Diputació Barcelona

Guide for the evaluation of international actions by local governments

General guidelines for the evaluation
of international actions by a local government

Tools Collection

Diputació Barcelona

This document presents a common methodological framework to evaluate the international actions of local governments, particularly activities of an international nature that aim to improve and promote an appropriate framework for foreign and international action that is sustainable and consistent with the priorities and potential of the territory, and with its global commitments.

In today's global setting, where local governments have come to play a key role in the implementation of international agendas, and their international activity is becoming a recognized public policy, more than ever it is necessary to have tools that allow them to define, plan and evaluate the impact of their actions. This publication represents a step forward in considering international action as a key element of a city's political activity.

This document concludes a process of reflection that began in 2007 with the publication of the *Guide for foreign action by local governments and decentralized cooperation*, since evaluation closes the circuit of a public policy and provides a practical manual for international action.

observatorio
| Cooperación Descentralizada | Unión Europea | América Latina |

This project is co-funded by the European Union

Local Government Series

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of international actions by a local government

Tools Collection

Author
Jean-Pierre Malé

With the collaboration of:
Eleonora Betancour and Braulio Diaz

Technical Direction
Office of Europe and International Strategy
Directorate of International Relations
Presidency Department
Diputació de Barcelona
[Barcelona Provincial Council]

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Abbreviations

AL-LAs	Euro-Latin American Cooperation Alliance between Cities
CAF	Development Bank of Latin America
DIBA	Barcelona Provincial Council
IA	International Action
IALG	International Action by Local and Regional Governments
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
LED	Local Economic Development
LG	Local Government
OCD UE-AL	European Union – Latin America Observatory on Decentralised Cooperation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UCLG	United Cities and Local Governments

Presentation

In the global world in which we live, international relations are a necessity for any government that aims to exercise its powers effectively and in keeping with its environment, as well as being essential to comply with global commitments to sustainable development. Obviously, this also extends to local governments.

Cities have progressively increased their presence in the international sphere, gradually creating their own strategies and networks and expanding knowledge of the outside world, though in many cases separately from other political actions. The motivations that prompt a local government to internationalise its territory are very varied; they may be political, economic, social or cognitive, emerging in any field. In fact, a local government rarely carries out international action for a single reason, and it is precisely a multidimensional approach that ensures that internationalisation has a noticeable, sustained impact over time.

But it is necessary to design, plan and evaluate international action as one more public policy of a government in keeping with the rest of its policies if it is to provide real added value and reflect the impact it causes in its city and citizens.

However, although it is a fact that cities have gained greater global recognition, the international actions of local governments are not always considered consolidated public policy and in some cases they are even questioned.

In this sense, Barcelona Provincial Council, through its Directorate of International Relations, stands out for promoting and supporting local bodies, especially those in Barcelona province, so that they identify, promote and plan their international actions in keeping with their potential, history and identity.

To this end, this guide offers a common methodological framework to evaluate the international actions of a local government, one more step towards improving, promoting and recognising international action as a necessary public policy today.

Pilar Díaz
Assistant Governor to the Presidency
and Delegate for International Relations

Introduction

In 2005, the Observatory for Decentralised Cooperation EU-LA, headed by Barcelona Provincial Council in collaboration with the Municipality of Montevideo, started its line of research, analysis and knowledge management of decentralised cooperation and began its first studies of the international action of local governments. This field of work set out to analyse and illustrate the relationships, collaborations and cooperation existing between local and sub-national governments in Europe and Latin America, and their utility for the development of the respective territories. In this way, it promoted recognition of the international actions of local government and decentralised cooperation as a local public policy.

To this end, two methodological guides were published: a *Practical manual to internationalize the city. Guide to foreign action for local governments and decentralised European Union-Latin American cooperation*, and *Elements for the construction of a local public decentralised cooperation policy*. These publications lay the bases for why a local government should have an international action strategy and provide elements to define, carry out and optimise this strategy.

Since these guides were published, the international actions of local governments have strengthened and increased globally, as shown by their growing participation in the definition of global agendas (Agenda 2030, NUA, Paris Agreement, etc.) and the evolution of decentralised cooperation towards international action within the framework of global governance.

In this context, some departments, governments and specialised bodies maintain that in order for international action to be recognised as a local public policy, it requires monitoring and evaluation as key elements for transparency, effectiveness and efficiency. For this purpose, the work started years ago has now been resumed with the publication of this third methodological guide: *Guide for the evaluation of international actions by local governments*.

Jean Pierre Malé, author of the Guide, was responsible for designing and creating it. This document starts with an analysis of the real conditions in which local governments in various regions of the world deploy their strategy of international action, and offers initial guidelines for discussion of the necessary conditions and indicators to evaluate it. The text opens the door to reflection on how the impact of a local government's interna-

tional action can be analysed and its usefulness demonstrated for the sustainable, equitable and inclusive development of a city and the construction of a global citizenship.

ANTONI MONTSENY, Director of International Relations of Barcelona Provincial Council and General Coordinator of the Observatory for Decentralised Cooperation EU-LA
NELSON FERNANDEZ, Director of International Relations and Cooperation of the Municipality of Montevideo and Head of the Latin American Branch of the Observatory for Decentralised Cooperation EU-LA

The process of writing the Guide

This document, commissioned by the Barcelona Provincial Government and the European Union—Latin America Observatory on Decentralised Cooperation, plays a key role in strengthening the city movement to which these two organisations have devoted a great deal of effort since the Observatory was founded in 2004. For this reason, we would like to take a brief look at this phenomenon and make some preliminary observations.

- **Recognition of the phenomenon of International Actions by Local Governments (IALG) regarding the evaluation of their impact**
  Nowadays, International Actions by Local Governments (IALG) are a widespread phenomenon. In a globalised world, most medium-sized and large towns/cities have international contacts, and forge exchanges and working relationships with local institutions in other countries.

The initial debates[1] around the potential significance of this emerging phenomenon and the legitimacy of local international actions, which seemed to encroach on the competences of the central government and call for the transformation of the existing legal and juridical framework, have been virtually superseded by the evidence that, in an increasingly interdependent world, LGs could not go without forging relationships with actors in other countries and, in particular, with local institutions that are their direct counterparts. Whatever the attitude taken by the central government, local institutions have penetrated the international sphere, whether individually or through the networks and associations they have forged.

At present, it could be said that the existence of IALGs is no longer up for debate. This phenomenon is already firmly in place and consolidated. Based on its own needs in a globalised world, each large municipality has developed and broadened its international actions. Using these initiatives as a springboard, the emergence of local institutions as international actors is no longer an emerging issue; it has come of age. As will be seen, it

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1. See, for example, AL-LAs Paper No. 1 on *The legal and institutional framework for international actions by cities*.

is a diverse, multifaceted phenomenon, which has consequences that affect all city levels and has an increasingly high-profile impact on potentially solving global issues and the transformation of the architecture of our global governance system.

Now, the unresolved core issue for all those who study and support this phenomenon is to evaluate its effects and forecast its potential to transform our cities and regions as well as our global system. It is a matter of evaluating the positive and negative aspects deriving from IALGs and conducting a strategic reflection on the way forward for this phenomenon.

Accordingly now is the time for EVALUATION, in the broadest sense of the word; to assess whether the orientation and content of the IALGs are having the desired effects and impacts. It is a strategic reflection, aimed at each of the LGs as well as all the actors involved in this field.

- **At what level can the International Actions by Local Governments be analysed and evaluated: local, regional or global dimension?**

Looking at it from the regional dimension of the International Action phenomena of Local Governments (IALG) to be evaluated, three levels can be distinguished where it would be useful to develop evaluation instruments and methods.

A. The *proposed research is at the first of these three levels, in other words, municipal level.* The objective is to *provide each LG concerned with tools to evaluate its international actions.* This first level of analysis is the most apparent because it corresponds to local autonomy and because the phenomenon of the IALGs arises precisely from the individual initiatives of the LGs which, one after the other, become aware of the need to conduct actions at an international level and move towards developing a strategy and drawing up a public policy in this field.

   At this level, being able to evaluate the results and impact of this new local policy is a need strongly felt by the LGs that have embarked on this journey.

   Furthermore, it should be noted that evaluation is an exercise in accountability and validation and/or rectification of the possible effects and results with regard to citizens. It must therefore be part of the process that accompanies the internationalisation policy, as it can contribute numerous elements to creating a common discourse on the importance of international openness, perceived as a commitment by all actors in the country and not only local administrations.

Two further levels could be addressed in the future:

B. e *supra-municipal or regional level* is a second aspect that emerges when the sum of municipal actions is accounted for and the need to coordinate or bring together

the individual initiatives of the LGs of a country or region takes place.[2] The purely individual perspective, municipality by municipality, may be insufficient or misleading. A clear example is the strategy of attracting external resources, which inspires many of the municipal internationalisation plans. Seen from the perspective of a specific LG, this strategy may be the right one and may be beneficial for the municipality. Nevertheless, it is an approach that tends to create a *dynamic of fierce competition between cities* and therefore entails certain debatable aspects that may be risky in terms of regional balance.[3]

It is therefore necessary to reflect on the results that could be generated by all the international municipal actions for a specific area and region because, if these actions were to overlap, it could create problems or lead to imbalances. From this point of view, a more global vision of the phenomenon and its potential positive and negative effects should be taken into account, and therefore an evaluation on a supra-municipal scale should also be considered in the future. Evaluating the results, not from the individual perspective of each municipality, but with a more global outlook, would provide additional richness, highlighting the possible effects of competition between cities and the need to coordinate their external actions to some extent.

C. The third level to be considered is global, evaluating the effects and impacts of the phenomenon of LG internationalisation, considered as the sum of the individual actions of municipalities regarding global priority issues (climate change, the global flow of people, etc.) and global governance.[4] Although it may seem far off, it is worth mentioning that some municipalities are already aware that their individual actions are playing a role in global transformations and changes in international affairs.[5]

In fact, the global context should be kept in mind, as the IALGs are part of the changes that can impact the global governance system and contribute to the realisation of the 2030 Agenda that was drawn up by the United Nations and adopted by its 193 member states in 2015.

The Agenda identifies 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved by 2030. Within this framework, *LGs are directly concerned not only by Goal 11, which is*

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2. For example, not all the towns along the Costa Brava can handle mass international tourism, just as not all towns can aspire to attract major sporting or cultural events. In the same way, it is not possible to encourage every medium-sized town in the same region to hold a summer music festival.

3. One such aspect is the cumulative cost of inter-city struggles to attract certain events or resources. Another may be the dysfunctions created by uncoordinated policy implementation in geographically proximate cities.

4. This third level was contemplated in the seminar held by AL-LAs in 2018 in Mexico City on the evaluation of the IALG phenomenon.

5. By way of example, the Canadian city of Montreal has selected three axes of internationalisation that correspond to three strategic objectives: external projection, attractiveness and leadership in the international municipalist movement. As well as the first two objectives which relate to the city itself, there is a global objective to which the city of Montreal wishes to actively contribute.

specifically focussed on sustainable cities and communities, but also by the vast majority of the SDGs, as effectively achieving them will depend to a large extent on progress made in urban spaces.

Within this perspective, the IALGs could be a powerful tool to move in the direction indicated by the international community. To this end, this phenomenon should not focus solely on competition between cities in the international arena to attract resources; it should foster and develop collaboration between LGs from different countries and continents to improve local public policies as well as to influence global governance. In particular, these governments should look to the values of the Agenda to bring their local policies in line with global goals.[6]

Within this context, *evaluating what IALGs currently represent, the positive and negative effects along with their impact, is of particular importance.* The public internationalisation policies that local institutions have initiated should be evaluated, in order to be in a position to evaluate this phenomenon as a whole, its possible contribution to the global agenda (2030 horizon) and, most importantly, its possible impact on transforming the current international governance system.

In fact, from our perspective, reflection should not be solely based on how local institutions can contribute to the realisation of some of the international community's goals, which responds to the widespread concern with locating SDGs. It must also explore the extent to which the emergence of cities as international actors can change the functioning and priorities of the global governance system.

For all of these reasons, we see the three levels of analysis as being interdependent and feeding off each other. From this broad perspective, the "micro" evaluation of the international actions of a specific LG, which is the strict scope of this Guide, cannot be considered without in some way taking into account the more general context in which municipal actions are set. Throughout the research, we therefore seek to point out and bring together the reflections that an evaluation at municipal level may raise for future evaluation at regional and/or global level.

The Guide should therefore respond to the calls for methodology and instruments expressed by the LGs regarding their individual actions. However, it is also important to take advantage of this research to reflect on and draw up general guidelines that can be used to point out possible actions on a supra-municipal scale.

- ⬚ **e pioneering nature of the Guide**

Since its creation, the Observatory has focused on highlighting and analysing the phenomenon of international relations between LGs. Subsequently, the Euro-Latin Ameri-

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6. Furthermore, it should be noted that the IALGs are generally part of a participatory, inclusive, multi-actor and multi-level partnership approach that corresponds perfectly to the spirit of institutional and social co-responsibility that characterises the Agenda.

can Cooperation Alliance between Cities (AL-LAs) has undertaken to provide instruments for LGs to initiate and develop their international action. Now, the Observatory and the Barcelona Provincial Government are seeking to move forward in a new and relatively unexplored field, which is that of evaluation.

It is important to be aware of the ambition and magnitude of the project. Starting at a local and individual level, which is quite logical, also presents us with a major challenge.

At a municipal level, the situations are significantly different. IAs are a phenomenon under construction that is transforming rapidly. It is challenging to try to build instruments capable of covering these different realities when this field is not yet recognised as an explicit competence of the local institution. This paper foresees the situation of many municipalities and seeks to offer them instruments that they can use in the future.

- ⌧ e Guide's target audience

The Guide aims to *"provide LGs from di⌧erent regions of the world* with practical tools" and is intended to become *a benchmark* for them. The origin of this work contains a very clear and recurrent statement that seeks to build a methodology and tools that can be applied and disseminated on a global scale. The Guide therefore has a broad and diverse target audience, which we will take into account, using examples and references from the experiences of cities in different countries and continents, and trying to propose instruments applicable to different socio-economic and cultural contexts.

On the other hand, it should be noted that cities that have undertaken reflection or an evaluation process are few and far between, and are mainly large cities that are trailblazers in their respective countries.[7] We will refer to these particularly interesting cases and draw on their experience, while being cautious not to focus solely on global and capital cities, such as Paris, London, São Paulo or Mexico City, which have exceptional conditions and resources compared to most others. On the other hand, it is important, wherever possible, to highlight the potential of those that are not capitals of their respective countries, as well as medium-sized cities. The challenge lies in providing a multipurpose tool that is also useful for cities of different sizes and in different socio-cultural contexts.

- **Scope of the Guide**

Within this context of partial and uneven progress, it may seem untimely to question a methodology for evaluating a LG's international actions, understood as a public policy

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7. In this regard, Mexico City has developed an information system that takes into account the generation of the following indicators: management (to ascertain the degree of implementation of its international policy activities); performance (to measure the achievement of policy objectives); and impact (to measure the medium- and long-term effects of its international policy activities).

that gives a unitary meaning to the different municipal actions. Few municipalities meet the necessary conditions to undertake this exercise and, in reality, evaluation experiences already conducted in this field are scarce. In chapter 6, we will look at how we can deal with and solve these problems.

Despite these challenges, we are pleased that Barcelona Provincial Council and the Observatory are considering reflecting on this issue and proposing some guidelines to LGs in order to evaluate their international strategy, as *doing so has a direct impact on the construction of a more coherent strategy* and the way the different actors and groups in the municipality are involved. This is because it requires a review of the policy adopted, specifying the expected results and the targets of the actions, reflecting on how to analyse their impact and, in general, delving deeper into the LG's strategic vision.

We therefore believe that this paper can help LGs to look at international actions as a whole, to specify the objectives of their foreign strategy, to forge contacts and alliances with other actors and collectives, and thereby come up with the necessary instruments to evaluate a public policy such as the local policy of internationalisation and foreign openness, which is particularly rich and complex, as will be seen below.

For all of these reasons, *we are not yet in a position to produce what could be considered an operational manual* that is capable of offering a proven methodology and specific instruments. However, by taking into account the real situation of the municipalities, *we can instead offer this guide, which offers assistance and recommendations* to LGs that are interested in considering the matter of evaluation.

- **Document structure**

In order to draw up these general guidelines, it is first necessary to situate the phenomenon of the IALGs and the strategic framework in which an LG's external action takes place (Part one).

Next, we will go over the importance and role of evaluation in all local public policies and the basic principles that guide this exercise, before carrying out an in-depth analysis of the specificity of a municipality's international action and identifying the particular challenges that its evaluation poses (Part two).

The operational section draws up guidelines for the evaluation of IAs and proposes methodological approaches to the various specific situations (Part three).

By way of conclusion, some closing remarks addressed to the LGs will be made.

Part one
International actions by a local government: context and strategic framework

1. The global context and significance of the phenomenon of internationalisation of local governments

The purpose of this first chapter is to present from the outset how economic globalisation has brought about a new situation on a global scale; how local institutions, actors and regions are affected, whether positively or negatively, by the internationalisation of the economy and society, and why Local Governments (LGs) must come up with strategies and implement local public policies in the international arena.

1.1. Drastic changes in the local/global relationship

The phenomenon of economic globalisation, which got underway at the end of the Second World War with the arrival of free trade on a global scale, has broadened and diversified with financial, technological and communication globalisation, radically transforming the traditional relationships between the local space and the global dimension.

The local space has now definitively lost its position of relative isolation, which served as a natural protection as a way of maintaining its specific distinguishing features. It can no longer be cut off from the dominant phenomena on a global scale. It is now fully immersed in a complex dynamic in which it is being *penetrated by forces, flows and interests that act according to the logic of an international nature or dimension.*[8]

In fact, it should also be emphasised that the general phenomenon of economic, financial and cultural globalisation, which has been developing since the end of the twentieth century and has accelerated in recent decades, has very significant effects and consequences on a city and a region, regardless of whether or not the LG has developed a deliberate and conscious internationalisation policy. At present, the global sphere penetrates and permeates the local fabric, while the local sphere ceases to be cut off from global issues. It could be said that, even if it is not consciously aware of it, *all municipalities or regions are undergoing a process of internationalisation, which we could in this case call passive internationalisation.*

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8. A few years ago, associations of Belgian municipalities launched a campaign: "The world does not end with my municipality", which aimed to highlight these phenomena of interference and interdependence between local and global levels.

