



COMUNE DI LAMPEDUSA E LINOSA
Medaglia d'oro al merito civile
(Libero Consorzio Comunale di Agrigento)

N° 31 Reg.

del 29/03/2023

ORIGINALE DI DELIBERAZIONE DELLA GIUNTA MUNICIPALE IN VIDEOCONFERENZA

Oggetto: Presa d'atto Bando URBACT IV COOPERATIVI PROGRAMME CCI 2021TC16FFIR001. Autorizzazione al Sindaco a partecipare al bando in qualità di Partner.

L'anno **DUEMILAVENTITRE** il giorno **VENTINOVE** del mese di **MARZO** alle ore: **13:25** e seguenti, in videoconferenza nella Casa Comunale e nella consueta sala delle adunanze, in seguito ad invito di convocazione, si è riunita la Giunta Municipale con l'intervento dei Signori:

		Presente	Assente	Videoconferenza
Dott. Mannino Filippo	Sindaco	X		
Sig. Lucia Attilio	Vice Sindaco	X		
Arch. Di Maria Pietro	Assessore	X		
Dott. Di Piazza Aldo	Assessore		X	
Sig.na Palmisano Roberta	Assessore	X		

Presenti n° ..4.. Assenti n° ..1

Presiede il Sindaco **Dott. Filippo Mannino**;

Partecipa alla seduta ai sensi dell'art. 73 del D.L. n. 18/2020, ed ai sensi dell'art. 97, comma 4, lett. a) del D.lgs. 18 agosto 2000 n.267, il Segretario Comunale reggente, **Dott. Vito Antonio Bonanno**, il quale cura anche la redazione del presente verbale.

Il Presidente, constatato che il numero dei presenti è legale, dichiara aperta la seduta e invita i convenuti a deliberare sull'argomento in oggetto specificato.

Il Presidente da lettura della proposta come di seguito riportata

Oggetto: Presa d'atto Bando URBACT IV COOPERATIVI PROGRAMME CCI 2021TC16FFIR001. Autorizzazione al Sindaco a partecipare al bando in qualità di Partner.

LA GIUNTA MUNICIPALE

Vista la delibera di G.M. n.52 del 28/06/2022 di Approvazione regolamento per lo svolgimento delle riunioni della Giunta Comunale in videoconferenza;

Vista la proposta allegata al presente atto;

Visti i pareri favorevoli espressi sulla proposta di deliberazione, ai sensi della legge 08/06/1990 n°142, recepita dalla legge regionale n°48/91, così come modificata dall'articolo 12 della legge regionale 23/12/2000 n°30;

Ritenuto dovere provvedere in merito;

Ad unanimità di voti espressi in forma di legge;

DELIBERA

di approvare la proposta allegata al presente atto per farne parte integrante e sostanziale, facendola propria ad ogni effetto;

DELIBERA

inoltre, con separata votazione unanime, di dichiarare l'atto immediatamente esecutivo.



COMUNE DI LAMPEDUSA E LINOSA
Provincia di Agrigento
Ufficio Europa



PROPOSTA DI DELIBERAZIONE DA SOTTOPORRE ALL'ESAME ED APPROVAZIONE DELLA GIUNTA MUNICIPALE

OGGETTO: Presa d'atto Bando URBACT IV COOPERATION PROGRAMME CCI 2021TC16FFIR001. Autorizzazione al Sindaco a partecipare al bando in qualità di Partner.

IL RESPONSABILE DEL SETTORE II

Premesso che:

Il Comune di Lampedusa e Linosa in questi anni è stato capofila in diversi progetti europei in consorzio con altri paesi partner, maturando e vantando una notevole esperienza sui temi della promozione e dello sviluppo globale e sul fenomeno migratorio, quale fenomeno strutturale, valorizzando le attività degli enti locali nell'ambito della comunicazione pubblica sui temi della migrazione e dell'integrazione, offrendo alle pubbliche amministrazioni strumenti conoscitivi e comunicativi per meglio comunicare questi temi.

Considerato che in data 09.01.2023 è stato pubblicato il Bando URBACT IV COOPERATION PROGRAMME CCI 2021TC16FFIR001 - European Regional Development Fund 2021 -2027 European Territorial Cooperation Programme;

che il Comune di UTRECHT già partner con Comune di Lampedusa e Linosa in altri progetti europei, ha avanzato richiesta di partenariato per la partecipazione al suddetto bando in qualità di Ente capofila;

Considerato inoltre che Il progetto nasce con lo scopo di creare in ogni territorio un piano di azione, basato sulle specificità locali e con un dialogo con i diversi soggetti del territorio sulle politiche di integrazione. Il progetto permetterà di impostare un piano di azione e di provare alcune azioni pilota.

Dato atto che le proposte progettuali devono essere presentate entro il 31.03.20223 esclusivamente tramite la modulistica predisposta dalla UE e con le modalità specificate nel Bando;

Vista la volontà dell'Amministrazione a voler partecipare in qualità di partner in consorzio con il Comune di Utrecht capofila e altri otto comuni sui temi suddetti a valere sul Bando URBACT IV COOPERATION PROGRAMME CCI 2021TC16FFIR001 - European Regional Development Fund 2021 -2027 European Territorial Cooperation Programme;

Ritenuto pertanto opportuno aderire al bando suddetto;

VISTI i pareri favorevoli espressi ai sensi dell'art. 49 del D. Lgs. 18.08.2000 n. 267 in ordine

alla regolarità tecnica e contabile

PROPONE

Per quanto espresso in premessa alla Giunta Municipale di:

- Prendere atto del bando Bando URBACT IV COOPERATION PROGRAMME CCI 2021TC16FFIR001 - European Regional Development Fund 2021 -2027 European Territorial Cooperation Programme;
- Di autorizzare il Sindaco pro-tempore alla firma della documentazione di partenariato prevista per la presentazione della proposta progettuale da parte del Comune capofila di Utrecht;
- Di dichiarare la presente immediatamente esecutiva.

IL SINDACO
DOTT. HANNIBAL FILIPPO



IL Sostituto
La Responsabile del Settore II
Dott.ssa Giada Balsamo

PARERI ESPRESSI AI SENSI DELL'ART.12 DELLA L.R. 30/2000

In ordine alla regolarità Tecnica si esprime parere favorevole
Lampedusa, 28/03/2023

IL Sostituto
IL RESPONSABILE DEL SETTORE II
Dott.ssa Giada Balsamo

In ordine alla regolarità contabile si esprime parere favorevole
Lampedusa, 28/03/2023

IL Sostituto
IL RESPONSABILE DEL SETTORE III
Dott. Giada Balsamo

PROGETTO URBACT - ACCOGLIENZA DEI MIGRANTI NEI TERRITORI DI ARRIVO

I migranti appena arrivati sono spesso emarginati e le autorità locali faticano a soddisfare i loro bisogni, perché la loro accoglienza è in gran parte condizionata da politiche decise a livello nazionale. Tuttavia, è necessario facilitare l'integrazione dei nuovi arrivati per costruire società inclusive e socialmente resilienti, soprattutto in preparazione di eventuali future ondate migratorie climatiche. Le autorità locali, in coordinamento con tutti i livelli di governo e altri partner locali, svolgono un ruolo fondamentale nell'integrazione dei nuovi arrivati e nel metterli in grado di contribuire alle loro nuove comunità. Le autorità locali hanno risposto all'improvviso arrivo di migliaia di ucraini in fuga in cerca di asilo in modo efficiente, il che dimostra la loro capacità di giocare per accogliere i migranti in arrivo.

Il progetto mira a mettere le autorità locali in condizione di accogliere con successo i nuovi arrivati sul proprio territorio. Si prevede che le autorità locali europee si riuniscano per migliorare le politiche pubbliche e sviluppare nuove soluzioni che garantiscano condizioni di accoglienza dignitose e facilitino l'integrazione dei migranti nella società ospitante.

CONTESTO LOCALE:

Utrecht è la quarta città più grande dei Paesi Bassi e la sua popolazione è composta per il 35% da comunità di migranti. Utrecht è una città accogliente per tutti i migranti, i rifugiati e i rifugiati ucraini. Il Plan Einstein di Utrecht, iniziato con il forte afflusso di rifugiati nel 2016, è un concetto basato sull'accoglienza dignitosa dei rifugiati. Attraverso Plan Einstein, facilitiamo uno spazio aperto e gratuito per incontri significativi con un programma inclusivo fin dal primo giorno, coinvolgendo non solo i rifugiati ma anche i cittadini vicini. Incoraggiamo lo sviluppo di competenze professionali e la partecipazione, offrendo ogni tipo di attività che stimoli la loro crescita, dal giardinaggio, allo sport, alla cultura, alle attività professionali e linguistiche. Oltre a favorire il loro sviluppo, questo programma interattivo amplia anche la loro rete di contatti all'interno della città. Questo percorso pratico e continuo, dall'arrivo all'integrazione, porta a una migliore e più rapida integrazione nella società locale.

PROGRAMMA URBACT:

URBACT è un programma di cooperazione dell'UE che mira a promuovere uno sviluppo sostenibile e integrato, che comprende: Unione Europea, Norvegia, Svizzera, i Paesi IPA (Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, Macedonia del Nord, Bosnia-Erzegovina).

Il bando URBACT per le reti di pianificazione dell'azione sostiene la creazione di reti di autorità locali per trovare soluzioni alle sfide dei territori urbani attraverso la consultazione, la sperimentazione e lo scambio di buone pratiche.

CapofilaPartner del progetto Utrecht

L'obiettivo di queste reti è quello di sviluppare un piano d'azione specifico per ogni territorio partecipante, sulla base delle discussioni e degli scambi effettuati durante il progetto a livello europeo con i partner di progetto e a livello locale con gli stakeholder.

URBACT offre anche la possibilità di testare soluzioni innovative su piccola scala.
soluzioni innovative su piccola scala.

In questo modo, i partner del progetto scambieranno con i loro colleghi europei le loro sfide e le loro pratiche e avranno l'opportunità di co-progettare soluzioni. Questo dovrebbe portare allo sviluppo di buone pratiche innovative e al miglioramento delle politiche pubbliche.

I progetti URBACT durano due anni e mezzo, durante i quali un esperto di

Un esperto URBACT è a disposizione per fornire supporto metodologico. URBACT copre dal 65% all'80% delle spese e, alla fine del progetto, il programma facilita l'accesso ad altri finanziamenti europei per l'attuazione del Piano d'azione.

PROPOSTA DI PROGETTO:

Il progetto mira a progettare una strategia globale per accogliere e integrare meglio gli immigrati sulla base dell'esperienza e della competenza delle autorità locali.

La città di Utrecht propone di sviluppare il progetto attorno a due obiettivi specifici per rispondere alle esigenze degli immigrati arrivati di recente in Europa:

1. Salvaguardare i diritti umani dei migranti: accogliere gli stranieri con dignità e facilitare l'accesso ai loro diritti (alloggio, assistenza sanitaria e soprattutto mentale, istruzione, occupazione, cultura e sport, ecc.)

Sviluppare un piano per l'inclusione nel mercato degli alloggi, nel mercato del lavoro e nel sistema educativo, concentrandosi sulle circostanze distintive nel contesto degli immigrati e riconoscendo i sistemi e i processi locali discriminatori e/o di esclusione che possono vietare tali azioni.

2. Facilitare l'integrazione degli immigrati nel territorio: promuovere la loro inclusione e metterli in grado di sviluppare legami con i residenti locali, migliorare le loro competenze, promuovere l'apprendimento della lingua del Paese ospitante, ecc.

L'obiettivo è garantire un'accoglienza dignitosa agli stranieri, ai migranti (rifugiati ucraini) arrivati di recente e promuovere la loro integrazione e inclusione, al fine di migliorare la resilienza e l'inclusione nei territori urbani. Le migliori pratiche come il concetto di Plan Einstein a Utrecht e tutti gli altri concetti nelle città possono ispirare tutti i partecipanti.

- 8partner, provenienti da Unione Europea, Norvegia, Svizzera, Paesi IPA (Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, Macedonia del Nord, Bosnia-Erzegovina).

- Autorità locali disposte a migliorare le condizioni di arrivo e l'integrazione degli stranieri recentemente arrivati sul loro territorio.

- Autorità locali disposte a scambiare buone pratiche, a costruire un piano d'azione in modo partecipativo e a sperimentare azioni su piccola scala.

