

# Good local governance

## Practices and Initiatives from Ecuador

Study conducted by Jennifer Ortiz  
on behalf of VVSG



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**VVSG**



# Introduction and context

The Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (VMSG) is implementing its GloBe programme on international municipal cooperation in seven countries: Belgium, Benin, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Rwanda, Senegal and South Africa. Subsidised by the Belgian federal government, the programme aims to contribute to good local governance by strengthening (1) local government service delivery in a specific domain, (2) the competences of local officials and politicians and (3) internal processes within local government.

The programme in Ecuador is implemented through two town twinning partnerships, being those between Bierbeek and San Felipe de Oña on the one hand and between Evergem and Guaranda on the other. The aim is to strengthen the governance capacity of Ecuadorian municipalities through better integrated water and soil management.

In practice, however, we find that the focus of the GloBe programme is on the first aspect, namely service delivery by local governments in a specific domain. Town twinning programmes, including those in Ecuador, tend to focus strongly on concrete projects and service delivery in a specific domain. We find that insufficient attention is paid to the other two aspects, namely strengthening the competences of civil servants and politicians and of internal processes such as HR and information management, internal communication, citizen participation, planning and administrative management.

Therefore, in September 2023, the VMSG appointed a consultant to carry out the present study, with the aim of collecting good practices and recommendations on good local governance in Ecuador - specifically on strengthening the competences of civil servants and politicians and internal processes.



Cuenca municipality - discussion circles for participation and support



The study was conducted in the period October 2023 - January 2024 and documents 20 practices and experiences of local governments in Ecuador and their partners. With these good practices, the VVSG wants to contribute to cross-fertilisation between and capacity building of local governments and policymakers in Ecuador, Flanders and beyond.

The practices were selected by the VVSG, the AME (Association of Ecuadorian Municipalities) and the appointed consultant based on the following criteria:

- **Innovation:** does the practice propose new processes or methodologies that solve a need or problem?
- **Efficiency:** did the practice achieve the expected results by making optimal use of available economic, material or human resources?
- **Effectiveness:** did the practice achieve the expected results and had a positive impact?
- **Sustainability:** will the results achieved be maintained in the medium and long term?
- **Impact:** is there a clear and measurable positive change in the medium and long term?
- **Replicability or transferability:** can the practice be applied in another context and produce similar results?
- **Participation:** how were different actors (officials and politicians, citizens, civil society) involved in implementing the practice?

Good practices were described and documented based on interviews with staff from local governments and their partner organisations.

Participatory planning in Loreto Canton



# Reading guide

The 20 good practices are categorised according to six themes:

- **planning**
- **digital tools**
- **decision-making**
- **citizen participation**
- **internal communication**
- **administrative management**

There is overlap between some themes. For example, the planning focus area also features a practice that strongly focuses on citizen participation (Loreto), and conversely, the citizen participation focus area also features a practice that strongly focuses on planning (Olmedo).

The good practices were also assigned following labels based on their level of development:



- **Successful initiative:** pilot experience or innovative technique with first results.



- **Promising practice:** successful in one specific context, but not yet ready to be applied in another.



- **Good practice:** positive results in different contexts, can be shared so others can adapt and adopt it.

At any good practice, we provide the following info:



- Background



- Description



- Results



- Success factors



- Challenges



- Actors involved



- Validation criteria (sustainable impact and replicability)



- Contact details

# Good practices and successful local governance initiatives

## Planning

# MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT OF LORETO



## Successful initiative: participatory planning



### Background

The canton of Loreto suffered from a lack of decisive local policies due to administrative changes and economic and social crises. Therefore, a participatory planning process with various local actors began in August 2023, which is still ongoing today.



### Description

Initially, community leaders were approached to share their needs and build a shared vision through local roundtables. Based on interviews with further civil society stakeholders, this vision of desired local policy development was further refined. During participatory workshops, the canton's current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were identified (SWOT analysis). Short-term action points were then formulated to be taken up by the municipal administration. Responsible persons were appointed for all actions and deadlines were set.



### Results

Citizen participation in the decision-making process and in policy implementation ensures a supported Spatial Development Plan. Citizens are actively involved in the drafting and implementation of a policy for Loreto.



### Success factors

Social control and guarantees that the policy will also take into account input given during the participation process motivates citizens to participate in local policies. Planning for sustainable local development was drawn up, which in turn will have an impact on the local implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



### Challenges

Finding social actors committed to local development and transformation was challenging. It required a lot of work to visit the different areas in the canton and ensure proper coordination between municipal officials and communities.



### Parties involved

Mayor, city councillors, city administration officials, community leaders, neighbourhood leaders, citizens in general.



### Sustainable impact

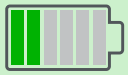
This is a sustainable and effective practice because it is a participatory decision-making process that responds to local needs. Creating participatory structures and the necessary space to coordinate them promotes the exchange of knowledge, lessons learned and perspectives to address local challenges in different communities and regions.



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# GUARANDA MUNICIPAL LIBRARY



**Good practice: coordination and alignment with educational institutions to promote reading culture**



## Background

According to the National Institute for Education Evaluation (INEVAL) and its Fourth Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study (ERCE), conducted in September 2022, reading is the main deficiency in children's education in Ecuador. To address this problem, the 'Mobile Libraries' project was launched in 2010, in the framework of the twinning between the municipality of Guaranda and the Flemish municipality of Evergem.



