

Wish Cities

Integrated System for the
Well-being of Young People

Innovation Transfer Network

INVESTMENT PLAN
Municipality of
Cartagena

WISH CITIES

Integrated System for the Well-being of Young People

Investment Plan for Wish Cities in Cartagena



Ayuntamiento
Cartagena

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SECTION 1. The policy context

1.1 Needs analysis in the territorial context

Cartagena (Region of Murcia, Spain) has **218.050 inhabitants**, of whom **36.454** are aged **15-29** (17,7% of the total). The region shows **high levels of deprivation** and **child poverty**: in 2023, **15,7%** of minors were living in *extreme* poverty (regional estimate), signalling structural inequality that disproportionately affects children and young people in certain neighbourhoods.

Beyond income poverty, Cartagena faces **uneven access to youth opportunities, services and information across neighbourhoods**, together with a **participation gap at the transition to adulthood**. While the city is recognised by UNICEF as a Child-Friendly City and runs a robust Municipal Council for Children and Adolescents (CLIA), there is **no formal civic mechanism for 18+ youth**, leading to a drop-off in voice and engagement once young people age out at 18.



Cartagena's designation as a UNICEF Child-Friendly City.

1.2 The policy response

Cartagena's response to the challenge of youth wellbeing and participation is grounded in a coherent, multi-level policy framework that spans the local, regional, national and European scales.

At city level, the **Municipal Plan for Children and Adolescents 2023-2027** (*Plan Local de Infancia y Adolescencia*, PLIA) provides the overarching strategic and operational framework. It guides coordinated action across Social Policy, Equality and Family, Youth, Education and Sports, and is underpinned by a network of established coordination bodies -both internal and with social entities- as well as the annual Children's Plenary held each year on 20 November.



This architecture has been shaped and reinforced by Cartagena's status as a **UNICEF Child-Friendly City**, a recognition held since 2017 and revalidated through the current PLIA. The Child-Friendly City framework carries

concrete obligations: the municipality is required to maintain active and documented participation channels for children and adolescents, to demonstrate measurable progress against the five UNICEF framework objectives - that children's voices are heard in policies and budgets; that all children access quality essential services; that they live in safe and clean environments; that they are valued and respected; and that they have opportunity for play, leisure and family life. It must also report to UNICEF at mid-term and at the point of each four-year renewal. These obligations make meaningful participation not merely a policy aspiration but a formal institutional commitment, with evidence and accountability requirements attached. The Investment Plan directly extends this architecture to the 18-35 age group, ensuring continuity of the

participatory governance model beyond the point at which young people currently age out of the CLIA.

At regional level, the Investment Plan aligns with the **Plan de Juventud 'OporTÚnidades' 2024-2027** of the Region of Murcia, the current strategic framework for youth policy managed by the Consejería de Turismo, Cultura, Juventud y Deportes. The plan covers people aged 14 to 40, sets out 60 measures with a budget of over €77 million, and is structured around three life stages: *Comienza* (14-24), *Actúa* (25-30) and *Gana* (31-40). Its priorities -participation, non-formal education, wellbeing, employment and social inclusion- are directly consistent with the objectives of this Investment Plan, and its explicit commitment to youth participation as a cross-cutting principle provides a strong regional anchor for Cartagena's approach.

At national level, the Investment Plan is consistent with two complementary frameworks: the **Estrategia de Juventud 2030**, which sets Spain's long-term strategic direction on youth empowerment, participation and social inclusion; and the **Estrategia Estatal de Derechos de la Infancia y de la Adolescencia 2023-2030**, which articulates a rights-based approach to children and young people across all levels of government and includes a specific commitment to meaningful participation in public life - reinforcing the obligations that flow from Cartagena's UNICEF recognition.

At EU level, the Investment Plan is consistent with the 2021-2027 programming period, particularly:

- **EU Cohesion Policy 2021-2027 - Policy Objective 4** (A More Social and Inclusive Europe);
- the **European Pillar of Social Rights** (including Principle 11 on childcare and support to children);
- and the **EU Child Guarantee** and the **EU Youth Strategy**, with their shared emphasis on youth engagement, participation and wellbeing.

The Investment Plan also reflects the three cross-cutting principles embedded in the EU 2021-2027 framework and in URBACT's programme priorities. **Gender equality** is considered throughout, ensuring that the design and delivery of youth participation structures actively address potential barriers to access and representation, and that

evidence gathered is systematically disaggregated to capture differences in needs and outcomes across genders. **Digital transition** is recognised both as an enabler of more inclusive and evidence-informed participation, and as a substantive area of relevance to young people's lives that the initiative seeks to engage with. **Green transition** is embedded as a cross-cutting lens, acknowledging that young people have a particular stake in the long-term sustainability of their city and that their voice should inform decisions on the urban environment, public space and the quality of life in their neighbourhoods.

Within this framework, Cartagena's response prioritises: (i) sustained youth participation beyond age 18 through a formal advisory pathway; (ii) better-informed local decisions by strengthening evidence and feedback loops; and (iii) wider, fairer access to opportunities and services for young people - priorities that are fully compatible with EU 2021-2027 objectives on social inclusion, equal access to services and youth empowerment.