COINVOLGIMENTO DEI PARTNER DI PROGETTO:

☐ Partecipare a incontri internazionali;

☐ Condividere e scambiare conoscenze con altre autorità locali europee che lavorano su sfide simili.

sfide simili;

☐ Coinvolgere gli abitanti e i principali stakeholder a livello locale;

☐ Co-progettare un Piano d'Azione Integrato locale con il supporto di un esperto URBACT;

☐ Sperimentare azioni su piccola scala

ATTIVITA' Comune di Lampedusa e Linosa

3.1.1 Sfide locali delle città partner specifiche per il tema della rete

Per ogni partner, fornire informazioni sulle sfide locali in relazione al tema politico identificato dalla rete - max. 2000 caratteri. 2000 caratteri

A partire dagli anni '90 fino ad oggi, la piccola isola di Lampedusa è diventata il principale punto di approdo per decine di migliaia di migranti che cercano di raggiungere le coste dell'UE (circa 70.000 nel 2022). Questi flussi migratori sono arrivati inizialmente in un territorio non attrezzato per accoglierli e sono stati gli abitanti (circa 6.500) a fornire loro aiuto e assistenza. Con lo sviluppo di politiche migratorie più strutturate da parte dei governi italiani, è stato costruito un centro di accoglienza per i migranti e sono state sviluppate procedure standard volte a trasferire i migranti in altri luoghi d'Italia nel più breve tempo possibile.

Non sono mancate situazioni estreme e drammatiche che hanno segnato indelebilmente la popolazione locale: la presenza in ogni angolo dell'isola di oltre 15.000 tunisini nel 2011 assistiti

con ogni mezzo dagli abitanti in assenza di supporto esterno; i naufragi, in particolare quello del 3 ottobre 2013 che è costato la vita a 368 persone.

Questo processo ha visto una crescente securizzazione della gestione della migrazione che ha portato all'esclusione del comune e della comunità da qualsiasi ruolo attivo. Se le autorità locali e i cittadini non hanno un ruolo, non hanno nemmeno il potere di intervenire e gestire, anche per quanto riguarda le questioni che hanno un impatto in termini di disagi, costi aggiuntivi e immagine esterna sulla comunità locale e sui diritti dei migranti. Tra questi problemi vi sono la mancanza di un'adeguata assistenza sanitaria su un'isola le cui strutture non sono affatto sufficienti; i costi legati alla fornitura di servizi e allo smaltimento dei rifiuti prodotti nel centro di accoglienza; la saturazione del porto con le imbarcazioni utilizzate dai migranti che non sono state rimosse e i danni alle reti e alle barche da pesca causati dai detriti delle imbarcazioni; il danno alla reputazione dell'isola per le condizioni di degrado e di igiene del centro di accoglienza, inaccettabili per i migranti e per i lampedusani che si sono meritatamente guadagnati negli anni la reputazione di persone rispettose dei migranti e dei loro diritti fondamentali.

3.1.2 Quadro strategico locale della città specifico per il tema della rete

Per ogni partner, fornire informazioni sulle strategie e/o sui piani d'azione che sono rilevanti per il tema della rete - max. 2 000 caratteri

A causa della legislazione italiana sulla gestione degli sbarchi e della prima accoglienza dei migranti, le istituzioni lampedusane non hanno un ruolo attivo in questo ambito, trovandosi nella scomoda posizione di doverne gestire gli effetti meno desiderabili senza avere i poteri per agire in modo efficace e sostenibile. In questo quadro, la mitigazione di problemi specifici non poteva avvenire all'interno di una strategia complessiva, ma piuttosto con incontri ad hoc finalizzati al superamento di situazioni di emergenza.

Nonostante la progressiva perdita di centralità degli aspetti concreti della gestione degli arrivi di migranti sull'isola, il Comune ha realizzato negli anni azioni progettuali volte a sensibilizzare l'opinione pubblica locale, nazionale ed europea sulla necessità di garantire la dignità e i diritti fondamentali dei migranti. La posizione dell'amministrazione comunale è rimasta sostanzialmente invariata nel susseguirsi dei diversi sindaci e ha raggiunto un importante traguardo nel 2020 con la fondazione della Rete delle Città e Isole di Frontiera (BTIN). La rete, di cui Lampedusa è presidente del consiglio di amministrazione e che attualmente conta 15 città aderenti di 11 Paesi dell'UE, ha tra i suoi obiettivi l'attuazione di azioni congiunte per affrontare i problemi specifici della marginalità geografica e istituzionale dei luoghi ai confini dell'Europa, tra cui la questione migratoria. Un obiettivo altrettanto importante è quello di svolgere un'azione di advocacy congiunta con le istituzioni europee a favore di una responsabilità condivisa tra gli Stati membri, di politiche migratorie umane che garantiscano pienamente i diritti fondamentali e della promozione e attuazione del Global Compact on Migrations e del Global Compact on Refugees delle Nazioni Unite.

In qualità di membro dell'UCLG, Lampedusa ha guidato un processo politico nell'ambito dell'Organizzazione e con il forte sostegno del suo Segretario Generale, per la redazione e l'approvazione della Carta di Lampedusa per la Mobilità Dignitosa e la Solidarietà Territoriale.

3.1.3 Legami locali con lo sviluppo urbano sostenibile attraverso la politica di coesione

Per ogni partner, fornire informazioni sui collegamenti con la dimensione urbana della Politica di coesione (SUD, Carta di Nuova Lipsia, Articolo 11, EUI, ecc.) - max. 2 000 caratteri

La posizione geografica estremamente periferica, le ridotte dimensioni fisiche e demografiche e le conseguenti limitate capacità amministrative rendono molto complessi i progressi verso il raggiungimento degli obiettivi della dimensione urbana della politica di coesione. Alcuni dei

problemi dell'isola rientrano nell'ambito delle Aree urbane e altri in quello delle Aree remote/rurali. Se, da un lato, il piccolo centro urbano di Lampedusa e il tessuto economico dell'isola, basato sempre più sul turismo e più marginalmente sulla pesca, richiedono strategie di sviluppo legate ai concetti di città produttiva e sostenibile e alla mitigazione degli effetti della congestione e dell'inquinamento durante la stagione turistica, dall'altro lato, i problemi principali e duraturi sono legati alla marginalità geografica e istituzionale e riguardano in generale l'accesso ai servizi per la cittadinanza, compresi quelli di base come la sanità e l'istruzione pubblica. Un approccio di governance multilivello è spesso utilizzato per affrontare questi problemi a livello regionale e talvolta nazionale (come nel caso delle questioni migratorie). Un aspetto particolarmente rilevante delle strategie di sviluppo sostenibile rientra nell'ambito della Città verde. Lampedusa deve tutto il suo benessere, per le generazioni presenti e future, alla straordinaria bellezza del suo mare e del suo territorio incontaminato. Le amministrazioni locali lo sanno bene e sono altrettanto consapevoli dei problemi esistenti e delle complesse soluzioni: la produzione di energia verde per rendere l'isola autosufficiente, l'accesso all'acqua potabile e la depurazione delle acque reflue, la gestione del ciclo dei rifiuti, la tutela del mare soprattutto durante le affollate stagioni turistiche.

La disponibilità di importanti finanziamenti offerti dalla Recovery and Resilience Facility dell'UE in questi settori è stata adeguatamente sfruttata dal Comune di Lampedusa, che ha quindi l'opportunità di fare progressi in queste direzioni.

3.1.4 Motivazione e impegno di ciascuna città ad aderire alla rete

max. 2 000 caratteri

L'impegno di Lampedusa nell'attuazione del progetto è garantito dall'assunzione di responsabilità da parte di tutti i membri del consiglio comunale nella fase di candidatura. Il sindaco ha presentato l'iniziativa del progetto durante una riunione del consiglio comunale, ricevendo l'approvazione di tutti i membri e registrando la loro disponibilità a partecipare al Gruppo locale in base alle loro responsabilità amministrative. Inoltre, l'attuale amministrazione è ancora al primo anno del suo mandato (2022-2026), quindi l'intera attuazione del progetto rientrerebbe nell'attuale mandato e non si presenterebbero rischi di discontinuità politica e amministrativa.

L'opportunità di aderire alla realizzazione di questo progetto URBACT è vista come un'occasione unica per rafforzare la capacità dell'amministrazione locale e, attraverso di essa, della comunità locale, di avere un maggiore controllo su fenomeni di portata globale che inevitabilmente impattano in modo diverso sull'isola e sui migranti a seconda di come vengono gestiti. C'è infatti piena consapevolezza e condivisione dell'importanza di mantenere l'essere umano e la sua dignità al centro di ogni politica migratoria, a partire dai salvataggi in mare e dalla prima accoglienza dove Lampedusa è un luogo cruciale. Il patrimonio reputazionale e valoriale costruito negli ultimi decenni dalla comunità lampedusana, divenuto simbolo di accoglienza e solidarietà, è molto fragile e viene messo a rischio quando la gestione mostra inadeguatezze, comporta costi eccessivi per la comunità e genera dinamiche di lotta tra gruppi sociali vulnerabili, lasciando spazio a istanze di chiusura e ostilità. La possibilità di affrontare tutti gli aspetti legati al soccorso, allo sbarco, alla prima accoglienza e all'intero periodo di permanenza sull'isola con l'obiettivo di migliorare la qualità dell'accoglienza rendendola pienamente sostenibile per la comunità locale e per l'amministrazione è vista come una base concreta per costruire e sperimentare soluzioni a questioni annose e non più sostenibili.

3.1.5 Valore aggiunto della partecipazione a una rete URBACT

Per ogni partner, fornire informazioni sul motivo per cui è necessario intraprendere questo lavoro come parte di una rete URBACT. Qual è il valore aggiunto per il partner della partecipazione? - max. 2 000 caratteri

Rispetto a una situazione in cui il Comune di Lampedusa dovesse realizzare autonomamente le iniziative qui proposte, convocando un tavolo di lavoro multistakeholder con il coinvolgimento di tutti gli attori istituzionali e non, rilevanti per le tematiche da affrontare, farlo nell'ambito di un progetto URBACT fornirebbe invece un livello di legittimazione incomparabile di fronte ai livelli istituzionali superiori e una forte garanzia in termini di impegno di tutti gli attori coinvolti. Come dimostrato dalle esperienze passate, i tavoli di lavoro ad hoc possono produrre risultati immediati nella risoluzione o mitigazione di un problema, ma non proseguono la loro attività nel tempo e a seguito di una pianificazione strategica. Al contrario, il progetto URBACT porterebbe all'avvio di un percorso di 2,5 anni, in cui si prevede il contributo decisivo degli esperti URBACT e l'elaborazione di un Piano d'Azione basato sulla condivisione delle competenze specifiche di ciascun attore e sviluppato con un approccio strategico volto a individuare pratiche sostenibili nel lungo periodo.

Inoltre, ci sarebbe la possibilità di verificare, grazie ai fondi del programma, attraverso azioni pilota la bontà delle soluzioni individuate e di effettuare una valutazione ex-post sull'opportunità di dare loro continuità oltre la durata del progetto.

Non da ultimo, la possibilità di condivisione e apprendimento reciproco all'interno del partenariato internazionale sarebbe un importante valore aggiunto.

3.1.6 Stakeholder locali da coinvolgere nel Gruppo locale URBACT

Per ogni partner, fornire informazioni sui principali stakeholder da coinvolgere a livello locale - max. 2.000 caratteri. 2 000 caratteri

Gli stakeholder da coinvolgere, data la natura e il quadro legislativo della materia da trattare, dovranno necessariamente andare oltre il livello locale, includendo attori istituzionali e della società civile responsabili o attivi in tutte le aree di intervento.

3.1.7. Potenziale di finanziamento/attuazione delle azioni

Per ogni partner, è necessario fornire informazioni sul potenziale di finanziamento/attuazione delle azioni progettate nell'ambito di un Piano d'azione integrato. - max. 2 000 caratteri

3 pilastri:

- 1- tutela dei diritti umani dei migranti che sbarcano: azioni volte a tutelare la salute fisica e mentale dei nuovi arrivati per tutta la durata della loro permanenza sull'isola; sviluppo di attività specifiche rivolte a bambini, minori non accompagnati, donne sole e uomini soli, in modo da non escludere alcuna categoria di migranti.
- 2- Azioni volte a garantire la centralità della persona nella gestione delle procedure post mortem dei migranti e la protezione psicologica dei loro cari sopravvissuti alla traversata o residenti in Europa: meccanismi per garantire la presenza costante di psicologi/mediatori culturali; meccanismi per garantire la presenza, quando necessario, di figure religiose che possano svolgere i rituali legati alla morte di persone appartenenti a culti diversi; possibilità di scegliere il luogo/paese di sepoltura e assistenza nella gestione delle relative pratiche.
- 3- Meccanismi per rendere il fenomeno migratorio sostenibile per la piccola isola di Lampedusa, in modo da limitare le ripercussioni negative che generano ingenti costi economici, ambientali e reputazionali e possono generare l'emergere di sentimenti e istanze di chiusura e ostilità nei confronti della migrazione: meccanismi di governance multilivello nella gestione dei rifiuti (compresi quelli speciali come i relitti delle imbarcazioni), dell'acqua potabile e della sua depurazione, della pulizia e della messa in sicurezza del porto e delle aree marine vicine all'isola da relitti e detriti delle imbarcazioni utilizzate per la traversata; strategie di comunicazione volte a tutelare l'immagine dell'isola come luogo di accoglienza e ospitalità e a limitare l'impatto negativo delle percezioni dell'opinione pubblica sull'industria turistica dell'isola.

