

Partnering for Innovation

USDN Innovation Fund projects increasingly team up with NGOs to strengthen projects and have field-building impact.

It's becoming increasingly important to the Innovation Fund Steering Committee that investments made have long-range impacts outside of USDN. It is finding that bringing in external partners into the project team is having positive field-building implications in urban sustainability. Working with NGOs on projects can insure they are housed long-term with a partner that is protected from political agenda changes and local government staff turnover. The following 2014 projects included NGO partners:

NGO Partner	USDN Lead	Project
C40	USDN	Copenhagen Exchange on Adaptation-Mitigation Nexus
Composting Council Research and Education Foundation	San Jose, CA	Compostable Plastics Toolkit and Compostable Plastics Toolkit Dissemination
EcoDistricts	Boulder, CO	EcoDistricts Toolkit
Innovation Network for Communities	Boulder, CO	Energy Transformation Convening
Institute for Sustainable Communities	Houston, TX	Smart Cities 2.0
Southeast Michigan Regional Energy Office	Dearborn, MI	LED Streetlight Convening
The Shared Use Mobility Center	Portland, OR	Shared-Use Urban Mobility Scan

USDN members find that working with partners increases project impact on the urban sustainability field. Benefits the Fund has seen from these types of collaborations include:

- Stronger proposals benefiting from more than just a local government perspective (Urban Mobility, for example).
- Reduced stress in proposal development and project management, as partners balance the workload for busy sustainability directors (Green Procurement, for example).
- Potential for a longer product life span, as some partners are able to host the product on interactive websites (Compostable Plastics Toolkit, for example).