Through WISH CITIES, **Cartagena is translating the WISH MI approach into an integrated local response** to the challenge of youth wellbeing and participation beyond the age of 18. The Investment Plan brings together **four mutually reinforcing lines of action: a formal Youth Participation Group, a neighbourhood-level evidence base, a governance framework to embed young people's perspectives in municipal processes, and a non-formal education pathway** to widen participation and support youth development. Together, these actions strengthen the city's **institutional capacity to engage young people in a structured, meaningful and consequential way**, while contributing to **local, regional and EU 2021-2027 priorities** on inclusion, youth empowerment and better-informed policymaking.

SECTION 2. The investment proposal

2.1 Background to the proposal

Cartagena participates in **WISH CITIES**, an URBACT Innovation Transfer Network (ITN) led by the City of Milan, whose purpose is to adapt and transfer the **WISH MI** model of integrated youth wellbeing to six partner cities across Europe. The ITN provides a structured transnational pathway -combining peer learning, local testing and evidence capture- through which each partner city tailors the innovative practice to its own governance context, services and population. For Cartagena, the strategic rationale for participation is clear: the city has built a strong and recognised participation system for children and adolescents under 18, but lacks a formal, resourced structure that extends beyond that threshold. The ITN offers both the methodology and the peer support to address this gap in a credible, evidence-grounded way.

WISH MI is an integrated urban innovation developed by the City of Milan that reframes youth wellbeing as a systemic policy challenge requiring coordinated action across services, spaces and participation. Its innovative character lies in three distinct dimensions. First, it operates across **multiple policy domains simultaneously** - education, health, culture, social services and urban planning- rather than addressing youth needs through a single sectoral lens. Second, it positions **young people as active co-designers** of the services and spaces that affect them, rather than as passive beneficiaries of provision. Third, it introduces **structured tools for equitable access**, acknowledging that participation and opportunity are not equally distributed across a city's neighbourhoods and population groups. Together, these dimensions represent a departure from conventional youth service models and constitute the core of what makes WISH MI transferable as an urban innovation.

In practice, the model operates through four mutually reinforcing components: a **digital catalogue** of opportunities and services available to young people; **voucher schemes** (individual and collective) to support equitable access and co-design; **neighbourhood hubs** as proximity spaces for teenagers; and a **Youth Ambassadors programme**

embedded within City Hall to sustain a direct bridge between young people and municipal administration.

The results achieved in Milan demonstrate both the social reach and the institutional depth of the model: a catalogue of approximately 360 services spanning arts, supplementary education and health; more than 1,000 households activating individual vouchers, generating over 5,000 activity participations -with 63% of beneficiaries reporting they would not have engaged without the voucher support; six neighbourhood hubs piloted with a focus on the 14–18 age group; and a community of over 130 Youth Ambassadors sustaining an ongoing relationship between young people and the city administration. These outcomes confirm that the practice has achieved meaningful scale and generated genuine institutional learning - both of which are essential preconditions for successful transfer to a new context.

Within the ITN, Cartagena is selectively adapting the building blocks of WISH MI to its own priorities and governance structures. The adapted approach is organised around four interconnected lines of action: establishing a formal **Youth Participation Group** that extends the city's existing under-18 architecture to the 18–35 age group; developing a **structured data management model** -drawing on practice from both Milan and the partner city of Pori- to build an evidence base for youth wellbeing at neighbourhood level; designing a **youth governance framework** that embeds the perspective of young people systematically into relevant public policy processes across the municipality; and promoting and consolidating **non-formal education** as a meaningful pathway for young people's development and social participation.

2.2 Our starting point

Cartagena (218,050 inhabitants, of whom 36,454 **-17.7%- are aged between 15 and 29**) combines a strong and institutionally recognised participation ecosystem for children and adolescents under 18 with a significant gap at the transition to adulthood. Despite holding UNICEF Child-Friendly City status and operating an active Municipal Council for Children and Adolescents (CLIA), **the municipality has no formal, resourced participation structure for young people aged 18 and over**. The consequence is a drop-off in voice and civic continuity at the very point when young people age out of the

CLIA -leaving a cohort of motivated, often well-prepared individuals without a structured channel through which to remain engaged in public life. This gap is compounded by fragmented access to opportunities and uneven information about available services across the city's neighbourhoods. At regional level, **an estimated 15.7% of minors were living in extreme poverty in 2023**, a figure that signals deep structural inequalities disproportionately affecting children and young people, and that reinforces the case for targeted, evidence-informed responses.



UNICEF Cities Council meeting in Cartagena.

Prior to the WISH CITIES ITN, Cartagena had already established a solid foundation for under-18 participation: the CLIA operates with clear procedures, an annual Children's Plenary (held each 20 November), and active coordination bodies linking municipal departments with social entities. However, no equivalent structure existed for the 18-35 age group, and no systematic mechanism was in place to ensure that the perspective of young people was routinely integrated into relevant municipal policy processes. During the ITN process, the city took a series of deliberate steps **to test the feasibility of extending its participation architecture**: a youth group of twelve members aged 18 and over was formed; internal rules of procedure and a set of priority themes were drafted; and a pilot round of structured meetings was convened, producing advisory input that fed into the November 2025 civic moments. These steps confirmed both the operational viability of the model and the genuine demand among young people for a stable, recognised pathway.

The city's interest in adapting and transferring the WISH MI model rests on a clear strategic fit. Milan's experience demonstrates that it is possible to build an integrated system that links participation, data and service access in a coherent, governance-anchored way -precisely the combination that Cartagena needs. The model offered concrete mechanisms applicable to Cartagena's context: an approach to organising and communicating opportunities to young people; tools for equitable access and co-design that can inform future instruments such as participatory budgeting; a neighbourhood-level lens for understanding disparities in wellbeing and participation; and a framework for embedding youth input systematically within municipal governance. The ITN's transnational peer learning format -complemented by the experience of partner cities including Vila Nova de Gaia, Dublin and Pori- provides the structured support needed to adapt these elements responsibly to Cartagena's own institutional context.