## Description

The project aims to promote reading culture among children. The Mobile Libraries team visits urban and rural schools of Guaranda Cantonment to raise awareness among students and teachers about the importance of reading, as well as to lend books to students and teachers and hold talks and workshops with teachers. The Directorate of Culture of Guaranda Municipality provides vehicles to the Mobile Libraries team to visit schools twice a week. The alignment and coordination between municipal administration, Mobile Libraries team and educational institutions has allowed the project to keep running smoothly since 2010. The team in charge draws up the routes for the visits, contacts the heads of the educational institutions to prepare themes, makes appointments with teachers to organise class schedules and keeps track of which books the children have read.



## Results

More than 20,000 students from urban and rural schools in Guaranda Canton participated in the project, promoting the reading habit among children and their families. The project led to the publication of the book "Voces del tiempo: Guaranda en sus leyendas" ("Voices of time: Guaranda in its legends"), which was awarded the National Prize Darío Guevara Mayorga in 2021. The collaboration has also made it possible to organise reading festivals with educational institutions.



## Success factors

Support from local authorities has played a major role in achieving the results. Participation in various national and international events has provided increased visibility for the project. This brought more financial and technical support and also increased local support for the project, which in turn promoted continuity and sustainability. The support of international partners such as Evergem municipality has also been a decisive success factor.



## Challenges

In the municipal budget, staff posts for this project were eliminated. Currently, 2 people are still responsible for the project, which limits the scope of visits to educational institutions.



## Parties involved

Guaranda municipal administration, municipal libraries, Evergem municipality, educational institutions in Guaranda region.



## Sustainable impact

The practice is sustainable because it involves coordinated work with different institutions. Improved reading levels lead to smoother development of other skills. The practice is also highly replicable. The processes and methodologies developed have already been shared with other municipalities, such as the municipality of Guayaquil.



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Cleaning the sewage systems was one of the items in the action plan that was created in a participatory way in Loreto.



Children in remote rural areas also get the chance to learn to read in Guaranda.

# MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF CHONE



## Good practice: integrated programme 'Sustainable Chone'



### Background

The main problems the Chone municipal government is trying to solve with this programme are the lack of green areas, deteriorated road networks causing mobility problems, pollution problems due to the poor quality of sewerage in the urban area, and high temperatures in areas with low tree density.



### Description

The project started in 2020 and is currently under implementation. The project aims to mitigate the effects of climate change through sustainable urban infrastructure and sanitation. Chome aims to create a sustainable, inclusive and prosperous canton that promotes a balance between economic growth, environmental conservation and the well-being of residents. It is based on four axes: economic development, social development, institutional development and environmental development. In September 2023, a contract was signed between the Chone municipal government and the Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean (CAF) to expand the project. The \$30 million endowment will directly benefit more than 15,000 people through the provision of safe drinking water, improved sanitation facilities and the construction of public spaces that improve mobility and safety in green areas and relaxation and recreation.



### Results

Five kilometres of bicycle paths were constructed, more than 400 livestock farmers in the canton were able to carry out productive activities, cocoa plantations were reforested, a sewage system was constructed, and the capacities of municipal technical staff were strengthened in areas such as sustainable urban planning, eco-architecture, green engineering and environmental management. The project was lauded in 2023 as one of the 'Prácticas Ejemplares Ecuador', an annual competition organised by the 'Líderes para Gobernar' foundation. This gave the project greater visibility and grew community support for its continuation. Several regulations were also developed to ensure the sustainability of the

project, including the Regulation for Coexistence of Citizens and Good Environmental Practices, Regulation for Noise Control and Regulation for Sanitary Waste Management.



### Success factors

The practice was made possible partly through the implementation of agro-ecological systems, such as regenerative animal husbandry and genetic improvement, the implementation of the hydrosanitation plan around sanitation and wastewater management, productive reforestation and urban reforestation, training and public awareness. All this work made it possible to create an integrated project.



### Challenges

Financial management of the wide range of planned activities was challenging.



### Parties involved

Municipal government of Chone, Ecuadorian Development Bank, CAF, German Development Cooperation GIZ, Ministry of Urban Development and Housing (MIDUVI), Ministry of Transport and Public Works (MTOPE), provincial government of Manabí, parish council of Chone.



### Sustainable impact

The sustainability of the project lies in the development of regulations that guarantee that actions will continue despite change of administrations. It also proposes long-term solutions to reduce the effects of climate change. It is a comprehensive programme copied by the municipal governments of Sucre and Flavio Alfaro, with which an agreement has been signed for advice and skills strengthening.



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# MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF SAN FELIPE DE OÑA - PARISH COUNCIL OF SUSUDEL



Successful initiative: supporting partners to strengthen a common project



## Background

The Provincial Government of Azuay, the municipality of Oña and the Parish Council of Susudel have an agreement to implement an irrigation and drainage project, which has been part of the Development and Land Use Plan of the Provincial Government of Azuay since 2014. Thanks to Oña's town twinning with the Flemish town of Bierbeek, a financial contribution from the Belgian Development Cooperation (DGD) has been secured for the implementation of the project since 2017. Their twinning programme - in addition to supporting the construction of the irrigation canal - focuses on the organisational processes of the local 'Junta de Riego' (Irrigation Council) and on increasing the administrative capacity of the local government by strengthening internal management processes and the capacities of staff members and politicians. In February 2023, following local elections and the formation of a new administration in Oña, there was a change in the technical staff responsible for the project, with no prior dialogue or transition period. This hampered the continuation of internal processes around governance capacity and the formation of the Irrigation Council, among others.



