

حـوار المـدن العربيـة الأوروبيـة ARAB EUROPEAN CITIES DIALOGUE Riyadh 2025

### ARAB EUROPEAN CITIES DIALOGUE 2025 DETAILED GUIDEBOOK

Bridging Cities, Building Futures





On behalf of the AECD team, we sincerely thank all of you who have confirmed your participation in the inaugural Arab European Cities Dialogue (AECD), taking place in Riyadh on May 11, 2025. The following presentation provides an overview of the rich three-day program and key highlights.

*Kindly note that certain actions require your attention, indicated by this symbol:* 

We look forward to an engaging and impactful gathering! AECD Team

## CONTENT









TARGETED PARTICIPANTS









Arab-European Cities Dialogue | Confidential



## **AECD OVERVIEW**

Arab-European Cities Dialogue | Confidential



The "Arab-European Cities Dialogue" forum is a global-regional event that aims to create a space for cooperation, enhance communication, and build relationships between representatives of Arab and European cities and municipalities, including mayors, presidents, secretaries, and governors, with the participation of influential players in international development, such as international urban organizations, municipal unions, and donor institutions.



### STAKEHOLDERS

#### THE FIRST HOSTING CITY OF AECD:

### **RIYADH**

#### Saudi Arabia

Will host the first edition of the Arab European Cities Dialogue

#### **HOSTED BY:**





#### **ORGANIZERS:**







#### Arab Urban Development Institute (AUDI)

A Pan-Arab, non-governmental organization, specialized in research and capacity development in the fields of urban development and municipal affairs.

#### **PLATFORMA**

A pan-European coalition of towns and regions – and their national, EU and global associations – active in city-to-city and region-to- region development cooperation, hosted by Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)

### The agency of international cooperation of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNGI-CILG)

The regional MENA office of VNG International, with expertise in the technical and political level of local government enhancing decentralized cooperation and building strong bridges with European and Worldwide organizations.



### • RITZ-CARLTON HOTELS RIYADH SAUDI ARABIA





## WHY SHOULD YOU **\* PARTICIPATE IN AECD**?

**CONNECT** WITH **120+** Mayors

Of major cities from Arab and European regions



#### DISCOVER **20+** LARGE SCALE PROJECTS

In Riyadh, a city in transformation through urban visits



## **AECD PROGRAM**

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**SELECTED THEMES CRITERIA** 

THEMES

#### ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF CITIES

Supporting cities in tackling their unique challenges and priorities to foster sustainable development and enhance urban life.

#### **EMPHASIZING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MUNICIPAL OPERATIONS** Highlighting the vital role of efficient daily municipal operations in

delivering essential services and maintaining infrastructure for better quality of life.

#### SUSTAINING LEADERSHIP AND DIALOGUE AMONG CITIES Promoting continuous collaboration and knowledge exchange among cities to address shared challenges and drive collective progress.

#### **APPROVED THEMES**

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The following themes represent the collective concerns of Arab and European cities:

LIVEABLE CITIES AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**MUNICIPAL FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY** 

**TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION** 

**CITIES COOPERATION** 



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### ACTIVITIES

#### The Arab European Cities Dialogue

is designed to have **6 major activities** that reflect the objectives of the event over a **3-day program**, as follow:

Further details are provided in the following slides	<b>01</b> PLENARY AND THEMATIC SESSIONS	<b>O2</b> CITIES NETWORKING	<b>O3</b> CITIES LEADERSHIP FORUM	<b>O4</b> URBAN FINANCING FORUM	05 FORUM FOR LOCAL ACTION	06 URBAN AND CULTURAL VISITS
	Discussions with mayors and experts highlighting good practices and common challenges to address urban challenges	Meetings between cities to network and explore potential future collaborations	A meeting of Arab and European cities to discuss the governance of the AECD	A session between cities and funding agencies to gain insights from experts on project proposals	Sessions organized by international organizations, oriented towards dealing with urban day-to-day challenges (workshops, trainings, etc.)	A journey to Riyadh's most renowned urban projects and unique sightseeing highlights

### AGENDA

#### Subject to change

Time	HEAD OF DELEGATION	ACCOMPANYING DELEGATION	
09:30 - 15:00	Day Program (11 May 2025)		
09:30 - 10:30	Registration		
10:30 - 11:00	Opening Ceremony		
11:20 - 12:20	Plenary Session 1 on Cities Cooperation		
12:30 - 13:30	Lunch		
13:30 - 15:30	Cities Networking	Forum for Local Action	

Note: this flexible time between can be used for rest and/or networking (bilateral meetings)