At the start of the ITN, a number of significant **assets** were identified. The CLIA provides a recognised and procedurally mature participation system with established interdepartmental links and legitimacy across municipal services. A cohort of motivated CLIA alumni exists, eager to remain engaged beyond the age of 18. The Interdepartmental Commission and the Social Entities Commission offer ready-made governance circuits through which youth advice can be routed and followed up.

Municipal teams in Social Services (Childhood and Adolescence) and Youth and Participation are available and willing to co-lead delivery. The city also benefits from a range of ongoing public programmes and initiatives in which the structured integration of youth perspectives could generate meaningful added value, providing natural opportunities for the Youth Participation Group to engage with diverse actors across the municipal sphere.



Face-to-face working session with members of CLIA, part of the ULG.

Alongside these assets, a number of **barriers** were also identified. No formal mandate or statute yet existed for 18–35 participation, meaning that the advisory status of the new group needed to be established and consolidated. Dedicated budget and staff capacity to sustain a new structure were limited, making it essential that processes be lean and well-integrated into existing workflows. Data on youth wellbeing and service access were fragmented and inconsistently updated, pointing to the need for a light but reproducible evidence baseline. Finally, the feasibility of the model -in terms of governance arrangements, meeting rhythms and coordination load- needed to be demonstrated through a pilot phase before full consolidation could be considered.

The pilot phase has now validated both feasibility and demand. The Investment Plan builds on this foundation by developing four interconnected lines of action: formally establishing and sustaining the **Youth Participation Group**; building a **structured data management model** to support evidence-informed decisions on youth wellbeing at neighbourhood level; designing a **youth governance framework** that embeds young people's perspective systematically into relevant public policy processes across the municipality; and promoting and consolidating **non-formal education** as a meaningful pathway for young people's development and civic engagement.

2.3 The adapted version of the UIA project

Rather than replicating the WISH MI model in its entirety, Cartagena has pursued a selective adaptation that retains the core logic of the original innovation -integrating participation, evidence and service access within a coherent governance framework- while shaping each component to fit the city's institutional context, capacity and priorities. The adapted approach is organised around **four interconnected lines of action**.

- The first and most foundational is the **formal establishment of a Youth Participation Group** for the 18-35 age group, designed as a direct continuation of the CLIA ecosystem. From WISH MI, Cartagena has drawn on the Youth Ambassadors model -the principle that young people should occupy a recognised, procedurally anchored role within municipal governance- and adapted it to a broader age range and a different institutional setting. This component was prioritised because it directly addresses the post-18 drop-off that represents Cartagena's most pressing challenge, and because it builds on assets already in place: motivated CLIA alumni, established coordination bodies and experienced municipal teams. The result is a participation structure that is embedded in existing governance circuits rather than added alongside them.
- The second line of action focuses on the **development of a structured data management model** to support evidence-informed decisions on youth wellbeing at neighbourhood level. Here, Cartagena has drawn on the neighbourhood lens of

WISH MI — the recognition that disparities in access and opportunity are spatially distributed and require localised evidence — and complemented it with learning from the partner city of Pori, whose experience in youth data governance offers relevant methodological guidance. This component was prioritised because effective adaptation of any element of the WISH MI model depends on understanding local conditions with sufficient granularity, and because data fragmentation was identified as one of the main barriers at the outset of the ITN.

- The third line of action is the design of a **youth governance framework** that embeds the perspective of young people systematically into relevant public policy processes across the municipality. This goes beyond the participation group itself: it establishes the mechanisms, roles and routines through which youth input is channelled, considered and responded to by different actors in the municipal sphere. From WISH MI, Cartagena has drawn on the model's emphasis on institutional anchoring- the idea that youth participation only generates lasting value when it is integrated into the governance structures that shape real decisions. This component was prioritised because without a clear and operational governance framework, even a well-functioning participation group risks producing advice that is heard but not acted upon.
- The fourth line of action addresses the **promotion and consolidation of non-formal education** as a meaningful pathway for young people's development and social participation. This draws most directly on the service-access and co-design dimensions of WISH MI -the catalogue of opportunities, the voucher logic and the hub model- translated into a form suited to Cartagena's existing provision landscape. It was prioritised because non-formal education represents a practical, inclusive and relatively low-barrier entry point for engaging young people who may not identify with formal political or civic participation, thereby broadening the reach and diversity of the overall initiative.

Taken together, these four components address Cartagena's core challenge -the absence of a structured, evidence-informed and institutionally anchored system for youth wellbeing and participation beyond age 18- while remaining manageable within

current municipal capacity and creating a credible foundation for consolidation and scale under the EU 2021–2027 policy framework.

2.4 The integrated approach and the participative process

From the outset, Cartagena has treated youth wellbeing and participation as a **genuinely cross-cutting policy challenge** -one that cannot be addressed effectively from within a single municipal department or through a single type of intervention. This framing has had concrete consequences for the design of the initiative. Rather than locating responsibility for the adapted practice within one service area, the city has built its approach around existing inter-institutional governance circuits, ensuring that youth advice has a clear and documented route into decisions taken across different policy domains. The integrated approach also means that the four lines of action - participation, data, governance and non-formal education- have been developed as mutually reinforcing components of a single system, rather than as parallel or independent workstreams. Evidence informs participation; participation shapes governance; governance creates the conditions for broader access to non-formal education. This systemic logic is what distinguishes the adapted practice from more conventional, single-strand youth interventions.



