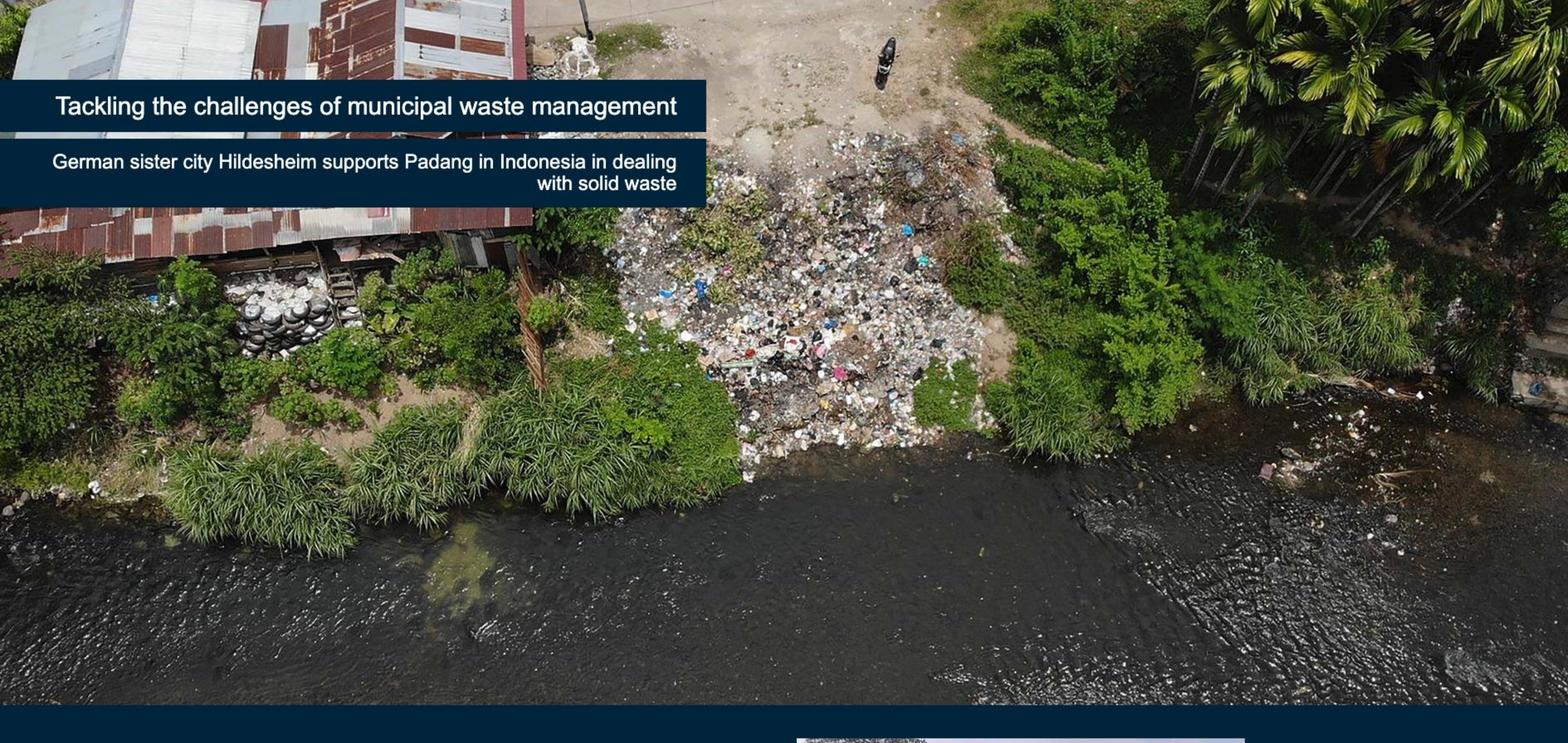


Tackling the challenges of municipal waste management

German sister city Hildesheim supports Padang in Indonesia in dealing with solid waste



Overview

Padang is a city of over one million inhabitants located on the island of Sumatra, Indonesia. The Arau River flowing through the city center of Padang is heavily polluted with household garbage and is a main recipient of untreated wastewater. In order to make Padang more attractive to tourists and a more livable city for its inhabitants, the Padang administration developed the objective to clean Arau River with the support of a water sanitation expert.