18:00 - 22:00	Evening Program	
	Tour	Venue Dinner
	Gala Dinner	venue Dinnei

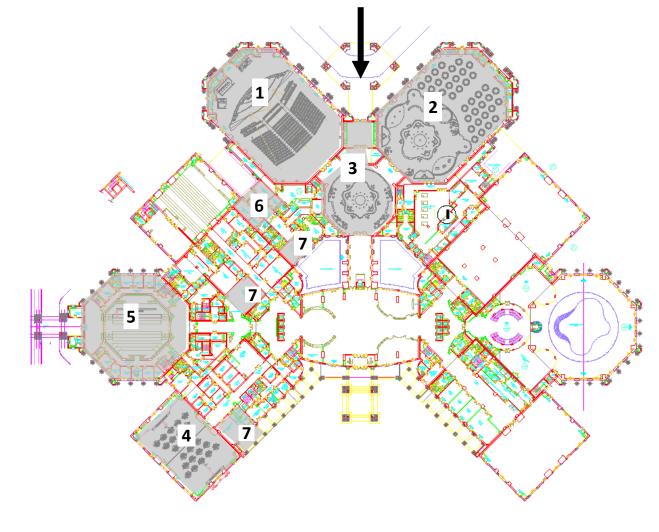
09:00 - 16:00	Day Program (12 May 2025)		
09:00 - 10:00	Plenary Session 2 on Livable Cities And Climate Change		
10:00 – 11:00	Plenary Session 3 on Technology And Digital Transformation		
11:10 – 13:20	Cities Leadership Forum	Forum for Local Action	
13:40 - 14:30	Lunch		
14:30 – 16:00	Forum for Local Action		
Note: this flexible time between can be used for rest and/or networking (bilateral meeting			
17:00 – 22:00	Evening Program		
	Urban Visits		
	Venue Dinner		

09:00 - 13:40	Day Program (13 May 2025)		
9:00 - 10:00	Plenary Session 4 on Municipal Financial Sustainability		
10:00 – 13:00	Urban Financing Forum Forum for Local Action		
13:10 – 13:40	Closing Session		
13:40	lunch		
Note: this flexible time between can be used for rest and/or networking (bilateral meetings			
17:00 – 22:00	Evening Program		
	Urban Visits		
	Venue Dinner		

Heads of delegation include mayors. While accompanying delegations includes city delegations, LGAs and organizations.

Once the list of confirmed cities and organizations is shared, bilateral meetings can be scheduled during the AECD event. For any specific arrangements, please coordinate with the organizers in advance.

### AECD ACTIVITIES TAKING PLACE ACROSS THE VENUE





#### THE RITZ - CARLTON

RIYADH

Code	AECD Activities	Ritz-Carlton Hall Availability
1	Plenary Sessions Forum for Local Action <i>(Day 1 &amp; 2)</i> Urban Financing Forum	Ballroom A
2	AECD Lounge Lunch Area	Ballroom B
3	Registration Networking Area	Ballroom's Foyer
4	Cities Networking Cities Leadership Forum Forum for Local Action <i>(Day 3)</i>	Meeting Rooms A & B
5	Forum for Local Action	Auditorium
6	H.H. Majlis	H.H. Majlis
7	Mayors Lounges	Multiple Halls



## **AECD ACTIVITIES**

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## PLENARY SESSIONS

Moderated discussions with **Mayors, as head of delegations**, highlighting good practices and common challenges under the notion of "what works"



#### Each session will include

- On-Stage Discussion with Mayors (Arab & European)
- Engagement: Interactive Q&A platform being explored
- Live translation (English-Arabic)\*

#### **Sessions Overview**

Theme	Session Title	Key Focus Areas
Cities Cooperation	Beyond Borders: Transforming Cities through Global Cooperation	Best practices, global partnerships, city diplomacy; challenges; and role of city networks
Livable Cities And Climate Change	Towards Resilience: Climate Adaptation & Mitigation in Arab and European Cities	Adaptation and mitigation, financing mechanism, regulatory policies, sustainability and best practices
Technology And Digital Transformation	Digital Transformation in Urban Governance: Insights from European and Arab Cities	Smart governance, AI in cities, challenges and best practices, public-private innovation; public participation
Municipal Financial Sustainability	Local Economic Development and Investment: Strategies for Sustainable Urban Growth	Local economic development, investment strategies, challenges and opportunities, institutional capacities, cross-border cooperation

\* Possibility to accommodate more languages upon request (such as **French** and **Spanish**); final approved list of interpretation languages will be aligned with Guest Management stream.