## Description

Oña's partner municipality Bierbeek, together with the umbrella organisation of Flemish cities and municipalities (VVSG), made a proactive plea to the authorities of the municipality of Oña, and subsequently to those of the Susudel Parish Council and of the Las Nieves-Chilpa-Susudel Irrigation Canal Council, to keep the project manager in place so that there can be continuity in the processes that have been started. Bierbeek also decided to switch from monthly monitoring processes to weekly monitoring processes together with the local project manager and the partner municipality's technical team. This ensured, after a break of several months, the restart of planned activities in the social, technical and administrative areas.



## Results

The guidance carried out and joint planning facilitated project implementation and contributed to strengthening the work with local communities,

registration of families for the cadastre process and laying pipes on the canal platform for irrigation water guidance. It was also identified that at the organisational level, there is a need for more analysis and guidance of the target group (irrigation water users) to ensure continued participation and feedback in project implementation.



## Success factors

This experience highlights the importance of international donors guiding their implementing partners, in order to maintain agreements, processes and schedules despite change of administrations, to ensure continuity of the assigned technical team and activities.



## Challenges

There were challenges in organisational processes, management tools and administrative management among others within the Irrigation Council. Therefore, awareness-raising and training processes will be put in place for the community, for the Irrigation Canal Board and for the other autonomous state parties involved.



## Parties involved

Municipal government of Chone, Ecuadorian Development Bank, CAF, German Cooperation GIZ, Ministry of Urban Development and Housing (MIDUVI), Ministry of Transport and Public Works (MTOPE), provincial government of Manabí, parish council of Chone.



## Sustainable impact

Providing intensive support to improve the operational and administrative management of the project promotes knowledge transfer and self-reliance among project staff, authorities and beneficiaries.



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# Good practices and successful local governance initiatives

Use of digital tools



# MODIVELNOR



## Good practice: traffic accident Balanced Scorecard (BSC) design to improve road safety and education



### Background

In 2015, the General Assembly of the Northern Transport Cooperation established the 'State-owned Northern Mobility Company', or Movidelnor. This is to ensure efficient management of public services in traffic and public transport. Some of the main causes of road insecurity and road accidents were found to be inadequate traffic training and lack of awareness among road users. To address this issue, a Balanced Scorecard (BSC) was created in 2016 to record accidents in the 15 cantons and, based on this, determine the topics to be covered in training courses.



### Description

The Balanced Scorecard records statistics on road accidents in the 15 cantons. This information is shared with the Department of Road Safety and Education to then produce curricula for citizens, educational institutions, professional drivers and civil society organisations. Trainers from the department use inclusive methodologies for different target groups through physical and virtual training. The Balanced Scorecard is updated monthly and is available [online](#).



### Results

Thanks to statistics collected since 2016 and the launch of road safety training and awareness activities, more than 300,000 people have so far been reached around road safety issues. This helps reduce the number of road accidents recorded annually.



### Success factors

By integrating road safety training and awareness into the curricula based on statistics from the Balanced Scorecard, training could be better tailored to the right target groups.



### Challenges

At the beginning of the programme, there was no adequate target group analysis for each training requested by CSOs and educational institutions. As a result, the content was often misaligned. Processes are now in place to clearly identify the target group and better tailor the trainings.



### Parties involved

Northern Traffic Partnership (Mancomunidad de Tránsito del Norte), educational institutions, professional drivers, Trafficnor.



### Sustainable impact

The project inspired other local governments, such as the municipalities of Latacunga, Tulcán, Quito, Machala and Ambato, to use recent statistics to implement road safety training. It is a sustainable practice because it builds road safety skills and knowledge among citizens and students, which they in turn can share with their families.



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# MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT OF CUENCA



## Successful initiative: using technology tools to prioritise public spending



### Background

The Cuenca municipal government saw a decline in citizen participation and declining participation in local decision-making spaces due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They decided to seek digital alternatives and technologies to facilitate citizens' access to information and participation processes in the municipality.



### Description

In 2021, the Cuenca municipal government invited community leaders and other citizens to participate in virtual sessions to get to know their needs better and then be able to set more informed priorities in public spending. They used tools such as Google Forms, Zoom and Google Drive. Officials from the municipal administration and the various parish councils worked together to facilitate the virtual sessions, and also drew up a training plan for municipal officials. The municipality has a database of social stakeholders and community leaders, which is regularly updated by the responsible team (e.g. based on site visits) and can be accessed through a direct request to the municipality.



### Results

More than 5,500 citizens participated in the virtual citizen participation spaces in 2021. Together with the citizens, the allocation of \$8,382,262.26 from the municipal budget was approved for the implementation of 62 projects.



### Success factors

The use of technological tools for meetings, working sessions, citizens' meetings and so on brought about a new model of territorial management.



### Challenges

Older residents struggle to use technology. In several neighbourhoods, poor internet connectivity also remains a barrier to good interaction.



### Parties involved

Cuenca city council, parish council, neighbourhood leaders, citizens.



### Sustainable impact

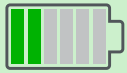
The right to citizen participation within the municipal budget planning is regulated by the Constitution and other applicable laws. The Cuenca City Council promotes this important duty, especially in the context of the COVID-19 crisis, through its Directorate of Participation and Governability and the use of technological tools.



