Mendoza, Argentina:

Urban Laboratory of the City of Mendoza

Model: Enabling Innovation

The city of Mendoza's Urban Laboratory is an **experimental space** to innovate on sustainable urban development, urban ecology, and citizen urbanism.

THE CHALLENGE

Facing a rapidly growing urban footprint, the city government lacked the ability to experiment and test projects in a way that would facilitate innovation. In 2021, Mendoza's planning department launched the Laboratory to **deal with this gap**.

HOW IT WORKS

The Laboratory uses a three-pronged methodology.

First, they connect stakeholders and co-create **pilot projects** through workshops with universities, private companies, and civil society.

Second, they **collaborate** with these stakeholders to run the pilots as experimentation.

Third, they **validate and adjust** projects before they are taken forward in the city's programmes or by private actors.

In one project for example, they worked with a professional association of property developers to create a digital map hosted by the city government. The map makes land use information public and free, such as where development is allowed in relation to sustainable development.

In 2022 the Laboratory won the Inter American Development Bank's (IDB) "Cities for All Challenge", which will enable it to test new circular economy building techniques in the city. With the award, they are co-creating a **community self-construction project** using solid urban waste in Sierras Altas, a low-income neighbourhood of the city.

The Laboratory is led by staff within the planning department, but brings in several city departments.

LESSONS

The Laboratory benefits from a **multi-disciplinary team**. Cities can use such cross-departmental collaboration to strengthen experimentation, innovation, and collaboration, while also maximising resources.

Its work shows the importance of a strong methodology. Apart from setting a good foundation, this ensures that the public sees value and allows for ongoing political backing.