### 01

#### **Beyond Borders** Transforming Cities through Global Cooperation

This session examines the role of city-to-city cooperation between European and Arab cities in tackling shared challenges through cultural exchanges, climate action, economic opportunities, and city diplomacy. It highlights the value of such partnerships, strategies for success, and the role of networks, with examples from ongoing initiatives.



### 03

### Digital Transformation in Urban Governance

Insights from European and Arab Cities

This session explores the digital transition in urban governance across European and Arab cities, focusing on its opportunities and challenges. Mayors and officials will share experiences, discuss trends, and highlight successful initiatives while addressing the complexities and limitations of the transformation process.



#### **Towards Resilience**

#### Climate Adaptation and Mitigation in Arab and European Cities

Arab and European cities face shared climate challenges, including water scarcity, rising temperatures, flooding risks, and decarbonization. This session highlights practical city initiatives in adaptation, mitigation, funding strategies, and partnerships, fostering collaboration to tackle climate change.

04

#### **Local Economic Development and Investment** Strategies for Sustainable Urban Growth

This session will explore local economic development and investment strategies, addressing resource access, regulatory hurdles, and institutional capacity in cities. It will highlight balancing infrastructure and economic growth, fostering cooperation, and tackling development amid global crises.



## CITIES NETWORKING

A session for cities' heads of delegation to introduce themselves and catalyze collaboration and networking opportunities throughout the event and beyond.



#### **EXPECTED OUTCOMES**



- **Facilitated Introductions:** City representatives engage in a dynamic exchange, introducing themselves through the "One Image, One Story" format—sharing their name, city, a flagship project, and their city's key expertise.
- **Enhanced Peer Collaboration:** Participants identify common interests and potential areas for collaboration, fostering meaningful connections that extend beyond the AECD event.

#### **ONE IMAGE**

APPROAC

- Step 1: Submission Before the Event, each City should submit one high-quality image in advance.
- Step 2: Image Showcase During the Event.
- Step 3: Quick Interaction (Tell Your Story) in 1 min.
- Digital Exhibition (Bonus Feature): During the event, all submitted images can be displayed in a gallery (physical or digital) with short captions from the cities.

#### Until April 25<sup>th</sup> - Share Your City's Story Through a Single Image (<u>Submit Here</u>)

#### **KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

- Engaging, Energetic, and Active introductory session
- Enabling tools will facilitate the session: Screen, auto-mic cut off, etc.
- Translation (Arabic English) services will be offered to ensure equitable engagement



## CITIES LEADERSHIP FORUM

A meeting of Arab and European Heads of Delegation to discuss the future and governance of the AECD



#### **SESSION FOCUS**

The main focus of this activity is to explore and present various dimensions of AECD's sustainability, ensuring its long-term viability as a platform for dialogue and collaboration.

Key aspects to be discussed include:

- Governance Structure
- Funding & Financial Resources
- Sponsorship & Strategic Partnerships
- Ensuring Continuous Participation



## URBAN FINANCING FORUM

City representatives present urban development proposals to funding institutions for feedback and matchmaking.

### Together with metropolis •



#### **OBJECTIVES**



- **Foster Dialogue:** Connect Arab & European city representatives with funding agencies for collaboration.
- **Enable Peer Learning:** Share best practices on municipal financing mechanisms and innovative urban solutions.
- **Bridge Funding Gaps:** Link city-led projects to suitable financing channels, including donors and investment mechanisms.
  - A call is sent to cities attending AECD to express interest in presenting projects and receiving feedback from funding institutions.



- 8 proposals from 8 cities will be selected to be presented during AECD to funding institutions and dialogue will take place around them.
  - Participation is **open** to projects across all urban-related fields.

Until April 5<sup>th</sup> – Submit your city proposal (<u>Submit Here</u>)



## URBAN FINANCING FORUM

City representatives present urban development proposals to funding institutions for feedback and matchmaking.

