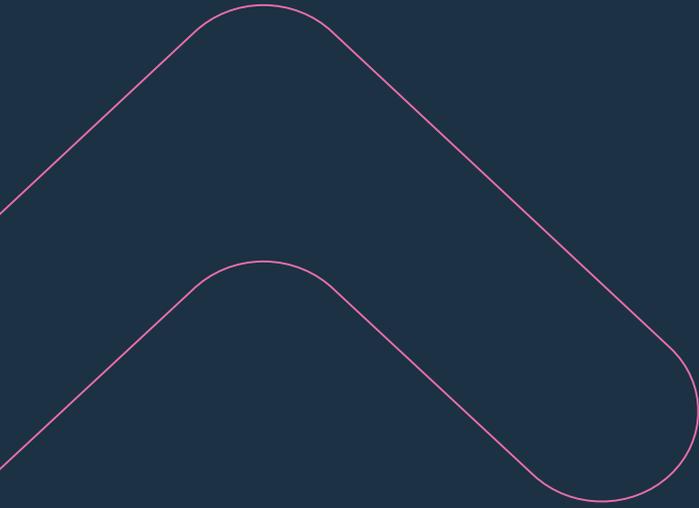




European Capital
of Democracy

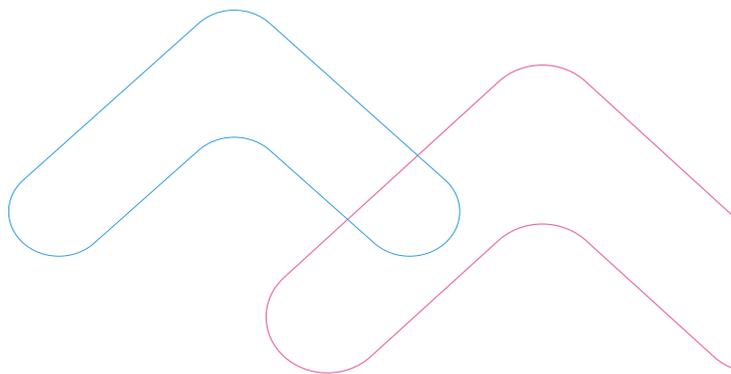


ECOD 2027 APPLICATION

Denizli

Submitted: November 2025

Content



Mission statement

Teaser	4
Summary.....	4
Democratic Ambitions.....	5
Achieved Successes	6
Future Challenges	6

Projects

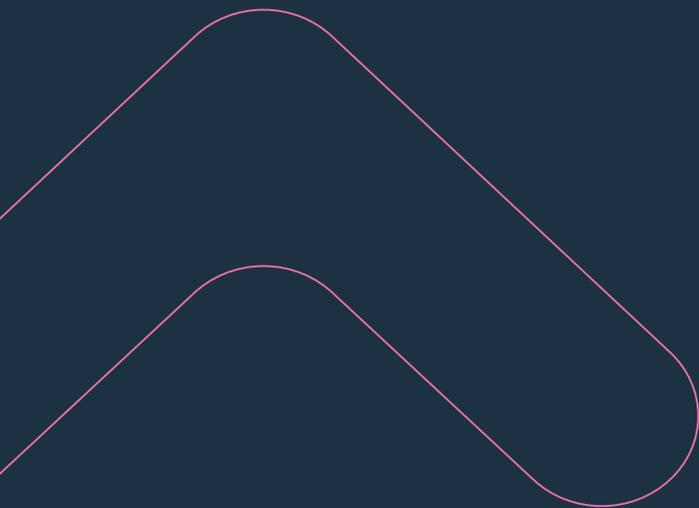
Solidarity-Based Governance: Philanthropy and Public-Private Partnership Models	9
Thematic Workshops for Strengthening Democratic Governance in Denizli	11
Denizli Industry Governance Platform.....	13

Project Ideas

Nutrition Assistance for Students in Denizli.....	16
Empowering Mothers, Educating Children: Denizli Early Childhood Development Centers Project	19
No One Leave Behind: Kınıklı Social Center Project	22

ECOD 2027 APPLICATION - DENIZLI

Mission statement



Mission statement

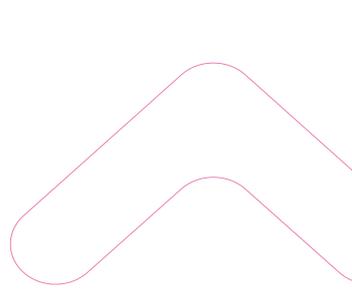
The City where happy citizens live is Denizli

Teaser

To create a livable city where people can live in health and prosperity, upholding justice and equality in service with a people-oriented approach, while preserving its historical and environmental values.