Background

Padang an their German sister city Hildesheim decided to take part in the program "Experts Fund for Municipal Partnerships Worldwide" of GIZ and SKEW, which advises municipal partnerships and assigns experts to support it. Once the expert started his work in the environmental department in Padang, it soon became clear that within the 2-year period of the assignment, a complete river regeneration was not feasible: The high level of water pollution in combination with a huge amount of unmanaged waste made it almost impossible to tackle this challenge in the near future. Although regular collective clean-ups were organized by the city administration, a systematic approach was missing and despite the high number of inhabitants, there was no municipal department for waste management in place.

Objectives

A sustainable municipal strategy for waste management is being developed and implemented. This strengthens and develops municipal structures and competences.



Activities

The first steps were to investigate which data was available and how the situation on the ground looked like. Furthermore, all the relevant stakeholders had to be mapped in order to see who had which roles, responsibilities and experiences.

It soon became apparent that a national river monitoring strategy has already been developed and that reliable monitoring data of Arau River already existed. However, this monitoring data has not been used as a basis for political decision-making so far. For this reason, the second step was to display the gathered data in a less complicated and less technical way so it was easy to understand even for non-experts. At the same time, the existing data was compared and enriched with data gathered from field investigations and expert opinions from Padang.

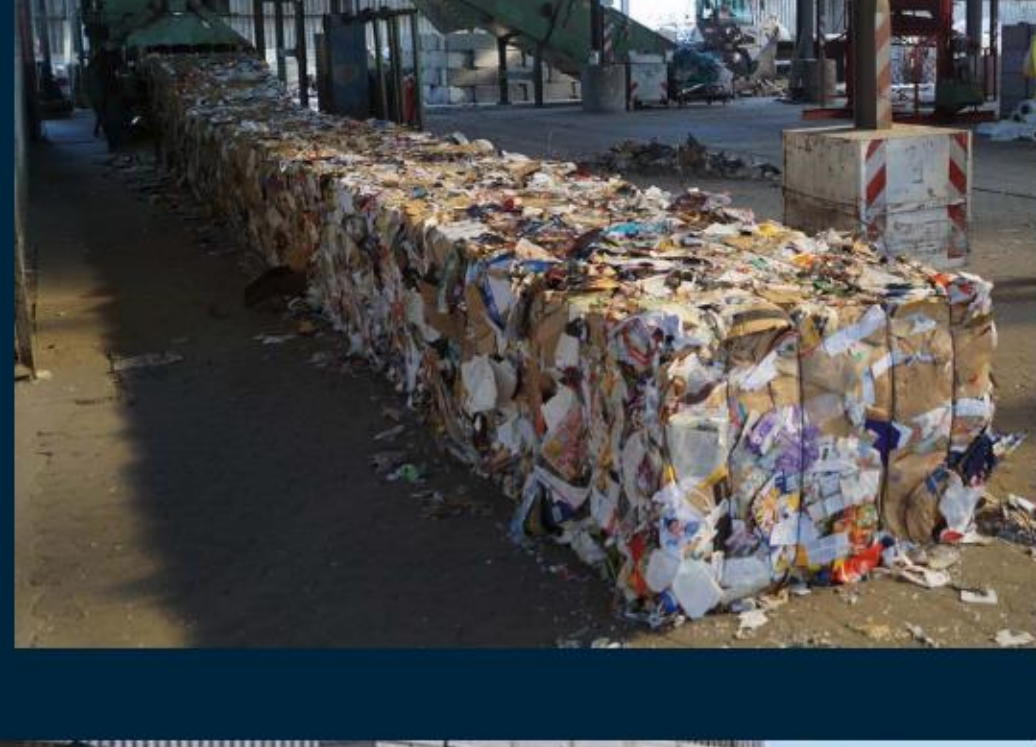
Throughout the whole process, the expert met with all the important stakeholders that have been mapped before to present the current data to them. In addition, it was equally important to talk especially to members of the city administration and the local politicians about the sources of the pollution.