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# MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT OF CUENCA



## Good practice: Cuenca's Open Data Portal



### Background

To give citizens smoother access to public information - and to meet the increasing demand for citizen information - the Cuenca City Council launched the project "Governance 4.0 Actions to Promote Data Openness, Transparency and Digital Citizen Participation" in 2022 with support from the German Development Cooperation (GIZ), through the Datalat Fund. Before this initiative, people in the city could access government information only for specific cases, manually and on-site.



### Description

In 2021, the local government organised a citizens' consultation on expectations regarding transparency. 148 citizens and organisations participated. This determined the categories of information that would be shared with citizens. External specialists designed the platform and coordinated the uploading of publicly accessible information. In the process, an Institutional Open Data Guide was created, defining the technical, organisational and standardisation outlines to be followed by the Institute for publishing open data from the municipal administration. All internal procedures were fully documented to limit the loss of knowledge and experience following changes in staff or administration.



### Results

The portal so far includes more than 50 sources with information on infrastructure, finance and institutional management, among others, promoting transparency and access to public information.

The Open Data Guide was prepared in collaboration with civil society and academic actors.



### Success factors

The role of authorities was crucial in developing this practice, as was coordination with academia and society. Also important was defining internal processes where responsibilities and roles were defined for each area.



### Challenges

During the change of administration in mid-2023, the Transparency Headquarters technical staff had to divide tasks among the new Headquarters Board and the Directorate to which it belongs, which in turn had to defend the importance of this work to the new authorities.



### Parties involved

Cuenca City Council, Datalat Fund, German Development Cooperation (GIZ), universities of the city of Cuenca, Cuenca civil society organisations and trade unions of the city.



### Sustainable impact

Promoting transparency and access to information for citizens gives the Cuenca municipal government a model role for innovative strategies for an Open Government. The project is 100% replicable in other local governments, thanks to all the documentation and processes developed by the Cuenca municipality.



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# MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT OF MEJÍA



## Good practice: territorial management system and spatial data infrastructure of the Canton of Mejía



### Background

Due to the lack of territorial information processing management, the lack of correspondence between field and cabinet information, the lack of follow-up and transparency of property taxes, the need to comply with current regulations and the constant adaptation to new technologies, Mejía municipality started implementing a Territorial Management System in 2004.



### Description

The Territorial Management System and Spatial Data Infrastructure includes valuation models, property tax issues, owner and property updates, free geographic information system software and implementation of geographic information in mobile devices. The municipal government has been committed to building the system since 2004. In 2012, a national programme was launched with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG) to support the graphical and alphanumerical part and create additional budgets. The Territorial Management System is used both by citizens, to access municipal services, and by municipal officials, to keep a close track of all procedures.



### Results

The Territorial Management System has improved services to internal and external users of the municipality. Mapping, cadastral plans and thematic maps are up-to-date. Cadastral processes are more flexible and accurate as there are procedure manuals, guides and control formats. Tax collection, allocation of budgets to projects and transparency of information have also improved.



### Success factors

Due to the political will and leadership of the 2004 government, the difficult task of gathering information and developing the system started. Economic resources and technical staff were provided for construction.



### Challenges

The project sometimes relies on private companies to share information belonging to the municipality. Officials with repetitive jobs do not always accept the implementation of new systems smoothly. Therefore, clear functions and responsibilities were worked out, facilitating the construction and implementation of the system.



### Parties involved

Municipal government of Mejía, Military Geographical Institute



### Sustainable impact

This practice is sustainable, replicable and innovative because it efficiently provides various services and information to citizens. Several local governments, including Tena municipality, are interested in learning how the practice is implemented.



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The Cuenca municipal government developed a Guide to open data management and co-creation together with actors from academia and civil society.



The safety fair makes young people aware of dangerous traffic situations.



The mayor of Mejía presents the Local Management System and Special Data Infrastructure.



# Good practices and successful local governance initiatives

## Decision-making



# ECUADORIAN FUND POPULORUM PROGRESSIO



**Successful initiative: establishment of steering committees with parish councils for solid waste management.**



## Background

In the rural parishes of Guaranda Canton, there was no adequate solid waste management and there were open dumps. According to Article 55 of COOTAD (Organic Law of Spatial Planning, Autonomy and Decentralisation), the municipal government has exclusive competence over solid waste management and environmental remediation. In response to these problems, the municipality of Guaranda worked on a waste project from 2008 to 2015, in agreement with the parish councils and with the support of their Flemish town twinning partner Evergem.



## Description

The project aims to improve solid waste management in the 8 rural parishes of Guaranda Canton, through: i) a system of classification and separate collection, ii) disposal of rubbish dumps, iii) composting systems, iv) collection centres, v) training for households in sorting and separating waste, and vi) training for waste collection personnel. The Guaranda municipality established a committee in each parish to implement the various activities. Each committee consists of representatives from the municipality, parish councils, recycling organisations and community leaders, ensuring empowerment and knowledge transfer in the community.



## Results

The eight parish committees are still active to continue the project. 13,505 people were trained in sorting solid waste and moderating product consumption to avoid more waste. The committees also enabled the commercialisation of Integrated Production Systems (SIPAS) to be strengthened in the parishes of Salinas and Simiatug.



## Success factors

The formation of the committee and the implementation of its activities were facilitated by the political will of the authorities. The Fondo Ecuatoriano Populorum Progressio (FEPP) worked with the municipal and parish authorities to build

support for the project, highlight its benefits for citizens, realise competences in solid waste management and implement a transition process to give continuity to the project - even after the local elections.