Metodologia orientata all'identificazione, allo sviluppo e al finanziamento di meccanismi di pilotaggio automatico che si attivino al verificarsi di determinate situazioni, definendo le relative responsabilità e la logistica.

URBACT



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Introduction

URBACT offers cities a unique opportunity to learn from other peers in Europe in order to improve the way cities are managed. URBACT networks foster the exchange of experience and good practice across cities, building urban stakeholders' capacity to develop efficient solutions. One could say that URBACT is an accelerator of sustainable integrated urban development in Europe enabling cities to benefit from the tried and tested [URBACT Method](#).

URBACT IV (2021 - 2027) continues to bring cities together with its first call for Action Planning Networks, open from 9 January to 31 March 2023.

This guide will introduce you to the URBACT networking framework. It will give you a better understanding of what you can expect by joining an URBACT Action Planning Network. It also clarifies the commitment and contributions expected from you as well as the added value you will get from being a partner in an URBACT network.

It contains detailed information on designing a proposal for the Action Planning Network, including how to define the thematic focus, set up a partnership, and shape your network exchange and learning programme of activities. It provides useful tips for high-quality network proposals.

This guide should be read alongside the [Terms of Reference for the Call for Proposals](#) for the creation of Action Planning Networks. In addition, the [URBACT Programme Manual](#) shall be used as the main reference document for detailed information around management of networks – links are provided in the guide where relevant. In case you wish to be a Lead Partner it also outlines the main URBACT rules and procedures, as well as the network budget development.

We hope that this Guide to Action Planning Networks will provide you with useful advice on building a successful proposal as the (future) Lead or Project Partner.

Join us! Together, we drive change for better cities!

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Why join an URBACT Action planning network?

Since 2002 (from URBACT I to URBACT III), nearly 1 000 EU cities involved in URBACT have experienced the added value of transnational cooperation, the exchange of knowledge beyond national borders, and support around participatory and integrated approaches to policy-making.

Joining an URBACT Action Planning Network will allow your city to benefit from a structured and organised process of exchange and learning with peers across Europe. Your city can benefit from the tried and tested URBACT Method which uses integrated and participatory approaches to develop an Integrated Action Plan for your city.

URBACT Action planning network is the right place for your city if you:

- ✓ want to be empowered to tackle an urban policy challenge by exploring pertinent solutions through the production of an integrated action plan
- ✓ want to make a difference in your city and ensure the sustainable transformation through concrete actions
- ✓ wish to improve or change local policies by sharing experiences and exchanging knowledge with other European cities working on similar challenges
- ✓ are eager to involve relevant key stakeholders and practice participatory culture by learning new tools and methods for effective policy-making
- ✓ need a safe space for experimentation of innovative approaches for integrated city management processes and organisational impact

Action Planning Networks build upon the successful established action learning model used by more than 400 cities in URBACT III programme period (2014 to 2021). This includes:

- ✓ Being open to all themes – policy challenges ensuring a true bottom up approach
- ✓ Focus and support around crosscutting policy challenges – gender equality, green transition, and digital transformation.
- ✓ Simplified administrative process with unique contractual phase and justification of local activities with results-based approach.
- ✓ Promoting values of carbon footprint reductions by minimising and streamlining the network activities and the production of outputs.
- ✓ Enhanced guidance for co-production of Integrated Actions Plans and testing actions.
- ✓ URBACT University and other targeted and tailor-made programme capacity building activities for network partners.
- ✓ Support with networking, communication of results and policy advocacy at EU and national level.

What is the offer?

Key expected result

Integrated Action Plan (IAP)

An IAP offers cities a concrete response to their policy challenge. The IAP follows an intervention logic which aims to design and implement actions based on testing. The IAP will link the cities actions to the broader Cohesion Policy funds to support long term implementation and lasting change.

This will be achieved through:

- ✓ **Transnational exchange & inspiration:** Connecting cities' experiences and learning from peers across Europe
- ✓ **Method and guidance on how to develop integrated local policies** based on co-creative design process, experimentation and active engagement of relevant stakeholders
- Tailor-made expertise support for enhancing capacity in policy-making** for sustainable urban development: through Network experts and Programme Capacity Building activities
- ✓ **Communication, knowledge and visibility activities for URBACT beneficiaries:** Through the URBACT website, digital communication channels, events, social media, URBACT City Festivals, policy labs and National URBACT Points.

) **Transnational exchange & inspiration:**

Europe's cities often face similar challenges. Yet, although there are many solutions, it can be difficult to share these in a structured way. URBACT enables the learning environment, innovative approaches and the know-how to help cities co-design solutions to urban challenges. By bringing together cities from diverse backgrounds URBACT widens the scope of shared experiences and approaches. Through peer review with partners across Europe and exposure to different perspectives and practices you will generate new ideas for your own city as well as support other local authorities to build better solutions to their local challenges.

Transnational exchange and learning activities include site visits showing concrete examples of cities dealing with their local challenges. While exchanging with the host city staff and stakeholders questioning their approach, partner cities often reconsider their own approaches to similar issues. By participating in the transnational activities organised by the networks, you will also have the opportunity to benefit from the thematic inputs provided by European urban experts, academics and researchers as well as practitioners and policy and decision makers at different levels.

"Thanks to the plurality of ideas and experiences we offered each other, out-of-the box thinking and the use of unconventional methods to work on our SUMP, we all grew richer in terms of knowledge and capacities and became friends by our joint work."

LEAD PARTNER COORDINATOR FOR CITYMOBILNET

) Method and guidance on how to develop integrated local policies

As a partner you will have the opportunity to practice integrated and participatory approaches within the framework of the URBACT Local Group to be created in each partner city. This includes experimentation by testing actions for possible upscaling, applying the integrated approach - considering different policy areas and governance levels at the same time, and ensure active engagement of relevant stakeholders by practicing effective participatory methods & tools.

URBACT offers wide assortment of [tools](#) to co-design integrated policies with citizens, NGOs, public partners, businesses to co-produce an Integrated Action Plan (IAP) for specific policy challenge. Each partner in the Action Planning Network will undertake this work. URBACT Local group offers safe space for learning by doing and networking with relevant partners and decision makers.

"It will be remembered as an opportunity to experiment and explore. Communities will remember the fun events that brought people together. Institutions will be effected by changes in ways of working."

PARTNER IN RESILIENT EUROPE

) Tailor-made expertise support for enhancing capacity in policy-making

The Programme provides each Action Planning Network with a specific budget for the appointment of validated URBACT Experts to support the exchange and learning process. Each Action Planning Network will appoint a network Lead expert who will assist the network over its entire duration in order to maximise the impact of exchange and learning activities. Ad hoc network experts will also be recruited to provide support on specific needs identified by networks such as support with the design of exchange and learning activities, specific thematic expertise and support with methods & tools for integrated and participatory approaches.

In addition to the network activities, the URBACT Programme offers regular support to partners over the entire duration of the networks. This includes targeted guidance for specific outputs and activities and effective learning. Various "short & sweet" guidance materials related to the "art of networking in URBACT" notably for the newcomers.

Partners in Action planning networks will benefit from exclusive training and capacity-building activities, notably:

- tailor-made [capacity-building events like the URBACT Summer University](#) designed exclusively for partners in Action Planning Networks;
- support on cross-cutting themes – Digital transformation, Gender equality, Green transition;
- targeted training schemes for specific stakeholder groups, including elected representatives, local practitioners, among others.

Through these training sessions, URBACT aims to achieve sustained impact by improving the way cities work with their communities beyond the life span of the URBACT network.

"URBACT is offering concrete tools to work with on local level - very useful. Also inviting & sharing the experiences of networks and cities with good practices is highly useful - a good example is the best way to learn."

PARTNER IN SIBDEV

) Communication, knowledge and visibility activities for URBACT beneficiaries.

Over the years, URBACT has developed different communication channels and tools to communicate on the work of URBACT networks and cities.

At EU level, the URBACT website, www.urbact.eu, gives visibility to all approved URBACT networks through dedicated network pages where networks can upload articles, videos and materials produced by the cities for an external audience. In addition, the work of URBACT networks and cities is promoted to a wide EU audience through URBACT newsletters, social media, reports, publications, infographics and videos.

The URBACT programme also puts forward the work and outputs of cities involved in URBACT networks during EU events like the URBACT City Festivals, the European Week for Cities and Regions, the EU Cities Forum, UN-HABITAT events like World Urban Forums, and makes connections between URBACT networks and other institutions/organisations working on sustainable urban development (European Commission, European Urban Initiative, Urban Agenda for the EU, Council of European Municipalities and Cities, European Investment Bank, and others).

Finally, the [URBACT Knowledge Hub](#) brings together, analyses, and synthetises content and good practices coming from URBACT networks and other organisations when necessary. Currently, this Knowledge Hub has been collecting and sharing content around [gender equality](#), [housing](#), and [renewing the Leipzig Charter](#), [Food](#) and [Strategic Procurement](#).

At national level, National URBACT Points (national ministries, city associations, universities or not for profit organisations). are in charge of communicating about URBACT and the work of URBACT cities to their countries in their native languages. URBACT cities are therefore regularly invited to national events to present their work within URBACT and benefit from visibility through the webpages and communication channels of the National URBACT Points.

"Being part of the URBACT community gave us the opportunity to meet with and learn from many like-minded cities across Europe. It also raised the profile of Preston as a medium-sized city and enabled us to share our experience of progressive procurement in a way that would not have been possible without our participation in the URBACT programme."

LEAD PARTNER IN PROCURE AND MAKING SPEND MATTER

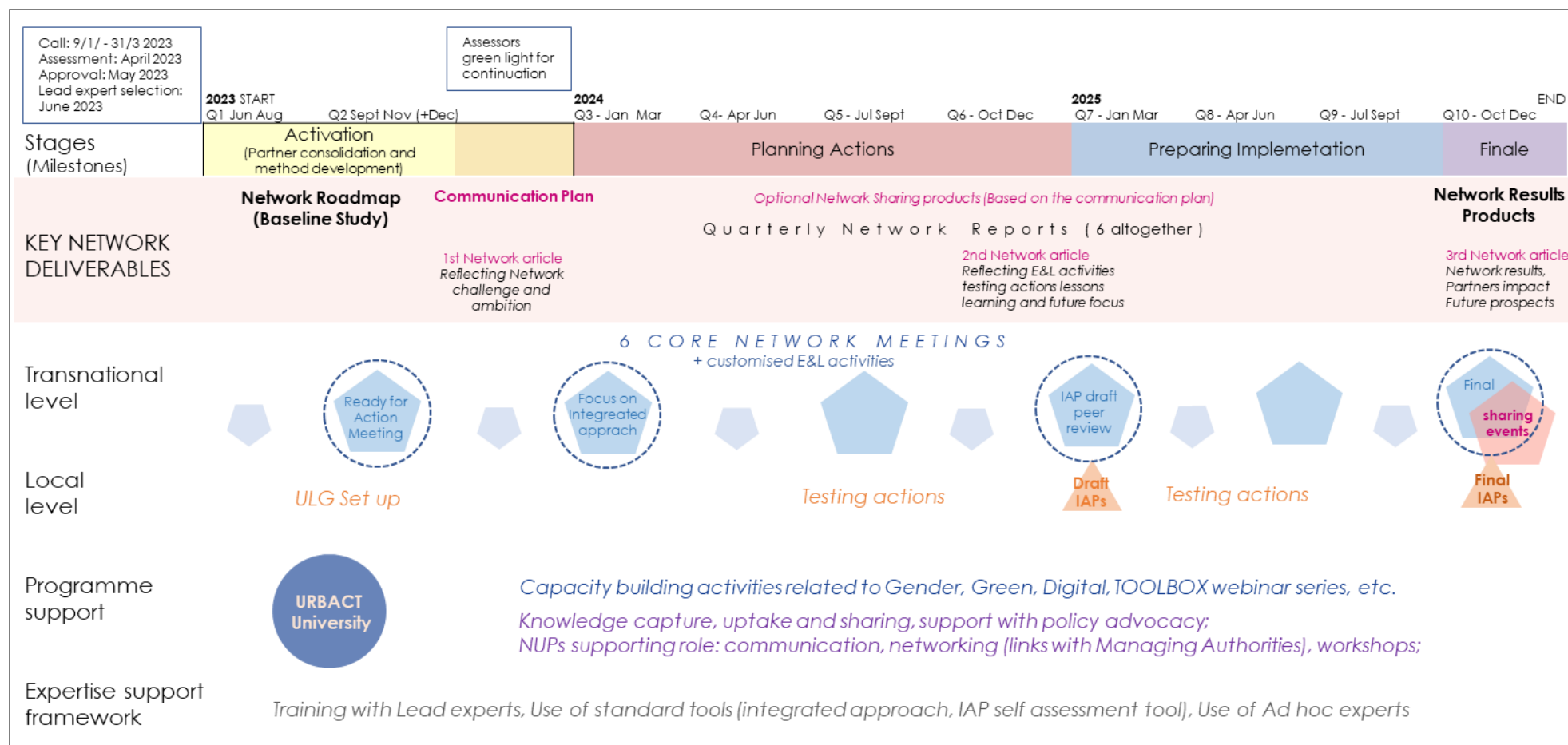
PART I

Action Planning Networks Journey

This section provides essentials around the URBACT networking framework. It shall give a better understanding of what one can expect by joining an URBACT Action Planning Network. It clarifies the commitment and contributions expected as well as the added value of being a partner in an URBACT network.