A major challenge in the planning of basic waste management structures in Padang was that within the environmental department of Padang City, there was little knowledge of how for instance a composting plant or a sewage water treatment facility worked and looked like. In order to demonstrate the functioning of such facilities and to transfer knowledge to the officials in Padang, a field visit to the partner city Hildesheim was planned. In 2021 however, the global Covid-19 pandemic imposed major travel restrictions and made any in-person field visits to Germany impossible. This is how the idea of a virtual site visit was developed. In two online sessions, a large number of participants from Padang city, but also from other Indonesian municipalities, visited both the composting plant and the sewage water treatment of Hildesheim. The two visits were facilitated with the support of interpreters, expert interviews and practical examples. All the participants had the opportunity to pose questions and interact with the local waste and water management experts.

One year later, once the travel restrictions had been lifted, an in-person visit of several municipal representatives from the environmental department of Padang to Hildesheim city took place and complemented the insights previously gained from the online site-visits. Furthermore, Hildesheim city officials advised Padang on how to best establish a municipal department for waste management through a waste management fee.

Effects

The representatives of the environmental department of Padang city stated that they learned a lot through the online and in-person site-visits and the exchange with Hildesheim city. With the knowledge gained and the support of the expert, a system for a waste management fee was developed and the request for an own waste management department for Padang was taken to the City Council, where it is currently being debated. Furthermore, an approach for waste reduction was established which led to abolishing of single-use plastic in various departments of the city administration in Padang.