## Challenges

A lot of effort was required from the local committees to ensure that citizens continue to maintain waste sorting and separation. Moreover, due to the change of administration, there was a lot of work to maintain support for the project and maintain the established processes.



## Parties involved

Municipality of Guaranda, parish councils of Facundo Velas, Salinas, Simiatug, San Luis de Pambil, San Simón, San Lorenzo, Santa Fe, Julio Moreno; Association of Recyclers, FEPP, Municipality of Evergem.



## Sustainable impact

The establishment of the committees empowered local actors and led to the introduction of fees for the collection service and raising awareness about its importance. Household waste sorting still takes place in 3 rural municipalities: Simiatug, Salinas and Facundo Vela.



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# MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT OF CUYABENO



Successful initiative: establishment of the Cantonal Council for Sustainable Tourism



## Background

The canton of Cuyabeno, located in the Amazon region with oil as its main economic activity, underwent a socio-economic crisis as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic that led to layoffs in many oil companies. As a result, the canton's economy had to be boosted through other activities, such as sustainable tourism.



## Description

In 2019, the mayor of Cuyabeno, as chairman of the Cantonal Committee for Emergency Operations (COE), initiated actions to create the Cantonal Council for Sustainable Tourism. Local producers were supported in selling their products to tourism companies and livestock farmers were offered technical support. Tourist attractions focusing on culture, nature and livelihoods were highlighted, with the help of organisations such as the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG).



## Results

Local entrepreneurs have an outlet for their products on the Cuyabeno bridge and a commercialisation centre for agricultural and livestock products was built in Cuyabeno's Tarapoa parish. Cuyabeno was awarded the Safe Travel certificate for safe travel by the World Tourism Organisation in 2021. The city was also recognised as one of the 8 sustainable tourist destinations by the Ecuadorian Ministry of Tourism in 2023. A [map of businesses, accommodation, tourist services and emergency services](#) was also developed and shared with national and foreign tourists.



## Success factors

Government agencies in the area joined forces and extended benefits to the rural sector. Various actors

involved in production and tourism worked together to give Cuyabeno national visibility.



## Challenges

The municipality of Cuyabeno led the initiative, although its resources and staffing are limited. This had an impact on resources for other actions under the - often more core related - responsibilities of the municipal government.



## Parties involved

Cuyabeno Cantonal Council for Sustainable Tourism, Cuyabeno Fauna Production Reserve, local entrepreneurs, Cantonal Schools for Regenerative Livestock, World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG)



## Sustainable impact

Sustainable tourism is an axis for broad sustainable development, protecting the environment, promoting interculturality and developing economic/productive activities for local people. The 'Explore Cuyabeno' concept where agricultural and livestock enterprises offer food and recreational activities is being copied by some livestock associations in the canton through the sustainable livestock association 'Oro Verde de Cuyabeno'.



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# COUNCIL OF GUARANDA



## Promising practice: formation of the Cantonal Office for Water



### Background

In 2016, a water quality analysis was conducted in the various rural parishes of Guaranda Canton. This found that there was an urgent need to reduce water pollution levels, as 90% of the water was unfit for human consumption. Poor water quality leads to various diseases that particularly affect children due to high levels of malnutrition. As part of the town twinning with the Flemish municipality of Evergem, implementation of the project started in 2017.



### Description

The "Sustainable Use and Management of Water" project aims to improve water quality in the parishes of Guaranda Canton, through water analyses, provision of treatment filters and micrometers, protection of water sources, planting of indigenous plants and training workshops, with support from the Fondo Ecuatoriano Populorum Progressio (FEPP). To facilitate project implementation and determine sustainable actions, the Cantonal Office for Water was formed, composed of representatives from Guaranda's municipal government, parish councils, Water Boards and local NGOs, who meet monthly to follow up on planned activities.



### Results

So far, interventions to improve the quality of water for human consumption have been implemented in 23 communities and monthly meetings of the Cantonal Office take place.



### Success factors

Both awareness-raising campaigns in the community and the support of Evergem's technical team to transfer knowledge and follow up the project contribute to achieving the expected results.



### Challenges

There has been resistance from some communities to work on water treatment because of the misconception that chlorinated water is bad for human consumption. Sensitisation campaigns in the community help to improve awareness about these issues. The public water utility (EMAPAG) has also faced difficulties in interventions in their communities. The Cantonal Water Council has acted as mediator but this requires further coordination with local parties. It was noticed that participants in the first workshops did not always attend the next ones. It was therefore decided to work through community leaders so that they can provide help in building support and anchoring in the community.



### Parties involved

Guaranda town council, FEPP, parish councils, water boards, local NGOs, Evergem municipality.



### Sustainable impact

The formation of the Cantonal Office for Water contributes to the institutional sustainability of the project, as key local stakeholders work together to improve water quality. It is also a promising practice as the processes and actions of the Cantonal Office can be shared with other municipalities. The municipality of Colta has expressed interest in replicating the practice.



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# Good practices and successful local governance initiatives

Citizen participation

# OLMEDO CITY COUNCIL



## Successful initiative: capacity building on participatory community planning



### Background

When the new Olmedo municipality administration took office in May 2023, it was found that there were no processes for participation in local policies. So they started an internal process to build capacity and form a technical team to apply the methodology of participatory policy planning. This process lasted from May to November 2023.