Summary

Denizli Metropolitan Municipality regards strengthening the culture of democracy at the local level, placing citizen participation at the core of decision-making, and developing a governance model grounded in justice, equality, and transparency as its fundamental mission. Guided by the principle of “People First,” the Municipality aims to build an inclusive urban environment where every citizen’s voice is heard, and collective wisdom and participatory governance shape the foundation of city life. Throughout history, Denizli has stood out as a city of solidarity, productivity, and innovation. Carrying this legacy into the future, Municipality aspires to become a pioneer of democratic innovation and social justice. Through participatory platforms and dedicated councils for persons with disabilities, youth, children, women, and the elderly, Denizli develops a governance model that enables all segments of society to engage actively in decision-making processes. By using digital participation tools, open data practices, and social communication channels, the Municipality fosters an interactive culture of democracy where citizens can directly share their ideas and contribute to the city’s development. In this context, a Denizli Industrial Governance Platform has been established jointly by the Denizli Chamber of Industry and Denizli Metropolitan Municipality to institutionalize cooperation between the public and private sectors. This platform strengthens continuous dialogue and joint decision-making mechanisms between local government and industrial stakeholders. Our understanding of equal service delivery is built on ensuring that every resident has fair access to the same opportunities and public services. Denizli’s social municipal practices integrate projects supporting disadvantaged groups, sustainable environmental policies, and programs that empower women and youth to play more active roles in community life. This approach nurtures a climate of trust and collaboration not only between the administration and citizens but also among all actors that shape the city. Denizli’s democratic energy is fueled by contributions from every segment of society. Universities, civil society organizations, local initiatives, and citizens work collectively toward our shared vision of a participatory, livable, and just city. While drawing inspiration from good governance practices across Europe, Denizli integrates its own cultural values and local dynamics into this framework, creating a uniquely local yet globally relevant democratic model. For Denizli, participation in the ECoD 2027 process



represents more than the pursuit of a title; it is an opportunity to share and strengthen our inclusive democratic vision on an international scale. Our goal is to advance a city where citizens are not merely service recipients but active democratic partners who co-create the future of a fair, sustainable, and resilient urban community.

Democratic Ambitions

At Denizli Metropolitan Municipality, we regard democracy not merely as a system of governance but as a culture that permeates every aspect of urban life. Our democratic ambition is to create an ecosystem where citizens collectively shape the city's future through a transparent, participatory, inclusive, and accountable local governance model. This vision is grounded in the principles of strengthening local democracy, producing citizen-centered services, and deepening a culture of social solidarity. Denizli is a city where diverse cultures and social dynamics coexist, characterized by a strong culture of production. This diversity represents a valuable potential for democratic transformation. The Municipality strives to activate this potential by developing mechanisms that enable every citizen to actively participate in decision-making processes. The Councils for Persons with Disabilities, Youth, Children, Women, and the Elderly; together with the work of mukhtar offices and volunteering programs, are tangible reflections of this approach. The overarching aim is to ensure that individuals of all ages, identities, and life experiences have a voice in city governance. Our democratic ambitions focus on enhancing social inclusiveness through innovative local governance practices. The Municipality promotes a culture of participation and dialogue through “common mind platforms” – such as the Denizli Industrial Governance Platform – where ideas can be freely expressed and collaboration is institutionalized. Through open data policies and transparency practices, citizens are empowered to monitor, evaluate, and contribute to municipal activities as active stakeholders. While Denizli draws inspiration from good governance and participatory democracy models across Europe, it also seeks to integrate these examples with its own local realities. Policies developed in areas such as sustainable urbanism, environmental management, social justice, and cultural heritage not only enhance the city's welfare but also strengthen citizens' emotional connection to their urban environment. The ultimate goal is to transform democracy from an abstract concept into a tangible, everyday experience for all citizens. The ECoD 2027 process represents not only a period during which Denizli's democratic practices will become more visible but also a broader transformation journey—one that will institutionalize local participation and develop innovative democratic instruments. Our ultimate ambition is to establish a model of local democracy built on participation, equality, respect, and trust—making Denizli a reference city not only in Türkiye but across Europe.

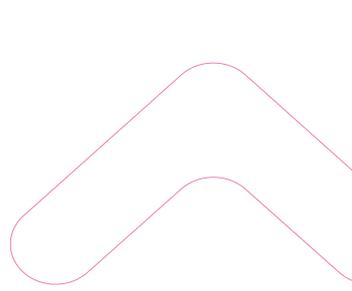


Achieved Successes

In recent years, Denizli Metropolitan Municipality has achieved significant progress in the areas of democratic governance, social justice, and inclusive development. All municipal activities are guided by the principles of collective wisdom, multi-stakeholder participation, and equitable service delivery. Regularly organized participatory workshops enable citizens, academics, NGOs, and the private sector to jointly shape the city's strategic vision. The outcomes of these events directly inform municipal policies and guide local development projects. Within this framework, the Denizli Industrial Governance Platform, developed in partnership with the Denizli Chamber of Industry, serves as a model for democratic cooperation. It strengthens public-private dialogue and ensures that industrial and employment strategies are shaped through participatory decision-making. Through the Department of Rural Services, the Municipality provides farmers with feed, seedlings, saplings, and agricultural equipment. These supports promote equitable prosperity between rural and urban areas, demonstrating that public services are delivered to every corner of the city, not only to the urban center. Under the Department of Social Services, a comprehensive social support system addresses the needs of vulnerable groups. Initiatives such as nutrition support for children, school bag and stationery sets for first graders, early childhood education centers (kindergartens), and free of charge educational support centers serviced by the Department of Culture and Social Affairs for disadvantaged students illustrate Denizli's strong commitment to social equality. Furthermore, free of charge sports and social programs—especially those designed for children and women—encourage healthy and active living, reinforcing social inclusion. In conclusion, through these holistic and participatory practices, Denizli Metropolitan Municipality embraces democracy not only as a governance model but as a guiding value that permeates every aspect of social life in the city.