The Investment Plan has been developed through the **URBACT Local Group (ULG)**, which brings together between 15 and 20 participants drawn from the two core coordination bodies: the Interdepartmental Commission, which links the relevant municipal service areas, and the Inter-Councillor Commission, which ensures political ownership at elected-member level. The ULG also includes former CLIA members now aged 18 and over, professionals from Social Services (Childhood and Adolescence) and the

Youth and Participation Department, education providers, NGOs and community organisations active in the city. This composition gives the group the character of a genuine quadruple-helix dialogue, **bringing together the public sector, civil society, education and knowledge actors, and the young people themselves**. The presence of elected councillors alongside technical staff and community representatives ensures that the work of the ULG is both operationally grounded and politically anchored.

In practice, the ULG has met regularly throughout the ITN -approximately monthly, with additional sessions convened as specific milestones or decisions have required. Working sessions have combined co-design and iterative drafting of the Investment Plan with structured reflection on progress at local level, and have been complemented by a report-back duty that ensures young people are kept informed of how their input is being considered and acted upon.

The group has also contributed to the transnational peer learning dimension of the network: partner city visits have taken place in Vila Nova de Gaia, Pori and Dublin, and the network's partner cities visited Cartagena in November 2025. These exchanges have provided concrete methodological learning that has directly informed the development of the adapted practice.

Throughout, the process has followed the URBACT method of co-design, testing and structured reflection, timed to the network's milestones and ensuring that participation is continuous, documented and consequential for decision-making rather than merely consultative.

SECTION 3. The adapted innovation project

3.1 The Value Proposition

Cartagena's investment creates something that does not yet exist in the city: a formal, evidence-informed and institutionally anchored system through which young people aged 18 to 35 can engage meaningfully with public life, contribute to municipal decisions, and access the opportunities they need to develop and participate fully in society.

The adapted practice builds directly on the city's existing framework for the participation of under-18s and expands it through four interconnected lines of action. A formal **Youth Participation Group** bridges the gap that arises after the age of 18 and preserves the civic leadership that CLIA has cultivated over the years. A **structured data management model**, drawing on the experience of Milan and Pori, provides the empirical basis needed to understand young people's well-being at neighbourhood level and to make service decisions grounded in local realities. A **comprehensive youth governance framework** ensures that young people's perspectives are systematically



integrated into relevant public policy processes across the municipality, ensuring that participation is not limited to a specific consultative body but is meaningful and not merely ad hoc. And the promotion of **non-formal education** broadens access to development and participation opportunities for young people who might not otherwise engage through formal civic channels.

For a funder, this represents high leverage per euro invested: it converts existing institutional assets into durable governance capacity, improves the quality and legitimacy of public decisions through structured youth input, and establishes a replicable model that is consistent with EU 2021–2027 objectives on social inclusion, youth empowerment and evidence-informed policymaking.

3.2 The workplan

The workplan is organised around four interconnected lines of action that together constitute Cartagena's adapted version of the WISH MI model. The first action carries the principal cash costs of the initiative; the remaining three are delivered through municipal staff time and in-kind contributions. All four lines of action are at different stages of progress, reflecting the phased and iterative nature of the ITN process.

Action 1		Formal constitution and consolidation of the Youth Participation Group	
Description	The Youth Participation Group has already been tested in pilot form through an initial cohort, draft internal rules and a first sequence of structured meetings. This action focuses on moving from that pilot phase to a formally constituted and recognised participation structure for young people aged 18 to 35. It includes the refinement of the Group’s operating model, the validation of its internal functioning and participation criteria, the development of its communication and visibility materials, and the steps required for its formal establishment. The Group is expected to be formally constituted by September 2026 , after which the action will support its initial consolidation through the approval of its first working calendar and the launch of its first stable cycle of activity.		
Cross-cutting principles			
Gender equality is embedded in the design and development of the Group through a commitment to balanced representation, inclusive language and attention to possible barriers that may affect participation differently across genders.		Digital transition is incorporated through the use of digital tools to support communication, coordination and accessibility, helping to ensure that participation is easier to sustain and more accessible to young people across the city.	Green transition is reflected in the Group’s potential thematic agenda, which may include issues related to sustainability, public space and urban quality of life, ensuring that young people can contribute to discussions on the future of their city.
Indicators	○ Baseline: pilot group in place, but without formal constitution as a recognised municipal participation structure. ○ Outputs: operating model and participation criteria refined; internal functioning validated; visual identity and communication materials developed; at least one public visibility milestone delivered; Youth Participation Group formally constituted by September 2026; initial working calendar approved. ○ Result: the Group becomes operational as a formally recognised and stable youth participation structure, with the first phase of consolidation under way and continuity conditions in place for the 2026–2027 cycle.		
Risk analysis			
Risk	Mitigation		
Delays in the internal validation or formal recognition process of the Group.	Early coordination with the relevant municipal bodies; progressive preparation of the required documents and decisions; realistic sequencing of the formalisation process.		
Difficulty sustaining commitment during the transition from pilot phase to formal structure.	Clear communication with participants; visible milestones throughout the process; defined roles and early involvement of young people in shaping the Group’s first working cycle.		
Low diversity or insufficient renewal beyond the founding cohort.	Targeted outreach through existing youth, education and community networks; accessible communication materials.		
Timeframe	【 Spring 2026: refinement of the Group’s operating model, participation criteria and communication materials. 【 May 2026: public visibility milestone, including presentation of the Group in the context of the Feria de Infancia. 【 June–September 2026: formalisation process, internal validation and preparation of the Group’s initial working cycle. 【 September 2026: formal constitution of the Youth Participation Group. 【 Autumn 2026: first stage of operation and initial consolidation of the formally constituted Group.		