It is of the utmost importance for any LG to be aware of this and to ask itself how it wishes to go about promoting, channelling or curbing the actions that directly affect it. The current situation requires municipal authorities to become mobilised at a local level, yet with a clear awareness of the global phenomena they are confronted with.

1.2. Advantages and opportunities of cities opening up to the outside world

Quite often, LGs clearly perceive openness to the outside world as a potential source of wealth, bringing with it positive opportunities for the city and its inhabitants.

The economic dimension is the most important in this regard, which is often due to the LG's desire to project itself, improve how it is perceived and attract resources of all kinds from abroad. In this case, the notion of improving the city's attractiveness in terms of investment, setting up companies, tourist flows, talent and knowledge, international events, etc., is placed at the forefront in the belief that this will lead to a spiral of growth which, in turn, will have positive consequences for the local business fabric, employment and the quality of life of citizens.

Somehow or other, the city seeks to take advantage of the mobility of resources and flows on a global scale in order to get itself *into a position where it can benefit from globalisation*. When developing this line of action, the municipal institution generally turns to the city's economic actors for support, in particular businesses and their representative organisations. The driving role then falls to the Department of Economic Development with the active participation of the chambers of commerce and business associations.

Nevertheless, beyond the promotion and economic interests of certain actors in the municipality, *the LG's IAs have many other upsides*, such as cultural openness, exchange and improvement of local public policies, solidarity, etc., which will be looked at throughout the paper, yet which we can briefly touch on in this introduction.

In the field of decentralised public cooperation, for example, it is evident that every city is in daily contact with other cities around the world with which it can exchange experiences and solutions of a technical, organisational or strategic nature. This international cooperation is down to the realisation that all cities have very similar agendas (organising urban planning, regulating housing, providing basic public services, ensuring public safety, making local democracy a reality, etc.), have specific experiences in these areas, and can exchange them through a common learning process.

For other cities, IAs will be a way of expressing their solidarity with other, more disadvantaged cities, their desire to reduce international inequalities or to play their part in establishing a more just international system. In this case, NGDOs and other civil society organisations will be actors and beneficiaries of external actions.

Inhabitants of the municipality may also *benefit from the city's international openness* and the wealth that stems from enhancing cultural diversity. Today, every city has citizens with a multinational background that represents a potential wealth. The city's greater sensitivity to other cultures, how visible they are and the valuation of the diversity that makes up the city's human fabric can improve coexistence and dialogue between citizens.

It is, then, clear that through internationalisation a city opens windows of opportunity in various industries and dimensions which the LG can detect and try to take advantage of, that go beyond traditional economic promotion and that have significant potential to transform the city and improve the quality of life of its citizens.

1.3. Risks of destabilising cities and local fabrics

The positive expectations for a city's external openness should not mask *the risks involved in becoming more exposed to economic globalisation* and the forces that drive it. By way of example, it is becoming increasingly clear that there is currently no city that is free from the problems brought about by massive migration flows (arising from mass tourism, economic migration or refugee flows caused by wars). The same can be said for other aspects of globalisation. *Every local government is confronted with the consequences of these global phenomena* and must come up with specific and realistic local solutions to problems that they have no control over and *for which the local institution often has no recognised competence.* This is one of the major challenges facing cities in the twenty-first century.

The main problems that may be experienced at a local level as a result of economic globalisation should therefore be looked at in more depth. These include:

- Possible negative effects on *housing* (price and rent increases, gentrification, etc.) due to the arrival of tourists or speculative capital flows from abroad.[9]
- *Mass immigration* and what it can lead to in terms of problems of coexistence, downward pressure on wages and other induced phenomena.
- The potential *overcrowding of urban areas due to tourism*, with its consequences in terms of managing public services and the targeting of investment towards certain sectors to the detriment of others.
- The *accelerated penetration of large international companies*, which often threaten the survival of small local businesses.
- The *delocalisation of production activities* and the volatility of the labour market due to the increased mobility of international capital.
- The *risks of corruption and social dumping* linked to certain types of foreign investments.

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9. A well-known example is that of the city of Amsterdam, which is the new home of the European Medicines Agency. The arrival of this renowned institution is expected to create major upheaval, particularly as regards housing, along with the economic benefits it will generate at other levels.

- *Cultural colonisation*.
- The *generalisation of digital platform formulas* and their effect on the casualisation of employment.

These phenomena that are directly linked to globalisation affect the municipality's production and social fabric. They make it more vulnerable and, in some cases, may even destroy some of its core features. Bearing in mind these risks, which vary in direction and intensity according to each specific local environment, it is of the utmost importance for the LG to be aware of these phenomena when drawing up an external action strategy.

Globalisation, accompanied by the implementation of neoliberal policies and cuts to welfare spending, is also a *direct threat to certain population segments and certain social classes*. The precariousness of employment and large-scale financial speculation with housing are two clear examples that lead to the weakest being forced to move away from city centres.

The core problem is the power that international financial and economic actors have acquired and the capacity they currently have to transform the meaning and rationale of cities. From a space of coexistence between free citizens and subjects with rights, the city can become a theme park for luxury tourists, a speculation reserve for vulture funds or a dumping ground for environmental pollution.

In our opinion, it is important to correct or make up for this bias, bearing in mind the effect of globalisation on local spaces as well as the possible consequences of certain external action policies by the municipality, which are inspired by models of competition between cities on a global scale.

On top of these factors is the fact that globalisation brings with it profound changes in the behaviour of local actors and in the living conditions of citizens. *The relationship between actors, whether economic or social, and "their" region becomes considerably weaker and more ambiguous*. The increasing mobility of capital and companies creates a *high risk of delocalisation* of productive activities, which weakens the social fabric and can lead to serious crises at local and regional level, which was the case, for example, in the American city of Detroit, which was devastated after the exodus of car companies. In practice, international capital is increasingly ridding itself of any lasting commitment and responsibility for the region in which it is located.

Under these conditions, the LG's willingness to accelerate the internationalisation of the municipality may contribute to increasing, or, conversely, to slowing down the undesired impacts of ongoing globalisation. These possible effects must be analysed and weighed up when defining or reviewing the municipality's international action policy.[10]

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10. In our opinion, addressing the latter aspect corresponds to a more balanced and more mature vision of the IALGs, which perceive and take into account the risks that would stem from competition between cities or from a lack of coordination between their actions.

1.4. Political implications and the need for alliances

In the face of what we have broached in the previous section, voices call for the right to the city, which is understood above all to be *the right of its inhabitants to jointly decide on the future of their region and the city model* to which they aspire.[11]

In this regard, the exercise of local power and the orientation of participatory strategic planning become key elements when it comes to defending the city and its citizens against the forces that threaten them. It is a matter of going beyond the purely institutional vision, with a view to moving towards local governance with more involvement and active participation of citizens and civil society, and to strengthen local democracy.

In fact, beyond the institutional dimension, there is growing opposition between the interests of citizens and local institutions on the one hand, and globalised actors on the other. The political dimension underlying the definition and implementation of an international policy by a LG must therefore be taken into account.

This awareness should also lead to *exploring the possibilities of joint action by cities between themselves and of alliances between local institutions and social movements* and civil society organisations. It is a question of starting to form city alliances and fronts between local institutions and citizen platforms to exert joint pressure, with the aim of obtaining more competences and resources in each of the fields where the global dynamics of the economic system endanger the balance of local spaces and regions.

Some highlights:

1. The city's internationalisation has an extremely important strategic content. If the LG does not set out its own external action policy, the city is subject to a passive internationalisation that depends on other actors.

2. The LG has to address the opportunities of openness to the outside world, as well as the risks of globalisation (economic and cultural).

3. The IAs, as part of the city's strategic planning, should identify which interests they want to favour, which social actors and groups they defend, and how they can contribute to improving the quality of life of citizens.

4. Moreover, it is important to remember that IAs represent an individual positioning of the city in question, but they also have a collective dimension, since the sum of municipal actions implies major changes in the relationship between LGs and other institutions, both national and international.

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11. See in particular the way in which this issue, initiated by Henri Lefebvre, has subsequently developed in Latin America

2. A strategic framework for international actions by a local government

2.1. Planning for international actions by a local government

The aim of this document is not to recall the strategic planning methodology that enables the LG to choose its internationalisation priorities and to determine the actions (internal and external) that are deemed necessary to achieve their objectives. This issue, which corresponds to the planning phase of the city's international action, has been developed in the guide published by the Barcelona Provincial Council, which has served as methodological guidance for the city councils of the Barcelona area when drawing up their external projection plan, and in the various publications of the Euro-Latin American Cooperation Alliance between Cities (AL-LAs).[12]

According to these benchmarks, international action planning should be seen as an important part of the city's strategic planning and one instrument more to implement and bring to life the city model that is the benchmark and the local government's priority purpose.

The planning methodology, the construction of the strategic axes and deciding concrete actions will not be discussed further. The only thing that should be highlighted in this phase, as it conditions the way in which the evaluation will be addressed, is the *complex and multifaceted nature of a municipality's international actions*.

2.2. Multiple objectives: the diversity and complexity of international actions

It is important to highlight the multiplicity and diversity of objectives that an LG may consider when drawing up its international strategy. It is possible to identify at least *seven families or blocks of objectives* that the LG may have when drawing up an internationalisation strategy:

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12. Guia metodològica per elaborar plans locals de projecció internacional (2014) Available at https://www.diba.cat/documents/228621/20643032/2240-16664-2014+Guia+metodol%C3%B2gica+per+a+l%27elaboraci%C3%B3%20de+plans+locals+de+projecci%C3%B3%20internacional+E-LLIBRE.pdf/dc49260f-549d-422c-b269-b0c7af184dd8.

A. To project a particular image of the municipality to the outside world.

B. To compete to attract external resources.

C. To cooperate horizontally and reciprocally between LGs to improve local public policies.

D. To demonstrate the municipality's international solidarity and cooperate in development.

E. To open the city to the outside world and highlight cultural diversity.

F. To defend common interests or values with other cities on an international level.

G. To contribute to solving global problems.

The diversity of possible objectives must be analysed in detail because it will directly condition the evaluation process. This presents the challenge of evaluating an international policy oriented according to different criteria from one municipality to another and comprising a set of actions that often correspond to different sectors and departments.

Next, each of the aforementioned axes will be briefly reviewed in order to provide a clearer idea of the objectives that may guide an external action policy and the type of results and impacts the LG can expect in each case.

A. Boosting the city's visibility and improving the way it is perceived abroad

This first possible axis of internationalisation is built around the desire to make the city (or the region) known around the world, to put it on the map in the fields that interest it most, to give off a positive and attractive image, and for the municipality to be associated with certain economic dynamics. The objective is for the city to achieve greater external projection (in terms of image, fame, degree of awareness, etc.). This approach often comes into being in the search for a privileged position for the city in the existing rankings.

This campaign to improve a city's image is often accompanied by promoting the region and local products and can lead to multi-actor partnerships, in particular with local entrepreneurs seeking external projection. It clearly contributes to the city's international visibility and quite often focuses on a theme that the city particularly excels at and in which it aspires to be an international benchmark.

B. Competing to attract external resources

Another strategic line, closely linked to the former, focuses on the idea of improving the attractiveness of the city, with the central objective of channelling investment and economic resources while attracting talent or tourist flows.

This second axis is very important and has an important place in municipal internationalisation strategies because it is generally put forward as being of particular benefit to the city (considered as a whole). It specifically focuses on hosting of all types of major events due to their supposed positive effects on the local economy, attracting companies to create jobs and/or promoting tourism.

In this case, the expected results in terms of attractiveness are mostly quantitative and can be measured relatively easily.

C. Horizontal and reciprocal cooperation between local governments

A third type of objective or motivation of the LG entails the desire to develop an exchange of experience and knowledge with LGs in other countries. This is a very different perspective and logic from the previous case.

In this third possible axis of internationalisation, the driving force behind international presence is the belief that LGs increasingly need to have frequent contacts and structured exchanges with their foreign counterparts in order to share their experiences, compare the solutions they bring to local problems, learn from each other, modernise their management, etc.

In this case, it draws on the premise that LGs have quite similar functions and agendas in all countries, such as the provision and management of basic public services, regulating urban planning, housing policies and urban management, citizen security, culture, the deployment of local democracy, etc. Taking this reality into account, the main objective is to exchange experiences with a view to improving public policies in all the areas of competence of local administrations.

D. Showing solidarity and fostering development cooperation

This fourth possible axis of internationalisation has been an important reason for municipalities seeking to forge relationships with the outside world. The will to express citizens' solidarity and fight international inequalities from a local level has been constant, in Europe in particular, and has come to fruition in different ways such as, for example, twinnings, agreements or cooperation projects.

Initially, many municipalities delegated the task of cooperation to local non-governmental development organisations (NGDOs), limiting themselves to subsidising their projects. More recently, LGs have sought to set out a public policy of cooperation from municipal level and to conduct actions that require direct participation from different areas of local government. These actions fall within the framework of what has been termed decentralised cooperation. They are geared towards strengthening local institutions, the transfer of knowledge and local management methods, standing up for human rights, support for gender policies, etc., thereby overcoming the more assistance-oriented or traditional practices of international cooperation.[13]

E. Opening the city up to the outside world and highlighting cultural diversity

In this fifth dimension, the LG sees external projection and internationalisation as reciprocal, two-way actions, which tend to make citizens more aware of other social and

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13. Today, decentralised cooperation and South/South cooperation are seeking to create another, more horizontal and reciprocal, relationship model.

cultural realities. The goal is to stimulate the outward projection of local social, cultural and sporting groups and associations, while at the same time recognising the value of other cultures and the richness of having groups of people from other countries and continents in the same city.

In this regard, it is a matter of valuing the presence of those who are foreign-born and making the most of their talents while, at the same time, opening up culturally to the outside world, leaving behind narrow-minded or overly provincial attitudes. "Opening the windows" of the city can have important cultural, social and political effects.[14]

The direct intention of this type of action is to improve the quality of coexistence, consolidate social cohesion and develop an awareness of belonging to a rich and complex community.

F. Defending common interests or values with other cities
In this case, the LG seeks to play a leading role in defending and disseminating local values and interests, through the different existing modalities (LG associations, lobbying platforms, city networks, etc.). It seeks to project itself abroad through advocacy networks or strategic alliances for the political empowerment of the local dimension in international spaces or forums while, at the same time, consolidating a position of leadership within the international municipalist movement.

The LG may also seek to forge political relationships between like-minded municipalities in other countries with a view to coming up with common solutions.

G. Contributing to solving global problems
In this case, the LG seeks to actively contribute to solving global problems, such as climate change or forced displacement, and to influence global governance mechanisms. It therefore tries to respond in a coordinated manner to economic, social or ecological challenges that nation-states and international organisations are unable to address. Aspects of technical improvement of local policies or institutional strengthening through the exchange of experiences and good practices are secondary, while the emphasis is placed on more political and strategic objectives than the former.

This especially justifies the creation of city alliances and their presence in forums where global governance is determined, with a view to influencing international agendas and global issues that affect all cities around the world.

After examining this overview of possible objectives, it is apparent that international action is multifaceted and moves in one direction or another depending on the priorities and political will of each LG. The various families of objectives mentioned in this

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14. The city of Grenoble (France) has chosen this aspect as one of the strategic axes of its internationalisation policy. It has nearly 200 different nationalities among its citizens and has decided to set up a "Parliament" of foreign-born people, which is regularly consulted and expresses the views and proposals of this segment of the community.

presentation are not incompatible and can coexist perfectly well within an overall strategy of the municipality in a single planning exercise or be developed successively in subsequent plans.[15]

Table 1 describes and illustrates the seven families of objectives with some examples.[16] It is simply an indication of the types of actions that respond to each family of objectives, giving a specific example for each case.

Table 1. Summarised typology of possible objectives of international actions at a local level and examples of actions in each case

Families of objectives	Main focus	Types of frequent actions	Illustrations (case studies)
A. Projection	Achieving greater external projection for the city (in terms of image, fame, degree of awareness, etc.)	• Build a city brand or a city/regional plan • Develop a strategy for international positioning (marketing) • Participate in international events in the field, among others	In 2007, the ONLY-LYON city brand was created with the participation of a total of 28 bodies from the city of Lyon with the aim of becoming consolidated as a global city for business, gastronomy, culture and the arts in France
B. Attractiveness	Improving the attractiveness of the city, with the key objective of channelling investment and economic resources and attracting talent or tourism	• Apply to attract a major sporting, social, political or cultural event of international stature • Develop a portfolio of projects for foreign investment • Come up with an internal strategy for attracting international capital/projects, such as a convention bureau or an investment office	In 2020, Rio de Janeiro became the first UNESCO-International Union of Architects (UIA) World Capital of Architecture, which entails hosting the World Congress of the International Union of Architecture that is held every three years and attracts the world's leading architectural design stakeholders
C. Improve local public policies	Exchange experiences with a view to improving public policies in all local administrations' areas of competence	• Participate in calls for proposals from international organisations in cooperation with other local governments and their networks • Develop direct cooperation and/or knowledge transfer actions in different areas of public policy	In 2018, the Metropolitan District of Quito launched the Quito Decides citizen participation platform, the first in Ecuador, inspired by the transfer of knowledge from the CONSUL software system developed by Madrid City Council, which has been rolled out in more than 90 cities around the world

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15. In fact, the evaluation does not dispute these objectives. It simply aims to assess whether the actions undertaken have been consistent with these aims and whether they have resulted in the desired effects.

16. It is worth highlighting that an LG may set different objectives in its international action strategy. Its motivations or intentions are diverse and complex. They may be grouped into seven major blocks, which are not mutually exclusive, as each LG can pursue and combine different objectives, either simultaneously or successively.