Future Challenges

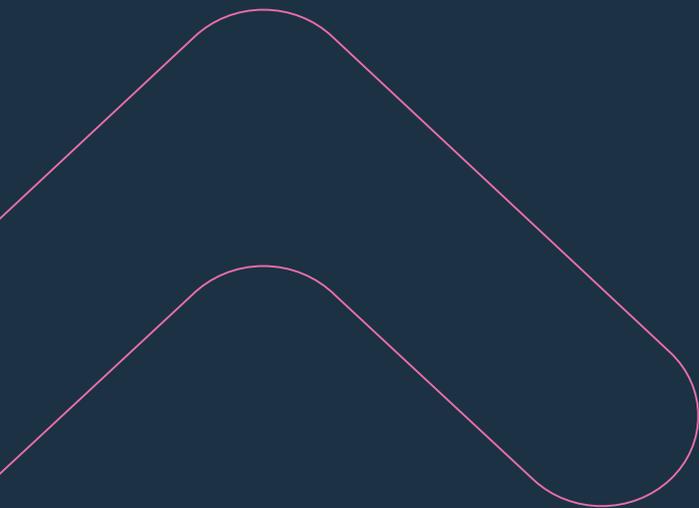
Denizli Metropolitan Municipality has taken significant steps to strengthen participatory governance in the city, tackle social inequalities and achieve sustainable development goals. However, in the future, the continuity and effectiveness of these gains face certain structural and financial challenges. The primary challenge is the sustainability of financial resources. Local government revenues rely heavily on central government allocations and local tax revenues. Rising economic costs, the expansion of social services, and new priorities such as tackling the climate crisis are straining existing budgets. Developing innovative financing models is crucial to sustain social municipal services, rural development support, and infrastructure investments. Another challenge is the continuity of administrative and political coordination at the local and national levels. Coordination between different administrative bodies can sometimes lead to delays in decision-making processes or limitations in the effective use of resources. This is an area that requires careful management in order to maintain the functioning of participatory mechanisms. In addition, the variability created by local election cycles is the most



important factor for future institutional sustainability. Changes in the structure of the Mayor or the Council can lead to differences in strategic priorities or implementation methods. Therefore, preserving institutional memory, establishing a culture of long-term planning, and strengthening the concept of sustainable governance independent of political changes are among the key priorities. All these issues demonstrate the need for a flexible, inclusive and resilient governance structure in the future roadmap of Denizli Metropolitan Municipality. Common solutions developed together with the city's various stakeholders will carry Denizli's inclusive development vision into the future, while preserving both financial sustainability and democratic participation.

ECOD 2027 APPLICATION - DENIZLI

Projects



Denizli – Project 1

STRATEGY | PERMANENT

[HTTPS://DENIZLI.BEL.TR/DEFAULT.ASPX?K=HABER-DETAY&ID=23029](https://denizli.bel.tr/default.aspx?k=haber-detay&id=23029)

Solidarity-Based Governance: Philanthropy and Public-Private Partnership Models

Detailed description

Philanthropy and Public-Private Partnership (PPP) models are not merely financial mechanisms; they are tangible expressions of democratic participation and social responsibility. Through these approaches, Denizli Metropolitan Municipality goes beyond the role of a traditional service provider, strengthening public trust, transparency, and shared decision-making. Denizli's efforts in this field emphasize the mobilization of social resources through collective wisdom and solidarity-based democracy. This cooperation model demonstrates that democratic practice in Denizli extends far beyond casting votes or municipal council resolutions—it nurtures a culture of volunteerism, partnership, and civic collaboration by uniting the resources and expertise of the public sector, private enterprises, and civil society. Projects such as pedestrian overpasses, the municipal service buildings, family health centers, and day-care facilities stand as concrete examples of how citizens' safety, health, and well-being needs are addressed through swift and transparent cooperation with philanthropic organizations. The allocation of these resources to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups contributes to reducing social inequalities and advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Collaboration

This project ensures inclusivity and social justice at every stage — from planning to implementation and monitoring — by adopting a multi-stakeholder and community-based approach. Denizli Metropolitan Municipality (DMM) considers the views of neighborhood residents, civil society organizations, professional chambers, and representatives from surrounding districts in its decision-making processes, ensuring that projects reflect the needs of all segments of society. In particular, low-income neighborhoods, women, elderly citizens, and persons with disabilities are identified as the primary beneficiaries of philanthropic and public-private partnership (PPP) projects.

Target Group(s)

While this activity encourages participation from all segments of society, it primarily targets women, youth, elderly citizens, persons with disabilities, and residents of low-income neighborhoods. In addition, representatives from the private sector, civil society organizations, professional chambers, neighborhood leaders and local decision makers are actively involved in the process.

Denizli – Project 1

Communication

The activity is communicated to the target audience through the municipality's official website, social media accounts, and local press releases. In addition, official letters and invitations are sent to relevant stakeholders. Transparent, accessible and inclusive language is used in all communications to ensure equal access to information for every citizen.

Democracy Year integration

During the ECoD Democracy Year, this project will be showcased through interactive exhibitions, short documentary screenings, and community storytelling sessions highlighting the cooperation between the municipality, private sector, and philanthropic actors. A dedicated exhibition area within the "Democracy in Action" event will visually present project milestones, design processes, and social impacts through panels and digital media. Public dialogues will be organized to share lessons learned and inspire replication of inclusive and transparent partnership models in other cities. Additionally, an online platform will be launched to share project data, videos, and testimonies, ensuring international visibility and citizen engagement. Through these activities, the project will demonstrate how public-private-philanthropic collaboration can strengthen democratic governance and social cohesion.