Action 2	Structured data management model		
Description	Cartagena currently lacks a coherent and reproducible evidence base on youth wellbeing and participation at neighbourhood level. This action aims to address that gap by defining a structured data management model based on existing administrative and service data across municipal departments. The action will include the mapping of available data sources, the definition of a shared indicator set, update criteria and a data dictionary, and the preparation of pilot neighbourhood sheets. The purpose is to establish a clear roadmap for the progressive implementation of the model by March 2027, drawing on learning from the partner cities of Milan and Pori.		
Cross-cutting principles			
Gender equality is incorporated through the disaggregation of relevant indicators by sex whenever possible, allowing the model to capture differences in youth wellbeing, participation and access to services.	Digital transition is central to this action, which strengthens the municipality's capacity for more structured, evidence-based and digitally supported management of youth-related information.	Green transition is reflected in the possibility of incorporating selected territorial and environmental dimensions into the model, where relevant and feasible, in order to support a broader understanding of young people's living conditions across neighbourhoods.	
Indicators	○ Baseline: data on youth wellbeing and participation fragmented across departments, with no shared structure or implementation roadmap. ○ Outputs: mapping of available data sources completed; shared indicator set and update criteria defined; data dictionary produced; pilot neighbourhood sheets prepared; implementation roadmap established. ○ Result: structured data management model defined and ready for progressive implementation, with the objective of being operational by March 2027.		
Risk analysis			
Risk	Mitigation		
Data fragmentation across departments and uneven data quality may limit the initial scope of the model.	Start with a minimum viable set of indicators based on existing and accessible administrative data, allowing for later extension.		
Limited staff availability from the relevant municipal departments may slow the mapping and validation process.	Anchor the work within existing coordination structures and define a realistic sequence of technical tasks.		
Data protection constraints may affect the use of neighbourhood-level information.	Apply purpose limitation and data minimisation principles from the outset, in line with municipal data protection procedures.		
Timeframe	【 April–September 2026: mapping of data sources, definition of indicator set and update criteria. 【 Autumn 2026: preparation of the data dictionary and pilot neighbourhood sheets. 【 January–March 2027: validation of the model and establishment of the roadmap for its implementation. 【 March 2027: target date for the model to be ready for implementation.		

Action 3	
Youth governance framework model	
Description	This action aims to define the governance framework through which the Youth Participation Group will be able to contribute in a structured and recurrent way to relevant municipal processes. Building on the formal constitution of the Group, it will establish the mechanisms, roles, routines and coordination criteria needed to channel youth input into selected policy and decision-making spaces across the municipality. The action will result in a Youth Perspective Governance Plan identifying the most relevant engagement points, the role of the coordination structure, and the procedures for report-back and follow-up. The framework will begin to be defined once the Youth Participation Group is formally in place and is expected to be completed by the end of 2026 .
Cross-cutting principles	
Gender equality is incorporated through attention to the potential differentiated effects of recommendations and participation processes, helping to ensure that the governance framework supports inclusive and balanced youth input.	Digital transition is supported through the use of simple digital tools for coordination, documentation and report-back, improving the traceability and accessibility of governance flows.
	Green transition is reflected in the possibility of including issues related to public space, sustainability and urban environment among the policy areas where youth input may be formally channelled.
Indicators	○ Baseline: youth participation in municipal processes taking place on an occasional or informal basis, without a shared governance framework. ○ Outputs: Youth Perspective Governance Plan drafted and validated; roles and coordination criteria defined; at least two recurrent engagement touchpoints identified and scheduled with relevant municipal or public-sector counterparts. ○ Result: governance framework in place to support the structured inclusion of young people's perspectives in selected municipal processes by the end of 2026.
Risk analysis	
Risk	Mitigation
The governance framework may remain too general and fail to translate into real municipal practice. Uneven willingness across municipal departments to receive and respond to youth input.	Define the framework on the basis of concrete and realistic engagement opportunities, linked to processes where youth input is timely and useful. Start with a limited number of departments or processes where there is clear openness and institutional readiness, and build progressively from those initial experiences.
The Youth Participation Group may face too many engagement requests at an early stage.	Limit the first phase to a small number of meaningful and well-prepared engagement points, prioritising quality, feasibility and follow-up.
Timeframe	【 September 2026: start of the definition phase, following the formal constitution of the Youth Participation Group. 【 Autumn 2026: identification of relevant municipal processes, definition of roles, routines and coordination criteria. 【 By the end of 2026: validation of the Youth Perspective Governance Plan and scheduling of the first recurrent engagement touchpoints.