Table 1. Summarised typology of possible objectives of international actions at a local level and examples of actions in each case

Families of objectives	Main focus	Types of frequent actions	Illustrations (case studies)
D. International solidarity	The willingness to express citizens' solidarity at a local level and to fight against international inequalities	• International development cooperation, knowledge transfer and local management methods • Foster and safeguard local democracy and economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR), and the right to the city, among other economic, social, cultural and environmental human rights	Since 2009, Mexico City has held the Friendly Cultures Fair as a way to show gratitude and solidarity with diplomatic representations based in the city, following the AH1N1 influenza crisis. This fair has established itself as the city's most representative international cultural event
E. Cultural openness	The aim is to stimulate the visibility of local social, cultural or sporting groups and associations, while recognising the value of other cultures and the richness they represent	• Cultural and artistic residencies • Creative Industry Exchanges (Orange Economy) • Awards, acknowledgements and prizes in culture, literature, art and gastronomy • Academic mobility; training and internships • Visibility of cultural spaces • Promoting the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the regions	Between 2016-2019, the Mayor's Office of Bogotá launched the Bogotá Líder programme, which mobilised more than 450 youth projects in vulnerable communities, through a training process (178 projects) and the exchange of experiences in different Latin American cities (91 projects), on issues such as vindication of the rights of the LGBTI community, construction of public spaces through art, social inclusion, peace building, prevention of violence and psychoactive substances, and transformation of the reality in the field
F. Leadership in the municipalist movement	Participating in the governing bodies of the main city networks due to their growing relevance as mechanisms for coordination, cooperation and positioning of local governments in the world	• Adopt a leadership role in key city networks, whether thematic or representative • Build and lead some type of political alliance to take a stand on issues that affect the region and its inhabitants	The alliance between the mayoresses of Madrid, Barcelona and Paris to start the World Forum on Urban Violence and Education for the Culture of Peace has recently been adopted by Mexico City to consolidate it as a World Forum of Cities and Territories of Peace
G. Impact on global problems	Foster political relationships between like-minded municipalities in other countries to come up with common solutions with the aim of responding in a coordinated manner to economic, social or ecological challenges that nation-states and international organisations are unable to meet	• Mobilisation and political lobbying actions with the main international bodies • Signing declarations, positions and communiqués between city collectives at the highest level • Advocacy in global forums where urban issues and sustainable development are discussed • Alliances at a local authority level to address global issues	In 2015, the inclusion of SDG 11 on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable was approved, as proposed by the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments

It should be emphasised that an LG can pursue and combine different objectives, either at the same time or successively. Typically, a city developing an international action policy selects three or four priority axes of internationalisation in each planning exercise. For illustrative purposes, we have analysed the international action plans of several cities to identify these axes and position them within our typology of objectives. For each of them, we have highlighted the objectives that, in our opinion, were the most important in their specific case and are the real backbone of their international action. By doing so, we were able to produce Table 2, which illustrates, using some selected examples of cities, how the international action of LGs effectively encompasses the different facets and groups of objectives.

This table does not claim to be representative of the current weight of the different target groups within the municipalities as a whole. It merely identifies a small sample of cities and shows that all of the target groups have an effective presence in the international action of cities, and that each LG interprets and adapts them to its specific situation.

This table can also help a LG to position its own international action policy and identify which blocks of objectives it corresponds to prior to carrying out an evaluation. Below, we will see that this work of characterising one's own internationalisation strategy is an essential step when it comes to conducting an evaluation exercise.

Table 2. Situation of different cities regarding the proposed target typology

Cities	Main objectives inspiring its international action						
	A. Visibility to the outside world	B. Attracting investment and resources	C. Improving local public policies	D. International solidarity	E. Cultural openness	F. Leadership of the municipalist movement	G. Advocacy on global issues
Montreal (Canada)	Promoting the city and improving its reputation and visibility	Attraction of international events, tourism and talent				Leading the World Association of the Major Metropolises and the International Observatory on Participatory Democracy	
Montevideo (Uruguay)			Collaboration and exchange with other cities, through the Mercociudades network	Launch of the South-South Cooperation Programme for the exchange and training of civil servants		Leadership in the main networks of cities in the region: Mercociudades, Metropolis, AL-LAs, UCCI, UCLG	

Table 2. Situation of different cities regarding the proposed target typology

Cities	Main objectives inspiring its international action						
	A. Visibility to the outside world	B. Attracting investment and resources	C. Improving local public policies	D. International solidarity	E. Cultural openness	F. Leadership of the municipalist movement	G. Advocacy on global issues
Grenoble (France)					Dissemination of international issues to citizens Placing value on foreign presence in the city		International leadership in the city's transition towards a different model: the green city
Medellín (Colombia)		Seeking foreign investment and cooperation through the Agency for Cooperation and Investment (ACI)	Medellín Lab for experimentation and exchange of public policies between cities				
Buenos Aires (Argentina)		International visitor attraction programme to position itself as one of the most attractive tourist destinations in the southern hemisphere			Study Buenos Aires programme to position itself as Latin America's capital for international students		Driving city of the Urban 20 programme, the political dialogue process of the cities of G20 member countries
Seoul (South Korea)			Launch the Conference of Mayors for the exchange of urban policies at regional level				Contribution to the integration, peace and development of North Asia, through the establishment of the North Asian Capital Cities Organisation
Madrid (Spain)				Annual allocated budget of more than €5m for international development cooperation calls and grants			Leading the global reflection process on urban violence and the promotion of a culture of peace
Mexico City (Mexico)	Creation of the CDMX brand, through an extensive local, national and international communication process				Cultural Capital of the Americas programme that integrates an offer of 150 packages, promotions and the largest cultural agenda on record		

Table 2. Situation of different cities regarding the proposed target typology

Cities	Main objectives inspiring its international action						
	A. Visibility to the outside world	B. Attracting investment and resources	C. Improving local public policies	D. International solidarity	E. Cultural openness	F. Leadership of the municipalist movement	G. Advocacy on global issues
Málaga (Spain)		Attracting investment in tourism and technology sectors			A commitment to culture as one of the main axes of internationalisation		
Cordoba (Argentina)	Promotion of the city to the outside world (Internationalisation round table with local actors)			Decentralised and South-South cooperation projects	Promotion of a multicultural outlook within the community, as children of migrants		
Angers (France)			Improve the efficiency of public services through the exchange of local experiences	Develop relations with twin towns linked by cooperation agreements	Raising citizens' awareness of foreign cultures		
Quito (Ecuador)			Development of the Quito Decides citizen participation platform as a result of cooperation with the city of Madrid			Lead the process of implementing the New Urban Agenda at a regional level, as a follow-up to the Habitat III Conference held in Quito	

Tables 1 and 2 help to visualise and clarify the broad, complex field covered by local international action. They should serve as a starting point for an LG to clearly identify the diversity of possible objectives, which facet(s) of international action it is currently developing and which it could undertake in the future.

> *Some highlights:*
>
> 1. When coming up with their international action strategy, LGs may have very different objectives. Each LG needs to be aware of the axes it has given priority to.
>
> 2. Within this range of possible objectives, some are part of a framework of global competition between cities to gain access to external resources, while others are geared towards fostering cooperation and collaboration between local institutions. Accordingly, setting IA priorities has a strong social and political dimension.
>
> 3. The diversity of the issues covered by IAs and their multi-sectoral nature make evaluating them more complex than evaluating other public policies.

Part two
Evaluating international actions by a local government. Guiding principles and general guidelines

3. Evaluating public policy. General presentation

The primary objective of chapter three of the Guide is to give the LG a clear idea about the functions and reasons for conducting an evaluation, as well as to briefly go over the basic concepts on which the evaluation of any public policy is based.[17] To this end, we will first highlight some core ideas to bear in mind when addressing these issues.

3.1. Key ideas regarding public policy evaluation

By way of introduction, we would like to highlight four key ideas to bear in mind when drawing up the proposed evaluation:

- *Evaluating a public policy is complex and has a significant qualitative dimension*. The LG should be well aware that this exercise does not just entail identifying a set of indicators or measuring quantitative results. As the Provincial Council points out, it is ultimately a matter of knowing whether a public policy really works and, if it does work, what is the magnitude of its impact? This ambitious formulation shows that an evaluation combines quantitative and qualitative elements, which requires collecting and analysing data and results, but also leads to judgements and evaluations of a policy and the effects thereof.

- *Evaluating a public policy goes across the board and involves not only the institutions, but also the actors, social groups and collectives that comprise the local fabric*, bearing in mind, at all times, that a public policy affects all of them, whether positively or negatively. In this regard, the elaboration process can *open up a space for social dialogue and collective learning and generate an experience of e⊠ective participation*. This process can sometimes be more important than the results of the exercise itself, as it generates or sustains a social and political dynamic in the municipality.[18]

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17. We will not elaborate on this because these are general ideas and concepts which are found in evaluation manuals and are not specific to IAs.

18. The impact assessment of the Sabadell Strategic Cooperation Plan 2010-2014, for example, highlighted that drafting the Plan had set in motion a process of rapprochement between the municipal institution and the associa-

- *Evaluation is about learning.* The institutions and actors that decide to conduct an evaluation must be willing to learn and compare and contrast their initial objectives with the observable reality in order to move forward and improve. It is, then, not a matter of limiting the evaluation to demonstrating the progress and successes achieved. On the contrary, the institution promoting the evaluation and the actors involved must be willing to identify and assess the successes, positive effects and opportunities linked to the policy under consideration and the real difficulties encountered or the risks it generates.

- *Evaluation is a factor in the sustainability of international actions.* Few local governments have equipped themselves with the instruments and mechanisms of a public policy that addresses a city's international actions with a long-term outlook. Evaluation becomes an institutional tool to demonstrate how this policy contributes to the city's objectives.

3.2. The functions of evaluation

Evaluating a public policy has two key dimensions:

Firstly, it should be seen as a *fundamental element of institutional learning*, which in turn leads to strategic learning, sectoral learning, and cross-departmental learning. As pointed out above, the local institution learns and experiments through the evaluation of its policies.

Secondly, evaluating a public policy is a *political act of local democracy* in which the municipal institution openly and transparently questions the way in which it addresses and resolves the problems of citizens and local actors, inviting them to review a particular strategy together.

With these principles in mind, five important functions can be identified, which are generally relevant to all evaluations of local public policies, but which can be further illustrated and clarified in the specific case of the evaluation of international actions.

1. The function of improving the public policy under evaluation

Evaluating a public policy has the core objective of assessing its content, orientation, results and impacts. In particular, the aim is to find out whether the policy has been appropriate (relevance), whether it has achieved its objectives (effectiveness) and what its main impacts have been (social and political impact).

Asking such questions is necessary and essential for the local government to be able to make well-founded and justified decisions on the policy under consideration. There-

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tions and NGDOs, which had lasted beyond the term foreseen in the Plan and could be considered as one of the main positive results for the municipality.

fore, the evaluation should provide a broad, in-depth assessment, based on quantitative and qualitative aspects, and provide the local government with the necessary elements to confirm, review or modify, if necessary, the policy followed up until now.

2. The function of strategic learning of the local government and the consolidation of *strategic planning*

When conducting the evaluation of a specific policy, the local government is often forced to draw up the objectives it had and the results it expected from its implementation, as well as the relationships and complementarities within the entire framework of municipal public policies. The evaluation exercise often has the effect of revising, updating and intensifying the city's strategic planning. In fact, with regard to the policy in question, the model of the city that the local government fosters and how the policy under evaluation affects its implementation is put back on the table, and discussed if necessary.

3. The institutional experience of transversality between municipal departments

Evaluating a municipal policy, specifically a policy as extensive and complex as that of international actions with its multiple aspects, calls for across-the-board work that involves different departments of the local institution and often represents an innovative and enriching practice.

In this way, collecting information, comparing objectives with results or looking for consistency between actions assigned to different departments can turn the evaluation exercise into an excellent opportunity to bring together technicians from different sectors and specialities, highlighting their participation in the achievement of the local government's strategic objectives.

Experience has shown that routine activities tend to lock each sector of the local institution into its own logic and that the people responsible for the different sectoral actions appreciate having the opportunity to feel actively engaged in transversal strategic work. As a result of this experience, new mechanisms of communication and transversal exchanges may be identified, which can be consolidated and incorporated into the dynamics of the institution.

4. The experience of citizen participation and active dialogue with local actors

Evaluating a public policy can also be a valuable experience of citizen participation and multi-actor dialogue. Citizens are the people whom policies ultimately affect, and the local government must come up with formulas for them to truly participate in analysing and discussing this policy, particularly if the aim is to demonstrate which actors and social groups have benefited from it and which have been negatively affected. In this regard, evaluating a public policy is never a neutral exercise, conducted in a purely technical manner, but a political act in a broad sense, and an act of participatory democracy.

5. An exercise in transparency and accountability

Along the same lines, evaluation is one of the mechanisms available to a local government to improve transparency and accountability before citizens. Public resources have been allocated to carry out certain actions and it is good for citizens to be informed of the objectives, results and impacts of the corresponding public policy. Therefore, the evaluation should lead to a programme of communication and dissemination of the results to the inhabitants of the municipality, which should contribute to achieving greater citizen consensus around the LG's international actions.

3.3. Evaluation phases

Evaluation can take place at different times. Three types of evaluation are normally distinguished according to this criterion:

1. *Ex ante* evaluation
2. Ongoing evaluation
3. *Ex post* evaluation

The *ex ante* evaluation is a broad initial assessment before drawing up and implementing a public policy, making it possible to assess the starting point of the action. It is a kind of initial in-depth diagnosis, aimed at coming up with a strategy.

It is of the utmost importance because it makes it possible to obtain the *status report*, a reference by means of which to measure or evaluate the progress and changes achieved as a result of the policy implemented, and to propose and assess the *different strategic alternatives*.

An ongoing evaluation, on the other hand, can be conducted during the implementation of a given public policy, without having to wait for the final term set forth in the corresponding plan. It is an *operational evaluation, which can still correct or adapt the activities* that were foreseen in the plan and that have been initiated.

The final or *ex post* evaluation takes place when the period foreseen for the implementation of the actions included in the Plan has come to an end. In contrast to an ongoing evaluation, its objective is not to influence the progress of an ongoing programme but to *assess its effects and impacts* in order to draw the appropriate lessons for the future. By doing so, the institution responsible learns and thereby improves its capacity to plan and implement the evaluated public policy.

3.4. Possible scopes of evaluation

Evaluation has a number of possible objectives, including:
- To verify the degree of achievement of the *desired* results
- To assess the *processes* that IALGs have put in place
- To evaluate the *impact* of the actions carried out

Measuring *results* is relatively simple. Generally, the municipal international action or outreach plan itself should precisely state the results to be obtained, express them in quantitative terms and even identify the indicators needed to evaluate its achievement if they are not directly measurable. Furthermore, the *follow-up* work conducted throughout the plan should have generated and regularly updated these measurements.

Assessing *processes* is more complex and requires selecting the aspects that are deemed to be of greatest interest and value, according to the LG's criteria. They can be identified at three levels:
1. Within the local institution
2. Within the institution's relationship with citizens and local actors
3. Within their interaction with international actors

The LG may focus, for example, on the process of improving transversality between municipal departments as a result of international actions. In this case, it would be a matter of measuring this phenomenon using appropriate indicators and assessing whether it has been developed in accordance with the LG's expectations, and whether it has succeeded in making the internal mode of operation evolve in the desired direction.

Another example could be actions aimed at citizens in order to spark their interest and get them actively involved in the implementation and monitoring of the municipality's external actions. In order to evaluate a process of this type, the tools and indicators which are mainly qualitative, relevant and that make it possible to account for its progress will need to be identified.

Finally, the valuation of *impacts* is even more complex and raises a number of issues that will be addressed below.

> **Example. Strategic framework for Madrid's global citizenship and international cooperation policy.***
>
> In 2018, Madrid City Council's global citizenship and international cooperation policy, which has been promoted since 2016, was approved. The aim was to provide a political, participatory and economic framework for its fulfilment.
>
> The document mandates the creation of a specific mechanism for monitoring progress and decision-making from a process logic that should facilitate:

- Monitoring and analysing results and processes. Not just as a process of monitoring the actions conducted, but also with mechanisms to evaluate to what extent they achieve the intended results in terms of transition, renewal and strengthening of the municipal policy of Global Citizenship and Development Cooperation.

- Applied research and knowledge generation. This refers to the mechanisms that make possible the constant, ongoing incorporation of the learning that is acquired during the planned exercise.

- Transparency and accountability. Together with the budget monitoring indicators, mechanisms are implemented to further transparency and information for citizens, including the periodic publication, clearly expressed and easily accessible, of the performance of the policy and the assessments and evaluations of worked carried out.

- A system of basic quantitative and qualitative indicators to monitor the follow-up of progress in the process designed by this Strategic Framework and in the results it offers for the new configuration of the policy.

- Design and scheduling of periodic monitoring documents, reports or products, with main findings and conclusions, and commitment to publication.

- Systematisation of the conclusions and findings of the applied research, as well as their progressive incorporation into decision-making processes.

*Strategic framework for the global citizenship and international cooperation policy of the city of Madrid (2018-2021) Available at https://www.madrid.es/UnidadesDescentralizadas/FondosEuropeos/Boletin/Noticias%202018/ficheros/Resumen%20ejecutivo%20marco%20estrategico.pdf.

3.5. Basic concepts

Now is a good time to briefly review some of the key concepts used in the evaluation exercises:

- Effectiveness: the degree to which the objectives set forth in the action were achieved.
- Relevance: the extent to which the objectives of an intervention are congruent with existing needs.
- Consistency: there are two levels of consistency in actions. Firstly, internal consistency, which must exist between the objectives set forth in the action and the series of measures designed and implemented, and, secondly, external consistency, which is equivalent to the principle of complementarity with other policies and/or actions.
- Implementation: the way in which a policy or programme has been implemented or put into practice.

- Efficiency: the extent to which the desired results and/or effects were achieved with the least number of resources possible.[19]
- Strategic alignment: ensuring that the goals presented contribute to achieving one of the objectives defined in the action.
- Simplicity and synthesis: incorporating a limited number of relevant targets and indicators, clearly written in language that is accessible to citizens.
- Results-orientation: the way in which changes in the population as a result of the action are reported, as well as the main products, services and benefits provided.
- Strategic nature: the action supports other strategic public policies within local government agendas.

3.6. Necessary conditions for the evaluation of a public policy

From a theoretical perspective, the evaluation of a public policy particularly implies and requires the following conditions:

(1) The field in which the policy is to be conducted should be clearly specified and defined (*identification of the field of action)*.
(2) It is considered legitimate and necessary for the public institution to intervene and conduct a series of actions aimed at improving efficiency or quality, for the benefit of citizens (*justification for public action*).
(3) The setting of clear objectives and the development of a strategy to achieve them (*expression of political will*).
(4) The agreement of a policy to be implemented in a given period, broken down into a series of coordinated actions (*demonstration of a willingness to act on the part of a public institution*).
(5) A series of actions scheduled or planned (*public action planning*) and political agreement on its implementation.
(6) Financial, organisational and competence mechanisms planned and put in place to enable the Plan to be implemented (*operational aspects have been specified and put in place*).

These different points constitute necessary conditions. Strictly speaking, evaluating a local public policy should not be undertaken when these prerequisites are not met.