Democracy dimension

Community

One-time costs (planning and preparation)

0 EUR

Operational costs (per year)

0 EUR

Funding provided by the City (%)

100%

Denizli – Project 2

EVENT | PERMANENT

[HTTPS://WWW.DENIZLI.BEL.TR/DEFAULT.ASPX?K=HABER-DETAY&ID=23769](https://www.denizli.bel.tr/default.aspx?k=haber-detay&id=23769)

Thematic Workshops for Strengthening Democratic Governance in Denizli

Detailed description

Denizli Metropolitan Municipality has launched a comprehensive participatory governance process aimed at strengthening democratic dialogue, collective decision-making, and civic engagement in shaping the city's future. The project, titled "Strengthening Democratic Governance in Denizli through Thematic Workshops," seeks to identify local priorities through a multi-stakeholder approach and contribute to the strategic direction of the municipality's future activities. Within this framework, four major thematic workshops were held between 2024 and 2025: the Tourism Workshop (10–11 September 2024), the Resilient and Modern City Workshop (29 November 2024), the Rural Development and Social Welfare Workshop (27 February 2025), and Denizli Art Workshop (26 April 2025). These meetings brought together civil society organizations, professional chambers, academics, private sector representatives, and citizens to discuss Denizli's social, cultural, economic, and environmental challenges. The outcomes of these workshops contribute to the municipality's future programs and planned activities. At the end of each workshop, advisory reports were prepared to summarize the key findings and recommendations. By adopting transparency, inclusiveness, and participation as guiding principles, the project contributes to the institutionalization of democratic governance at the local level. It also provides a tangible example of Denizli's commitment to the vision of the European Capital of Democracy Network, which promotes active citizenship and multilevel cooperation for the strengthening of democracy.

Collaboration

The project was implemented under the coordination of Denizli Metropolitan Municipality, with the active participation of Pamukkale University, various civil society organizations, chambers, and associations. In addition, tourism and agricultural sector organizations contributed either individually or institutionally. This multi-stakeholder structure has enhanced participatory practices in local governance processes. A fully participation process has been followed while shaping the future of Denizli. Relevant stakeholders are always guide for Denizli.

Target Group(s)

The project primarily targets local stakeholders who directly influence or are affected by Denizli's urban and rural development policies. The main target groups include civil society organizations, professional chambers, academia, and local community representatives, as well as citizens who wish to contribute to shaping the city's future. Particular attention has been given to ensuring balanced representation across sectors, genders, and age groups throughout the participation process.

Denizli – Project 2

Description

Civil society plays a central role in all stages of the project — from planning to implementation and evaluation. Representatives of local NGOs, associations, and community-based organizations actively participate in thematic workshops to share their expertise, local knowledge, and perspectives on the city's social, cultural, and environmental priorities. Their contributions help shape the recommendations developed during each workshop, which are then considered in the municipality's strategic planning processes. Continuous dialogue with civil society ensures that decision-making remains participatory, transparent, and responsive to citizens' needs, thereby strengthening democratic governance in Denizli.

Democracy Year integration

The advisory outputs generated through these workshops serve as guiding inputs for both ongoing and planned projects. In this way, it becomes possible to observe how the principles of democratic governance contribute concretely to the city's current dynamics and its future development processes.

Democracy dimension

Community

One-time costs (planning and preparation)

0 EUR

Operational costs (per year)

0 EUR

Funding provided by the City (%)

100%

Denizli – Project 3

EVENT | PERMANENT

[HTTPS://WWW.DENIZLI.BEL.TR/DEFAULT.ASPX?K=HABER-DETAY&ID=23999](https://www.denizli.bel.tr/default.aspx?k=haber-detay&id=23999)

Denizli Industry Governance Platform

Detailed description

Denizli Industry Governance Platform is a bilateral cooperation and consultation mechanism established between the Denizli Metropolitan Municipality and the Denizli Chamber of Industry. Its main objective is to strengthen coordination between the two institutions, foster dialogue, and develop joint recommendations on issues related to the city's industrial policies and economic development. The Platform focuses on several key cooperation areas, including: * Industry and Urban Integration, * Employment and Education, * Waste Management and Recycling, * Transportation and Infrastructure, * Climate Crisis and Energy Efficiency * Tourism and Social Projects. The Governance Platform operates under an Advisory Board, which meets every three months or more frequently if needed, depending on the agenda. The Board's decisions are advisory in nature and aim to guide the strategic and policy-making processes of both institutions. The Advisory Board consists of members selected from the councils of each institution and is co-chaired by the Mayor of Denizli Metropolitan Municipality and the President of the Denizli Chamber of Industry. Two thematic working groups — the Social Working Group and the Technical Working Group — have been formed to address specific topics, with the participation of council members and relevant experts. Administrative coordination is carried out by the Secretariats of both institutions, which are responsible for preparing meeting agendas, recording minutes, and following up on the implementation of recommendations. Through this structure, the Denizli Industry Governance Platform ensures that industrial and urban issues are addressed in a regular, transparent, and participatory manner, fostering a sustainable culture of collaboration between the public and private sectors in Denizli.