### Description

A training process on the methodology of "Participatory Community Planning" took place under the guidance of the local administration, targeting specialists in the fields of municipal planning, agriculture, infrastructure, drinking water, health and social management. After the training process, a guide was prepared for mapping local actors and organising participatory policy planning workshops. The guide was applied to citizens. This allowed local government to identify needs - around access to basic services, environmental restoration and agricultural production, among others - and set priorities for the 2024 Municipal Annual Action Plan. At a "Cantonal Participatory Budget Meeting", the action plan was then jointly adopted.



### Results

Internal capacity building made it possible to create structural spaces for citizen participation, establish methodological guidelines and multi-sectoral collaborations for implementing actions together with citizens. Municipal officials were strengthened to implement participatory processes. There is a focus on inclusive processes that also involve vulnerable groups in the canton.



### Success factors

The willingness of the authorities to set up participatory planning processes was an important factor in the implementation of this initiative.



### Challenges

As this was a new initiative for the community, there were challenges related to community outreach, logistics management and financing catering and information materials for the workshops. Nevertheless, thanks to awareness campaigns and both physical and digital communication by the municipality, key community actors participated in the first planning workshop for the 2024 projects.



### Parties involved

Community presidents, community leaders, chairman and members of the parish council, representatives of the cantonal planning board, citizens.



### Sustainable impact

The process of capacity building and the formation of a multidisciplinary municipal team for the exercise of participatory policy planning, constitute a sustainable instrument to promote citizen participation in the long run.



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# MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF ESPÍNDOLA



## Successful initiative: support for participatory budgeting



### Background

Due to a recurrent lack of transparency, efficiency and cooperation in previous administrations in Espíndola, there was mistrust and continuous underdevelopment. The new administration decided to bet on a new local governance model, where citizens play the leading role in decisions about collective interests and where there are no social inequalities.



### Description

All six rural parishes and the city parish of Amaluze of the canton of Espíndola were visited to communicate about planned projects of the municipal administration and to prioritise, together with the citizens of each parish, projects and use of tax money, for the 2024 financial year.



### Results

The main achievement is the promotion of citizen participation and transparency in the allocation of public funds. This contributes to citizen empowerment and involvement, and subsequent accountability processes by local government.



### Success factors

Collaboration with parish councils and community leaders ensured improved support and trust.



### Challenges

Adapting strategies to the needs and characteristics of the citizens of each parish was a challenge. A participatory and inclusive culture had to be created, avoiding misconceptions about municipal management.



### Parties involved

Municipal council of Espíndola, parish councils of La Naranja, Bellavista, El Airo, El Ingenio, Jimbura and Santa Teresita, city parish of Amaluza, community leaders, citizens.



### Sustainable impact

Allocating public funds in a transparent manner to citizen-selected projects promotes citizen participation, open communication and responsible long-term project follow-up.



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# MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT OF SANTO DOMINGO



## Promising practice: civic training schools



### Background

The municipal government of Santo Domingo strengthened the knowledge and skills among its citizens about participatory democracy so that more local and social actors in the canton would contribute to the implementation of public policies.



### Description

The municipal administration conducted citizen training schools from April to November 2022 to provide tools to strengthen citizen participation. The training process involved the development of four training modules on the following topics: participation rights, citizen participation systems, parliamentary procedures, social control and accountability mechanisms. The trainings were delivered on-site in various public spaces, to civil society representatives, social, cultural, sports and trade union actors, leaders of parishes, communal centres, and so on.



### Results

80 Cantonal Assembly leaders and CSOs participated in the 'civic training schools' promoted by Santo Domingo City Hall.



### Success factors

Coordinating with various organisations and raising awareness about the importance of capacity building were key factors in the development of the civic training schools.



### Challenges

Several participants who started training school did not participate in all training modules, requiring refresher and catch-up processes to complete the training programme.



### Parties involved

Municipal government of Santo Domingo, midfield organisations.



### Sustainable impact

The practice is sustainable because it works to strengthen knowledge and skills, making participants attach long-term importance to civic participation. This stimulates the development of local governance.



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# MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF SAN MIGUEL DE IBARRA



## Promising practice: forming the participatory budget



### Background

The municipality of Ibarra conducted a situation diagnosis of the methodologies, processes and management models used in terms of participatory budgeting in May 2023, after the change of administration. This identified several shortcomings, mainly in the way actors interpreted territorial reality. Ibarra decided to develop a more efficient management model for citizen participation and participatory decision-making.



### Description

Representatives from the private sector, entrepreneurs, citizens, social, cultural, sports, environmental, heritage and government institutions were invited to consultations with a Technical Committee to form the participatory budget. The technical roundtables were led by specialists from the municipality, councillors and the mayor.



### Results

At neighbourhood level, technical roundtables were organised with experts from the various municipal departments and seven advisory councils in the fields of environment, security, planning, culture, administration, civic participation and economy. This made it possible to draw up sub-plans; for the development of the historical centre of the canton, for infrastructure studies, sanitation and road works, and so on. An innovative system of civic participation, the 'Veedurías Ciudadanas' or Schools for Civic Participation, was set up in the different districts of the canton of Ibarra. They oversee the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of actions in each neighbourhood, municipality and community.



### Success factors

The work of the technical roundtables used a methodology that focuses on the rapprochement between the authorities and key actors, and prioritises the needs of citizens.



### Challenges

During the technical roundtables, it was identified that citizens' knowledge on territorial management, planning and citizen participation is limited. Therefore, additional action is being taken under this project to strengthen skills in these areas for different parties.