Action 4	
Non-formal education programme	
Description	Cartagena already has experience in using non-formal education and youth volunteering as spaces for learning and participation. Building on that experience, this action aims to design and progressively implement a stable annual training programme for young people focused on strengthening the skills needed for meaningful participation in civic and public life. The programme will offer regular learning spaces to develop competences linked to participation, such as communication, collaboration, facilitation and active citizenship. It will be shaped by the priorities of the Youth Participation Group and delivered, where possible, through existing municipal and partner structures. The programme is expected to be formally implemented by the end of June 2027 .
Cross-cutting principles	
Gender equality is addressed through inclusive design, attention to possible participation barriers, and the integration of equality-related perspectives where relevant.	Digital transition is reflected in the development of competences related to communication, participation and responsible engagement in digital environments.
	Green transition is incorporated through the possible inclusion of sustainability, environment and urban quality of life among the programme's thematic contents.
Indicators	○ Baseline: non-formal education and volunteering-related activities already exist, but without a stable annual training programme specifically focused on strengthening youth participation competences. ○ Outputs: annual training programme designed; thematic modules and delivery approach defined; implementation pathway agreed with relevant municipal and partner actors; first training activities prepared, scheduled or launched. ○ Result: stable non-formal education programme formally in place by the end of June 2027, providing regular training opportunities to strengthen young people's competences for participation.
Risk analysis	
Risk	Mitigation
The programme may remain too general and not translate into a stable and recognisable annual training offer.	Define from the outset a clear annual structure, a limited number of realistic modules, and an implementation pathway linked to existing municipal and partner capacities.
Difficulty engaging young people beyond those already involved in volunteering or civic initiatives.	Use accessible formats, practical content and outreach through trusted youth, education and community networks, while linking the programme to the interests identified by the Youth Participation Group.
The programme may become disconnected from existing youth participation and volunteering dynamics.	Build the programme on previous local experience and ensure regular alignment with the Youth Participation Group and the actors already involved in youth volunteering and non-formal learning.
Timeframe	【 Autumn 2026: design of the annual training programme and definition of its thematic and methodological structure. 【 Late 2026 – early 2027: coordination with relevant municipal and partner actors, and preparation of the implementation pathway. 【 January–June 2027: rollout of the first implementation phase. 【 By the end of June 2027: formal implementation of the annual non-formal education programme.

3.3 Governance and delivery model

The delivery of the adapted practice is led by the **Municipality of Cartagena**, with two departments playing complementary and jointly accountable roles. **Social Services (Childhood and Adolescence)** acts as project owner: it anchors the Youth Participation Group as the natural continuation of the CLIA ecosystem, safeguards procedural integrity for council sessions, and liaises with service leads and the Interdepartmental Commission. The **Youth and Participation Department** co-leads day-to-day delivery, supporting outreach, recruitment and facilitation, and steering the route to formal recognition and consolidation of the group.

Two established coordination bodies are central to the governance model. The **Interdepartmental Commission** (which is made up of staff from various municipal departments: Social Services, Culture, Sport, Youth, Education, Local Police, Municipal Libraries, Equality, the Local Development and Employment Agency, Sustainable City and European Projects) serves as the internal channel through which youth recommendations are transmitted to competent service areas and followed up systematically.



The **Social Entities Commission** provides the interface with community organisations, NGOs and the broader civil society ecosystem, ensuring that feedback reaches young people and that outcomes are communicated transparently. The **Municipal Council for Children and Adolescents (CLIA)** plays a continuity role, transferring methodological knowledge and thematic experience from the under-18 system to the new 18–35 pathway. The **Youth Participation Group** itself -comprising young people aged 18 to 35 - is both a beneficiary and an active co-producer of the initiative, contributing advisory input, co-designing elements of the adapted practice, and taking on facilitation roles in public-facing moments. **Municipal Communications and IT** ensures alignment with branding standards, data protection requirements and accessibility obligations across all public-facing outputs.

Beyond these core partners, the governance model is designed to be open and responsive: the Youth Participation Group will engage periodically with a diverse range of actors across the municipal sphere -public bodies, professional associations, civil society organisations and community networks- as the themes and priorities of its work require. This ensures that youth input reaches the processes where it can generate the greatest value, without locking the model into a fixed set of sectoral relationships.

Roles, responsibilities and leadership

Policy alignment and procedural leadership rest with Social Services (Childhood and Adolescence). Operational co-leadership -including recruitment, facilitation, events and communications- sits with the Youth and Participation Department. A shared secretariat, operated through a single coordination point with a named officer and shared mailbox, is responsible for convening meetings, preparing agendas, issuing minutes and advisory notes, tracking service responses, and reporting back to young people.

Governance flows

The model operates through a clear and documented cycle. Recommendations arising from the Youth Participation Group are recorded in a standard advisory note, registered by the secretariat and transmitted to the competent service via the Interdepartmental Commission. Each note receives an initial acknowledgement and a substantive follow-up response -accepted, accepted with modification, or not accepted with reasons

stated. The Social Entities Commission provides community-level feedback and supports the dissemination of outcomes. The secretariat publishes regular, accessible report-backs- covering what was advised, how the city responded and what comes next- through the group's communication channels and at regular meetings, closing the feedback loop and maintaining trust in the process.

This governance architecture fits within existing local structures, preserves clear lines of accountability, and ensures that youth participation is **visible, documented and consequential** for municipal decision-making.

3.4 Overall project schedule

The Investment Plan is being finalised in the closing phase of the WISH CITIES ITN, but **its implementation extends beyond the end of the network itself**. Cartagena's action plan is structured as a progressive process that builds on the pilot phase already completed and continues through a sequenced implementation of the four lines of action **between 2026 and mid-2027**.