The Action Planning networks journey in a nutshell (infographic)

Action planning networks will have a duration of 31 months which will be organised around 10 quarters. The journey will be composed of 4 distinct stages with related milestones. All networks will have a minimum set of standard activities and benefiting from bespoke support from network experts. Networks are expected to organise at least 6 core transnational network meetings and propose additional customised set of exchange and learning activities. These will feed the co-production of Integrated Action Plans (IAPs) at local level. A menu of tailor-made capacity building activities at programme level i.e. URBACT University will provide a targeted offer for strengthening the capacity for practice of tools designing and preparing implementation of respective IAPs. The programme-led knowledge and communication activities will also accompany the networks throughout their URBACT journey.



What is expected from you as network partner?

The essentials

URBACT Action Planning Network is an exchange and learning tool for cities where one should:

- ✓ have identified a specific challenge in order to explore and share ideas about possible solutions,
- ✓ be interested in finding integrated and sustainable solutions to urban challenges,
- ✓ be willing to work in a transnational learning environment with peers and experts,
- ✓ accept to work with local stakeholders to design an Integrated Action Plan focusing on addressing the policy challenge locally,
- ✓ agree to apply the URBACT Method of co-creation and action learning throughout the network lifetime.
- ✓ ensure that your administration can commit to this network all the necessary resources – financial and staff over the network lifetime.

A successful participation in an Action Planning Network requires that all partners commit to the following core activities:

Transnational activities

Commitment to take an active part in the transnational exchange and learning activities is mandatory. The active contribution of all partners in the transnational activities is a key condition for a rich and effective exchange and learning process for all partners.

The tasks to be performed:

- ✓ preparation and active contribution to the transnational exchange and learning network activities around specific policy content requiring professional proficiency in English,
- ✓ possible hosting of a transnational event,
- ✓ ensuring a proper administrative management related to transnational activities.

Transnational activities are conceived as a logical sequence of exchange and learning moments that will feed into partner activities at local level, and more especially into the production of the local Integrated Action Plan. Continuity in terms of participation to transnational meetings is crucial. Although clearly you may consider bringing in new participants, depending on the themes being covered during each meeting, it is recommended that the officer in charge of the Action Planning Network at local level (“the local coordinator”) is always on board.

Local activities

The co-production of an Integrated Action Plan by the URBACT Local Group is a compulsory requirement for all partners involved in Action Planning Networks. This is a co-creation process which requires ongoing work over the whole lifetime of the network. Partners should link the local work to what is happening in transnational meetings and should record key learnings throughout the duration of the network.

You will commit to set up and run an URBACT Local Group that will bring together representatives of different departments within the local administration (in order to ensure horizontal integration), including elected representatives, decision-makers, in charge of the policy areas addressed by the Integrated Action Plan. This participatory process should involve representatives of communities, residents, beneficiaries linked to the policy you intend to deal with, as well as representatives of delivery agencies, third sector and private interests when relevant. The requirement to develop a participatory approach through the URBACT Local Group should not lead to duplication, and partners can build on existing local partnerships when appropriate.

URBACT Local group can be used also as a platform for networking in order to strengthen the links with EU cohesion policy funds and build relationship with key local decision-makers notably the relevant managing authorities in charge of operational programmes.

All partners must be committed to engaging with local stakeholders and to mobilising the resources needed (in terms of human, time and financial resources). This includes identifying as soon as possible the “right” local coordinator for the network.

Communication

If no one talks about it, it is as if it did not happen. This is why communicating about ongoing activities and final results is crucial. Besides meeting the necessary EU publicity and visibility rules (as described in the [URBACT Programme Manual “Communication at network level”](#)), the network’s findings and lessons learnt should be shared more widely, with all urban practitioners who may be facing similar policy challenges across Europe. This can be done in various ways, for instance reports and articles shall capture and reflect network exchange and learning activities, the uptake of thematic knowledge and progress in partner cities.

Most of the sharing outputs will be produced by network experts, nevertheless, partners active contribution will be essential for making these sharing materials meaningful for wider audience. These shall be published on the respective network webpages on the URBACT website and promoted via social media, newsletter or during events. Bear in mind that producing the right content through suitable channels – with a target audience in mind – will be of great help when seeking mindset changes and getting more people on board for your cause.

Active participation in programme activities

The URBACT Programme Secretariat organises a variety of training and capacity-building sessions for partners and local stakeholders involved in approved networks. Attendance and active participation of partners in these activities is expected. Programme will also facilitate various knowledge sharing activities where partners can be invited to share their experience with wider audience.

Specific training sessions will be organised for the Lead Partner’s team on topics which can help deliver the project successfully. Examples include general project management, public procurement issues, reporting costs, being audited and network communications. These sessions are often organised as virtual meetings.

In addition, all network partners as well as network Lead experts will be invited to attend general information and guidance sessions as well specific practical working sessions in order to share and exchange together about the learning experience in different networks.

The overview of Action Planning networks - The journey with 4 stages

Each of the Action planning journey stages has a distinctive purpose with related objectives and milestones (see also infographic page 9).

Stage 1 – Activation (quarter 1 and 2 – from June to December 2023)

During the activation stage networks will consolidate their partnership and develop a customised methodology for the work plan of networking activities at transnational and local level for the following stages. This will be done within the framework of the well-established URBACT Baseline Study process to be carried out by the network Lead expert. It includes the state-of-the-art analysis for the policy challenges being tackled by the network, partner visits for understanding specific local policy contexts and the identification of common denominators as the basis for designing and defining the focus and types of activities for effective action learning. The latter will be presented in the key deliverable of the activation stage - the Network Roadmaps.

During the first quarter of activation stage (June-August 2023), URBACT Secretariat will organise a launch meeting for all approved Action Planning networks. Several sessions around essential information and guidance materials for proper start of the network journey will be organised online for Lead partners and Lead experts as well as all network partners. The dates of this meeting are already set - 21 June 2023 with Lead Partners and Lead Experts and 22 June 2023 with all partners. The attendance at these sessions is compulsory. After these initiation sessions all networks are invited to organise the proper network kick off meetings to discuss details arounds organisation of different activities taking place in activation stage. Online format is suggested for these meetings.

An URBACT Summer University will take place in the week of 28 August 2023 and will gather all partners of the Action Planning Networks to build their capacities in carrying out their activities at network and local levels. The entire URBACT action planning community will be able to meet and discover the URBACT universe and get ready for setting-up of URBACT local groups (ULG). More information about this event will be shared in the coming months.

During this stage all networks will set up their respective network pages on the urbact.eu website. For this purpose, networks will have to produce and share with the URBACT Secretariat the network logo files, the official tagline/one-liner, a boilerplate (short paragraph) explaining the network and funding, as well as other EU requirements (detailed on the Programme Manual – Book 1).

During the second quarter of activation stage (September - December 2023), the first Core Network meeting gathering the entire partnership shall be organised (in-person) by all networks. The focus of this “Ready for Action” core network meeting will be around the results of the Baseline Study process. The outcome of this meeting shall be a mutual agreement around the itinerary and focus of network exchange and leaning activities as well as the methodological framework for local activities and the desired impact to take place during the following stages of the journey.

At the end of this quarter networks are expected to submit to the URBACT Secretariat a communication plan, outlining the common objectives, messages, intended target audiences, agreed channels and operational communication activities. This document will complement the Network roadmap and define the networks’ ambitions for sharing results.

KEY OUTPUTS:

- ✓ Network Roadmap (based on the Baseline Study process)
- ✓ 1st Core network meeting (in-person)
- ✓ URBACT Local Groups set up (8-10 per network, depending on number of partners in the network)
- ✓ Network's communication plan
- ✓ First Network article presenting network challenges and ambition

At the end of activation stage, the Network Roadmap (based on the Baseline study process) will be reviewed by the External Assessment Panel to ensure sufficient quality to proceed into the following stages of the journey. The passage to the following stages is therefore NOT automatic, projects can be stopped if the quality of the network is considered insufficient.

Stage 2 – Planning Actions (quarter 3 to 6 - from January to December 2024)

It is the longest and most significant part of the action planning journey during which each network follows its own customised Network Roadmap - action learning activities. This stage is mainly structured around core network meetings, the set up and meetings of URBACT Local Groups in each partner city. It concludes with the network Mid-Term Reflection process (MTR) and draft Integrated Action Plans (IAPs) produced by all partners.

The transnational activities in this stage focus on the thematic inputs related to the policy challenges tackled by exploring solutions, practices, case studies and providing inspiration for partners to take away. A core Network meeting focusing on Integrated approaches (with tailored exercises, methods and tools) shall be organised by all networks at the beginning of this stage. The objective of this core meeting is to reinforce the holistic approach to the IAP co-production process with possible upcoming testing activities. Additional methodological guidance for organisation of this particular meeting will be provided during the journey. At least one more core network meeting in-person with no pre-defined focus should be foreseen by the network later in this stage.

Other customised activities in this stage can include staff exchanges, bi-tri lateral meetings, online masterclasses, thematic sessions, as defined in the Network Roadmap. The combination of online and/ or in-person formats for these activities shall be well thought through by taking in consideration the related carbon footprint.

The use of Ad hoc experts is strongly encouraged during this period for enriching the overall learning experience around the specific thematic areas or support with the use of specific methods & tools.

Testing activities will be an integral part of the IAP co-production process in respective ULGs being a tool for triggering the stakeholders' engagement and try out the coherence and operationalisation of specific actions for the potential upscaling and definition in the Integrated Action Plans.

Quarterly network reports (six altogether), starting in quarter 3 are suggested for a standardised process of interim updates on network progress – transnational and local activities. These reports, produced by the Lead Expert of each network, should aim to capture learning for the network as well as to have an adequate format for network communication activities – sharing knowledge with wider audience. These reports shall be published on network webpages and can feed the production of the Final Network Results Product/s to be delivered at end of the journey.

During this stage the capacity- building activities organised by the URBACT Secretariat will focus on supporting the consideration of the cross-cutting thematic dimensions - Digital transformation, Gender equality, Green transition, in partners' local activities. In addition, the use of the URBACT Toolbox will be strongly encouraged with possible live tutorials around various tools.

Knowledge Hub and communication activities initiated by the URBACT Secretariat will focus on identifying relevant content coming from different networks or partner cities, in order to create or reinforce synergies and contributions among different parties and external partners.

The Mid-term reflection process at the end of Planning actions stage to be carried out by all networks will enable to pause and reflect on the progress being made at the mid-point of the network journey. It will be a well-structured and guided process which should be useful for the network partners and of minimal administrative burden for all concerned. Based on the results of the MTR, networks will have the possibility to adjust and reprogram network activities. Further guidance will be provided on this point following approval of networks.

KEY OUTPUTS:

- ✓ 1 Core network meeting focusing on Integrated approach (in-person)
- ✓ 1 Core network meeting – focus to be defined by network (in-person)
- ✓ Customised set of exchange and learning activities (in-person or online)
- ✓ 3 quarterly network reports
- ✓ Network article summarising key network activities taking place in planning actions stage including the insights from testing activities and key learning insights.

Stage 3 – Preparing Implementation (quarter 7 to 9 – from January to September 2025)

During this stage all partners are expected to make further progress on their respective IAPs by focusing on operationalisation aspects. In this regard the exchange and learning activities during this stage shall focus on:

- Drawing lessons from testing activities for definition of actions and possible upscaling
- Identifying the necessary and possible resources for specific actions (funding, staff)
- Defining responsibilities of key stakeholders for implementation of actions
- Incorporating the framework for monitoring of actions for ensuring the effectiveness of IAP
- Analysing the risks or obstacles related to implementation (contracts, key actors, partnerships)
- Outlining the implementation process

Targeted and tailor-made programme capacity building activities will complement the network activities with further support in all the key aspects related to integrated and participatory implementation.