Collaboration

The Industry Governance Platform includes, as a form of “governance” rather than “government”, typically public–private partnerships. Its democratic quality is determined by its structure of participation and its accountability to the public interest. In this regard, the Denizli Industry Governance Platform represents the first example in Denizli where such a structured cooperation has been formalized through a bilateral cooperation protocol between the municipality and the chamber of industry. This model marks a significant step in institutionalizing dialogue between the public and private sectors, ensuring that local economic and industrial policies are developed through participatory and transparent mechanisms.

Denizli – Project 3

Target Group(s)

Under this platform, the target group is also residents of Denizli.

Description

Civil society is represented in this project through Denizli Chamber of Industry, which acts as a key stakeholder and coordination partner under the “Denizli Industry Governance Platform Cooperation Protocol” signed with Denizli Metropolitan Municipality on 30 June 2025. The protocol will remain in force for four years and may be renewed by mutual agreement of the parties. Denizli Chamber of Industry ensures that the needs, priorities, and perspectives of the local industrial community are integrated into the city’s sustainable development agenda. Within this governance mechanism, a joint Advisory Board and thematic working groups are established, enabling participatory decision-making and dialogue between local government, industry, and citizens. The Chamber involvement strengthens transparency, accountability, and cross-sector collaboration, while supporting actions in areas such as employment, environmental sustainability, urban infrastructure and climate resilience.

Democracy Year integration

Within the framework of the ECoD Democracy Year, Denizli Chamber of Industry (DSO) will highlight participatory and transparent governance practices through Denizli Industry Governance Platform initiative. Implemented in partnership with Denizli Metropolitan Municipality, this structure promotes regular dialogue and cooperation between public authorities and the private sector. Quarterly meetings, open consultation sessions, and joint workshops will foster inclusive decision-making, accountability, and collaboration among stakeholders.

Democracy dimension

Participation

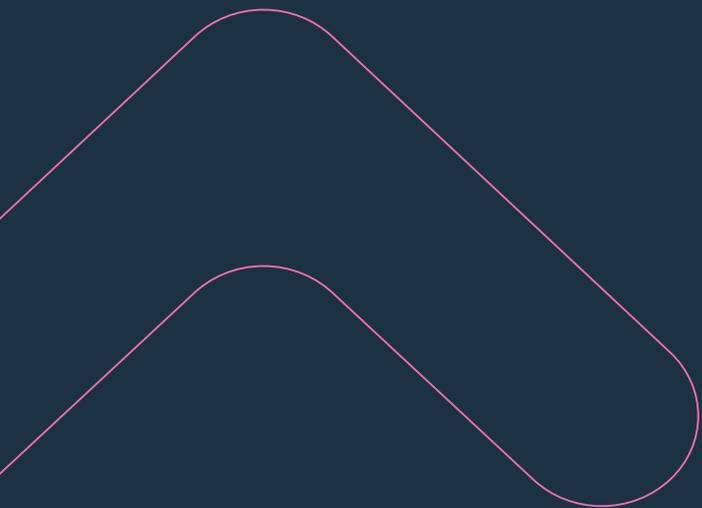
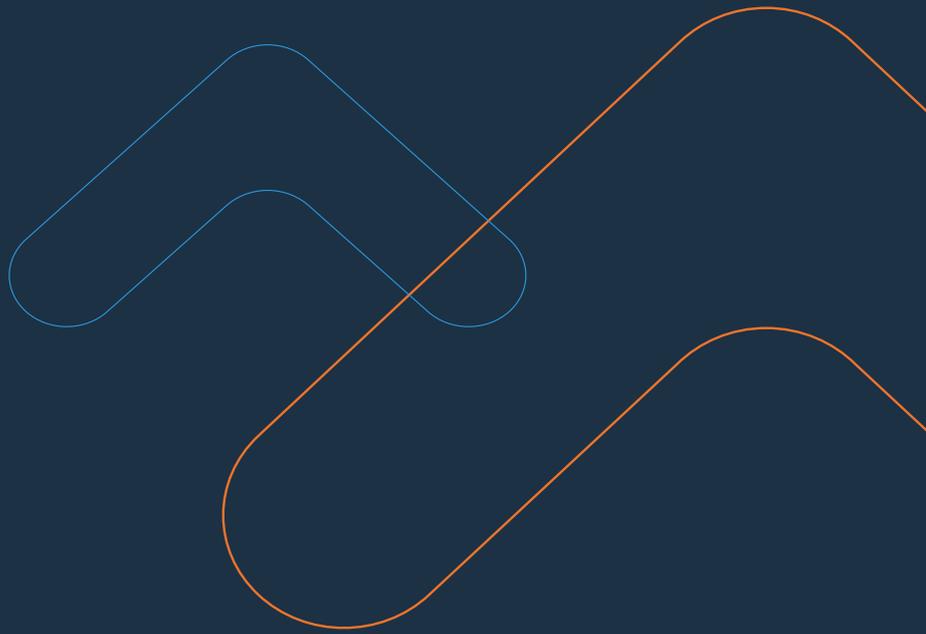
One-time costs (planning and preparation) 0 EUR

Operational costs (per year) 0 EUR

Funding provided by the City (%) 100%

ECOD 2027 APPLICATION - DENIZLI

Project Ideas



Denizli – Project Idea 1

Nutrition Assistance for Students in Denizli

Challenge

Economic stratification in urban areas poses a significant obstacle to equitable human development. Rising living costs in Denizli and generally in Türkiye place pressure disproportionately on low-income families. This problem manifests itself critically as food insecurity for schoolchildren. The lack of adequate nutrition in the early years of primary school (especially from the critically important first grade onwards), particularly protein deficiency, is directly linked to developmental deficiencies and cognitive impairments. This nutritional gap creates a fundamental inequality that hinders the child's participation in education and limits their future potential. The fundamental problem is not just hunger, but a systematic failure to provide an equal start, which is a prerequisite for a fair and democratic society. Denizli Metropolitan Municipality intends to reduce these kind of inequalities.