Phase 1 / Foundation and pilot operation (completed, September 2025 – February 2026)

The Youth Participation Group was formed, internal rules of procedure and priority themes were drafted, and a pilot sequence of structured meetings was convened. Advisory input from the group fed into the November 2025 civic moments. Partner city visits took place in Vila Nova de Gaia, Pori and Dublin, and the network's partner cities visited Cartagena in November 2025. These activities validated both the operational feasibility of the model and the demand for a stable and recognised youth participation pathway.

Phase 2 / Formalisation and first implementation cycle (Spring 2026 – June 2027)

This phase covers the progressive deployment of the four lines of action that make up Cartagena's local adaptation of the WISH MI approach.

For **Action 1**, spring 2026 is dedicated to refining the operating model of the Youth Participation Group, preparing its communication and visibility materials, and carrying

out initial public-facing actions, including its presentation in the context of the Feria de Infancia. The formal constitution of the Group is expected in **September 2026**, followed by its initial consolidation and the launch of its first stable working cycle.

For **Action 2**, work begins in 2026 with the mapping of data sources, the definition of an indicator set and update criteria, and the preparation of the first technical elements of the model. During late 2026 and early 2027, this work is consolidated through the data dictionary, pilot neighbourhood sheets and validation process. The objective is to have the structured data management model ready for implementation by **March 2027**.

For **Action 3**, the definition of the Youth governance framework begins once the Youth Participation Group is formally in place. During autumn 2026, the city will identify relevant engagement points, define coordination roles and routines, and prepare the Youth Perspective Governance Plan. The framework is expected to be completed and validated by **the end of 2026**.

For **Action 4**, Cartagena will build on its previous experience in youth volunteering and non-formal education to design a stable annual training programme aimed at strengthening young people's competences for participation. The design phase begins in autumn 2026, followed by coordination and preparation during late 2026 and early 2027, with the first implementation phase taking place in the first half of 2027. The programme is expected to be formally in place by **the end of June 2027**.

Critical path

The formal constitution of the Youth Participation Group is the key milestone for the wider action plan, as it provides the basis for the subsequent development of the youth governance framework and helps shape the priorities of the non-formal education programme. In parallel, the structured data management model follows its own technical roadmap towards implementation in March 2027. The four actions are therefore interconnected, but not fully dependent on the same timetable, allowing Cartagena to combine early consolidation with medium-term implementation.

SECTION 4. Budget

4.1 Project costs

The budget is designed to support the first implementation phase of Cartagena's adapted model within realistic municipal means. Most of the work across the four lines of action is delivered through municipal staff time and coordination, which constitutes the main own contribution of the Municipality of Cartagena. **Direct cash expenditure is concentrated on the first action**, which covers the formal constitution and initial visibility of the Youth Participation Group.

Actions 2 (structured data management model), 3 (youth governance framework model) and 4 (non-formal education programme) are **primarily developed through municipal staff time** and the contribution of partner actors already involved in the URBACT Local Group. These actions extend over a longer implementation period -up to March 2027 in the case of Action 2 and up to June 2027 in the case of Action 4- but do not require specific additional cash expenditure within the current cycle.

Total investment required (current cycle)

Base (excl. VAT): **€5,000.00**

VAT (21%): **€1,050.00**

Total (incl. VAT): **€6,050.00**

All items are operational (revenue); no capitalisable assets are created in this cycle.

Component	What it covers	Capital / Revenue	Amount (EUR, excl. VAT)
Actions 2, 3 and 4	Delivered entirely through municipal staff time and in-kind contributions from ULG partners	-	0
Communication and identity assets (Action 1)	Naming, visual identity and brand guide; templates (slides, minutes, social media); welcome kit (approx. 30 units); basic digital	Revenue	3,300

Component	What it covers	Capital / Revenue	Amount (EUR, excl. VAT)
	presence with admin access; light photo assets		
Formal presentation at the Feria de Infancia (Action 1)	Venue/AV support; event materials and signage; basic photo and video documentation; light catering; prints; post-event publication	Revenue	1,700
TOTAL CASH COST (excl. VAT)			5,000

Funding time schedule

Phase	Coverage	Duration	Amount (EUR, excl. VAT)
Communication assets sprint	Visual identity + templates + welcome kit + digital presence (go-live)	Spring 2026	3,300
Event window	Formal presentation of Youth Participation Group at Feria de Infancia + post-event publication	Spring 2026	1,700
TOTAL			5,000

4.2 Investment sources

The project has been deliberately scoped to fit within **municipal means**. Cash expenditure is concentrated on a small, high-leverage package for the Youth Participation Group, while the remaining three lines of action are delivered through municipal staff time. No external funding is required for this cycle.

Funder / Budget line	What they will fund	Period	Amount (EUR, excl. VAT)	Status
Municipality of Cartagena - Youth	Communication and identity assets and the formal public	Spring 2026	5,000	Own funding

Funder / Budget line	What they will fund	Period	Amount (EUR, excl. VAT)	Status
and Participation Department	presentation of the Youth Participation Group at the Feria de Infancia			
Municipality of Cartagena - Social Services (Childhood & Adolescence) and Youth and Participation Department	Delivery of Actions 2, 3 and 4 through staff time; ongoing coordination, facilitation, documentation and governance	Spring 2026	-	Own contribution (in-kind)

Funding gap

There is no funding gap in the current cycle. All identified cash costs are covered by municipal own funds, and VAT is processed under standard municipal procedures. Should additional implementation needs arise in later phases -for example linked to the rollout of the non-formal education programme or the operational scaling of the data management model- the municipality may define complementary budget lines in future cycles and assess possible support from relevant regional, national or EU funding instruments.