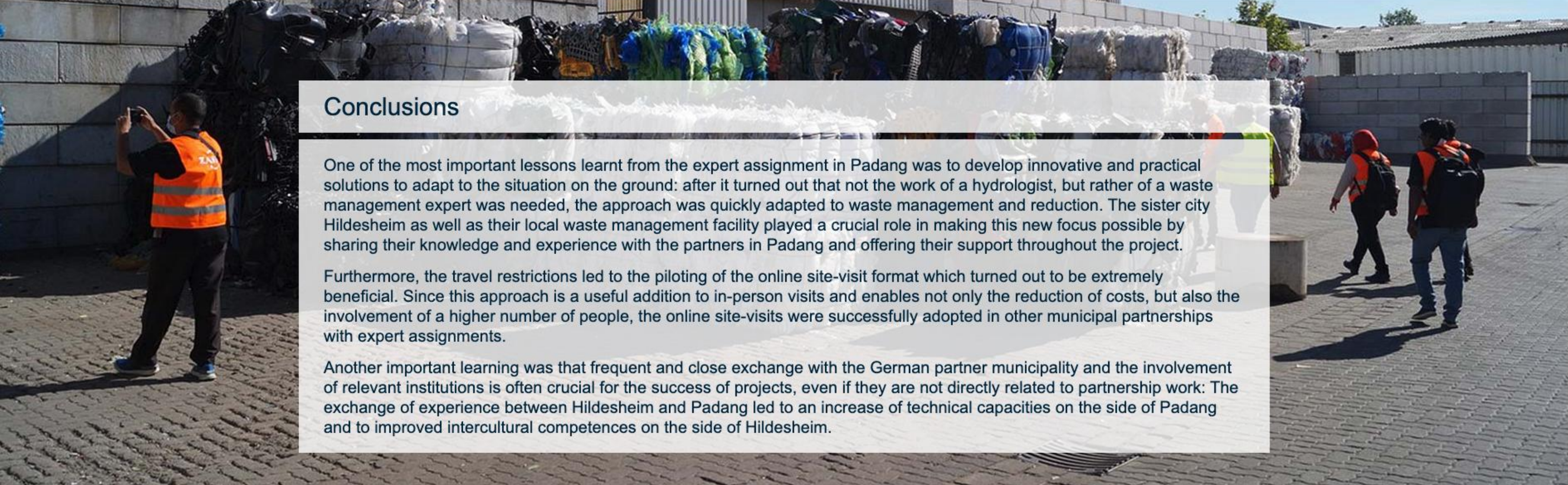


Conclusions

One of the most important lessons learnt from the expert assignment in Padang was to develop innovative and practical solutions to adapt to the situation on the ground: after it turned out that not the work of a hydrologist, but rather of a waste management expert was needed, the approach was quickly adapted to waste management and reduction. The sister city Hildesheim as well as their local waste management facility played a crucial role in making this new focus possible by sharing their knowledge and experience with the partners in Padang and offering their support throughout the project.

Furthermore, the travel restrictions led to the piloting of the online site-visit format which turned out to be extremely beneficial. Since this approach is a useful addition to in-person visits and enables not only the reduction of costs, but also the involvement of a higher number of people, the online site-visits were successfully adopted in other municipal partnerships with expert assignments.

Another important learning was that frequent and close exchange with the German partner municipality and the involvement of relevant institutions is often crucial for the success of projects, even if they are not directly related to partnership work: The exchange of experience between Hildesheim and Padang led to an increase of technical capacities on the side of Padang and to improved intercultural competences on the side of Hildesheim.