A core Network meeting focusing on the peer-review of draft IAPs shall be incorporated in network workplans at the beginning of this stage. This meeting shall have the following aim:

- To compare partners' draft IAPs and review for final improvements related to definition of actions also by taking in consideration the experience from testing and define attention points for further possible testing of actions.
- To define priority target groups and adjust the formats of Integrated Action Plans (i.e. decision makers, financiers, and citizens).

- To explore challenges related to communication and policy advocacy of the respective IAPs i.e. pitching, negotiations, lobbying etc.

An additional round of testing actions activities can take place during this period to confirm the suitability of specific actions defined in respective IAPs notably with the particular target groups. This will depend on the needs and ambition in respective URBACT Local groups.

Upon request from URBACT beneficiaries, National URBACT Points can have an emphasised supporting role at local level during this stage. They will act as enablers for networking with key local stakeholders and decision-makers (notably the relevant managing authorities in charge of operational programmes) by organising relevant networking events and providing communication support to partners.

KEY OUTPUTS:

- ✓ 1 Core network meeting focusing on peer-review of draft IAPs (in-person)
- ✓ 1 Core network meeting – focus to be defined by the network (in-person)
- ✓ Customised set of exchange and learning activities (in-person or online)
- ✓ 3 quarterly network reports

Stage 4 – Network Finale (quarter 10 – from October to December 2025)

The last quarter of the URBACT IV Action planning journey could be described as “Back to the future”. This is where the network journey and results will be captured in Network Results Product/s reflecting:

- The motivation and ambition of partners at the start of the journey
- The key features of the Integrated Action Plans
- The added value of the URBACT experience
- The highlights of the journey and the learning points from partners
- The future prospects

Each network will be able to organise the final core network meeting with optional back to back final event will be about celebrating the success (and failures) and look forward to the future endeavours with “Ready to implement” Integrated Action plans.

But not only, it is also about “cleaning up after the party”. In this final stage, main network management and coordination activities relate to the network formal closure.

KEY OUTPUTS:

- ✓ Network Results Product/s
- ✓ Final Core network meeting (in-person) back to back with optional final event (hybrid)
- ✓ Final network article
- ✓ An Integrated Action Plan (1 per partner)
- ✓ Network article reflecting network results, impact at local level, as well as future prospects

The organisation of key activities and outputs

The activities in URBACT networks are always structured around 3 Work Packages (WPs).

- > WP1 — Network Management
- > WP2 — Network Level (Transnational) Activities
- > WP3 — Local Level Activities

Each work package has its own aim. Work package 1 focuses on network management and coordination and is crucial to ensure the correct functioning of the network. Work Package 2 and Work Package 3 are intertwined and shall feed each other - a continuous flow of knowledge between the transnational and the local level activities should therefore exist, for effective results.

Communication and dissemination activities are spread throughout all Work Packages.

Each work package outlines activities that shall take place in order to achieve the desired outcomes. Regardless of uniqueness of network work programmes all networks shall follow the same framework for shaping the network activities.

Moreover, Work Package 2 and 3 define a set of standard outputs that should be produced by all networks. Programme aims to increase the impact and effectiveness of the exchange and learning in networks by focusing on the process and avoid unnecessary production of outputs. By analysing our various types of outputs and activities in past projects we have been able to identify the most useful elements in order to improve the overall URBACT experience for partners.

All proposed standard outputs shall be considered in network proposals. Proposed standardised outputs allow plenty of space for diversification and creativity within the given frames. A menu of possibilities and guidelines around what works best in any specific context are provided in the following sections of the guide.

All applicants are invited to propose as well customised network activities/ outputs in addition to standard expected outputs. Based on the principles and ideas defined in the application form these will be further developed and elaborated during the Activation stage based on the Baseline Study process. The Network Roadmap (key network output of Activation stage) will provide detailed description of different network activities which will respond to specific network needs for maximising the impact of exchange and learning in URBACT.

Work Package 1 - Network Management

The activities to be developed under Work Package 1 aim to ensure the sound management and coordination of the network concerning both the overall project management and all aspects of administrative and financial management. These also include organisation of responsibilities between the partners by building a strong collaborative relationship and ensuring the effective communication flows within the network and external audience.

) Key activities include:

- To sign all the contractual documents at Programme and network level
- Recruiting, if necessary, appropriate staff to ensure efficient project management and communication

- Regular coordination meetings to ensure strong communication between partners concerning project coordination
- Appointment and coordination of network Lead and Ad hoc experts in line with expertise framework provided by the programme
- Submission of official reporting documents by all partners – every 12 months
- Organise the Mid-term reflection process at the end of Planning actions stage
- Regular network management ‘health checks’ with the URBACT Joint Secretariat
- Final closure documents (end of the project) to be submitted by all partners
- To receive and transfer ERDF funds to partners (Lead Partner’s responsibility)
- Ensuring communication on the network’s activities and results with contribution from all project partners in compliance with EU publicity guidelines. It should take place on ongoing basis with regular updates of the project mini-site on the URBACT website.
- Delivering operational actions to implement the network communication plan (producing and publishing content on the network website and other channels), in addition to monitoring, evaluating and adapting the communication plan.
- Lead partners providing assistance and guidance to all project partners for external communication activities
- Attending information and training sessions and other relevant events organised by the URBACT Programme (based on the invitation)

A dedicated Networking space will be enabled for all APN partners on Basecamp in order to facilitate the coordination and flow of information. It will be used as a central channel for communication with the entire URBACT community. It enables an effective management of information, content, processes and outputs. This includes:

- A repository of key URBACT guidance and reference materials for different activities gathered in a dedicated “One stop support shop” suitcase/ folder.
- The targeted message boards for sharing news and key announcements
- The collaborative Calendar of all network and programme activities
- Automatic check-ins for gathering feedback around key deliverables
- Campfire for quick peer Q&A support
- Network folders with key outputs produced on the way
- Private network basecamp spaces managed by Lead partners

Further details and information about different elements related to functioning and management of URBACT networks including all aspects of administrative and financial management is provided in the URBACT IV Programme Manual – BOOK ONE – The URBACT Networks.

Work Package 2 - Network level (transnational) Activities

The aim of (transnational) network level activities is to support partners in improving their local policies in relation to the policy challenge. Including:

- > Sharing: To explore solutions and foster the exchange of experiences among partners
- > Learning: To strengthen the practical knowledge and skills of partners in the policy area related to the respective policy challenge
- > Applying: To draw lessons from the transnational exchange on an ongoing basis and to apply them at local level, especially through the production of an Integrated Action Plan

) Key activities include:

- **Organisation of transnational exchange and learning activities.** These activities should be a combination of different components including network meetings with specific thematic inputs, workshops, field visits, peer review sessions, and dissemination activities, etc.

THE FOLLOWING RELATED OUTPUTS ARE EXPECTED:

- ✓ Network Roadmap (based on the Baseline Study process). Further explanation around expectations of the Baseline Study process are provided in Part III of the guide.
 - ✓ At least 6 Core in-person transnational network meetings. A standard set of 4 core network meetings with specific focus in different stages shall be organised by all networks:
 - Activation: “Ready for action” meeting;
 - Planning Actions: “Focus on integrated approaches”;
 - Preparing implementation: “draft IAP peer review”;
 - Network Finale: Final network meeting including optional sharing event.
 - ✓ Customised set of exchange and learning activities. Combination of in-person and online activities is expected. Applicants are expected to suggest general principles and ideas for organisation of these activities depending on the specific needs related to the policy challenge tackled. Exact number and formats shall be defined during activation stage based on the Baseline Study process. Further guidelines for shaping customised activities are provided in Part III of the guide.
- **Production of various thematic and methodological outputs** shall take place during the lifetime of the network in order to ensure an effective uptake of knowledge. Nevertheless, structured process of interim updates on network progress is suggested. We expect different thematic and methodological productions to be captured and summarised within unique standard network output– Quarterly network report.

THE FOLLOWING RELATED OUTPUTS ARE EXPECTED:

- ✓ 6 Quarterly network reports (to be shared from quarters 4 to 9)
- **Co-development and implementation of the network communication plan.** Communication is everyone’s business and, both for transparency but also increasing visibility reasons, all project partners should be involved with the development of the communication plan, setting objectives, messages, target audiences, channels and planning at network-level. The plan shall include specific content and milestones to be shared widely, as showcasing results from network activities (particularly the Final Network Product), optional events open to attendants beyond project partners, news and articles.

THE FOLLOWING RELATED OUTPUTS ARE EXPECTED:

- ✓ Network Communication Plan
- ✓ At least 3 articles published on the network webpage
- ✓ Network Results product/s

Further guidance regarding the possible features and design of network level activities is provided in PART III of the present guide.

Work Package 3 – Local level activities

The URBACT Local Group (ULG) aims to have an impact on Local Governance and practices by enabling save space for the innovation in city administrations. It promotes the environment for active involvement of local stakeholders in co-creation and production of an Integrated Action Plan. It fosters:

- > Development of organisational culture by building bridges inside the city administration as well as with external actors.
- > Building relationship with stakeholders involved by exploring and testing solutions i.e. including concrete pilot experiments, organising creative workshops and sharing events with citizen, etc.
- > Improved professional capacity by practicing tools & methods for effective design processes.

) Key activities include:

- Setting up and running a URBACT Local Group for the co-production of Integrated Action plan
- Taking part in the exchange activities at transnational level and contribute to these activities (participation to seminars with relevant delegates, organisation of study visits, production of inputs, etc.)
- Testing actions activities as an integral part of the IAP co-production process. It can be used as a tool for triggering the stakeholders' engagement and try out the coherence and operationalisation of specific actions for the potential upscaling and definition in the Integrated Action Plans.
- Taking part in the capacity-building activities organised by the URBACT Secretariat for local stakeholders involved in URBACT Local Groups.
- Share results and lessons learnt and good practices to local stakeholders involved in urban development and wider EU community.
- Translating the network communication plan into communication activities at local level (e.g. local events, social media channels in local languages and coordinated efforts with the National URBACT Points).
- Making links with EU cohesion policy funds by building cooperation relationships with Managing Authorities of Operational Programmes.

THE FOLLOWING RELATED OUTPUTS ARE EXPECTED:

- ✓ URBACT Local group contact list. An updated contact list shall be shared with the URBACT Secretariat when appropriate.
- ✓ Integrated Action Plan (draft IAP version shall be ready for "IAP peer review" network meeting to take place at the start of Preparing Implementation stage).

Further guidance regarding specific activities to take place at local level is provided in PART III of the present guide.

Summary of network outputs

Standard network outputs as required in application submission system synergies CTE				Customised Outputs to be developed by the network during the Activation stage	
WP	Type of Output	Quantity	When	Type of output	when
2	Network roadmap (Baseline study)	One per network	At the end of Activation stage		
2	Network communication plan	One per network	At the end of Activation stage		
2	Transnational Network meetings (Core network in-person meetings)	At least 6 (4 with pre-defined specific focus in each stage)	1 in Activation stage, 2 in Planning actions, 2 in Preparing implementation, 1 in Network Finale (with optional back to back final event)	Customised set of exchange and learning activities (in-person or online)	Notably during the Planning actions and preparing implementation stage
2	Quarterly Network Reports	6 per network	To be shared in Quarters 4 - 9	Optional set of sharing products to be foreseen by each network based on the communication plan	To be defined in communication plan
2	Network articles	At least 3 per network	1st at the end of Activation stage 2nd at the end of Planning Actions 3rd in network Finale		
2	Network Results Product/s	1 set per network	In Network Finale		
3	URBACT Local Group (contact list)	1 per partner	At the end of Activation stage (and later depending on updates)		
3	Integrated Action Plan	1 per partner	Lead Partner (with LE and PP inputs)		

All required standard outputs shall be considered in network proposals. All applicants are invited to propose as well customised network activities/ outputs in addition to standard network outputs. Based on the principles and ideas defined in the application form these will be further developed and elaborated during the Activation stage based on the Baseline Study process. Details around key principles for shaping different activities and outputs at network and local level to be proposed in the application form are further provided in Part III of the guide.

PART II

Setting up an Action Planning Network

This section complements the Term of Reference of the call for Action Planning Network proposals with useful suggestions corresponding to the following sections of the application form:

- ✓ section 2 – Thematic content
- ✓ section 3 – Rationale of proposed partnership

Defining the thematic focus

An URBACT Action Planning Network is built around a shared policy challenge providing the platform for the exchange of lessons and experience around designing and delivering integrated and participatory policies for sustainable urban development. It contributes to the EU cohesion policy objective 5 – Europe closer to citizen. Moreover, the shared policy challenge addressed by the network creates a bond between partners.

The identification of the policy challenge to be addressed in the network is an initial key step when preparing an application in the framework of the call for proposals. Section 3 of the Terms of Reference document provides a thorough description of possible thematic coverage for Action planning networks. Here you will find additional reflections to be considered when defining the thematic scope, the network shall address.