All items in this phase are operational (**revenue**). If future stages generate capitalisable assets, these will be budgeted and classified separately.

SECTION 5. Monitoring and Evaluation

5.1 The Monitoring and evaluation approach

Monitoring is designed to be proportionate, embedded in delivery and useful throughout the full implementation period of the action plan. Rather than operating as a separate reporting exercise, it is organised around the four lines of action, each of which has clearly defined outputs, practical data sources and a review point aligned with its own implementation timetable.

The approach is progressive and cumulative. Evidence is gathered as each action advances, with the purpose of supporting implementation, identifying delays or bottlenecks, and capturing lessons for the following phase. Because the four actions now follow different time horizons, monitoring will not be concentrated in a single short delivery window, but will accompany the plan from spring 2026 through to **June 2027**.

The shared coordination point -led by **Social Services (Childhood and Adolescence)** together with the **Youth and Participation Department**- is responsible for maintaining the monitoring record. Evidence will be drawn from standard minutes, internal working documents, deliverables, attendance and participation records, basic digital analytics where relevant, and short review notes linked to key milestones.

No external evaluator will be appointed in this phase. Internal monitoring is proportionate to the scope and resources of the plan. If the programme expands in a subsequent cycle, the city may consider ad-hoc external evaluation of medium-term outcomes.

Data collection follows the principles of purpose limitation and data minimisation, in line with municipal procedures. Accessibility standards — including plain language and basic accessibility criteria for public-facing outputs — will be applied as a baseline requirement.

Roles and tools. The owner is Social Services (Childhood and Adolescence), together with the Youth and Participation Department as joint coordination point. Monitoring

tools include: minute and advisory-note templates; a deliverable checklist by action; attendance and participation records; working calendars; basic digital analytics where relevant; and short milestone review notes.

5.2 The monitoring and evaluation framework

5.2.1 Output indicators (with baseline & target linked to schedule)

Action	Output indicator	Baseline	Minimum target	Data source	When
Action 1 – Youth Participation Group	Operating model and participation criteria refined	Pilot phase only	Defined and validated	Internal working document / minutes	Spring 2026
	Communication and visibility materials delivered	None	Core materials produced and in use	Delivery record	Spring 2026
	Public visibility milestone carried out	No	Delivered	Attendance record / photos / publication	Spring 2026
	Youth Participation Group formally constituted	No	Formally constituted	Formal record / internal validation document	September 2026
	Initial working calendar approved	No	Approved	Calendar / minutes	Autumn 2026
Action 2 – Data management model	Mapping of data sources completed	No shared mapping	Completed	Mapping document	2026
	Shared indicator set and update criteria defined	No shared structure	Defined	Dataset document / minutes	2026
	Data dictionary produced	None	Delivered	Data dictionary	Late 2026
	Pilot neighbourhood sheets prepared	None	At least 2 delivered	Technical files	Late 2026
	Implementation roadmap established	No roadmap	Established	Roadmap document	March 2027
Action 3 – Youth governance framework	Relevant engagement points identified	No formal framework	Identified	Working document / minutes	Autumn 2026
	Roles and coordination criteria defined	No shared protocol	Defined	Governance draft	Autumn 2026
	Youth Perspective Governance Plan validated	No formal plan	Validated	Final document / validation record	End of 2026
	Annual training programme designed	No stable programme	Designed	Programme document	Autumn 2026

Action	Output indicator	Baseline	Minimum target	Data source	When
Action 4 – Non-formal education programme	Thematic modules and delivery approach defined	No structured framework	Defined	Programme document	Late 2026
	Implementation pathway agreed	No pathway	Agreed	Minutes / coordination note	Early 2027
	First implementation phase prepared, scheduled or launched	No stable programme	Completed	Schedule / session record	First half of 2027
	Programme formally in place	No	Implemented	Programme record / internal validation	End of June 2027

5.2.2 Result indicators (early effects, proportional to scope)

Result indicator	Baseline	Minimum target	Data source	When
New expressions of interest in joining or engaging with the Youth Participation Group after the first visibility phase	0	At least 5	Sign-in / contact record	2026
Founding and new participants confirming continuity in the Group's first formal working cycle	Not established	At least 60% continuity/confirmation	Follow-up list	Autumn 2026
Structured data model defined across key policy-relevant domains	No structured model	At least 3 relevant domains covered	Data dictionary / roadmap	March 2027
Youth governance framework formally enables youth input in selected municipal processes	No formal framework	At least 2 engagement points scheduled	Governance Plan / calendar	End of 2026
Annual non-formal education programme formally established	No stable annual programme	Programme in place	Programme record	End of June 2027
Initial partner or institutional commitment to support delivery of the non-formal education programme	No formal commitment	At least 1 commitment	Minutes / coordination note	First half of 2027

5.2.3 Quality assurance & learning loop

A concise issue log will be maintained throughout the implementation period, covering approvals, scheduling dependencies, coordination needs and technical constraints. Review points will be linked to the main milestones of each action rather than to a single short delivery window.

A short internal review note will be produced after each key phase: following the first public visibility stage of **Action 1**, following the validation of the governance framework, following completion of the data management roadmap, and following the first implementation phase of the non-formal education programme. These review notes will help identify what has been achieved, what requires adjustment and what should be carried into the following phase.

The framework focuses on completion, consolidation and early operational effects, in line with the scope of the current action plan. If the programme expands in a later phase, medium-term indicators on policy uptake, continuity of participation and territorial reach may be added and, where appropriate, subject to external evaluation.