Solution

“Nutrition Assistance for Students in Denizli” Project is a direct and systemic intervention designed to eliminate this nutritional inequality. The solution moves beyond ad-hoc aid to establish a formalized municipal guarantee of food security for low-income first-grade students, with a strategic plan to expand this support system to cover all primary school children up to the 4th grade. Its unique selling proposition (USP) is the program's robust implementation framework: it is legally grounded in municipal law and institutionalized within the Social Services Department. Through a completed public tender, the municipality provides weekly nutritional packages—containing essential proteins and vitamins—directly to families. This model ensures that access to education is not predicated on economic status, transforming a social welfare service into a concrete mechanism for educational equity.

Impact

The impact of this program is both immediate and scalable. Currently (2024-2025), the program provides direct support to 2,500 first-grade students, ensuring they establish the nutritional foundation necessary for their cognitive development. The strategic goal is to gradually expand this support up to the fourth grade. When fully implemented, this expansion will quadruple the program's reach and support an estimated 10,000 children per year. This phased intervention is expected to provide long-term, profound benefits by reducing developmental deficits across the entire early education spectrum. It also strengthens the social contract by providing concrete and reliable support, increasing civic trust, demonstrating commitment to a “care-based democracy,” and ensuring that all children can start their educational journey on equal terms.

Denizli – Project Idea 1

Implementation

This project is not a proposal but an ongoing, fully operational initiative with a clear expansion plan. The implementation is managed entirely by Denizli Metropolitan Municipality's Social Services Department. The programmatic infrastructure for the first phase (1st grade) is already established, with a finalized public tender. The projected annual cost for the initial phase (2,500 children) is approximately €152,351, fully financed by the municipality's budget. Distribution is currently active. The key achievement of this implementation is the establishment of a sustainable and scalable model that institutionalizes nutritional equity, effectively transforming municipal resources into a fundamental component of a child's right to education. This „turnkey“ status proves sustainability and capacity. The program is planned as a long-term strategic commitment, with the phased expansion to the 4th grade set as the primary objective for the 2025-2029 period.

Support

The support structure for the „Nutrition Assistance for Students in Denizli“ projects is exceptionally robust, anchored in the full institutional, political, and financial commitment of Denizli Metropolitan Municipality. This initiative is not reliant on external grants; it is entirely financed (approx. €152,351 annually) and implemented by the municipality's own budget and dedicated departments. This self-reliant model demonstrates a profound political will and guarantees the project's financial stability and long-term sustainability. This institutional backing is operationally enabled through effective coordination with essential local stakeholders, including local school administrations and neighborhood leaders, who facilitate the accurate and dignified identification of beneficiaries. The most critical support, however, is the profound stakeholder buy-in from the community itself. The active participation of 2,500 families validates the program as a direct response to a critical community need, transforming a tangible welfare service into a powerful mechanism for building civic trust. This cohesive support—political, financial, and communal—is precisely what renders the strategic expansion plan to cover all 10,000 primary school children a feasible and credible objective for the 2025-2029 period.

Democracy dimension

Community

Denizli – Project Idea 1

Images



Denizli – Project Idea 2

Empowering Mothers, Educating Children: Denizli Early Childhood Development Centers Project

Challenge

Rapid urbanization, rising living costs, and the changing dynamics of working life in Denizli have made access to early childhood education increasingly difficult, especially for low-income families. The high cost of childcare forces many mothers to withdraw from employment, deepening both economic and social inequality. In disadvantaged neighborhoods, the lack of safe and high-quality preschool institutions limits children's opportunities for equitable development. The most significant challenge is the absence of a reliable childcare infrastructure that supports women's participation in the workforce. This gap not only affects families individually but also hinders the city's overall productivity and social cohesion. The project aligns with the European democratic trends of social inclusion through early childhood education and gender-equal urban development. The Early Childhood Development Centers Project aims to strengthen social welfare by ensuring equal access to education for children and creating fairer opportunities for women in economic life.

Solution

The Early Childhood Development Centers Project is an innovative social infrastructure initiative developed to promote equal opportunities in early education and support women's participation in the workforce. The project envisions establishing modern, safe and accessible centers on municipality jurisdiction, where children aged 3–6 are planned to receive quality preschool education, social development programs, and psychosocial support. Its unique selling proposition (USP) lies in the municipality's direct implementation model that transforms public resources into social benefit. The project aims to protect every child's right to early education regardless of income level while supporting working mothers through reliable childcare services that contribute to gender equality. Denizli Metropolitan Municipality plans to gradually expand this model beyond the city center to all districts. By progressively increasing the number of centers, it is planned that by 2027 each district will host at least one Early Childhood Development Center. This approach aims to create an inclusive and city-wide network ensuring that all children have equal access to quality early education.