) **Have you consulted what your colleagues from other departments are working on?**

The decision on the preferred policy issue should be based on an honest assessment of local priorities and challenges discussed within the candidate city, with colleagues from different departments, with elected representatives and other relevant stakeholders (including residents and final beneficiaries). You should make sure:

- ✓ there is a clear understanding of the policy challenges you intend to address,
- ✓ policy challenges are considered as priorities in the local political agenda and shared by other departments and stakeholders,
- ✓ there is a clear political willingness to support the design process of the Integrated Action Plan, and,
- ✓ the implementation of the Integrated Action Plan is identified in the foresight of city opportunities as well as feasible and timely in relation to the city funding priorities.

This preliminary assessment is essential for all partners involved in the network.

) **Would your policy challenge interest other cities in Europe?**

You should reflect on the relevance of the policy challenges identified for other European cities and more especially on the contribution that the Action planning network will provide to other policy-makers and practitioners facing similar local challenges in Europe and beyond. Action planning networks are first of all conceived as tools to increase the capacity of cities in the design of integrated and participatory policies for sustainable urban development, but they are also expected to generate knowledge (in the form of case studies, most recent policy trends in different thematic fields, policy recommendations, etc.) to feed into the debate at EU, national and regional levels.

) **How should the policy challenge be structured in your proposal?**

The thematic content of the network is an important component of the application form and the proposal should clearly set out the following points:

A summary of the policy challenge addressed:

The application should include a clear and detailed analysis of the policy challenge, citing evidence of the scale of the problem (e.g. high levels of youth unemployment, low business start-up rates, incidence of CO₂ emissions etc.). It should provide some explanation of why this particular challenge was selected and how it is relevant for the network partners.

It is important to be very specific when developing a policy challenge. A well-defined and focused policy challenge will help cities develop better quality exchange and more focused solutions.

The relevance of the policy challenge within the urban dimension of EU cohesion policy context:

Relevance is an important criterion in the selection of the Action planning networks. This must be communicated in the application form in two ways:

- ✓ Firstly, the policy challenge must be relevant for a high number of cities across Europe. Although URBACT is initially interested in exchange and learning within the networks, ultimately the programme has a particular interest in solutions relevant for all European cities.
- ✓ Secondly, the policy challenge should reflect the European Union urban policy priorities which are reflected within the URBACT Programme objectives defined by EU cohesion policy objectives (2021 – 2027). These provide a coherent clustering of the topics and activities supported. Complementing these objectives, network applicants shall also consider other relevant activities under the urban dimension of EU cohesion policy notably the European Urban Initiative including Urban Agenda for the EU. Additional other relevant initiatives for consideration are provided in the Terms of Reference of the call.

Considering the cross-cutting principles:

In addition to the main theme addressed the networks will choose to work on, they will also have to reflect on how the network transnational activities and the Integrated Action Plan co-production process will address the cross-cutting thematic considerations, including:

- ✓ gender equality
- ✓ green transition
- ✓ digital transformation

Whether cities aim to address mobility issues, cultural heritage, financial engineering, energy transition or any other topic, applicants are invited to take the extra mile and consider how these holistic themes can be part of the challenges. A tailor-made capacity building support related to the consideration of the cross-cutting thematic dimensions will be provided by the programme to all approved networks.

) Are there policy challenges you always wanted to tackle but were afraid to start?

The beauty of Action planning networks is that partners can potentially cooperate on any topics of shared relevance in line with their local needs, as long as this falls within the scope of EU cohesion policy. Even though a multitude of topics have been tackled by past URBACT networks there are themes that have been less presented or even never developed. The programme would like to emphasize this point in current call for Action planning networks and encourage cities to come forward with high quality proposals for these themes.

It is suggested to have a look at what previous URBACT networks have worked on by visiting their webpages on [urbact.eu](https://urbact.eu/networks) website. The search engine enables selecting themes and topics which can give you an idea about the structure of topics tackled in URBACT: <https://urbact.eu/networks>

Building the Partnership

An effective transnational partnership is central to the success of the Action Planning Networks. Since 2002, the URBACT Programme has supported more than 1 000 cities in nearly 150 different networks; it has therefore extensive experience to draw upon. URBACT also has a good understanding of the essential ingredients for a successful transnational network. In this section, we share our experience in order to support the development of high-quality network proposals.

Below are some key questions you should ask yourself to identify the right partners and ensure the rationale for the coherence of the proposed partnership for the Action planning network:

- ✓ Is the identified policy challenge relevant for all partners?
- ✓ Does each partner have a shared understanding of the policy challenge to be addressed?
- ✓ Does each of the partners have an evident commitment to tackling the policy challenge with possible local links to Sustainable Urban Development through Cohesion Policy?
- ✓ Does each of the partners understand the commitment to design an Integrated Action Plan within the URBACT framework?
- ✓ Does each partner commit to provide sufficient resources for their network activities as required?
- ✓ Lastly, it should be ensured that the proposed partnership is eligible in the proposed framework. The Terms of References of the call details the eligibility criteria for possible compositions of partnerships.

Relevance of partners

The relevance of partners operates at two levels. Firstly, there is the question of the relevance of participating cities. Secondly, within those cities, there is the issue of local stakeholder relevance. The following considerations reflecting both levels should help you in selecting the partners and institutions to be involved:

- ✓ The challenge addressed must be a priority for all network partners. This can be evidenced in a number of ways. For example, it will be identified within local strategies and/or within the Operating Framework for EU funds, usually with identified resources attached. In some cases, the city will have previously tried to address this challenge, with limited degrees of success. Thirdly, different stakeholders within the city will have identified this challenge as being important, again reflected in their respective strategic planning.
- ✓ The experiences of all network partners are relevant and will contribute to the learning process of the whole partnership. Each partner city will contribute to the transnational exchange and learning activities with their own experiences and knowledge. These will be different for each partner depending on the local context, previous experiences.
- ✓ For certain topics the size and positioning of the city could be important comparable elements for the coherence check of partners' local situations i.e. maritime cities working on maritime issues.
- ✓ There is a clear understanding of the added value an involvement in an URBACT network will bring to the partner in relation to respective capacity building needs.

In case you want to be a Lead Partner you might receive an expression of interest from cities interested in your policy challenge. You can first send them a simple questionnaire (see example below and a more detailed one [here](#)). On that basis you will be able to do the shortlist of the most relevant candidates and follow up with more detailed questionnaire or even a phone call before making a final choice.

EXAMPLE — SIMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ASSESSING RELEVANCE OF PARTNERS

Institution details

1. Partner institution (Name, Address, Postcode, City):
2. Are you a public body?
3. What is the size of your city ?
4. Type of area (more developed, less developed, transition) ?
5. Are you currently partner in an URBACT network or applying to join others? If yes which one(s)?
6. Contact Person (First name, Family name, Service, Function, Phone number, Mobile number,, Email, Address, Postcode, City)
7. Who from your city would take part in transnational exchange meetings? (ability to speak English & in depth knowledge of the topic needed)

Partner profile

8. Have you already been involved in an URBACT Network? What is your motivation to join this network?
9. What are the problems and challenges faced by the partner city in relation to the theme?
10. What are the existing policies, strategic frames and concrete actions developed by the partner city so far in relation to the policy challenge?
11. What could be the scope of the Integrated Action Plan to be produced by the partner city within the framework of the network?
12. Who will be involved in the initial URBACT Local Group to be set up by the partner city?
13. What is the potential contribution of the partner city to the network activities and what does the partner expect from the network?
14. What is the experience of the partner city in terms of working through transnational exchange in relation to the policy challenge?
15. What is the added value URBACT would bring to the city in terms of learning and capacity building?

In the application form it is necessary to highlight possible complementarities and differences between the partners in terms of needs and previous experience.

SEVEN tips for Building a “Great” partnership

) There is no such thing as a perfect size

It is up to each network to decide about the ideal size of their partnership, as this depends on many factors. It is clear though that going for the minimum number of partners is very risky. It could be that one partner you want to involve drops out at the very last minute before you submit your application i.e. joins another Network proposal, does not provide the signed Letter of Commitment on time, etc. Anything can happen!

) Ensuring the (geographical) balance of partnership

The partnership for Action planning network shall, according to the eligibility criteria, include at least 70% of partners from Less developed and Transition regions. At the same time, you should aim for geographical balance across Europe – a partnership shall cover at least 7 countries regardless of number of partners. In this regard, you should consider having a reserve candidate (possibly with the signed Letter of Commitment) that is ready to join, in case of a last-minute drop out. In addition, a sufficient number of partners from more developed regions is expected in a balanced partnership. The map showing the categorisation of EU Regions for 2021-2027 can be found [here](#).

) Welcome newcomers

Not all cities in Europe have had the opportunity to take part in an URBACT network and experience the “URBACT learning journey”. Thus, URBACT’s guiding principle is to ensure participation of a maximum number of cities in URBACT networks. URBACT is particularly seeking to support cities which are new to the programme, i.e. the city has not been a partner in URBACT II or III. You should consider all these elements when selecting partners without sacrificing the quality and relevance of your project proposal. The [partner search tool](#) and [contacting the National URBACT Points](#) are two good ways to look for cities that have never been involved in URBACT before and that have the same interest with yours in joining an Action Planning Network.

) Be demanding, test the commitment

Besides considerations on the size of the partnership, the focus should be on the “quality” of the partner and on the relevance of their participation in a specific network. Aim for coherence and complementarity in terms of partners’ needs expectations and potential contributions. You should also make potential partners (and selected partners) aware of the ‘URBACT networking framework’ described in PART I and III of this guide and ask for commitment to these requirements. Therefore, the Lead Partner preparing a good questionnaire to collect information on partner cities in order to inform final partnership selection is very important.

) Beware of the “sleeping partners”

Once the network is approved and activities get started, some partners can turn out to be less active than expected. Therefore, developing a smaller partnership of 8 cities is also risky should some of them turn out to be ‘sleeping partners’. Even though you can consolidate the partnership during activation stage with possible replacement of partners the dynamics in the partnership and the richness of the transnational exchange may be impacted.

) Be smart – connect!

To facilitate the partner matching process, the URBACT programme encourages you to use the Partner Search tool and contacts of National URBACT points which can be very useful for finding right partners from different countries. These are provided in section 12 – useful resources of the Call document. For questions regarding the eligibility of “non-city” partners you should always consult the URBACT Secretariat at apn@urbact.eu. Do it early enough during the selection process as the eligibility verification process of non-city partners might take time.

) The best tip to avoid mistakes

Do not accept new partners on a “first come, first served” basis. Take time to speak with the relevant people in a candidate partner city before you decide on your final partnership. Try to avoid cities who reach you through consultants -this can be an indication that the city does not have real interest and/or capacity to become committed and active partner (this might be the case even for Lead Partner candidates).

Try to detect some potential flaws in candidate partners’ interest:

- Just want to become an URBACT city, no matter what topic; (cities committed to more than 3 network proposals can already be considered questionable)
- want to become an URBACT city with my topic, no matter what network;
- want to become an URBACT city although not equipped to actually handle the topic and make a difference at local level;
- are more interested in the budget than the policy challenge;
- ambitious politician with no commitment of wider municipality administration (incl. staff allowed to travel etc.);
- ambitious officer with no support from politicians who understand the importance of the project.

PART III

Shaping your network activities at transnational and local level

This section complements the Term of Reference of the call for Action Planning Network proposals and the URBACT IV Programme Manual with useful suggestions corresponding to the following sections of the application form:

- ✓ section 3 – Rationale of proposed partnership
- ✓ section 4 – Thematic content
- ✓ section 7 – Use of expertise

Network level activities

Past URBACT experience indicates that a detailed methodological approach to structuring and organising transnational exchange and learning is key to a successful URBACT network. As transnational exchange is, by definition, collaboration between languages, learning styles, culture, governance models, a clearly defined framework is vital. The detailed methodology for the transnational network activities will be determined during the activation stage based on the Baseline Study process and presented in Network Roadmaps and all partners should have a role in the design process. Nevertheless, all applicants are invited to present key principles and ideas for shaping their network activities already in the application process.

The Network Roadmap (Baseline Study process)

The Network Roadmap is a key network deliverable to be produced during the Activation stage. It will describe in detail the policy challenges the network is facing, placing it within the context of the EU's urban policy priorities. The insights from the Baseline study process will provide key details of each partner's background, the local conditions, context as well as potential for engagement. Most importantly, the Network Roadmap will set out the network's customised exchange and learning methodology based on the identified assets and barriers as well as the complementarities between partners.

The production of the Network Roadmap based on the Baseline study process is the main responsibility of the Lead Expert, but requires the input of all partners in the network. The Lead Expert (ideally accompanied by the Lead Partner) is required to visit and interview all partners in order to develop the partners' profiles for the study. The study will build on the different contributions provided by partners (local data, strategic priorities, delivery structures, related interventions etc.)