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19. Casillas, Celia et al. (2010): *Guía práctica para el diseño y la realización de evaluaciones de políticas públicas. Enfoque AEVAL*, pp. 93-97 Available at http://www.aeval.es/export/sites/aeval/comun/pdf/evaluaciones/Guia_Evaluaciones_AEVAL.pdf

Some highlights:

1. Evaluation is the best way for a public institution to learn, with a view to improving its strategies. It is a fundamental element when it comes to improving public policies.

2. The core objective of public policy evaluation is to assess whether a public policy is good for citizens, in terms of its relevance, effectiveness and impacts, and/or whether it can be improved.

3. It cannot therefore be limited to technical aspects and measurements. Accordingly, it must provide elements that can be qualitatively judged in order to be in a position to answer the key question regarding the real value of the evaluated policy as far as possible.

4. The specificity of evaluation for international actions

After showing the reasons for public policy evaluation in general terms and the necessary conditions for its implementation in the previous chapter, it is worth highlighting the specificity and complexity of the subject in the specific case of international local policy in this chapter.

Indeed, IAs, unlike other, more established public policies, present a series of specific difficulties that should be analysed, related with many of the aspects mentioned in the previous chapter.

4.1. Determining the purpose of the evaluation: what exactly do local government international actions encompass?

The first challenge has to do with defining and determining what can be considered an international action by an LG. The international actions carried out by a city are the sum of many actions of various kinds that respond to different reasons and intentions.

To form an initial indicative idea of everything that could be considered as part of the municipality's international actions, we must identify groups of actions according to the place where they are carried out and the population segment they are aimed at.

- *Actions that take place abroad*, such as city representatives attending an international seminar or organising visits abroad for a delegation of local business people.
- *Actions targeting persons, bodies or institutions outside national borders*, such as tourism promotion campaigns aimed at attracting foreign visitors.
- *Actions aimed at foreign residents in the municipality*, such as actions to support the culture of these groups.
- *Actions aimed at the local community or the municipal institution* that are directly related to the international issue, such as setting up a centre to provide and disseminate information about the different cultures of the world.

By way of example, we can examine the actions carried out in the field of international solidarity. By considering only this aspect of IAs, we come across actions of a very different nature (see table 3):

Table 3. Interventions that form part of international actions in the field of international solidarity: an indicative typology

International solidarity actions	Examples of actions carried out abroad	Examples of actions carried out in the municipality
Aimed at foreigners	International development cooperation projects	Migrant reception programmes (accommodation, education, etc.)
Aimed at foreign institutions and entities	Decentralised cooperation actions aimed at institutional support	
Aimed at the local community		Education for development programmes Actions to support local NGDOs
Aimed at local businesses		Seeking sponsorship to finance cooperation actions
Aimed at the municipal institution	Exchanges of good practices with other municipalities in the field of cooperation	Seeking external funding for cooperation projects

As can be seen, the field covered by the concept of international actions is vast and complex. If we explore further to cover all the main aspects of a municipality's international action, the list of actions to be taken into account expands considerably. Table 4 lists some of them.

Table 4. Examples of interventions that are part of the international actions: a schematic overview

Sector	Actions carried out abroad	Actions carried out in the municipality		
		For foreigners	For the local community	For the local institution
Institutional representation, contacts and protocol	• Institutional visits and contacts • Participation in international seminars, congresses and events • Participation in city networks			• Hosting foreign delegations • Internships
Development cooperation	• Direct cooperation actions • Grants to NGDO projects • Humanitarian aid		• Support for solidarity and cooperation associations • Awareness-raising and development education programmes	

Table 4. Examples of interventions that are part of the international actions: a schematic overview

Sector	Actions carried out abroad	Actions carried out in the municipality		
		For foreigners	For the local community	For the local institution
Decentralised cooperation and horizontal city-to-city exchanges	• Dissemination of local experiences and offering technical expertise to other cities			• Exchanges of good practices and joint actions between cities
Social sectors		• Reception of refugees and migrants • Housing, training and social support programmes • Specific programmes for minors	• Education and training for cultural diversity • Volunteer programmes in reception work	
Tourism	• Tourism promotion of the municipality abroad • Participation in international trade fairs	• Actions to promote or regulate tourism • Tourism fairs • Infrastructures and services to accommodate tourism (port, airport, hotels, accommodation, etc.)		
Education and culture	• Promotion of local artists and shows abroad • Scholarships abroad • Participation of the city in international cultural events	• Subsidies to foreign cultural associations • Support for cultural events and manifestations specific to each community	• International educational, cultural and sporting exchanges • International festivals and competitions • Training and awareness-raising on European and international issues	

Table 4. Examples of interventions that are part of the international actions: a schematic overview

Sector	Actions carried out abroad	Actions carried out in the municipality		
		For foreigners	For the local community	For the local institution
Economic promotion	• Programmes on giving visibility to the city abroad (offices abroad, market studies, city branding, external image, international ranking, etc.) • Programmes to support the internationalisation of local companies • Business visits and delegations abroad	• Subsidies and tax breaks to attract investment and talent • Programmes for new business start-ups and job creation		
Environment	• Promotion and signing of global agreements, protocols and frameworks to combat climate change • Lobbying and advocacy with the main international organisations for new financing schemes		• Programmes and projects that foster the awareness and professionalisation of activities related to environmental care. These include urban gardens, pedestrian city and waste separation	• Modification of legal and institutional frameworks. In general, one of the largest municipal budget allocations goes to environment and mobility
Multisectoral	• Attracting international funding for municipal projects			

On the basis of this indicative census of actions that could form part of an LG's IAs, we need to consider the exact delimitation of what is to be evaluated.

In our opinion, there is no need to evaluate all actions that may formally be considered international. It is not a question of drawing up an exhaustive list of all the interventions with an international component to evaluate the cumulative result of this sum of activities. On the contrary, we have to limit ourselves to actions that are part of a conscious strategy of the LG. In fact, we consider that the purpose of the evaluation is the international action *policy*, and this means that we must focus more strictly on the series of actions that aim to make this policy effective.

Here again, having a planning tool plays a key role. The plan expresses the political will to carry out a certain strategy and identifies a range of actions as the appropriate instruments to carry it out. This is what we have to evaluate, rather than formal aspects, such as the number of foreigners officially welcomed by the municipality, or the number of international events that the municipality has participated in, unless the plan considers these indicators as significant and representative of the implementation of a specific policy.

4.2. Specific difficulties of evaluating a municipality's international action policy

The first challenge is that this policy is *rather recent and still in a phase of progressive consolidation*. In many countries, international actions are not part of the powers and competencies explicitly given to local institutions. Moreover, while the vast majority of medium-sized and large cities are already active in the international sphere, few LGs are aware of the need to build an international strategy and turn it into an operational plan, drawn up with explicit reference to the city model to be promoted within the framework of the city's strategic planning.

For these reasons, *the very foundations necessary for the evaluation of a public policy* are often missing, in particular a clear definition of the policy, its objectives and expected results, as well as planning documents that express the unity of the international policy, its consistency, the corresponding activities and the practical modalities of implementation. *We are often faced with a policy field under construction*, where important elements are still lacking.

A second specific challenge is that international actions, as mentioned above, are multifaceted and complex. They are made up of diverse and sometimes disjointed *sectoral actions that require specific methodologies or instruments*. Evaluating an economic promotion programme is not approached in the same way as the evaluation of an international cooperation plan or cultural openness actions. Each type of action has its own reasons its own performance indicators and its own specific social partners.

It is the internationalisation strategy set by the LG, when it is clearly formulated and explicit, that constitutes the nexus that gives consistency to a series of actions of a different nature, located in different sectors.[20]

It can be difficult to evaluate this series of actions if the various facets have not been clearly set out as part of a well-defined international strategy. We will see that this conditions the methodology proposed (see chapter 6).

A third difficulty, which is also intrinsic to an LG's international policy, is that *its effects are not easily distinguishable from the effects of economic, technological and cultural globalisation*. In fact, these phenomena are evolving rapidly and affecting cities and territories more and more directly and intensely. The conscious actions of LGs to curb or stimulate their effects in the local sphere, which are embodied within the international action plan to be evaluated, can be diluted, lose visibility and be difficult to discern in the face of global macro-phenomena.

Fourthly, it must be considered *that the results and effects of an IA policy are medium to long term*. A public policy focused on expanding the external projection of a

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20. It can sometimes be easier to analyse the consequences of a city model or assess the impact of a single event than to detect and evaluate the aggregate effects of complementary actions carried out in different sectors.

city or increasing the attractiveness of the local area does not have clear, immediate effects. It is possible to obtain quick results from carrying out certain activities or holding international events, but the lasting impact of these actions and, above all, the aggregate impacts of a series of actions are not so easily measured. In any case, this requires a fairly long-term perspective. Consequently, the effects may not be easily identifiable in the period of implementation of a plan or an electoral mandate. On top of this relative inertia is the destabilising factor of the instability often brought about by electoral changes, which can affect the continuity of the municipality's international policy.

In many countries, this is compounded by the absence of a consolidated and developed evaluation culture and the lack of a practice of effective participation of local actors and citizens in decision-making and local governance mechanisms.

How to take these specific characteristics into account when evaluating the IAs of an LG will be discussed in the following chapters.

> **Example: AL-LAs. International actions, a public policy under construction**
>
> The AL-LAs alliance devoted an issue of the *Cuadernos para la Internacionalización de las Ciudades* collection to analysing the elements that make up the public policy of international action. Among them, it highlights that international actions are a matter in the process of consolidation at the institutional and political level, which must:
>
> - Express and bring to life the political will of the local government to act resolutely as a global actor, which implements a coherent strategy of international relations and which sets itself objectives to be achieved within a fixed timeframe.
> - Be embedded in strategic planning, placed high on the agenda of local government.
> - Be put together with the whole of its government plan and assumed transversally by the local institution as a whole.
> - Be agreed, coordinated and implemented with the active participation of the different local actors, through existing mechanisms for participation and consultation (councils, commissions, consultative groups, etc.) or through specific mechanisms.
> - Have the necessary technical, financial and human instruments for implementation, which means that it must be legislated at a local level and recognised in legal and institutional frameworks.
> - Be widely communicated to the public and provide for accountability mechanisms for local government to submit to the public the processes undertaken and the results obtained in each case.*

It must be taken into account that, in general, local governments develop actions that are not framed within a consistent internationalisation plan. Others gear this plan towards achieving specific results for the period that they hold office. Nevertheless, few local governments have all the aforementioned aspects in place. Furthermore, a pending issue is the link that this issue has with the legislative power at the local level.

* Source: *Cuaderno AL-LAs 2. Internacionalización del gobierno local. Una política pública en construcción*, pp. 55-57. Available at https://proyectoallas.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Cuaderno-AL-LAs-2.pdf.

Some highlights:

1. International action policy is a rather unique and highly complex local public policy and evaluating it is a real challenge.

2. As a starting point to adequately evaluate this policy, the initial situation must be known as well as possible, prior to setting out and implementing a municipal policy.

3. The evaluation should be based on prior planning. The LG should have a transversal plan in place, with activities involving different municipal departments, with clearly defined objectives and, if possible, a set of indicators or tools to assess to what extent the objectives have been achieved.

Part three
The evaluation of a local government's international actions. Methodological proposals

The complexity of international action policies and the specific difficulties mentioned in the previous chapter should not get in the way of reflecting on the evaluation exercise and drawing up guidelines for LGs. The following three chapters will be devoted to putting forward general guidelines for the evaluation exercise (chapter 5), indicatively advancing methodological guidelines (chapter 6) and setting out the type of organisation and instruments required to conduct the exercise (chapter 7).

5. Guidelines for the evaluation of international actions

Bearing in mind the general guidelines for the evaluation of a public policy (chapter 3) and the specific difficulties that have been mentioned (chapter 4), we now set out to clarify the orientation, nature and purpose of the exercise and to point out *guidelines that are specifically applicable for evaluating an LG's international actions.*

It should be emphasised that the following proposals are indicative and *should be assumed or adapted by each municipality* when launching the exercise. In this regard, the role of each LG is of the utmost importance in order to finish designing its own evaluation process, adapting it to its situation, specific problems and form of local governance.

5.1. Scope of the evaluation: a local evaluation framed within a regional and global context

As stated at the beginning, the Guide focuses on evaluation at a municipal level. It is primarily aimed at LGs and municipal technical teams that have developed an international action strategy, planned and implemented it, and are now in a position to evaluate its main effects and impacts.

Furthermore, the Guide is also directed, as will be seen below, at LGs that, even if they have a more incipient, less mature IA, are weighing up how an evaluation exercise could help them to draw up and implement an international action strategy (see chapter 6).

However, we believe that the Guide should also provide some elements and a common methodological framework for the future evaluation of the phenomenon at regional and global level. It is important, as we have pointed out, for conclusions to be drawn with a view to improving or guiding the support given to municipalities that are seeking to undertake their process of internationalisation and that can also suggest ideas and proposals to evaluate the impact of the IALG at a global level. Therefore, the reflections generated within the framework of this document will, whenever possible, have a supra-municipal impact.

In this regard, we would like to point out that an LG could very well decide to propose an evaluation covering a wider regional framework (metropolitan area, province, etc.), if it has the agreement of the other actors and institutions of the region concerned.

5.2. Purpose of the evaluation: the international action policy and its target audiences

It must be emphasised that the focus of the evaluation is mainly *the international action policy drawn up and implemented by the LG*. It is not a matter of evaluating a city brand, forming an opinion on the degree of internationalisation of a city and its local actors, or analysing the city's position in the numerous existing rankings. While this information could be useful in the course of the exercise, sight should not be lost of the fact that the core purpose of the evaluation is to provide elements that can be judged and a *strategic vision* of the municipal policy of international action, in order to help the promoting institution, in this case the LG and the local actors involved, to assess, review or correct it if appropriate.

To this end, the effects and impacts of international actions on the target audience of the actions fostered by the LG must be evaluated. These are of a different nature and, among them, we are able to specifically highlight:

(1) The population of the city as a whole
(2) The municipal institution
(3) The different local actors
(4) The surrounding region
(5) The international partners on which the international action of the LG under consideration may have an impact (e.g., in the case of development cooperation actions)

The groups of actors or social groups considered as targets of the municipality's international action, if they are not clearly stated in the International Action Plan or in the corresponding documents, must be explicitly identified and selected from the outset of the evaluation exercise. It is the LG, in collaboration with the other promoters of the exercise, that will determine which target groups the evaluation will be particularly interested in.

5.3. Content and purpose of the evaluation: impact-oriented evaluation

Before getting the evaluation exercise underway, the LG should draw up and specify what aspects it wishes to focus the evaluation on, bearing in mind the three mentioned previously, namely the outcomes, processes and impacts.

We suggest the exercise goes beyond evaluating *results* and focuses primarily on evaluating the *impacts* of the IALG, since we believe, as pointed out in the introduction, that the most important thing at present is to evaluate the impact of the IALGs. Nevertheless, we also suggest explicitly referring to the evaluation of the *processes that internationalisation* brings about, in particular the participatory processes and multi-actor dynamics that accompany the planning and implementation of international action. With that in mind, it could be pointed out that the evaluation exercise itself is precisely part of these processes, which constitute an important learning opportunity and a challenge for relations between the municipal institution and local actors and groups.

We would therefore advise that, as far as possible, these three aspects—results, processes and impacts—be addressed in terms of the aforementioned observations, while *prioritising the vision of the impacts generated* by the international actions of the municipal institution.

At this point, it should be noted that this document does not only evoke the positive effects of the municipal policy, but suggests "measuring the desired, unforeseen, positive and negative impacts of the IALGs, for LG, local actors, citizens and the area of influence, as well as externally". This is an extremely interesting approach, which can bring new elements to the table and enrich the evaluation.

In fact, when referring to the results or impact of a public policy, it should be considered that such actions are almost never neutral. A policy tends to favour certain interests, actors and collectives over others. The political will of an LG comes through in the city model it is promoting, and the economic sectors and social groups will benefit from it.

5.4. Social significance of evaluation: differentiated impact by actors and groups

As has just been mentioned, in the evaluation of a public policy it is necessary to be able to identify the positive and negative effects but, above all, it is of the utmost importance to be in a position to *break them down by type of actors or social groups*. It is a matter of overcoming the most frequent vision, which hides the social significance of the actions, and emphasising, on the contrary, the *impact assessment in qualitative terms and from the actors' perspective.*

In fact, the impact of the IALGs (or of certain international events) on the city *as a whole* is usually assessed. In this way, an attempt is often made to estimate in quantitative terms all the benefits foreseen for the city, without examining which actors will truly benefit and which may, on the contrary, be negatively affected by this dynamic.

Thus, in our view, overall assessments such as "This international event has brought in €50 million to the city" seem to be glaringly insufficient when it comes to evaluating a public policy. We need to ask more specific questions, such as: Who are the agents that

have benefited from this contribution of resources? Has the event led to jobs being created? Have local businesses been positively impacted? Has the profit stayed in the city and been reinvested or has it been transferred abroad? By answering these questions, it is ultimately a matter of identifying the quantity, as well as the quality and the social and political significance of the effects, in order to be able to truly assess the content of a public policy.

In this light, *evaluating impacts and their differential distribution by actors, social groups or neighbourhoods becomes a key element of public debate*, municipal governance and local political life. The degree of acceptance and consensus expressed by the community also depends on it. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance to put the issue of impacts and their quantitative and qualitative treatment on the table as a key factor of transparency and local democracy.

In this regard, the differential evaluation should bring in, for example, a *gender-based approach* (differential effects on men and women), a *socio-political approach* (differential effects by type of actor, by group and by income level) and/or a *territorial approach* (differential effects by neighbourhood).

A table could also be drawn up showing which social actors and citizen groups are likely to benefit and which are likely to be disadvantaged for each of the key blocks of objectives identified. In particular, this perspective would give a clearer idea of the actors with whom the municipal institution should work and open dialogue to come up with solutions, and those who can establish a real complicity with the LG in terms of international actions.

5.5. Pre-design of the evaluation: the necessary positioning of local government

In order for the evaluation to be able to assess the impact differentiated by actors and social groups, it is extremely important for the LG to have identified and outlined the type of impact it hopes to detect beforehand in relation to these different levels. It is important that the LG has as explicit an idea as possible about what results it expects, what possible impacts it is concerned about and which it aims to gauge and control. If this work has not been carried out in the planning stage, it will be one of the key matters to be clarified during the stage of preparing for the evaluation in each municipality.

The LG, local actors and citizens need to reach an agreement in some way on the questions they will ask the evaluator and which they need answers to. These could be, for example, questions along the lines of:

- Has the policy of attracting tourist flows been seen as something positive for the city or has it led to the city becoming overcrowded with tourists, leading to a growing rejection of tourism by the local community?