Denizli – Project Idea 2

Impact

The impact of the Early Childhood Development Centers Project is designed to be both systemic and directly quantifiable, addressing a critical social deficit. The project's primary beneficiaries are children aged 3–6, working mothers, and low-income families. The intervention is critical, as existing local data indicates that nearly 40% of Denizli's preschool-aged children currently lack access to formal early education, exacerbating inequality. This project directly confronts this gap. The full-scale implementation, projected to establish at least one center in all 19 districts by 2027, will create a city-wide social infrastructure. With each facility accommodating 200–250 children, the network will achieve a total capacity of approximately 4,000 children annually. This directly enables broader workforce participation for women and provides developmental support that indirectly benefits over 15,000 family members. Beyond providing childcare, this project functions as a direct municipal intervention to promote gender equity and equal opportunity. By transforming public financial resources into social benefits, the centers will strengthen social cohesion and ensure that access to quality early education is not a privilege but a universal right for every child in the city.

Implementation

The Early Childhood Development Centers Project is implemented by Denizli Metropolitan Municipality through its existing social service network, technical capacity, and municipal resources. The project will be rolled out gradually by constructing centers on municipality jurisdictions. The initiative is designed to be fully financed within the municipality's current investment budget. As an example of the investment scale, the projected cost for a single center is approximately €1.53 million. Construction, equipment, and operational expenses for the network are covered by municipal funds without the need for external financial support. This approach reflects a strong model of local governance that balances fiscal responsibility with social commitment. Once each center is completed, local outreach, information, and registration processes will be conducted to ensure citizens' easy access to services. In the short term, the goal is to complete and open the first centers to the public. In the medium term, the municipality plans to evaluate the outcomes and replicate the model. By 2027, the establishment of at least one center in each district is planned as a key milestone in creating a city-wide and some districts inclusive childcare network.

Support

The Early Childhood Development Centers Project is implemented sustainably through the institutional capacity, technical expertise, and financial resources of Denizli Metropolitan Municipality. All planning, construction, and operational stages are coordinated by municipal departments, and funding is fully covered by the municipality's own budget. This ensures the project's implementation is institutionally secured without requiring external financing or partnerships. However, to enhance educational quality and operational efficiency, the municipality plans to collaborate with universities, professional

Denizli – Project Idea 2

chambers, and relevant public institutions. Technical, pedagogical, and social consultancy from these partners will strengthen the centers' service standards and ensure alignment with best practices in early childhood development. Regular monitoring and evaluation by the municipality's social service units will ensure continuous improvement and accountability. Through this structure, the Early Childhood Development Centers will evolve into a sustainable and institutionalized social service model with long-term impact across the city.

Democracy
dimension

Community

Images



Denizli – Project Idea 3

No One Left Behind: Kınıklı Social Center Project

Challenge

Rapid urbanization and population growth in Denizli have significantly increased the demand for social infrastructure. The university hospital district hosts thousands of daily visitors; however, accommodation and rest facilities for low-income residents, patient relatives, and out-of-town visitors remain insufficient. This gap deepens urban inequality and limits fair access to urban well-being. The most significant pain point is the lack of equitable access to health, shelter, and social support services for vulnerable groups, leading to isolation and weakened social bonds. The project aligns with the European trend of care-based democracy, where local governments act not only as service providers but as enablers of social solidarity, trust, and shared responsibility.

Solution

The Kınıklı Social Center Project which will be located near the hospital district is an innovative social infrastructure model based on the principle of “compassionate municipalism.” Covering 3,347 m², the center includes a 32-room guesthouse for patient relatives, a laundry and book café for students, and social lounges for citizens, creating a multifunctional space of solidarity. Its unique selling point (USP) lies in its participatory partnership model that brings together the municipality, the university, healthcare institutions, and philanthropic organizations. Through this approach, citizens gain fair and dignified access to essential needs such as shelter, hygiene, and rest without being constrained by market conditions. The Kınıklı Social Center stands as a transformative example of how solidarity, trust, and inclusivity can be translated into urban life, strengthening both community cohesion and local democracy.

Impact

The impact of the Kınıklı Social Center Project is conceptualized to be both quantifiable and systemic. The facility is forecasted to accommodate an average of 150,000 individuals annually, encompassing its residential, social support, and communal functionalities. This capacity systematically mitigates the urban inequalities identified in the Challenge section. The project is designed to facilitate equitable access to essential amenities (shelter, hygiene, rest) for vulnerable groups—including patient relatives and low-income students—who are often marginalized by market externalities. The programmatic timeline is strategically aligned with the ECoD framework. The center is scheduled to commence operations in early 2027. This ensures that its demonstrable social outcomes will be fully operational and visible throughout the potential European Capital of Democracy year. Beyond these metrics, the project’s principal strategic dividend is derived from its participatory governance model (our USP). This collaborative framework, integ-

Denizli – Project Idea 3

rating municipal, academic, and civil society actors, transcends institutional silos, thereby bolstering civic trust and institutional legitimacy. The Center is envisioned not merely as an ancillary support facility, but as a „lived space of democracy,“ where principles of equity, solidarity, and participation are procedurally and substantively realized.