During these visits the Lead Expert (and Lead Partner) should present the URBACT framework and the specific objectives and focus of the Network, and review the local situation and experiences in relation to the policy challenge to be addressed. The partner visits should be organised in close cooperation with the partners and include possible meetings with the relevant project coordination staff, possible URBACT local group coordinator, elected representative(s), civil servants concerned with the policy challenge addressed, relevant delivery bodies and other local stakeholders identified as potential members of the URBACT Local Group.

Clear political support for the participation of the city in the Action Planning Network should be demonstrated by all partners involved and shall be investigated during the visits from the Lead Expert and Lead Partner.

Specific guidelines for the Baseline Study process will be available for approved Action Planning Networks.

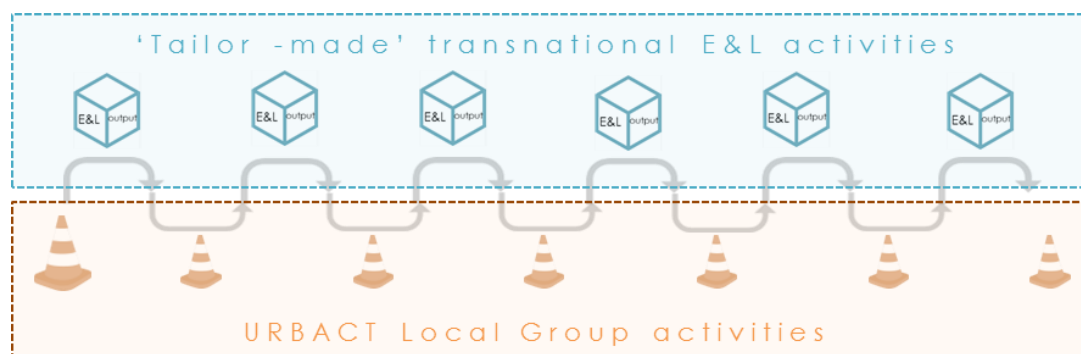
The production of the Network Roadmap being the main responsibility of the network Lead Expert, will be used to assess the performance of Lead Experts in relation to the knowledge of policy issues tackled by the network, methodologic support for exchange and learning, as well as, the writing skills.

Below are a few examples of good Baseline Studies from previous URBACT Networks:

- URBACT III Action Planning Network – [Active Citizen Baseline Study](#)
- URBACT III Action Planning Network – [ROOF Baseline Study](#)
- URBACT III Action Planning Network – [URGE Baseline Study](#)

Customisation of network exchange and learning activities

There is no single preferred methodological approach to the customisation of the transnational exchange and learning in networks. URBACT does not adopt a prescriptive approach and welcomes innovative models and creative approaches. The most important thing is that the methodology proposed is realistic, clearly explained and has a logical rationale. It should also consider the specificities around the policy issues being addressed as well as the needs and the experience of all partners. Key success factors for effective learning in relation the theme shall be clearly demonstrated. In addition, the methodological approach should generate a continuous flow of knowledge between the transnational and the local level for the appropriate application of knowledge generated during different network activities.



) 10 reflections for designing effective Exchange & Learning activities:

1. Different lengths of transnational network activities can be foreseen. Physical sessions are likely to take place over a period of two to three days. If working online however, duration and format should differ, as discussed in points 7 and 8 below.
2. Transnational meetings should be interactive, stimulating and enjoyable. Consequently, regardless of the methodological approach, networks are expected to think seriously about the design and delivery of transnational sessions, so that participants get maximum benefit from the experience. Staff exchanges and bi-/tri lateral deep dive meetings, as well as specific study visits have proven to be very effective in past URBACT networks.
3. The thematic focus of the network will have an impact on the types of stakeholders that will be involved in the transnational meetings and thus on the type of activities that can be proposed during the sessions.
4. At the design stage of transnational E&L meetings, different activities can be considered. These include:
 - ✓ Inputs from a variety of expert speakers (these might be Lead Experts and/or Ad-hoc Experts working with the project, local experts on a particular topic or guest speakers from other networks and organisations)
 - ✓ Forensic site visits (with the active involvement of local stakeholders of the hosting city)
 - ✓ Peer review exercises
 - ✓ Group problem solving
 - ✓ Structured discussions and analysis sessions using [dynamic facilitation techniques](#)
5. The local stakeholders of the hosting city should play a key role in presenting their local situation in relation to the transfer process, needs and experiences/solutions. All partners should receive

some orientation material in advance, so they arrive with some understanding of the local context, even if the meeting is online.

6. Advance planning is an important part of effective transnational seminars. At the very least, this means collaboration between the Lead Expert, Lead Partner and host partner around the agenda, contributors and the logistics. In some cases, Lead Experts have visited the host city in advance to see venues and meet the hosts. In other cases, they have organised online planning meetings in advance of the transnational seminars.
7. Even prior to the pandemic, URBACT networks were making increasing use of online tools and methods to reduce their carbon footprint. However, Covid-19 has provided a huge catalyst for the use of digital platforms which have been actively embraced by the Programme and its networks. Although face to face collaboration still offers the best basis for building trusted relationships, a growing range of activities can be conducted online and regardless of the pandemic, the future of urban collaboration is hybrid. URBACT has developed a range of resources to support this, which include the [Hints and Tips](#) materials and the [URBACT Toolbox](#).
8. Online meetings require a technical rehearsal in advance, to ensure that the digital platform and all audio and visual inputs work correctly. Speakers also welcome the opportunity to check presentations and connections in advance of their inputs.
9. 'Housekeeping' matters also need to be considered carefully. These include finance, administration and communication issues. As much as possible, it is advisable to manage these aspects of the network outside the main business of the transnational seminars. This might mean via online meetings, separate to the exchange and learning sessions.
10. Finally, networks are using social media (in particular Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Viber, Telegram etc.) to complement their transnational activities. All networks are encouraged to establish a social media profile and these tools can be very effective to enhance the internal communication among partners as well as to promote transnational events and to engage with a wider audience in proceedings (for external communication, see the related section).

Tools for network learning and knowledge uptake

Knowledge coming from transnational exchange and learning activities should be effectively captured, organised and documented in order to be easily accessible to all stakeholders involved in the local co-production process. A few examples are listed below:

Pre- and post-meeting briefing note

This tool is used to capture and document the E&L rationale. The pre-briefing note provides a clear understanding of the content to be covered at each network meeting (including necessary preparations) and reminds partners about the tasks that need to be undertaken before the meeting. The post briefing note documents the learning from the meeting for each session, and lists the tasks to be undertaken before the next meeting. This is being considered as very efficient tool for ULG coordinators to report learning from the transnational to local level and as a reminder of tasks.

Key Learning grid

A basic tool used at the end of each transnational network meeting in order to capture key learning points for each partner and actions to be carried out at local level. The grid is reviewed by partners and the Lead Expert at each transnational meeting. It helps partners record the history of learning and monitor actions throughout the journey. It can be also used for internal network recording of the exchange and learning process.

Support and follow up materials

The set of all the materials, handouts, produced for/at network activities. These can include compilation of PowerPoints, templates, canvases, main learning notes from different sessions, photos, short videos, peer learning points etc. These can help ULG participants design debriefings at local level. Private Network Basecamp space will be available to all approved networks for gathering and organising all network productions and making them available for network partners.

Capturing and sharing network results

A minimum set of outputs with three standard formats are proposed for capturing and sharing network results – Quarterly Network Reports, Network articles and Final Network Results product/s.

) Quarterly Network reports

Different thematic and methodological productions shall be captured and summarised within unique standard network output– Quarterly network report. Each network is expected to produce 6 Quarterly network reports reflecting network activities during Planning actions and Preparing implementation stage.

Preferably, these reports should aim to capture and connect learning for the partners in the network but these shall also have an adequate format for network communication - the knowledge generated by the network is interesting and useful for a wider audience of local, regional, national and EU-level policy makers and practitioners not directly involved in the network activities. Therefore, these shall include at least:

- ✓ Highlights from core network meetings activities as well as other bespoke network exchange and learning activities
- ✓ Thematic inputs related to the policy focus tackled by the network
- ✓ Partners' local activities and progress made in relation to the IAP co-production process.
- ✓ Brief presentation of tools developed and/ or used demonstrating integrated and participatory approaches

Networks are free to design their own unique visual identity which can be inspired and combined with a variety of formats showcasing network activities in concise and effective way. The quarterly network reports shall be shared as regular network webpage updates and can feed the production of the Final Network Results Product to be delivered at end of the journey.

) Network articles and other interim products

All Action planning networks shall produce at least three network articles throughout the network duration in order to showcase the interim results of the network activities to a wider audience in a concise format. Each network article will reflect the state of play linked to the specific milestone of the network journey:

- ✓ First network article shall present network challenges and ambition. It will be published on the network webpage during the activation stage as a first network output dedicated to wider audience.
- ✓ Second network article shall be shared at mid-point summarising network exchange and learning activities taking place in planning actions stage including the insights from testing action activities and key networks learning insights
- ✓ The third article shall be shared in final stage and reflect network results, impact at local level, as well as future prospects

Other Interim sharing products can be designed based on the different thematic and methodologic inputs from network exchange and learning activities. These shall be used for knowledge dissemination purposes and using formats as additional articles and other outputs (e.g. policy papers, policy recommendations or thematic reports). These can be produced by different Ad hoc experts as part of their work plans.

) The final network results product/s

The network results product should rely on the (most relevant) outputs from your transnational exchange and learning experience i.e. the quarterly network reports. There is no predefined format for the network results product: it can be a digital product or a written document as long as it reflects the partners' and network's learning experience.

The product can showcase successful cases of accessing Cohesion Funds, but also refer to the challenges the partners have faced. People are not just interested in the 'what' part, but also in the 'how'. In short, the Final Network Product should wrap up and bring light to the action planning journey. The following elements are considered of interest for other cities:

- ✓ Introducing the challenges and objectives of the Integrated Action Plans
- ✓ Explaining why partner cities chose to embark on this journey
- ✓ Demonstrating the added value of working in a transnational URBACT network
- ✓ Presenting the highlights of the journey and the main learning from partners
- ✓ Suggesting next steps for the network partners

The budget foreseen for the development of this product might change from network to network, depending on the format, content and investments related to its production.

Local level activities

Local level activities within the Action planning network are centred on the URBACT Local Groups (ULGs), established in each participating city.

URBACT Local Group (ULG)

) What is an URBACT Local Group?

The ULG is a fundamental tool that enables experimentation for innovation in city administrations. As the programme promotes multi-level participation, we expect the composition of these groups to reflect the project's thematic focus. This means that a network on digital transformation will have a different stakeholder mix to one promoting carbon reduction. Cities should think carefully about the composition of their ULG, ensuring appropriate coverage. Partners should also seek the participation of their relevant Managing Authority, to promote the visibility of their planning work, and to ensure alignment with the National Cohesion Policy Framework. The [URBACT Toolbox](#) includes tools on [identifying appropriate stakeholders](#) and [establishing the ULG](#).

) What's the role of the ULG Coordinator?

Each city will appoint a coordinator for its ULG. This key person will function as the main contact point for other partners by attending transnational network sessions, as well as being the pivotal link within the ULG on the ground. The ULG Coordinator will be responsible for the delivery of the city activities and outputs described below. S/he will also be the key point of contact for the [National URBACT Points](#) (NUPs), throughout the lifespan of the project. NUPs should play a key role in capitalising network activities and results and supporting the networking activities with relevant national decision makers. The ULG/Local Project Coordinator will also act as the point of contact between the partner city and the URBACT Secretariat.

) What's the format for ULG sessions?

The ULG is an active working group that will be at the heart of the action planning process in each city. It may be a group designed especially for the URBACT project, or be a relevant group that is already in place. Each ULG will be different, reflecting local structures, priorities and actors. It is expected to meet on a regular basis and to take account of the URBACT principles and tools to work efficiently and interactively. The URBACT Toolbox provides guidance around how to design and run these sessions well.

ULGs will organise a series of meetings and events, in line with the Network Roadmap, to drive the co-production process and create a draft IAP. The network level activities can provide inspiration to try out ideas, concrete solutions, and tools with the relevant stakeholders. The ULG process should be closely linked with the overall network methodology and feed the exchange and learning at transnational meetings.

The ULG can be used as laboratory to experiment and learn by doing. Testing actions activities can be used to involve different stakeholders in the design process in order to assess the possible upscaling of specific actions, test stakeholders' engagement and build closer relationships. This is one of the essential factors for the successful integrated approach.

) How often should the ULG meet?

At the start of the project, each ULG should define its working patterns based on the general networking framework agreed within the network during the activation stage. This will include regular working sessions which are often linked to the transnational network meetings. For example, it can be very helpful to meet prior to a transnational meeting to prepare and ensure that the opportunity is optimised. Following the transnational sessions, it is also helpful to meet in order to share feedback and key learning points. ULGs have also found it useful to come together when key activities or outputs are due, such as the testing actions activities or draft Integrated Action plans.