- What impact has the campaign to attract foreign investment in the commercial sector had on small local businesses? Has there been a crisis and destruction of jobs in this sub-sector?

Identifying the impacts to be evaluated will depend on many factors and specific elements, such as the specific situation of each municipality, its economic and social problems, the visible effects of globalisation on the running of the city, the sensitivity and political will of each LG and citizens' perception of the most pressing problems. The methodological approach and the selection of the necessary tools (qualitative indicators, surveys, interviews, etc.) will depend on this to support the analysis of the impact(s) that the LG regards as a priority.

It is worth remembering here that evaluation is never a neutral exercise, which would uncover an indisputable truth based on objective data. Instead, evaluation is, in our opinion, a political act in the broadest sense of the word which moves in a qualitative and strategic terrain rather than in a purely technical one.

Bearing in mind the aforementioned observations, we rule out a global evaluation carried out in purely economic terms that raises doubts as to who really benefits from municipal actions,[21] and we instead suggest *moving, as far as possible, towards a differentiated evaluation according to the actors and groups involved*, in spite of the challenges that such an approach poses.

> **Example. Initial diagnosis for the internationalisation of Chicago**
>
> Chicago is the gateway to the heart of the United States. The city's many actors regularly engage in simultaneous but disjointed efforts in international activities across the four pillars of city life: civic, commercial, educational, and arts and culture. While many activities affect the same markets and target audiences, they do so too often in isolation. There is no coordination or overall plan. As a result, activities are transactional, tactical rather than strategic.
>
> The Chicago Council on Global Affairs think tank diagnosed the opportunities of having an international strategy for the city designed by a number of experts from different areas of the city.
>
> This diagnosis and its resulting strategy focus on four pillars as objectives of internationalisation:
>
> - The citizen pillar. The city lacks the infrastructure, resources and institutional coordination to support the level of international engagement needed to foster the city's interests.
> - The commercial pillar. The city lacks the resources, marketing and infrastructure to boost international tourism and investment.

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21. For example, in the case of a major international event, it would be necessary to include the public cost of holding the event in the overall evaluation (prior investments in security, cleaning, protocol, maintenance, etc.) and the costs and inconvenience borne by the citizens, when the city is "rented out" to large private organisations.

- The artistic and educational pillar. Market research on how Chicago is perceived around the world, largely associated with high crime rates, tax issues or things that happened in the past, shows that the city's reputation does not reflect the creative metropolis it is today.
- Leadership in global affairs. Chicago could be a leading voice for cities and citizens of the world to take leadership roles in existing international organisations.

Source: https://www.thechicagocouncil.org/research/report/chicagos-global-strategy.

5.6. The political dimension of the evaluation exercise: towards participatory and citizen-based evaluation

As well as taking into account the actors and collectives with a view to ensuring a more socially accurate evaluation, we believe that they should not only be the *objects* of the exercise, they should also be *active subjects* and should be given the opportunity to participate directly in the analysis and reflection that is part of the evaluation process.

To enable this, they must be recognised as fully-fledged actors in the evaluation process, or partners of the LG in this exercise, and the evaluation methodology must be consistent with this objective. Along these lines, it is necessary to go beyond the strictly technical perspective, in other words, a global evaluation, exclusively institutional and conducted by experts, to progress towards an evaluation that involves more actors and is conceived as a *collective learning process and a space for social and political dialogue*. This is the reason why we favour an effective participation of the key actors and local collectives in the evaluation exercise itself.

It should be emphasised that the guidelines set out in this document move in this direction. They do not present evaluation as a purely technical process, which would be the sole responsibility of the administration. On the contrary, they see evaluation as a "complex and transversal process involving a number of actors and competing interests".

It could be said that evaluation, from this perspective, is conceived as a *multi-actor process*, carried out by the municipal institution and *led by the local government*, as guarantor of common interests and in the interest of the public.

5.7. Evaluation conditions and requirements: towards variable geometry evaluation

It has already been pointed out that the standing of IAs in the different municipalities is extremely heterogeneous. In a new and emerging field such as this, each municipality has its own degree of progress and maturity. One may then wonder what the essential conditions or prerequisites are for a municipality to consider evaluating its IAs.

From a theoretical and formal point of view, it would be a mistake to consider an evaluation if the IAs are not clearly outlined as a well-identified field, if the LG has not given itself a clear mandate to act within it, or if the LG has not yet come up with a comprehensive and coherent international action policy, framed within the city's strategic planning.

This strict view has the virtue of being coherent, but would mean leaving it up to the LGs that have already completed the following five steps to evaluate the IAs:

a) Development of a joint strategy encompassing all their international actions and subordinating them to common objectives.
b) Formulation of an international (or external) action policy to implement this strategy.
c) Planning and building an International Action Plan and making all budgetary and organisational arrangements for its effective implementation.
d) Substantial experience in implementing the actions planned during the term of the plan.
e) Expression of a political will to carry out an evaluation of the International Action Plan as a whole, with agreement of local political forces and the actors involved.

Following this logic, it would appear that very few municipalities actually fulfil all the necessary conditions for an IA evaluation of this kind, and one could conclude that it is perhaps too early to consider evaluating a public policy that, in many cases, is not yet clearly identified, defined and recognised.

On the other hand, if we start from a broader and less rigid concept of evaluating an LG's IAs, we can adapt to the progress and degree of maturity of the question in each of the municipalities concerned. In fact, the fact that a given LG expresses an interest in evaluation shows that it is convinced that this exercise could be useful and could provide it with valuable elements, even if its international actions are still emerging, if it is not yet conceived as a specific field that defines a new local public policy, or if the LG has not yet taken all the necessary steps to structure it.

From our point of view, the challenge from now on consists precisely in striving to provide guidelines adapted to each case, depending on the more or less advanced and comprehensive vision that it has of its actions on an international level.

Taking these considerations into account, acknowledging that IAs are still a field of public policy under construction leads to the proposal that IA evaluation can have a variable scope, depth and orientation, according to the real situation of the municipality under consideration, its experience at international level and the political will of the LG. This option, which could be described as pragmatic or realistic as opposed to a perhaps more theoretically demanding position, is the one adopted in this Guide and which will be looked at in more detail in the following chapter, devoted to methodological proposals.

Some highlights:

1. IA is a complex and extremely diverse field. Its different components respond to different sectoral criteria and logics.

2. Nevertheless, the Guide suggests moving towards an assessment of impacts, desired and undesired alike, differentiated by types of actors and groups.

3. To this end, it is necessary to clearly identify the targets of the actions and the expected results in each case.

4. Thanks to the involvement of local actors and citizen groups, the evaluation should be a time of collective learning and a space for social dialogue.

6. Methodological guidance for designing the evaluation

In the specific field of the evaluation of municipal IA policy, specific experiences and theoretical and methodological reflections applied specifically to this field are few and far between. Among them, it is worth highlighting the contribution of AL-LAs, which has researched the subject and drawn up some general guidelines that we summarise below.

> **Example. Evaluation of internationalisation policies. An initial approach**
>
> In 2017, the AL-LAs alliance published a document analysing some of the keys to the long-term sustainability of local external action. It highlights that measurement and evaluation processes are key to strengthening public policy, however, so far these have focused on quantitative variables. It therefore recommends that:
>
> - Measuring international activity in the city needs to be quantitative and qualitative alike.
> - It is necessary to move towards a system for measuring the impact of international action that favours a comprehensive vision of the phenomenon of internationalisation in the city and provides a more precise understanding of the benefits it has for its community.
>
> The indicators to be designed should allow measurement in three dimensions.
>
> The institutional dimension: the knowledge management developed by the International Affairs office has led to the creation of a significant body of knowledge to systematise, capitalise on and generate experience transfer processes.
>
> The political dimension: the importance of transversality and inter-institutional coordination through the creation of instruments for forging relationships with other sectors, such as intersectoral roundtables, is key for internationalisation to contribute to the objectives of local government.
>
> The territorial dimension: it is possible to integrate impact indicators that make it possible to assess how international management contributes, in the medium and long term, to achieving objectives that are deemed fundamental for society.
>
> The indicators must respond to the reality of the territory and its dynamics, which is why it is important for them to be constructed on the basis of a participatory process with the territorial actors so that, together, the elements and approaches to be included in the measurement can be identified.
>
> Source: Cuaderno AL-LAs 8. Hacia una acción internacional sostenible en las ciudades
> https://proyectoallas.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/cuadernoallas08.pdf.

This formulation has the virtue of showing that evaluation can try to investigate different aspects and that it is important to focus not only on municipal structures, but also on the city, the actors, and the region.

In chapter 6, the aim is to explore this further and to provide LGs with guidelines on how to get their own evaluation exercise off the ground. To this end, after looking at the specific and interesting case of the city of Paris, we will set out the steps that the LG must take to prepare and start the process of evaluating its IAs.

6.1. Preliminary considerations: a significant case, the city of Paris

As an introduction to the chapter, we sought a global city of reference, such as Paris, for which we have a very recent and reliable analysis and diagnosis document since it comes from the Cour des Comptes, the official body responsible for controlling and overseeing the financial management of French public institutions.

The report by the Chambre Régionale des Comptes on the decentralized cooperation and international action of the city of Paris (2010-2018) published in 2019 highlights that:

- The scope has progressively widened from twinning to the idea of decentralised cooperation, and now to the broader vision of international action by local governments.
- The accounting of resources engaged in this issue is still limited to things that fall under Official Development Assistance (ODA), when in fact international action goes far beyond this framework. From this point of view, there is considerable debate as to whether or not refugee reception costs are part of ODA.
- Paris's international action encompasses a wide range of actions, including social action, education, culture, economic promotion, etc.

Actions registered by the city as being part of the international action include, among others:

- Actions aimed at foreign-born Parisians (e.g., the Chinese New Year celebrations)
- Historical memory actions within an international framework
- Promotion and dissemination of the European spirit and values
- Cooperation with other cities on urban issues
- International solidarity, in particular in the field of water and waste
- Promotion of French shows and artists abroad
- Refugee assistance
- Raising awareness of climate change
- Participation in city networks

> - Organisation of major international events, such as the Climate Change Conference or the Olympic Games
>
> This multi-faceted vision becomes weaker because these multi-sectoral actions are not presented under a clearly explicit logic and strategy. The dispersion of actions does not reflect a well thought-out and coherent transversal vision.
>
> One of the only axes that provides overall consistency is the desire to boost Paris's international visibility as a global city as well as the capital and symbol of the entire country, in a quite evident subordination to the diplomatic guidelines of the central government.
>
> On the issue of evaluation, the report highlights that ad hoc or sectoral evaluations are extremely limited and recommends, in conclusion, the evaluation, through all relevant means, of the effectiveness of the City of Paris's international actions.

This recommendation by the Cour des Comptes highlights a number of phenomena that will be discussed in greater detail in this chapter:

1. Regarding the identification of the actions that are part of the IAs, the supervisory body points out that the determination is not clear and that there are significant gaps in quantifying these actions. There is still no consensus within the French administration on what should be included in this category. This is why the official response of the LG to the recommendation of the Cour des Comptes has been to restate a biased view. It has considered that, until a global review of the field covered by this new public policy is carried out, only expenditure that can be considered as official development assistance will be quantified as IAs.

2. This ambiguous and partial delimitation is down to the lack of a comprehensive and agreed concept capable of encompassing all the actions that fall within the field of IAs. In this specific case, IAs are marked by the orientation towards development cooperation (primarily with the former colonies), along with extremely important aspects of support for French-speaking people, along with diplomatic and political visibility.[22] The City of Paris is perhaps cautious about revealing the number of resources it provides in support of state diplomacy and prefers to keep a low profile, at the risk of effectively minimising the importance IAs have acquired for a global city like Paris.

3. The regulatory agency deems this situation to be abnormal and does not favour transparency for citizens. It states that the international action of the City of Paris should be identified as a whole and would require a comprehensive evaluation.

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22. There are several reasons for this stance, including a failure to consider IAs as a set of multi-sectoral actions framed within a consistent strategy, and the fear of showing that IAs incur significant expenses, when this public policy has not been sufficiently justified to citizens.

4. Therefore, it can be seen that even a city of the importance of Paris has not yet integrated a comprehensive vision of its own IAs or fostered their evaluation.

With this example in mind, and aware of the diversity of local situations, the first step we would like to highlight as a recommendation to the LG in the preparation and design stages of its evaluation is the need to identify, as precisely as possible, how far it has progressed in terms of IAs, and how it conceives and develops its actions on an international level.

6.2. Stage 1 of the evaluation design: identifying the degree of maturity of the municipality's international actions

IALGs, as we have seen, are an emerging phenomenon that is evolving strongly and is constituted as the sum of decentralised initiatives. It is therefore understandable that there are no pre-established models or trajectories with clearly identifiable phases. Nevertheless, there is the possibility of proposing an indicative typology, which makes it possible to characterise where each municipality stands in relation to its action on the international scene.

Broadly speaking, five possible levels of maturity and scope of municipal international actions (IAs) can be distinguished, which represent a gradation in the LG's awareness of the importance and scope that its action can have on the international scene. For ease of reference, each of these levels will be designated by a specific adjective.

(1) NON-FOCUSED IAs, comprising different external actions carried out without a common strategy, which can also be designated under the term SUBORDINATE, as it does not have its own entity but responds to the individualised requests of the different municipal departments.

(2) International actions UNDER CONSTRUCTION, which reflect the political will of the LG to come up with a public policy in this field.

(3) SPORADIC (or OCCASIONAL) international actions, centred on the celebration of an important event.

(4) SECTORAL OR TARGETED IAs, designed to serve a specific purpose (Economic Promotion, Cooperation, etc.) and planned within this sectoral framework.

(5) COMPREHENSIVE IAs, conceived as a coherent whole and set within an overall strategy.

These five possible levels can be detailed as follows, in order for this typology to be as precise as possible.

(1) NON-FOCUSED and SUBORDINATE international actions

At this first level, *IAs are considered as a simple resource that can be made available to any LG policy*. The International Relations Office, in this case, is conceived as an operational instrument at the service of the departments that carries out management or seeks external funding, and acts essentially on demand.

> A specific example might be the case of a municipal department that asks the International Relations Office to help it pinpoint foreign cities that have proven expertise on a certain topic and might be willing to share their know-how.
>
> The Office then contributes to launching an exercise of reciprocal horizontal co-operation, which could have a significant positive impact on the sectoral policy of the department under consideration.

Within this framework, international actions are decided on an ad hoc basis, as pragmatic responses to the needs of the different municipal departments in carrying out their respective sectoral public policies.

Consequently, the rationale and justification of the municipality's IAs depend on the different sectoral policies, and the sum of the municipality's international actions does not necessarily have to be coherent in itself. This is quite often the case in municipalities that start being active on the international scene without having yet become aware of the need to have an IA policy.

> A clear example of this type in Europe was the initial period in which International Relations Offices were essentially engaged in seeking out, managing and monitoring possible calls for European grants. In this case, they acted on behalf of various municipal departments or on their own initiative, offering each of them the opportunities detected for attracting external funds.

These examples show that the actions derived from this logic are generally reactive and often discontinuous. The result is a non-focused IA, considered as a purely instrumental element, which has not yet acquired a consistency of its own.

(2) International actions UNDER CONSTRUCTION

As has been seen, each medium or large municipality may have *actions* of an international nature, based on the demands of municipal departments. However, this does not mean that it has a conscious IA *policy*. In fact, the multiplication of international actions does not guarantee its consistency, nor does it anticipate that the LG has accepted IAs as a legitimate and necessary local policy. There may be many international projects and experiences without having defined common guidelines and shared objectives.

We can speak of under construction or emerging IAs when the LG has become aware of the need and interest for the municipality to consider its international actions as a

specific field of public policy in which to design and implement a strategy, to draw up a coherent policy and to put it to work for the future development of the city.

At this point, the municipality specifically asks itself how IAs can serve to implement its city model within the framework of the city's strategic planning and what the guidelines and priorities of its IAs should be. LGs that reach this level aim to have a strategic planning instrument for their municipality, in the form of a plan, usually referred to as an internationalisation plan or international action plan.

(3) SPORADIC (or OCCASIONAL) international actions, focused on holding a major event

Many LGs, aware of the need for action on the international stage, focus on holding an event, from which they generally expect economic benefits and the city's international profile to be raised. These are often one-off international events or actions, which are generally not linked to an explicit public policy.

This main event may be a one-off event or it may already take place on an annual basis. In the latter case, it often becomes an integral part of the city's image, particularly in the case of small or medium-sized cities, which owe their international reputation to the event in question.

There are numerous examples across different sectors or fields of activity. They include, among others:

- Non-repeatable sporting or cultural events with international projection, such as, for example, the Mediterranean Games in Tarragona, Spain, held in 2018.
- One-off international congresses and conferences, such as the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, Habitat III, held in Quito, Ecuador, in 2016.
- Annual international music, film and theatre festivals, such as the Avignon Festival (France), the Cannes Film Festival (France) and the Edinburgh Fringe Festival (Great Britain), and in Latin America, the Estéreo Picnic Festival (Colombia) and the Vive Latino (Mexico).

In these cases, IAs focus primarily on obtaining and holding the event in question, which is conceived as a one-off event capable of bringing together the municipality's efforts on the international field, but which is not generally part of a sectoral plan for external projection.

(4) TARGETED (or SECTORAL) international actions

Many LGs that have made strides in the planning of their international action structure it around certain axes or partial aspects from a perspective that could be called sectoral. For them, IAs are focused around a core objective, such as the city's economic projection, attracting external resources, cultural dissemination or cooperation.

Many cities develop strategies in this regard and plan their international action through sectoral plans, such as an outreach plan or an international cooperation and solidarity plan. Quite often, two or more such plans, fostered by different municipal departments, may coexist. External action is split between these sectoral plans or programmes. However, IAs are not considered as a whole and there are no elements that give them an overall consistency.

Nowadays, this situation is relatively common and many municipalities are at this level.

This is the case of municipalities such as Belo Horizonte (Brazil), which has a series of strategic frameworks that include international activities to promote the municipality:

Department of economic development and tourism

- Investment attraction plan for the city and promotion of information technology
- Plan to foster entrepreneurship, the creative economy and the solidarity economy

Department of social protection, food security and sport

- Plan to strengthen public policies with regard to rights to the city

Department of culture

- Plan to strengthen culture and tourism in the Pampulha area

Source: https://prefeitura.pbh.gov.br/projetosestrategicos.