Implementation

The Kınıklı Social Center Project is being fully implemented and financed by Denizli Metropolitan Municipality, utilizing its own resources. The projected total investment for this initiative is approximately €4.18 million, underscoring the municipality's substantial commitment. All stages of planning, construction, and operation are managed internally by the municipality's technical and social departments. This self-reliant approach demonstrates the municipality's capacity to deliver sustainable social infrastructure investments through the efficient use of its internal capabilities. The project will be executed in alignment with the municipality's social service policies and communicated to citizens through city-wide information and outreach activities. Upon completion, the center will be integrated into the municipality's social service network, providing continuous and accessible support to residents. In the short term, the goal is to complete and operationalize the center, initiating direct service delivery to citizens. In the medium term, lessons learned from this project will be assessed to explore replication in other districts. The Kınıklı Social Center represents a lasting public investment transforming municipal resources into tangible social value and reinforcing the city's vision of solidarity and inclusion.

Support

The Kınıklı Social Center Project is a social infrastructure investment fully financed and implemented by Denizli Metropolitan Municipality's own budget. All stages of planning, execution, and operation are coordinated by the municipality's internal departments, with funding sourced entirely from the municipal investment budget. This approach strengthens both the municipality's fiscal discipline and its capacity for social responsibility. The project's sustainability is ensured through the municipality's existing social service network, technical staff expertise, and long-term operational planning. The Kınıklı Social Center stands as a strong reflection of Denizli Metropolitan Municipality's inclusive and compassionate governance vision. It demonstrates how public resources can be directly transformed into social benefit, serving as a model of democratic and citizen-oriented local governance.

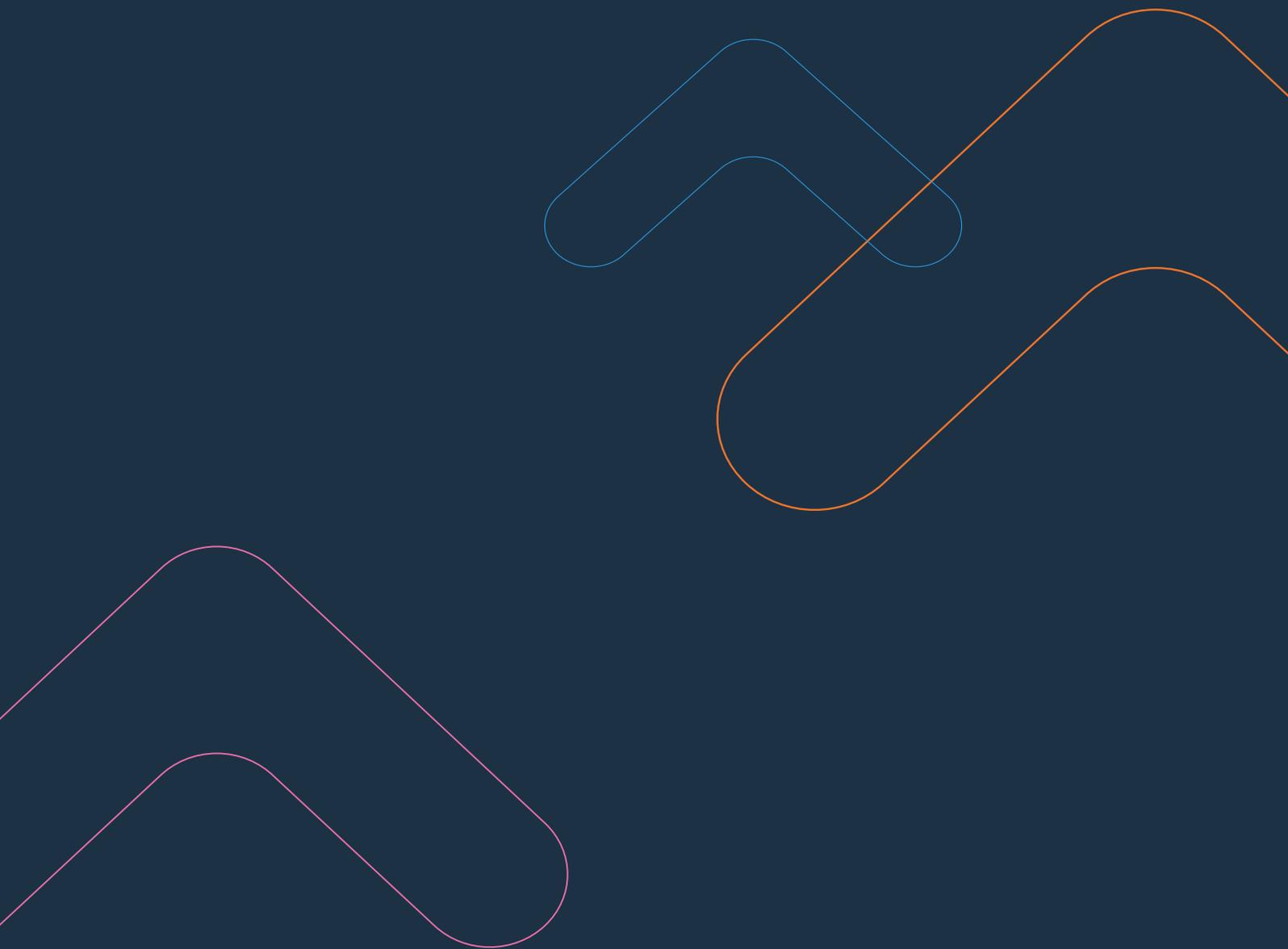
Democracy dimension

Community

Denizli – Project Idea 3

Images





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