Together with metropolis •



#### **IMPORTANT DATES**



- First week of January 2025: Launch call for proposals
- 5th of April: Closure of the call for proposals
- 14th of April: Announcement of the selected projects
- 5th of May: Finalizing the presentation of selected cities
- 13th of May: Urban Financing Forum, on the closing day of the 1st AECD

#### **PANEL & STRUCTURE:**

- A facilitated session involving funding agencies and cities, organized into two distinct tracks
  - **Solution Track** Showcase urban funding and financing models adopted by funding agencies.
  - Action Track Matchmake session were city project holders pitch to investors and funding agencies for direct engagement.
- Translation (Arabic English) services will be offered to ensure equitable engagement

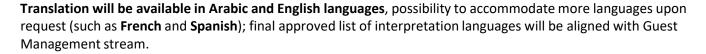


## FORUM FOR LOCAL ACTION

Semi-formal sessions organized by international organizations, oriented towards dealing with urban day-to-day challenges



Empowering Young Local Leaders through Intergenerational Dialogue and Decentralised Development Cooperation	Understanding The Impact of Urban Growth Patterns on Land Surface Temperature	Cities Cooperation for Urban Good
Successful multi-lateral Governance and Co-creation Processes	Building Resilient and Inclusive Smart Cities: Advancing Digital Transformation for Sustainability, Innovation, and Quality of Life	And Much More



14

Sessions

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Approx. **70** 

Mins

**Each Session** 

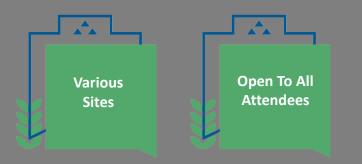
Open to All

Attendees



## **URBAN VISITS**

Offer participants an exclusive opportunity to experience Riyadh's most transformative urban projects



Guided visits aim to highlight innovative approaches to sustainable urban development, smart city infrastructure, and cultural preservation. This activity is meant to:

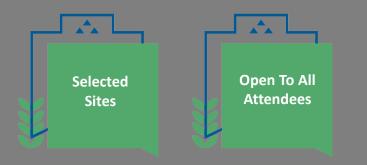
- Explore Riyadh's Flagship Projects: Firsthand experience on how major urban projects are shaping the future of Riyadh, aligning with national development goals.
- Learn from Leading Urban Initiatives: Insights into sustainability, smart cities, mobility, and urban resilience, reflecting AECD's core themes.
- **Engage with Experts:** Hear from experts that provide in-depth perspectives on the project.
- Explore Successful Public-Private Partnerships (PPP): Reviewing governance models and strategies shaping Riyadh's urban landscape.
- Enjoy a Curated Experience: Planning experience that ensure smooth and seamless participation, accessibility and logistics.

In the upcoming weeks, before the AECD, a registration system will be sent to those interested in participating in the urban visits for logistical arrangements.



### **URBAN VISITS**

Offer participants an exclusive opportunity to experience Riyadh's most transformative urban projects



Before arriving in Riyadh, explore some of its key urban projects





# TARGETED PARTICIPANTS





In the upcoming weeks, we will be sharing the list of participating cities, LGAs, funding agencies and international organization.



## HOST CITY

Arab-European Cities Dialogue | Confidential



### RIYADH

#### A Hub for Cooperation and the First Host of the AECD

Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, stretches across 1,554 km2 and has established itself as a hub for pioneering urban, cultural, and entertainment projects. Including the recently launched **King Abdulaziz Project for Riyadh Public Transport**, aimed at enhancing the quality of life for its residents. In addition, Riyadh is emerging as a global destination for hosting prestigious international events, including **Riyadh Expo 2030** and the **FIFA World Cup 2034**.

In this context, Riyadh emerges as a dynamic hub for dialogue and collaboration to tackle pressing urban challenges. Undergoing a remarkable transformative journey, the Saudi capital presents unique opportunities and navigates complex challenges, cementing its pivotal role on both regional and global stages. By building bridges, forging partnerships, and fostering cooperation, Riyadh continues to shape the future of urban connectivity and collaboration.

As the first host of this prestigious forum, the Riyadh Municipality is committed to creating a platform for sharing experiences across urban, municipal, and economic domains. This event will serve as a valuable opportunity for cities and municipalities to explore Riyadh's major urban transformative projects and immerse themselves in the rich historical and cultural journey of the Kingdom's capital.

We look forward to welcoming you to Riyadh!





## LOGISTICAL NOTE



- Our logistical team (through this email address: <u>aecd-event@araburban.org</u>) is currently coordinating with confirmed city delegates to arrange flights and accommodation.
- For visa arrangements, our dedicated team will guide you through the process shortly.
- Additionally, we are developing a pre-registration system for select activities to ensure a smooth and seamless experience during the AECD event. More details will be shared soon.

Thank you for your cooperation and prompt responses.

We look forward to welcoming you to Riyadh!

### AECD Team



### FOR ANY QUESTIONS



AECD@ARABURBAN.ORG

#AECD2025 #AECDRiyadh #CitiesComingTogether #BridgingCities #BuildingFutures #OneImageOneStory

## Thank you



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### *"Bridging Cities, Building Futures"*