### Parties involved

Ibarra City Council, neighbourhood councils, parish councils, national parish council, economic, cultural and environmental actors and citizens.



### Sustainable impact

Working with sub-plans as well as collaborating with local actors to co-manage project implementation ensures project sustainability and contributes to transparency of information and accountability.



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Info session on the 2024 participatory budget in Espindola



Olmeda's participatory planning process concluded with a 'cantonal meeting on the participatory budget' where programmes and projects for 2024 were jointly approved.



# Good practices and successful local governance initiatives

Internal  
communication



# MUNICIPALITY OF MARCELINO MARIDUEÑA



**Promising practice: creating a care space for council employees and/or their families addicted to narcotics**



## Background

Since June 2019, the municipality of Marcelino Maridueña has been implementing the social project “Municipal Outpatient Centre for People with Addiction Campa” to prevent and mitigate the effects of drug use among citizens. Although this project was initially designed to work with citizens, cases were discovered within the municipality among employees – or their families – that affected work performance. Therefore, an internal programme was launched in 2021 for all employees or their family members who need support in treating their addictions, and motivational therapy was initiated for the employee’s integral development.



## Description

The municipal team responsible for implementing the CAMPA project is given space to provide outpatient care to municipal officials, motivational and occupational therapies, psychological care, and follow up with the official or his/her family to determine how the support has improved their work performance.



## Results

As of 2021, 21 beneficiaries of the project remained clean. Discussions were also held with more than 140 municipal officials on drug abuse prevention.



## Success factors

There is successful coordination between different departments of the municipality, such as the sports department, the occupational medicine department and the physical rehabilitation centre. This internal coordination has made staff more aware of treating addictions as a welfare measure that translates into better work performance. As such, it has helped build a more inclusive environment that strengthens local governance.



## Challenges

Prejudice and stigma limited treatment options in some cases. Therefore, support and awareness are still being worked on within the relevant teams and all other municipal services to promote an inclusive environment.



## Parties involved

Municipal administration of Marcelino Maridueña and team consisting of a psychologist, social worker, doctor or medical assistant, nurse, occupational therapist, spiritual therapist.



## Sustainable impact

The CAMPA project is a sustainable practice because it focuses on the well-being of individuals and a safer and healthier environment for citizens. It improves work performance and creates inclusive spaces for implementing local governance. Moreover, it is a practice that can be replicated in other contexts with similar problems.



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# MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT OF SHUSHUFINDI



## Successful initiative: using and recording citizen information



### Background

Since May 2023, the new Shushufindi municipal government has been committed to better use of citizen information to ensure information access and transfer by municipal officials, contributing to better service delivery for citizens.



### Description

All employees of the organisation and new staff are continuously trained in the correct recording of internal and external information and files to ensure the digital and physical traceability of documents. For this purpose, the municipal administration uses an internal platform, accessible to all officials.



### Results

The use and recording of information has been improved in all departments of the municipality, making internal processes and citizen services more efficient.



### Success factors

Coordination and ongoing training, both for new and existing staff.



### Challenges

There was resistance among some officials to change their ways of working.



### Parties involved

Municipal administration of Shushufindi and all its officials



### Sustainable impact

Commitment to efficient internal processes, encourages a culture of good organisation and correct use of information. This allows employees to optimise their time use and better serve citizens.



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Regular capacity building of local mandataries in Shushufindi was essential for proper management and recording of civic information.



The mayor of Marcelino Maridueña presents a certificate to a young person who managed to stop his drug addiction thanks to the CAMPA project.

# Good practices and successful local governance initiatives

Administrative  
management



# MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT OF EL CARMEN



## Promising practice: improving municipal administrative management



### Background

In June 2019, the administrative processes of the El Carmen municipal government were analysed and several problems were identified, including lack of updating of the municipal land register, insufficient coordination with the Internal Revenue Service (SRI) to identify taxpayers and patents, lack of agreements with private banks for online payment of services, lack of online monitoring and control processes and lack of processes for building an efficient financial plan.



### Description

It started with a SWOT analysis of the municipal administration. This was conducted in the form of technical roundtable discussions, in which representatives of the various municipal departments participated. Based on the analysis, processes were then defined for budgetary planning, prioritising expenditure, payments, portfolio arrears and improving collection. Procedure manuals, standards and formats were drafted to facilitate the municipality's administrative management. In addition, a performance monitoring and evaluation model and the Balance SCORECARD were implemented to carry out reporting processes. Agreements were also signed with the Internal Revenue Service, the National Directorate of Public Registers and private banks.



### Results

The municipality scored better on the 'Indicators of Monetary Increase and Continuous Improvement', which allowed a higher state budget to be allocated to El Carmen. Collection management and services to citizens and have improved, as has the management of municipal patents by updating ordinances and the land register.



### Success factors

The key success factor was a comprehensive diagnosis of organisational management to identify the right areas for improvement.



### Challenges

In improving administrative management, there were obstacles such as overdue civil procedures that required immediate attention and low knowledge of the municipal portfolio.



### Parties involved

Municipal Council of El Carmen, Internal Revenue Service (SRI), Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Society (MINTEL), National Directorate of Public Registers (DINARP), Banco del Pichincha, association la Benéfica, citizens.



### Sustainable impact

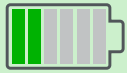
Official agreements with various public and private actors make this practice sustainable. Great efforts have reduced costs and time investment in the long run, making the practice interesting for replication by other municipalities.