(5) COMPREHENSIVE international actions

In the most advanced municipalities, international actions are conceived as a new local public policy. The LG believes that all its external action must have a coherent joint approach in order to respond to the LG's political will, to get local actors involved in a common project and to contribute to the creation of the chosen city model.

In this case, it is clear to the LG that the various, sectoral facets of its IAs must be consistent and framed within a comprehensive approach linked to strategic planning and the unified image of the municipality that it seeks to project on an international level.

An interesting example is Sunderland's (UK) 2018-2025 international strategy.

This is the first time that the city of Sunderland has brought together its various international connections, networks, initiatives and activities with a view to drawing up a comprehensive strategy and action plan, which will have an impact on the future of the city, the lives of its residents and the lives of citizens from other countries around the world.

> Long-term planning enables the pooling of experience and resources, and the aspiration to reach the full potential of a city that strives to be truly international.
>
> Sunderland is preparing to become the best city to live and work in the UK, developing initiatives in line with three key values (life improvement, city intelligence and social balance) that will be crucial to its regeneration and development.
>
> Source: https://proyectoallas.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/International-strategy-for-sunderland-2008-2025.pdf.

This overview has shown the variety of possible cases. The result of this first stage is *that the LG will be able to identify which category it falls into with reference to its IAs*, always bearing in mind that this typology is indicative and that there may be many specific cases that do not strictly come under this heading.

In any case, the work on this nomenclature is interesting, because it offers the LG the opportunity to reflect on what it thinks about its external action and how it positions itself in relation to other local public policies. This critical review may lead to changes in the conception of the respective functions and in the internal institutional architecture, if the LG realises, for example, that it should give its international relations office a more prominent and decisive role in relation to the sectoral departments.

6.3. Step 2: deciding the type of evaluation to be carried out and its primary purpose, depending on each specific situation

Taking into account the typology of cases developed in the previous section, the LG should now be in a position to specify, according to the real situation the municipality finds itself in, the specific characteristics of the evaluation and, more importantly, the key questions to be answered.

To assist the LG in this regard, we will now look into what kind of evaluation could be envisaged in each of the aforementioned cases. We will start with the planning instruments that can serve as a reference or starting point for the evaluation approach and try to define the purpose and scope of the evaluation in each case.

6.3.1. Non-focused or subordinate international actions

When IAs are deemed to be a mere instrument at the service of departments, they do not give rise to specific planning. International actions appear, at best, as interventions to be carried out within the framework of local sectoral plans and programmes. Generally, the international dimension is not highlighted as an objective in itself. It appears as a simple operational means, at the service of the local objectives set by each municipal department.

Within this context, *what is suggested is an evaluation of the effective contribution that international actions have made when it comes to achieving the objectives of each local policy*. In fact, within the framework of the evaluation of a particular local policy, it is possible to specifically analyse the role of having turned to the outside world. It is, above all, an analysis focused on *assessing the effectiveness* of international actions at the service of each local policy.

In this case, the evaluation of IAs is partial and limited to certain specific actions and is part of the broader framework of evaluating a local public policy.

An LG policy aimed, for example, at reducing pollution in the city could lead the urban mobility department to forge horizontal exchange and mutual learning relationships with cities in other countries, with a view to benefiting from their experience. This type of external action is framed within a particular sectoral policy and the contribution of this practice to the final objective (reduction in pollution levels) should be evaluated. From this point of view, the evaluation would seek to assess, more specifically, whether or not the department concerned has adopted interesting examples and experiences from other cities, and whether or not they have led to the local policy being reviewed and improved.

In this evaluation, the aim would not be to assess IAs in relation to IA planning, in other words, to assess the achievement of the objectives of an IA plan and its impact, but rather to identify and evaluate the effective contribution of IAs to other objectives drawn up by the LG.

Despite its limitations, an evaluation of this nature, which could be described as an evaluation of specific actions at the service of sectoral objectives, makes sense and could be seen as a learning opportunity for municipal technicians, as it could highlight the importance of international actions with a view to improving local policies and the quality of life in the municipality, as well as serving as an incentive for the generalisation of these international exchange practices to other departments or sectors of the local institution.

Moreover, disseminating these results may help to raise public awareness of the municipality's interest in developing actions at an international level.

> **Example. Bergamo and Igualada against COVID-19**
>
> An interesting example is that of the cities of Bergamo (Italy) and Igualada (Spain), which were at the epicentre of coronavirus contagion in their respective countries and developed, as a result, an exchange of information and a mutual learning dynamic in the first quarter of 2020.
>
> These two cities, which had no significant international actions and had not previously been in contact with each other, were led to develop this evolving international action in response to their local health needs.
>
> It would be of interest to assess what they have learned from each other and to what extent this international exchange has been fruitful for the inhabitants of both cities, so that this one-off experience can be consolidated and transformed into a more ongoing dynamic of exchange.

6.3.2. International actions under construction

In the case of an LG that has decided to draw up an international action strategy, we are at the beginning of a very interesting journey that will lead to a public policy being drawn up and implemented in this new field. Here, no planning document exists beforehand that can serve as a starting point of reference.

The evaluation method that would make the most sense in this context is, without a doubt, the *ex ante* evaluation focused on coming up with an initial diagnosis and providing elements for the LG and its local partners to take strategic decisions in view of the construction of an IA consistent with the city model and, in general, with the municipality's existing strategic planning framework. The objectives and methodology of the *ex ante* evaluation will be described in more detail in

6.3.3. Occasional international actions

In general, one-off events are planned by submitting a draft project. Moreover, in certain cases, national legislation, or European legislation in the case of Europe, further requires an environmental impact study or other annexed documents justifying ex ante the proposal submitted. If this initiative is given the green light, the draft project and its annexes constitute the planning and programming framework for all the activities included in the proposal submitted.

Regarding the main purpose of the evaluation, it would make sense to evaluate the project as a whole (results, processes, impact) and, above all, to evaluate the impact the event would have on the city and local actors and groups.

As has already been pointed out in previous chapters, the objective is to go beyond global and quantitative balances that simply seek to measure the resources or tourism flows that the event has generated and from which the city as a whole has benefited.

An example of this approach is the final evaluation of the Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games, which mainly looked at the overall quantitative results.

Example. The legacy of the Rio de Janeiro 2016 Olympic Games

The International Olympic Committee published a range of reports on the economic, environmental and social legacy of the organisation of the 2016 Olympic Games held in Rio de Janeiro. Among the elements analysed, the following are worth highlighting.

- The city of Rio built 70 new hotels and accommodation centres with an investment of almost R$5 billion in the tourism industry.
- To build hotels and other infrastructure for the Olympic Games, it is estimated that roughly 16,000 people were hired to build and adapt infrastructures for the Olympic Games.

- In 2016, 6.6 million visitors came to Brazil from abroad, representing a growth of 4.5% compared to 2015.
- 44 hectares of native vegetation were restored together with 7.3 hectares of natural vegetation for the Olympic Park.
- 9 km of river flow was restored through the regeneration of drainage banks.
- The BRT public transport network was extended by 150 km.
- The Porto Maravilha area was regenerated with a private investment of roughly R$8 billion.

Source: https://www.olympic.org/rio-2016.

In our opinion, this approach is clearly inadequate. In our view, the challenge lies primarily in:

a) Breaking down the impact by sector (hospitality, commerce, leisure, transport, etc.), type of actors (multinationals, large companies, SMEs, self-employed workers, etc.), social groups, gender, neighbourhoods, etc.
b) Identifying how the cost of the project is shared out and the corresponding impacts.
c) Identifying and analysing the opinions of the actors and social groups concerned.
d) Highlighting the processes generated or fostered by the event (gentrification, rentals, security, prostitution, etc.).
e) Ultimately evaluating the impact of the event on an economic, as well as social and political level, in the short, medium and long term.

As can be seen, evaluating an international event that affects and conditions the life of an entire city cannot be reduced to a mere statement of quantifiable results.

With regard to the temporal dimension, in this case the evaluation could be carried out *ex ante*, in other words, prior to the project being launched, or *ex post*. *Ex ante* evaluation would essentially seek to primarily validate the project's approach (relevance), improve its effectiveness, assess its future effects and foresee its possible impacts. *Ex post* evaluation would mainly seek to critically evaluate its results and impacts, and retrospectively evaluate whether the strategy followed was the most appropriate one.

6.3.4. Targeted or sectoral international actions

When the LG focuses its IAs on one or two specific sectors, the municipality generally draws up a plan to guide external action in each of them. This may be, for example, an economic projection and promotion plan, a development cooperation plan, a cultural openness plan or plans to protect the environment or fight climate change.

Some cities have several sectoral plans in place at any given time, but see them as forming part of separate areas and do not see the need for these different instruments to be unified or consistent with one another.

Each of these sectoral plans may give rise to an *ex ante* evaluation, monitoring and an *ex post* evaluation. Each plan is usually evaluated by the strategic and technical management of the relevant department. These are sectoral evaluations of certain facets of the IAs, which are generally carried out separately. Their primary objectives are to assess whether the sectoral policy defined by the LG, with the participation of the local actors and groups involved, and led by the municipal institution, has been the most appropriate (relevance) and yielded the expected results (outcomes). The evaluation also asks what impacts (foreseen or unforeseen) it has had.

> In Europe, there is extensive experience of evaluating municipal (or territorial) plans for international cooperation and solidarity.
>
> Spain has numerous examples. Bilbao (2006-2009) was a trailblazing municipality, together with several municipalities in the Barcelona region (Sabadell, Granollers, Vilafranca del Penedès, among others) and the autonomous community of Navarre.
>
> Similarly, in France, there is a long tradition of evaluation in this field. The Association des Départements de France in particular published a practical methodological guide in 2008: *Améliorer la qualité d'une politique publique de coopération décentralisée.*[22]

In the field of economic promotion, experiences of sectoral plans can be cited that must be submitted for evaluation:

> The 2019-2024 Economic Development Sectoral Programme of the State of Veracruz, Mexico is aligned with the 2019-2024 Veracruz Development Plan and the 2030 Agenda, and focuses on the following guiding objectives:
>
> - Strengthening small and medium-sized enterprises by fostering competitiveness and productivity, accompanying enterprises in their creation, development, promotion and marketing of products and/or services at local, national and international level.
> - Favouring entrepreneurship and encouraging business development where Veracruz companies have better opportunities to access financing schemes.
>
> It proposes a series of monitoring and evaluation indicators aligned mainly with SDG 8 and the State's General Development Plan, including those aimed at:
>
> - Increasing the participation of Veracruz organisations in national and international markets through the professional and quality management of their businesses.

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23. It is also worth noting a CIEDEL methodological guide devoted to evaluating development education actions, which represent a significant part of the actions included in a municipal cooperation plan: *Education au développement et à la solidarité internationale; ¿Comment auto évaluer ses actions?*, 2009.

- Raising the competitiveness of entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises in Veracruz.
- Increasing the capacity to attract and consolidate investment in the industrial sector of Veracruz.

Source: http://www.veracruz.gob.mx/desarrolloeconomico/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2019/09/ Gac2019-356-Jueves-05-TOMO-XI-Ext-Sectorial-19-24.pdf.

Similarly, there are also interesting examples and experiences in the environmental field:

The Environmental Atlas 2016–Sustainable Quito is a tool used to build a new urban agenda for sustainable development, with city-related matters such as regional dynamics, city footprint, programme for a sustainable city and smart city policies and management.

This tool allows for measuring, monitoring and evaluating based on effort and result indicators for regional dynamics (hydrography, climate, ecosystems), waste management, climate change impacts and air quality.

Source: https://issuu.com/fiorum/docs/atlas_ambiental_2016.

It can be seen that the different sectoral evaluations correspond to rather different objectives and apply to very varied fields, each with its own criteria, instruments and indicators.

In fact, the target audience for actions depends on each sector. Some plans are explicitly oriented towards foreign actors or institutions. If we are, for example, dealing with a plan to boost the city's reputation and give it greater visibility, it would be a good idea to find out whether the foreign actors (business people, tourists, academics, etc.), who are the targets of the promotional campaigns, now perceive the city differently.

On the other hand, a municipal cooperation and solidarity plan is normally aimed at several actors and groups inside and outside the municipality: foreign beneficiary communities, locals and young people (development education), local NGDOs, etc.

For this reason, the LG commissioning an evaluation must determine, on a case-by-case basis, the groups and actors for which it will try to evaluate the impact. It will also have to collaborate with the technical team to select the indicators and technical tools needed for the evaluation. With this in mind, chapter 7 offers a range of qualitative and quantitative indicators applicable to each case.

A step forward would be to evaluate two sectoral plans of this nature simultaneously and in a coordinated manner, with the aim of highlighting the need to coordinate the corresponding policies. This would serve to move towards greater consistency of the municipality's international action and to make the LG aware of the interest of integrating the two sectoral plans in the future.

For example, a joint strategy of cultural openness and international solidarity with a common objective of opening citizens up to diversity and global justice could be envisaged. Here, two sectoral objectives are mutually supportive and can have an interesting synergy.

However, in other circumstances the harmonisation of different sectoral objectives may prove to be more challenging, as in the case below.

Bilbao (Spain)

In the case of Bilbao, the international actions are split between different departments and do not appear to be part of a joint strategy, drawn up and planned in a consistent, unified manner. Different planning instruments are involved, with sectoral logics that may turn out to be divergent if the LG does not draw up an external action strategy capable of encompassing and unifying them.

Two can be cited by way of example:

1. The 2030 International Action Strategy (passed in 2019), whose primary objective is to "position Bilbao among the most competitive cities, support the local economic and business fabric, and attract new investments and international events".

2. The 2nd Municipal Plan for Citizenship and Diversity of Bilbao City Council (2017-2019).

The first document is part of a perspective focused on economic promotion and corresponds to the objectives of boosting the city's reputation and attracting investments, as set out in chapter 2. The second covers a series of measures aimed at facilitating the reception of foreigners, combating xenophobic stereotypes and developing the population's openness to intercultural diversity, which corresponds to a quite different objective.

In this case, it is possible to evaluate these two aspects of Bilbao City Council's international actions separately, but it would be difficult and factitious to try to evaluate them together if the LG did not express more precisely which common strategy unites them.

6.3.5. Comprehensive international actions

The more advanced or experienced LGs are aware of the importance of going beyond the planning of sectoral external actions, materialised, for example, as we have saw in the previous section, in an international cooperation plan or an economic projection plan.[24] From this point of view, they see the benefit of establishing a joint strategy for the LG as a whole in its international action and providing the necessary instruments to plan and implement it.

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24. At present, not many LGs have reached this point. Many municipalities are still scheduling their external actions from a sectoral and partial perspective, which makes it difficult to come up with a comprehensive strategy and a subsequent evaluation.

In this way, LGs that develop an integral and transversal international action plan seek to have an additional instrument of strategic planning of their municipality, in the form of an internationalisation plan or external action plan, which covers all facets of IAs that the municipality has developed (see sections 2.2. and 4.1. of this Guide).

This plan can be evaluated *ex ante* or *ex post*. In both cases, it is an extremely valuable yet highly complex evaluation because it brings together, in one way or another, all the sectoral evaluations, with a view to evaluating whether the guidelines set for IAs as a whole have been followed and have produced the expected results.

An interesting example of a city that has sought to unify all of its IAs within the framework of a joint philosophy and orientation is Montreal (Canada).

Example: the Montreal (Canada) strategic framework for international relations

It seeks to boost the city's international influence and contribute to the prosperity of the metropolis, the quality of life of its citizens, and play its part in helping to overcome local and global challenges.

It has provided for a series of measures such as:

- Promotion of economic dynamism, innovation, creativity, culture, the French-speaking world, tourism, knowledge and talent.
- Attracting companies, civil organisations, events and international talent.
- Leadership on the international stage based on the "living together" city model that emphasises inclusive economic development, sustainable development and democratic metropolitan governance.

Source: http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/pls/portal/docs/page/prt_vdm_fr/media/documents/strategie_relations%20internationales_administratif_tableau_hr_vf.pdf.

After reviewing the different possible situations, a table (table 5) can be presented to summarise the aforementioned observations.

Table 5. Outline for the characterisation of the type of evaluation to be carried out

Levels	Evaluation type	Object of the evaluation	Improvements that can be made
A) Non-focused or subordinate IAs	*Ex post* evaluation of selected local policies	• Evaluation of the effective contribution that international actions have made to achieve the objectives of each local policy in question	• Making international actions visible and justifiable • Encourage IAs between municipal departments • Broadening citizen consensus on the municipality's IAs

Table 5. Outline for the characterisation of the type of evaluation to be carried out

Levels	Evaluation type	Object of the evaluation	Improvements that can be made
B) IAs under construction	*Ex ante* evaluation of the municipality's international action strategy	• Establish an initial diagnosis • Propose and select priorities for international action • Assess the possible effects and impacts of different options	• Become aware of the positive and negative effects of globalisation • Help plan and set out a municipal external action strategy
C) Sporadic or occasional IAs	*Ex ante* o *ex post* evaluation of an international event	• Evaluation of the impact of the event on the city and local actors and collectives (before or after the event)	• Critical appraisal of the event in economic, social and political terms • Possible revision of its content and orientation
D) Targeted (or sectoral) IAs	*Ex ante* o *ex post* evaluation of sectoral external action plans (economic projection, cooperation, cultural openness, environment, etc.)	• Separate evaluation of each sectoral facet of the IAs	• Provide a basis for judgement to re-evaluate, if necessary, the sectoral policies under consideration • Highlight the need for them to be consistent and to approach IAs as a whole
E) Comprehensive IAs	*Ex post* evaluation of the municipality's internationalisation strategy	• Comprehensive evaluation, which takes into account the international actions of the municipality as a whole and evaluates their impact on the different social actors and groups and on the city in general	• Possibility to critically review the LG's approach to external action • Opportunity to communicate the global vision of IAs developed by the municipality to citizens

6.4. Step 3: guidance for commissioning the evaluation

After clarifying the type of evaluation needed, the LG must commission an external technical team, which will team up with the municipal departments to conduct the exercise. The assignment will be based on outline references drafted by the heads of the local institution. To assist in this phase of the process, the content and issues of *ex ante* and *ex post* evaluations are explained below.

6.4.1. *Ex ante* evaluation: a key element in the development of an international action strategy

As indicated in the previous section, it is of the utmost importance to conduct an *ex ante* evaluation, especially in two cases: (1) before bidding for a major international event, or (2) prior to the implementation of the LG's IA policy.