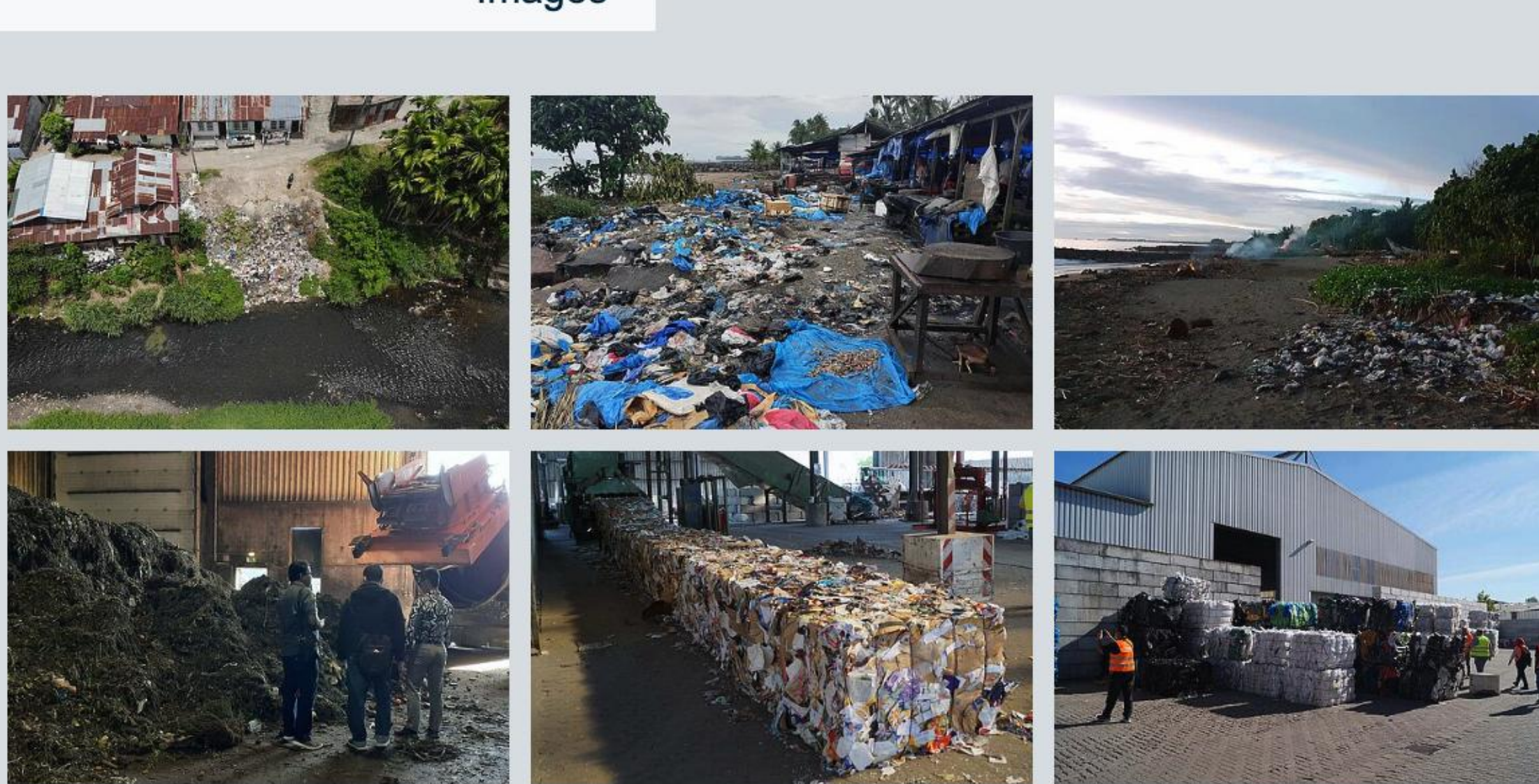
Further information

Water protection for Padang
Hildesheim organises virtual interactive tours of a composting plant and a sewage treatment plant for its partner municipality
Hildesheim – Padang: „What matters is the strong commitment“ SKEW
Published: 11/01/2024

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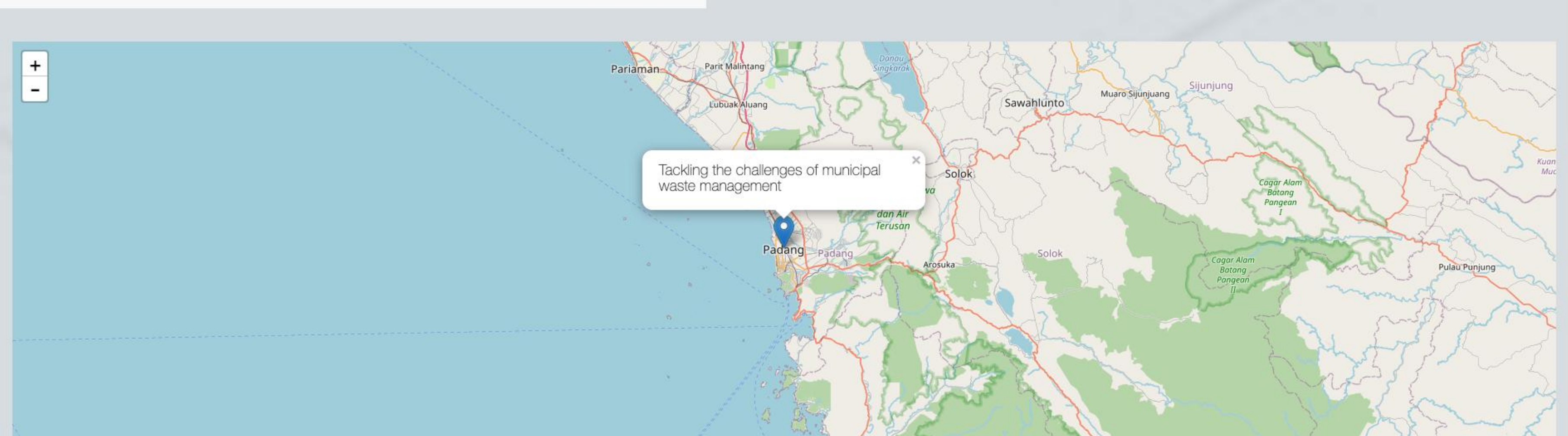
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Categories: Municipal services, Solid waste management and recycling, Water supply / sewage

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