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# MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF SAN MIGUEL DE IBARRA



Good practice: establishing internal management model for citizen safety



## Background

In recent years, Ecuador has experienced a wave of violence that has made it one of the most violent countries in the world. In the city of Ibarra, the risk of violence and citizen insecurity is increased by concrete local factors such as public alcohol consumption, informal street vending and inadequate management of public spaces. In collaboration with the municipal police and the municipal commissariat, the municipality launched an improved citizen safety management model in 2023.



## Description

Through the establishment of a specialised municipal police operational team and the creation of warning codes and risk indicators, the management model aims to enable the classification and mitigation of security risks. Some concrete measures have already been taken in cooperation with the community: relocating street vendors, monitoring in parks and public areas, cleaning vacant lots, preventive community awareness campaigns, and so on. The management model ensures recruitment of highly trained staff, with codes of conduct. Efforts are being made to strengthen skills in human rights, psychology, risk analysis and mitigation. Together with municipal directors, the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Red Cross, the national police, the army, parish councils and neighbourhood leaders, Ibarra is currently drafting a security plan for the canton.



## Results

The management model made it possible to identify the factors causing insecurity. This management has ensured that Ibarra is considered one of the safest cities in the country. This contributes to the free mobility of citizens.



## Success factors

The follow-up of the planned actions is running smoothly thanks to the creation of an inter-institutional consultation table that meets every 15 days, with the support of the mayor representing the civil security council, the Intendencia, the municipal commissariat, the national police and the municipal police.



## Challenges

Currently, not enough crimes are reported. Awareness campaigns and cooperation with community leaders remain necessary to achieve more civic participation in this project.



## Parties involved

Municipal government of Ibarra, municipal police, municipal commissariat



## Sustainable impact

The practice is sustainable thanks to the development of an internal security management model, good inter-institutional cooperation and good recruitment procedures of trained staff aligned with the institution's values. The Esmeraldas municipality has already received advice on how to build a similar model.



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# COUNCIL OF CÉLICA



## Successful initiative: supporting Water Boards' legalisation process



### Background

The canton of Céllica is struggling with scarce conservation of the (micro) basins that provide drinking water, an expansion of the agricultural frontier and soil desertification. Since 2023, the municipal government has been committed to a project to improve the situation, in collaboration with parish councils, water boards and the community.



### Description

For the project, Céllica worked well with the parish councils and water boards to educate and involve landowners around the (micro) basins in their protection. One of the main policy actions of the Céllica Municipal Council is the legal advice and assistance they provide to the representatives of the water boards so that they can obtain the legal status that facilitates their work. In addition, administrative and technical training is provided to the water boards, enabling them to work on their own and ensure sustainable conservation of the (micro) basins.



### Results

Joint work has started on the legalisation of 32 water boards (Juntas Administradoras de Agua Potable). The municipality also succeeded in strengthening the relationship with parish councils, which are committed to conserving and protecting water resources.



### Success factors

Thanks to relationships with local leaders, the project is running smoothly.



### Challenges

Financing the acquisition of properties around (micro) basins is a challenge.



### Parties involved

Municipal council of Céllica, regional water fund FORAGUA, rural parish councils of Cruzpamba, San Juan de Pózul, Teniente Maximiliano Rodríguez Loaiza, Sabanilla.



### Sustainable impact

The sustainability of the project is based on supporting the Water Boards to legalise and strengthen technical and administrative skills for the protection of (micro) water basins. These actions can be replicated in all municipal governments.



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# Recommendations for strengthening local governance

Based on the above good practices and successful initiatives, we identify the following key recommendations for strengthened local governance in Ecuador. They can inspire future actions, both for Ecuadorian and other cities and municipalities and their international partners, who want to work towards inclusive and sustainable local development.





Develop **participatory processes** and embed them among municipal officials and other local actors. Document all processes physically and digitally.



Ensure **anchoring and support** for all actions and projects that contribute to local development. Implement training processes and communicate transparently, especially in case of new administrations.



Use **digital tools** for managing internal and external data and for planning, monitoring and tracking projects.



Make an **analysis of the different processes** in your organisation as early as the design phase of actions, programmes and projects. Identify improvement opportunities for delivering products and services to citizens.



Implement ongoing processes for **strengthening skills**, such as train-the-trainer initiatives. Even when staff members leave, their accumulated knowledge and skills remain valuable within the local community.



Commit to **inter-institutional cooperation** and alignment between local government, public institutions, private companies, academia, civil society organisations, community leaders, and so on.



**Institutionalise cooperation** at the territorial level - involving different actors such as civil society, academia, local businesses or NGOs - through formal structures and documents.



If you implement projects with support from international partners, ensure guidance and **local ownership** of the funding. This contributes to capacity building of your own staff and sustainability of projects.



Invest time and resources in **monitoring and evaluation**. Track all implemented projects and actions, set good indicators and clear targets, organise evaluations to get feedback for future projects.



Actively seek strategies and projects that generate municipal revenues with a view to the **financial sustainability** of the organisation (e.g. premiums, levies, cadastral taxes). From this perspective, develop multi-year programmes in cooperation with national and international partners.



Ensure the digital **documentation** of all processes, methodologies, results and products resulting from your projects and programmes. This facilitates replication and ensures continuity.



Set up structured **transition processes** after local elections to enable a smooth handover to the new authorities and teams.



Increase your **national and international visibility**, e.g. by participating in competitions and programmes. Publicise your good practices, products and results achieved.

## Want to know more?

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# VVSG