In the first case in particular, it is a matter of:

a) Taking stock of the positive and negative effects that the event may have on the city as a whole, and also in a differentiated manner and broken down by type of actors, citizen groups, neighbourhoods or genders, as mentioned in chapter 5.

b) Analysing the requirements in terms of infrastructure, accommodation, transport, security, etc. and drawing up a detailed forecast of the cost of the event and its related impact.

c) Analysing which local actors will benefit from the event and which will have to bear costs, risks or impacts.

In the second case, which is the most common, the evaluation serves to collect and keep a record of information about the city, draw up an initial diagnosis, weigh up the benefits and risks of the international action, build multi-actor partnerships and jointly select the best possible strategy for the city in question.

a) Basic information

In this phase, the key when it comes to making the diagnosis is *information*. To this end, it is important to mobilise public and private actors who can provide information that the local institution itself does not usually handle. Therefore, from the outset of the exercise, it is advisable to involve research centres, chambers of commerce, business associations, think tanks, civil society organisations, etc. that can collaborate in this task.

b) Initial diagnosis

Using the information collected, the next objective is to draw up assessment of the situation of the city in terms of external openness and internationalisation, including:

• Measuring the degree of internationalisation of the city, as well as the weight of external activities in the running of the local institution and the main local actors.

• Finding out how the city is perceived externally and its position in the different rankings.

• Diagnosing its weaknesses and strengths.

• Taking stock of the passive internationalisation of the city and, in particular, the impact of the economic and financial forces of globalisation on the local fabric.

• Identifying the main opportunities that openness and outreach can offer.

- Outlining the risks to the city and its inhabitants if the LG does not act to curb or counteract certain trends of economic globalisation that affect the local space.
- Identifying the public and private actors that can or should be associated with a city strategy.

Carrying out this initial in-depth diagnosis is the basis of being in a position to open up a citizen and political debate, because it provides a critical analysis of the initial situation and a clarification of the threats and opportunities generated by the global economic and political context.

Nevertheless, few LGs do this in a comprehensive, rigorous and participatory manner. Many embark on a process of internationalisation simply because they have identified positive opportunities in the international field, which the municipality or municipal institution has not been able to understand until now. Accordingly, policymakers often believe that the city would stand to gain by being more visible and by attracting, in a more efficient manner, the resources of all kinds that are theoretically available throughout the rest of the world, be they investments, tourist flows or talent, and pay little attention to the possible collateral effects of these dynamics.

Therefore, the desire for international actions often focuses on the simple idea of improving the city's visibility and attractiveness. This is a well-known approach that is quite common as part of a local institution's attempts to build a foreign policy.[25]

c) Public debate and strategy building
Taking into account the diagnostic elements and considering the city model that the LG strives to build and the existing strategic planning documents at all times, the *ex ante* evaluation will look at the comparative analysis of possible international action strategies and open it up, if deemed appropriate by the LG, to a public debate with participation from local stakeholders.

It can be supported by a SWOT analysis, provided that equal weight is given to the opportunities arising from external openness and the risks involved in opening up further to the dynamics of economic globalisation.

The interest and the need to involve the *community and local stakeholders* with a view to creating an alliance of actors or a citizens' movement in favour of critical reflection on the international positioning of the city should also be underlined here.

If the debate between the parties on the strategy to be adopted succeeds in bringing to the fore a degree of consensus at the level of the political groups represented in the city council and at organised civil society level, a city strategy will be drawn up and officially adopted through the appropriate decision-making mechanisms.

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25. See, for example, the AL-LAs' *Cuaderno para la Internacionalización de las Ciudades* no. 5, devoted to *La acción internacional para una ciudad atractiva* (2015).

A notable example of stakeholder consultation and public participation is that of Mexico City, which developed a process called "Dialogues for a Global Mexico City".

Example. Dialogues for a Global Mexico City

An example of the construction of a participatory strategic diagnosis can be found in the Dialogues for a Global City process, carried out between 2014 and 2016 by the Government of Mexico City.

This was conducted with the aim of providing a channel for communication, exchange and reflection between government and civil society on the significance of the internationalisation of the city, in an organised, consistent and consensual manner.[26]

This process has made it possible to identify a range of recommendations and priority matters together with some local actors (limited but representative) for internationalisation beyond what the government could do.

> "[...] From the outset, the Dialogue was not conceived as a widespread process, but rather as a limited, eminently qualitative one, with influential and representative stakeholders as its target group. It was a short-term, focused exercise, which, although derived from the consultation of a limited sector of interviewees, resulted in the collection of wide-ranging and enriching information."

This exercise saw the participation of more than one hundred representatives of civil and cultural organisations, opinion leaders, academics, government representatives, business people and entrepreneurs, resulting in a series of standardised recommendations.

The results of this process were:

- Mexico City included Article 20 "Global City" in its constitution, giving express powers to the local executive to conduct its external action within the framework of its competences.

- In 2018, the Head of Government issued the "Global Mexico City" declaration, in which he called for the institutionalisation of public policy, based on the principles of a city of peace, solidarity, hospitality and asylum.

- The foundations were laid for the establishment of the inter-agency Cabinet for International Action with the participation of the expanded Cabinet.

- The institutionalisation of the dialogue space within the International Affairs Committee of the Mexico City Congress was proposed.

Source: https://cgcid.org/dialogo-para-una-cdmx/.

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26. Citizens' initiative.

6.4.2. *Ex post* evaluation: the best tool for institutional learning

Among the different types of evaluations, *ex post* evaluation is the best known and most widely used. As mentioned in section 6.3, it can be applied to a one-off event, a sectoral policy or an integral international action policy.

In all these cases, *ex post* evaluation is of the utmost importance when it comes to improving an LG's strategic approach. In fact, when this type of evaluation is put forward, it is generally because a specific external action policy has been implemented and sufficient time has passed to judge whether or not the results are in line with the initial forecasts. The *ex post* evaluation is the opportunity to see what has happened, to understand and assess the reasons for any possible imbalances between the forecast and the actual situation that has been observed, and to critically reflect on the international action strategy that has been implemented.

It could therefore be said that evaluation looked at in this way is an opportunity to learn, in order to transform the policy under consideration if need be. This learning should not only be of an institutional nature and limited to LG level. On the contrary, it can and must be transformed into a real social and political process of the municipality, if other local stakeholders, citizens' organisations and social groups are involved. In each case, maximum benefit should be drawn from this collective learning, going beyond the strictly technical vision of the exercise.

By way of example, if we consider the *ex post* evaluation of a major event,[27] which seeks to assess observed effects, some observations can be made as a way of taking advantage of this process.

Quite often, the organisers of cultural or sporting events carry out an overall economic assessment, with a view to calculating how much money the city as a whole has received. From our perspective, as mentioned above, it is a good idea to analyse the impact of the event, analysing its positive and negative aspects in a differentiated manner according to the actors and groups. In particular, it is important to assess how much of the cost has been borne by public institutions, how this cost is to be financed, and whether the event has generated a public debt that will be borne by citizens over an extended period of time.

Beyond the economic and financial aspects, the effects the event has had on the use of public space and what consequences it has had on citizens' quality of life should also be researched. Experience shows that citizens may react negatively if they have the feeling that the city is being "rented out" to a group of business interests, or if they feel that the benefits generated, in terms of jobs created for example, do not make up for the cost they have to pay.

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27. Examples of evaluations of one-off events include the *ex post* evaluation of the ECOTEC European Capitals of Culture, 2009.

To conduct this type of analysis, which is socially more refined and politically more committed than the globalising approach, the local institution cannot limit itself to working with business associations and representatives of the economic sectors concerned. It must collect the opinions and feelings of citizens through instruments to be established, such as multi-actor dialogue roundtables, interviews, surveys or polls, etc.

Some highlights:

1. Each LG should be able to position and characterise the degree of progress and maturity it has achieved in terms of international action.

2. On this basis, it will be able to lead the evaluation design process, deciding the nature of the exercise and its specific objectives, and preparing the main tools required.

7. Evaluation instruments and indicators

After the three stages mentioned in the previous chapter, which have allowed the LG to clearly identify the type of evaluation to be carried out and its content, the design of the exercise moves on to a *fourth stage*, which entails selecting the indicators and, more generally, the instruments required.

This is a seemingly technical phase, but one that has significant strategic and political implications. In our opinion, it merits in-depth *reflection on the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of the work to be carried out*, which is why we are devoting this chapter to it.

7.1. Overview

The first idea associated with the evaluation exercise is that of *having an array of quantitative indicators* to detect and measure the concrete effects of the different actions included in the international action plan. In this regard, one might think that the before and after could be measured in order to objectively verify whether the city council's actions have had a specific quantitative effect.

Unfortunately, the actual situation is not so straightforward. For various reasons, *this initial approach proves to be insufficient.* The main obstacles, depending on the case, are:

- The primarily qualitative nature of certain objectives, which cannot easily be reduced to an objective measurement.
- The absence of adequate quantitative indicators to measure the evolution of the phenomenon, or the impossibility of having them at a local level.
- The lack of more precise indicators to estimate the impact differentiated by type of actors and type of groups.
- The difficulty of attributing, with certainty, the evolution observed to the specific action taken by the LG, due to the intervention of other phenomena or variables.

These obstacles should not lead to the evaluation being shelved, but should *guide it towards a more political, strategic and subjective approach* in which not only are the

available quantitative indicators collected, but also the opinions or degrees of satisfaction of the actors and users are taken into account.

It is relatively straightforward to measure a city's degree of internationalisation through quantitative indicators. On the other hand, assessing the impact or evaluating the relevance of a policy requires qualitative tools and elements, models or reference values, against which the observed situation can be compared with the desired situation.

Therefore, after briefly commenting on classic quantitative evaluation approaches, the need to use or build, if necessary, participatory evaluation instruments that go beyond the usual ones will be outlined.

7.2. Quantitative instruments: traditional indicators

As in the case of other public policies to be evaluated, it is possible to identify some quantitative indicators that may be useful to account for certain aspects of a municipality's international action policy. We will distinguish between indicators that refer to the city and those that concern the municipal institution.

7.2.1. Possible indicators for the city as a whole

Regarding indicators that serve to measure the degree of internationalisation, the evolution of which makes it possible to see the changes generated by the IAs, we can make the following observations.

- The most commonly used indicators usually reflect the degree or percentage of foreign penetration in terms of population, visitors, economic actors and productive fabric, wealth, investments, ownership of real-estate capital, student population, etc.[28]
- Other indicators refer to the development of the capacities and infrastructures necessary for greater external openness. This is the case, for example, of hotel, communication and transport infrastructure.
- Another group comprises indicators that reflect actions of an international nature, such as, for example, the frequency and attractiveness of major technological, sporting or cultural events or the entertainment offer.
- Indicators also serve to acquire information on how much people know and how the city is perceived abroad in economic, cultural, educational, technological and sporting matters. To this end, attention is paid to the *numerous city rankings* by variables.

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28. They concern, for example, the origin of the population (foreign population, percentage of the total population, growth rate, etc.), the importance of tourist flows (visitors, overnight stays, tourist expenditure, etc.), the nationality of productive capital (companies with foreign capital/local companies), real-estate investment flows (purchase of buildings and housing by international funds, etc.), the origin of the cultural offer, attraction of foreign students, etc.

- Other aspects may also be of interest, such as policies, provisions and regulations aimed at stimulating internationalisation, in other words, those aimed at promoting or subsidising foreign tourism.
- Other fields may also be explored, such as the degree of openness of the community, language proficiency, etc.

This first brief list of possible quantitative indicators shows that they are extremely varied and that each city will have to choose those that are of most interest to it, in accordance with the internationalisation objectives it has set itself. *For each of the aforementioned seven families of objectives, a number of measurable variables can be associated in quantitative terms.*

It should be emphasised that one element that significantly conditions sub-national evaluations is that many indicators are not available at this level and therefore have to be discarded. *Only indicators that are locally measurable* or come from local statistical sources (municipal population register, local business census, land registry, etc.) are usable, which severely restricts the number and relevance of possible indicators. For example, there are generally no clear indicators available on the degree of external openness of the local productive fabric, because imports and exports are not recorded at municipal level.

For this reason, first of all the data available for the evaluation at a municipal level must be analysed. It is also necessary to ascertain whether the corresponding statistical series exist with a view to being able to follow the evolution and make the appropriate comparisons. It is noted that data is systematically collected at local level (population, housing, mobility, etc.) but it is limited and quite often insufficient for the differentiated evaluation that we are proposing. Furthermore, this aspect must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, because the availability of data may vary from one city to another.

7.2.2. Indicators referring to the municipal institution

These observations refer to indicators that concern *the city as a whole*. One can also try to estimate, by means of indicators, the degree of internationalisation of the *municipal institution* itself and its evolution.

In this case, possible indicators usually refer to:

- ⊠ *e frequency and importance of the external activities* of the different municipal departments (international contacts, participation in international seminars, conferences and events, experience in shared projects, membership in city networks, twinning, cooperation actions, visits and internships, etc.).
- ⊠ *e existence of institutional structures and tools that facilitate external action* and its operational capacity (situation of the international relations office within the munic-

ipal organisational chart, budgets, human resources, language skills of the staff of the different departments, etc.).

- ☒ *e progress made in setting out an international policy and its e☒ective planning* (existence of strategic planning tools for external action, operational plans, evaluations, etc.).

A notable example of this line of action is the Council of Montevideo (Uruguay), which has developed a control panel that seeks to measure the results corresponding to each strategic objective.

Example. Institutional Objectives and Goals. Montevideo 2020

Measuring Montevideo's international action is included in the Council's institutional strategic planning process. Its preparation has been based on the criteria of strategic alignment, simplicity, results orientation, project management and planning levels.

The information system developed in 2018 produced a table of indicators that serves to visualise a series of indicators within the framework of the strategic guidelines and objectives in force.

Strategic guidelines up to 2020

1. To promote an efficient, sustainable and safe mobility system.

2. To promote environmentally sustainable development.

3. To strengthen social inclusion and coexistence.

4. To foster a model of sustainable and innovative development.

5. To increase citizen engagement and participation.

6. To bring about cultural transformation towards efficient, innovative and transparent management.

A specific objective is devoted to strengthening Montevideo's international links, with quantitative indicators related to cooperation activities, exchange of good practices and city networking.

	2020 goal	Calculation formula
SO 4.7 - Strengthening links with the region and the world	Exchange of best practices, international agreements for greater internationalisation of the city, activities of Mercociudades and other networks such as UCLG, UCCI, Metropolis that are not covered by other goals.	Number of activities
	To foster international cooperation projects and city networks and the participation of the Mayor in international network events, cities and partner organisations. At least 2 per year.	Number of activities
	To examine the internationalisation of Montevideo through the management of the permanent technical secretariat of Mercocities.	Compliant / Non-Compliant

Beyond this objective, international indicators are included along different strategic lines, demonstrating their across-the-board nature throughout the municipal institution.

Strategic objective	2020 goal	Calculation formula
SO 1.4 - To increase smart management	To promote smart management through exchanges of information and experiences with the Mercociudades Thematic Units of Science, Technology and Training and the UCCI Committee	Number of exchanges of information and experiences
SO 2.5 - To contribute to climate change mitigation	To contribute to climate change mitigation actions through 100RCs	Number of support and/or participation actions
SO 3.7 - To guide cultural policies towards integration and coexistence	To foster cultural policies of coexistence and social integration through participation in the UCCI Culture Committee, the Mercociudades Thematic Unit of Culture, and UCLG, as well as participation in other networks such as Magallánica, the network of French-speaking cities or Aeropostal	Number of activities
SO 5.3 - To generate more information and new tools for communication with citizens	To generate more information for the public on the activities managed by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation	Number of communications

Source: https://montevideo.gub.uy/sites/default/files/biblioteca/objetivosymetas2020.pdf.

7.3. Qualitative indicators that express the opinion of stakeholders and citizens

In addition to indicators, other instruments can also be used to measure the opinions of citizens and stakeholders. In this regard, it is a good idea to ascertain whether the city regularly conducts opinion polls or surveys, and to analyse the issues they address.

A good example is that of Barcelona City Council, which publishes a barometer with the aim of collecting and measuring the main concerns of citizens and their opinions on the evolution of the city and municipal action, as will be seen in chapter 8. Along the same lines, other municipalities have observatories to monitor the evolution of phenomena, together with the qualitative and subjective perceptions of citizens.

These barometers or observatories provide constant information of the utmost importance. However, it is possible that the items covered only partially deal with the subject matter necessary for evaluation. To complete them, the city council could take on the responsibility of broadening the field covered by these surveys and also forge contacts and enter into agreements with external public or private organisations capable of offering more comprehensive and detailed information, each in their own field of specialisation.

It is therefore necessary for each city to identify statistical sources, or information available at the express request of the city council, available in organisations such as professional associations, chambers of commerce, chambers of property, associations, third sector entities and NGOs. For each aspect that the city council decides to evaluate, these organisations may be contacted with a view to jointly analysing the information they have or could collect. This type of agreement can also be used to actively involve them in the international action policy and its evaluation.

> **Example. Mexico City. Towards a system for measuring international action**
>
> In 2018, with a group of public policy and international relations experts, Mexico City embarked on the creation of an information system on international action with structured data and an emphasis on the collection system. It is a scheme that seeks to foster co-responsibility among government agencies with a typology of management indicators according to the objectives of the International Relations Office; strategic indicators according to the objective of the local government; and impact indicators in accordance with the region's objectives.
>
> The indicators proposed in the three areas are divided into three categories:
>
> 1. **Institutional level indicators** - Knowledge acquired - Training (officials, areas) - International presentations, competitions and events - Number of best practices or international experience transferred and adopted
>
> 2. **Indicators in the political arena** - Intersectoral goals of international action strategies - Intersectoral adoption of strategic lines of international policy - Number of international experiences systematised under international criteria in the CDMX - Number of calls responded to for cooperation funds in CDMX - Fulfilment of LG goals - Participation in international forums - Priority issues for the CDMX promoted in international negotiations - Leadership in international networks
>
> 3. **Regional indicators** - A creative, diverse city: culture, art and gastronomy - City of rights: social inclusion and equal opportunities - Mega-urban laboratory: sustainable development, climate change, mobility and resilience - City of knowledge: talent and innovation - Attractive city: business, tourism and investment

This is a noteworthy undertaking, although the indicators seem to remain for the time being in the strictly quantifiable realm.

7.4. Appropriateness of indicator selection in each case

As has been pointed out, the aforementioned objectives are of a diverse nature and, at the time of evaluation, will therefore require different forms of measurement. Consequently, there are likely to be *no general and universal indicators applicable to all LGs*. On the contrary, the selection of the corresponding criteria and indicators will depend

directly on the objectives of the internationalisation process in the municipality under consideration and have to be made on a case-by-case basis.

If the core purpose, for example, is to attract foreign investment, tangible results will be expected and the degree to which these results have been achieved can easily be measured by quantitative indicators. If, on the other hand, the LG has set itself the objective of opening up the city's culture, or enhancing the cultural diversity generated by immigration, or if it has chosen to seek a leading position in international municipalism, the tools will need to be more qualitative, in order to account for more complex and subtle phenomena.[29]

It is for this reason that this Guide does not aim to produce a standard list of evaluation indicators or tools, but to *help LGs to build them*, according to their own internationalisation objectives.

7.5. The need to build a specific data collection and analysis mechanism for a qualitative strategic impact assessment

As can be seen, the range of quantitative data available for the evaluation of a local policy is, in any case, limited and likely insufficient. The LG should conduct a pre-analysis of the quantitative elements and indicators that will be available (combining official statistics and data collected by private entities) and the qualitative information it will need. Thereafter, a kind of scorecard *will be created to evaluate the public policy of internationalisation*.

In order to do so, the aspects to be measured and the processes whose evolution is to be monitored must be chosen beforehand. This involves prior conceptualisation work that has both technical and political aspects. For example, if the aim is to attract large-scale businesses and, at the same time, monitor their possible impact on local business, a set of indicators including, for example, the evolution of retail outlets (opening and closing down), the variation in employment rates in small and large-scale business, and the opinion of retailers, must be created. However, the LG may also decide to analyse the possible effect of these changes on urban mobility (to monitor the evolution of transport flows, congestion problems, etc.) or other areas of local life.

This example shows that the impact does not appear to the observer in a spontaneous, obvious and clear way. On the contrary, *it is necessary to define the kind of impact(s) the LG wishes to analyse beforehand and, if necessary, create the necessary instruments*

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29. In the case of the French city of Grenoble, for example, one of the major aspects of its internationalisation strategy is the recognition of the value and wealth represented by the fact that the city has a large foreign population. In this specific case, we can see how international actions have an internal dimension that is of the utmost importance when it comes to drawing up an integral policy and how it forces us to seek criteria and indicators that move away from traditional indicators, such as international rankings or the flow of external resources that the city attracts.

and information channels to account for this type of impact(s). Often, the instruments do not exist in advance. If this work is not done previously, it will not be possible to *analyse these aspects of the phenomenon in retrospect.*

The above observations show that the LG must carry out a process of reflection and conceptualisation beforehand, asking itself a number of questions, such as: What effects or impacts would we like to detect? On what issues and groups? What quantitative data will be available?[30] What type of qualitative information will we need and how can we obtain it?

One such example is the work prior to the implementation of the underground in the city of Quito. Although this is not an international action project, we mention it here because it is of interest to look at how the LG has sought to analyse the impact of the project, differentiating it by type of actors and social groups.

The social and economic characterisation of the Quito Metro 2013-2019

The Quito Metro is the largest mobility project undertaken in the city's history and will have a far-reaching impact on the organisation of the capital as the backbone of the public transport system.

The implementation of the Metro will allow for a new organisation of Quito's public transport system that seeks to reduce traffic congestion, improve service coverage, reduce travel times and create a more organised city.

The spectrum of the population involved is broad, so it is necessary to know the characteristics, concerns, position, benefits and incidence of the project in the different social groups, in order to identify the sensitive factors identified by the population, to be aware of the degree of adhesion and to mitigate the possible negative impacts that could be generated in the process of constructing and running the Quito metro.

In 2012, the publicly-owned metropolitan company conducted a quantitative and qualitative analysis to identify the socio-economic situation of the inhabitants along the route of the metro stations in order to develop communication strategies for the implementation of the project.

This prior technical-political reflection also called for specifying, as precisely as possible, the intentions and objectives of the LG at the time of launching the internationalisation or international projection policy. The LG is, then, obliged to specify its objectives *ex ante* and the concrete results expected and, at the same time, to foresee which groups or sectors may be favoured or affected by the measures that form part of the plan.

This work should involve the different municipal departments, which could help to spot the possible consequences of the public policy of internationalisation for the various sectors of local life and identify available or obtainable data.

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30. These questions are important because it could almost be said that only the aspects chosen by the LG may be taken into consideration.

These observations show the unavoidable need to construct an ad hoc instrument for measuring the impact(s) and the technical difficulty of this project along with the economic cost involved, if we think in terms of specific surveys or polls. It should also be borne in mind that this objective knowledge effort can be replaced, at least partially, by *consulting key actors or those affected by the internationalisation policy*, which can be done within the framework of existing consultation channels or through ad hoc forms of participation. This is possible, provided that the LG recognises the limitations of objective information, values the formulation of subjective opinions and accepts, in some way, that the process of social concertation may be as or more important than the desire for objective knowledge and analysis.

In any case, it is possible to combine the two levels—that is, to have, on the one hand, a set of indicators and statistics and, on the other, to hold participatory monitoring and evaluation meetings with local actors. They could also be encouraged to produce and provide objective data from their own sector, in order to give solidity and credibility to the opinions they express in interviews and meetings.

> *Some highlights:*
>
> 1. The evaluation will combine traditional quantitative indicators with more qualitative ones and seek to combine data analysis with the collection of qualified opinions from key local actors.
>
> 2. As the availability of information at the local level is partial and limited, the necessary tools to collect quantitative and qualitative information must be designed and implemented prior to the evaluation.
>
> 3. The involvement of actors in data collection and analysis will be encouraged in order to enrich the information and, in particular, to make the evaluation truly participatory.

8. Recommendations to local governments to prepare the evaluation

To conclude this Guide, we will now draw up some recommendations for LGs seeking to highlight the impacts of their municipality's international actions, mainly underscoring *the importance of having a good IA planning process in place beforehand*, which has clearly set out the objectives and strategy, and which has *foreseen, as far as possible, the possible impacts* of the actions planned, whether they are desired or not.

8.1. The desirability of comprehensive international action planning

Firstly, it should be noted that a good evaluation is usually based on good prior planning. In fact, in order to conduct an evaluation under the best possible conditions, it is extremely advisable to have a strategic planning instrument that includes the main lines of the city model that one wishes to promote and that places international action within this framework.

Accordingly, in order to be in a position to conduct a full evaluation, an internationalisation plan would have to specifically address the following three aspects:

1. *Initial diagnosis*
   - Assessment of the situation in the municipality prior to the implementation of the international action policy.
   - Knowledge of the changes brought about by globalisation in the local fabric (effects of the passive internationalisation of the municipality).
   - Assessing the opportunities and risks of going international.

2. *Consistent internationalisation strategy*
   - Building an internationalisation strategy consistent with the city model and embedded in strategic planning.
   - Defining a policy of citizen participation and alliances with local actors and collectives.

- Setting clear objectives for the municipality's external action policy with a breakdown by sector or department (axes of internationalisation).
- Assessment of the expected results, distinguishing the beneficiaries of these results.

3. *Operational programming*
   - Development of a specific programme of actions.
   - Drawing up of the expected results of each action.
   - Identification of indicators or instruments to measure the expected effects.

It would also be necessary to have the data collected through the monitoring of the different activities during the plan's implementation period.

Without this groundwork, the evaluation exercise will not be as comprehensive and productive. It should be explicitly limited to sectoral evaluations (plans for a certain facet of the IAs) or to evaluations of specific events or actions.

8.2. The need to draw up expected effects and impacts beforehand

A second aspect to highlight is the need for the LG to have identified and drawn up the results it hopes to achieve through its international actions as clearly as possible. Very few cities go to the effort of specifying their expectations. One notable exception is the city of Montreal, which explicitly draws up its desired results and impacts.[31] In this particular case, it is worth noting that Montreal distinguishes between the desired effects for the city and for the world, which shows that the city is aware of the role it wants to play as a trailblazer of the municipalist movement.

It is also clear to city officials that the evaluation of this across-the-board policy is highly complex, which is why they emphasise that: "in international relations, some results are tangible, others less so; some are measurable, others are tougher to evaluate; and some depend on variables that are sometimes beyond our control."[32]

Despite these challenges, LGs should strive to explicitly state why they have undertaken and developed an IA and what they expect from it, because it is of great use when it comes to building more effective monitoring and evaluation tools.

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31. In reality, this formulation is still in the early stages: it is often limited to simply citing the international events that the city will be awarded, without evaluating their impact on the community, and without diversifying by social groups or collectives. Nevertheless, it is a useful initial attempt to explicitly state what is expected from the international action.

32. The Montreal Strategic Framework for International Relations, 2017, p. 11.

8.3. Detailed identification of the possible desired effects of the international action

Beyond its general expectations regarding the IAs, the LG should also make the desired positive effects explicit, at least in a broader sense, and choose the most relevant indicators in each case. In this regard, the table below (table 6) is limited to suggesting certain items, in order to help LGs to establish their own forecast table.

Table 6. Summarised presentation of the positive effects sought (according to the types of objectives described in chapter 2)

Type of actions taken by the LG	Desired effects	Possible indicators
A. VISIBILITY OF THE CITY TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD • Campaign to promote the city abroad • Promotion of local products on the external market	• Increased visibility of the city • Improving external image • Increased exports by companies in the city	• Improvement of the city's position in the various rankings of recognition and global valuation • Number of economic promotion missions abroad • Number of local companies involved • Evolution of the percentage of local production being sent abroad
B. ATTRACTION OF EXTERNAL RESOURCES • Foreign investment and business attraction campaigns • Tourism promotion programme • Incentives to set up research and knowledge centres • Holding international trade fairs and events of an economic nature	• Establishment of new production activities • Job creation • Attraction of tourist flows • Talent recruitment • Attracting entrepreneurs and professionals	• Improving the city's position in attractiveness rankings • Increase in the amount of foreign investment • Number of companies set up • Number of jobs created • Change in the number of tourists • Seasonal hotel occupancy • Importance of the event: number of exhibiting companies, number of participants, public, etc. • Occasional hotel occupancy • Grants obtained (from public and private sources)
C. HORIZONTAL EXCHANGES BETWEEN LOCAL INSTITUTIONS	• Improving local public policies • Dissemination of good practices developed in the city	• Number of departments and areas that have benefited from the exchanges • Number of technicians involved in external contacts • Number of foreign cities with which exchanges have taken place or partnerships been forged • Participation in the themed networks of cities

Table 6. Summarised presentation of the positive effects sought (according to the types of objectives described in chapter 2)

Type of actions taken by the LG	Desired effects	Possible indicators
D. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND SOLIDARITY • Direct cooperation actions by the city council • Support for solidarity associations in the municipality • Education for development	• Forging relationships and links with local institutions in the south • Support to local NGDOs • Increasing public awareness of international inequalities • Mobilisation of youth and the general public	• Number of partner cities • Indicators of the frequency and intensity of relationships • Municipal budget dedicated to cooperation (distinguishing direct cooperation and support to NGDO projects) • List of public awareness events and shows • Youth volunteering actions: frequency and number of participants • Effects on southern partners (some indicators)
E. CULTURAL OPENNESS AND VALUING DIVERSITY	• A cultural offer that is permeable and open to external contributions • Development of international contacts and exchanges • Projecting local creation outwards • More relevance and prominence to the presence of foreign community groups living in the city • Combatting stereotypes or prejudices against foreigners • Review and reconsideration of the participation of migrant groups in local life	• Evolution of the number of shows scheduled with foreign participation and percentage of the total cultural offer, by areas (theatre, music, visual arts, etc.) • Number of festivals and cultural events with external projection (evolution of audiences and geographic origin) • Actions to promote the cultural diversity of the city: activities carried out, frequency and audience, spaces and facilities available • Number of young people who have participated in international exchanges
F. DEFENCE OF MUNICIPAL INTERESTS	• Presence and engagement in the spaces of political and strategic collaboration of LGs • Leadership and international projection of the city on certain issues	• List of municipal networks and organisations to which the city belongs • Active participation in relevant events, forums and steering councils • Indicators of international recognition of the city as a benchmark in the cities movement

Table 6. Summarised presentation of the positive effects sought (according to the types of objectives described in chapter 2)

Type of actions taken by the LG	Desired effects	Possible indicators
G. IMPACT ON GLOBAL AGENDAS AND ON KEY ISSUES FOR THE LOCAL WORLD	• Commitment of the city to the solution of certain global problems (climate change, migration, etc.) • Mobilisation against the effects of globalisation on local spaces (housing, tourist overcrowding, etc.)	• Actions taken in each strategic sector and indicators on pollution, mobility, reception of migrants and refugees, etc. • Indicators on the control and reversal of the most serious phenomena (financial speculation, tourist saturation, etc.) • Indicators of the city's commitment and leadership in these fields

8.4. The detection and control of undesired effects

In the previous section, we had no difficulty in identifying the desired positive effects of IAs and establishing an initial table to summarise them. On the other hand, reflection on the undesired effects of certain internationalisation strategies is still in the early stages. As indicated above, it would be advisable for the LG to address this issue and ensure that it deals with it before designing and implementing the evaluation of its foreign policy.

To illustrate the groundwork that an LG would have to do, the example of the city of Barcelona can be taken, where the municipal policy of attracting luxury tourism and overdevelopment of hotel capacity pursued by previous city governments has been called into question.

Some qualitative indicators, reflecting the degree of public concern and discontent with these phenomena, have come to the attention of the current LG. For example, in recent years, tourism has been cited as one of the city's main problems in the municipal barometer, and citizen platforms have been set up to make their voices heard against excessive tourism, holiday lets, rising rents and the increase in evictions (all phenomena considered to be a consequence, at least partly, of the increase in tourism).

The current LG, backed up by citizen surveys, is of the view that international actions geared towards attracting massive flows of tourists and cruise passengers has led to saturation, and that this model should be halted or reversed.

In this regard, the city council has realised that it must measure and control a number of phenomena that had not been sufficiently taken into account, including, for example:

- The initial public cost of investment and equipment.[33]
- The recurrent cost of maintaining, operating and cleaning these infrastructures.
- The environmental effect and in particular the pollution of the harbour and the sea.
- The seasonality, precariousness and low quality of the jobs created.
- Collateral consequences, such as illegal street vending.
- The concentration of tourist spending on luxury goods, taxis, museums and hotels.
- The displacement of traditional shops away from the city's main commercial streets.
- The transformation of shopping centres into a showcase for luxury European designer goods (Ch. Dior, Louis Vuitton, etc.).
- The loss of identity and the city's personality, transformed into a kind of theme park for Asian, American and European upper classes.
- The corresponding cultural impoverishment, with the assertion of stereotypes about Spain that do not correspond to the local culture.
- Criminal activities that go hand in hand with mass tourism in the city.
- Nuisance caused by crowding in public spaces.

Faced with these phenomena, the LG could choose to look at the effects as collateral consequences and give priority to the interests of the hotel industry and the objective of economic promotion. Conversely, it could also decide to take the side of the citizens concerned and show a willingness to change the objectives of its international action. In this case, we can clearly see the political and not strictly technical nature of the LG's position and the direction it could take its international action in.

As can be seen, the same phenomenon (for example, in this case, tourism) can have both positive and negative effects. It is always ambivalent. The problem lies in knowing how to detect when saturation point is reached, and when and why the negative effects prevail over the positive. Furthermore, it is important to be in a position to discern the differentiated impact of the phenomena as mentioned above: which actors and groups of citizens benefit from a particular international policy orientation and who is negatively affected by it.

It is therefore clear that the preliminary analysis of the LG in the preparation and design phase of the evaluation should include a critical reflection on the possible undesired effects and negative impact of IA policy. By way of example, we can offer an initial outline of a table (Table 7) that would allow an LG to collect and keep a record of these aspects.

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33. For example, the transformation of the port to accommodate the biggest cruise ships in the Mediterranean, to the detriment of other investments.

Table 7. Some possible negative effects

Here, we will cite only a few simple examples, which are already evident in many cities:

Phenomenon	Possible effects (undesired)	Indicators
Transforming the city into a mass tourist destination	• Increased public cost (public investments in port or airport infrastructures) • Holiday apartments • Mass low-quality tourism • Traffic in certain neighbourhoods • Rising rents • Illegal street vending on the rise • Dirt and urban maintenance problems • Creation of low-skilled and temporary jobs	• Public dissatisfaction with tourism and street demonstrations • Conflicts of cohabitation or coexistence in the public space (municipal barometer) • Increase in the rate of precarious employment • Pollution
Speculation with housing	• Entire buildings being bought by investment funds • Tenants being driven out of certain neighbourhoods • Financial pressure on housing • Decrease in social housing • Rent increases • Evictions • Increasing social segregation by neighbourhood	• Empty flats (speculation) • Real-estate transactions involving the development of luxury flats • Exodus of poor tenants and young people to other neighbourhoods or cities (export of urban poverty)
Effects of collaborative platforms on employment (Uber, Airbnb, etc.)	• Transformation of salaried employment into false self-employment • Precarisation of employment and loss of basic labour rights	• Employment created by platforms, as a percentage of total employment (e.g., Uber versus taxi drivers) • Labour disputes around these new business models

As noted above, tables 6 and 7 are presented as an indication. Each LG should construct its own tables, taking into account the specific situation of the municipality.

> *Some highlights:*
>
> 1. The quality of the evaluation depends first and foremost on the quality of the LG's capacity to plan and foresee. It is important for the plan to have explicitly drawn up the objectives that the LG assigns to its international action and identified the actors and target groups.
>
> 2. The LG should also foresee and be aware of the impacts it wishes to detect and verify, as this is important to be able to evaluate them.
>
> 3. It is also important for the LG to have established mechanisms that allow for actor participation, communication and transparency with citizens and civil society associations.

Conclusion
Concluding remarks aimed at local governments

Generally speaking, the foregoing observations emphasise that evaluating IAs is not an exercise that is external to the LG, which can be delegated or entrusted to a specialised office without the significant involvement of the local institution's technical and political decision-makers.

On the contrary, the entire Guide shows that LG plays a key role in both the planning and the assessment phase of IAs.

In the first phase, the LG must explicitly set out its objectives, precisely determine the actors and groups targeted by its actions, forge alliances with local actors and groups that will participate in the exercise and, finally, foresee and *anticipate the possible impacts*, as the required condition for the evaluation to have a significant impact.

In the second phase, it must decide the type of evaluation it is seeking, come up with guidelines, draw up the terms of reference for contracting the technical support team, establish the participation mechanisms, organise communication with the public and build the specific instruments for collecting information that will enable it to provide answers to the questions formulated.

These tasks are demanding for an LG that is not always adequately equipped, but they ensure that the LG and citizens will learn the best lessons and get the most out of the evaluation of municipal IAs.