The ULG Coordinator is responsible for the organisation of the ULG working sessions.

Integrated Action Plans (IAPs)

The work at local level forms the basis for the delivery of Integrated Action Plans. The activities to be foreseen in the ULGs should be aligned with the transnational exchange and learning itinerary and follow a framework agreed at network level. Linking the local work with EU regional and urban development priorities, The Urban Agenda for EU, as well as, UN Sustainable Development Goals is crucial for successful IAPs.

During the activation stage all partners will define the co-production process of Integrated Action Plans. These will be reflected in respective Network Roadmaps outlining the basic IAP structure, ambition, objectives, stakeholders mapping, timeline of activities including links with transnational activities, and the scope of possible testing actions activities. Defining the involvement of different stakeholders (including national/ regional levels) for this will be crucial.

The URBACT Programme will provide a general framework for the production of Integrated Action Plans - The IAP Guidelines will be shared during the activation stage. The Guidelines will provide information and principles about the expected structure and elements to be included in Integrated Action Plans, in line with the action planning journey stages and milestones.

In addition, the URBACT Summer University (taking place w/c 28 August 2023) will be the main training event targeting notably the ULG / Local partner coordinators during the activation stage. This will be a 3-day event, delivered in English, which aims to provide URBACT networks' partners and their local stakeholders with tools and methods to develop integrated and participatory approaches, for the design and future delivery of the Integrated Action Plans. The curriculum will therefore aim at familiarising participants with the URBACT method, focusing on the integrated approach and different aspects of the action-planning cycle. The interactive programme will also be an opportunity for exchanges to take place between the programme's local players, to spread relevant and tangible practices at a transnational level and to enable the ULGs to create links with one another, in particular at national level.

The cost of the participation at this event shall be covered and foreseen in the network budget.

) Testing actions

The philosophy of an URBACT network is to collaborate and identify possible solutions to a particular challenge. These solutions are developed into actions as part of an Integrated Action Plan. By including an opportunity for cities to test some of these solutions at a smaller scale before embarking on larger scale actions is an innovative way to bring about a culture change in city administrations.

'Starting small but thinking big' is perhaps a most suitable motto to use to explain testing activities in the URBACT network.

Within the ULG framework partners have the possibility to experiment with ideas (developed or shared in transnational meetings) and carry out specific testing activities. During Activation stage it is important to explore and identify possible formats and scope of testing activities that would best suit network partners regarding the specific policy challenge. This shall be explored during the Baseline study process but also considered and embedded in the customized exchange and learning methodology for the following stages.

Testing actions can be triggered by an idea or a concept, perhaps already tried in another city, which can be tested to check the relevance, feasibility and added value of its implementation in different local contexts. These can be used to involve different stakeholders in the design process in order to assess the possible upscaling of specific actions. Partners will be able to learn from these tests, measure the results and either adapt, upscale or reject actions to be included in the Integrated Action Plan based on this experience. These can improve the future delivery of actions by being aware of possible risks and hardships.

SOME BASIC EXAMPLES OF WHAT THE TESTING ACTIVITY COULD BE:

- ✓ 5-day test of a concept in a local neighbourhood, repeated several times, with adaptations and improvements after each test.
- ✓ Temporary testing of alternative uses for public space – closing streets etc.
- ✓ Temporary testing of alternative modes of transport in specific neighbourhoods.
- ✓ Local neighbourhood events or campaigns to raise awareness of specific topics.
- ✓ Training for local citizens on relevant topics (zero carbon or waste reduction for example).
- ✓ Virtual tools to consider re-use of vacant buildings.
- ✓ Sensors in the case of IoT, a policy paper, an instrument, an operational plan etc.).
- ✓ Paper Prototyping exercises or user needs workshops.
- ✓ Purchase of small equipment such as maintenance tools or a bike to develop solutions linked to the circular economy and recycling.
- ✓ Purchase of small mobile recycling units to test their use at public events.
- ✓ Experimenting with new forms of citizens' participation.

More details around testing activities from previous Action Planning Networks will be provided to approved projects

URBACT as a programme does not finance infrastructure investment and works mainly on improving methods of working to solve urban challenges using soft measures. The testing activities will follow this principle and as such hard infrastructure projects cannot be supported by the programme.

Network Communication

Communication is a crucial process embedded into every step of an URBACT network. It ensures that URBACT cities can create a positive legacy, making project live beyond its life cycle.

To maximise the update and visibility of the work by URBACT beneficiary cities, approved URBACT networks will have to carry out the following activities (as thoroughly described in the URBACT Programme Manual, Book 1, Section F -Communication at Network level, p.91-102):

) Assign a communication officer for the URBACT network:

Whether from a Lead Partner or a Project Partner city, a key to success is to always have a referent person (communication officer) for the communication activities at network level. In most cases, **this role is fulfilled by someone from the Lead Partner team**, but it can actually be an **external provider** or even someone else **from another partner city** who is notably at ease with the position and related tasks — should this be the case, the corresponding budget for communications should be allocated accordingly. This officer is expected to be in close contact with the URBACT Joint Secretariat.

) Deliver a communication plan:

From the moment the network officially starts its activities and within six months (unless a different timeline is set in the call for networks), the network with the help of the communication officer has to submit to the Secretariat **a communication plan**.

) Develop a network branding:

under the coordination of the network's communication officer, each network has to define a network acronym, tagline and boilerplate within the first couple of months after the approval of the network.

) Develop a visual identity:

Each URBACT network has to develop its own visual identity that will make it both distinct and recognisable to an external audience. This visual identity includes notably a logo, with different versions – the official one, a smaller for social media profile pictures, a black and white for easier use when printing documents etc. The logo should be sent to the URBACT Secretariat within the first couple of months after the approval of the network.

) Respect programme branding and EU requirements:

Alongside their network visual identity, URBACT beneficiaries must always use URBACT/EU logo. Any kind of material produced by the network has to bear the URBACT/EU logo. *If this is not the case, costs of any materials or activities will not be eligible for reimbursement.*

Similarly, following the REGULATION (EU) 2021/1060 Art 50(1) all URBACT beneficiaries – Lead Partners and Project Partners – **must produce an A3 poster within six months from the approval of the network** and **must publish a news about the network in their respective institutional websites**.

) Maintain a network webpage on the URBACT website:

All URBACT networks (even closed ones) benefit from a dedicated webpage to communicate about good practices, case studies, recommendations or reports to an audience external to the beneficiary cities. In this sense, a network webpage acts as a “business card”. For the network webpages, the Network Communication Officers are expected to create an **editorial planning – with articles, news, events and a library** – following the decisions agreed in the communication plan. The Network Communication Officer is then in charge of maintaining the network webpage on a regular basis but the Lead Expert and other Project Partners can upload different content, including quarterly network reports, articles, news, events, videos and other documents

) Use digital communication tools:

While URBACT does not make any particular channel mandatory, **it is required for Network Communication Officers to set up an account on at least one social medium and regularly update it with content**. In this way, articles from the network webpage can be shared through social media and reposted by URBACT social media for greater visibility.

) Sharing network final results:

Besides the local mandatory products, networks are expected to also deliver a final product. This output needs to **capture the experience of the network, any lessons learnt and policy recommendations**. The final product can take whichever format the network’s partners deem fit, in order to better reach the intended target audiences — series of thematic reports, publication, tools, videos, animations, etc. — the crucial thing is to consider the dissemination process for it. Final events can be a powerful way to spread this material, for example, as well as the network webpages.

In addition, the URBACT beneficiaries are encouraged to take contact with their National URBACT Points to coordinate about communication at national level.

Network expertise framework

Adequate expertise support has proven to be crucial for effective capacity building in cities. Transnational networking and learning between peers requires careful design of events with inspirational facilitation techniques. Proper design and delivery of integrated sustainable urban development policies in cities demands a transdisciplinary approach.

For this reason, expertise support for URBACT networks is structured around three core dimensions for ensuring effective exchange and learning:

- Expertise for the design and delivery of transnational exchange and learning activities
- Thematic expertise (related to wide array of themes and related subtopics in relation to sustainable urban development policy challenges)
- Methods and tools for integrated and participatory approaches for the design and delivery of sustainable urban development policies.

In addition, an adequate set of communication skills has proven to be vital for ensuring the overall quality of expertise support also in the context of hybrid working reality. These are required for all experts validated in the pool.

The Lead Expert role in URBACT networks remains pivotal for ensuring an effective learning. Expert candidates interested in this role will need to validate a set of “URBACT Lead expert skills” crucial for maximising the impact of network exchange and learning activities and knowledge production with proven leadership and coaching approaches.

Network expert roles and missions

In order to improve the efficiency of the expertise support provided to URBACT networks, expertise made available to approved networks is presented in two distinct URBACT network expert roles:

- > **A network Lead Expert** supports the partnership over the entire duration of the network which requires a high level of professional commitment (in case of appointment). A Lead Expert workplan will consist of up to 140 days of expertise spread over 31 months network duration. A Lead Expert supports the network with:
 - The definition of the main focus of network activities based on the Baseline Study process. It includes designing the network work plan with a menu of exchange and learning activities with various formats, elaborating the main expected results and production of network outputs.
 - The delivery of transnational exchange and learning activities with effective facilitation techniques.
 - The knowledge of EU policy frameworks and the specific thematic fields tackled by the network.
 - Coaching and supporting the use of effective methods and tools for the design and delivery of integrated and participatory processes in partner cities.
 - The knowledge capture and uptake and communication of network results

This list of tasks is not exhaustive; each Lead Expert will have a dedicated work plan based on the suggested expertise support framework with defined task categories (see below). A Lead Expert's role is to empower and support cities in their sustainable development processes, rather than teach or dictate.

The shortlisted network Lead expert candidates will be proposed for appointment after network approval (The Terms of References of the present call provide detailed information about the appointment procedure for network Lead experts). One can be appointed as Lead Expert only in one URBACT network at the time. However, appointed Lead Experts can perform other ad hoc expertise missions in other networks.

- > **Network Ad-hoc Experts** provide support on specific needs identified by the network with shorter and more specific expertise tasks. Most network Ad-hoc expertise missions require shorter commitments (up to 5 days). Nevertheless, longer network Ad-hoc expertise missions (6 - 20 days) are also possible depending on specific network expertise requests. Sometimes Ad-hoc experts can also complement network Lead Expert support with specific and complementary tasks over the entire duration of the network – these kinds of missions usually exceed 20 days of expertise.

Network ad hoc expertise missions can include tasks supporting one or more specific expertise needs in line with different types of expertise, such as:

- supporting the design and facilitation of network meetings,
- providing specific thematic inputs at different exchange and learning activities,
- training on methods and tools for supporting integrated and participatory processes in partner cities,
- customised support at local level and with the production of specific network outputs.

This list of tasks is not exhaustive; each network Ad-hoc expert has specific set of missions defined with the work plan in line with suggested expertise support framework with defined task categories (see below).

All approved networks shall appoint at least two network Ad hoc experts during the life-time of the network. The support from Ad hoc experts is suggested notably during the Planning actions and Preparing Implementation stage of the network journey. There are no limitations in relation to number of Ad hoc expert missions in different URBACT networks.

The selection and appointment of experts

The selection and appointment of network experts will take place after the network approval. All networks shall appoint at least 3 network experts during the life-time of the network – a network Lead expert and at least two network Ad hoc experts. All selected experts appointed to carry out the expertise support shall be validated and included in the [URBACT pool of experts](#). In case networks will not be able to find an adequate expert in the pool (due to the specificity of the expertise need), any expert can be invited to apply for validation – [the call for experts](#) will remain open over the entire duration of the URBACT programme.

The selected network experts are proposed via the expertise request form that shall be validated by URBACT Secretariat. For validation, the suitability, geographical balance and the gender balance of appointed network experts shall be considered. After the validation, URBACT Managing Authority makes the contractual arrangement with the expert whereas network Lead partners are responsible for coordination and certification of expertise services. Detailed guidance will be provided to approved networks.

It should be noted that only experts who have not been directly involved in developing the application can be proposed. A strict conflict of interest procedure will be followed.

Mapping of expertise needs and organisation of tasks

Each network shall have a specific expertise budget of EUR 144 500 to cover a maximum of 170 days of expertise regardless of the number of partners.

The allocation of days to the Lead Expert shall not exceed 82% of the total budget (max. 140 days). Therefore, a minimum of 18% of the expertise budget (min. 30 days) shall be allocated to Ad-Hoc Experts supporting the network. During the Activation stage all Network Lead experts will have a fixed work plan with a total 40 days of expertise in order to carry out essential tasks related to the network development and delivery of the Network Roadmap. During activation stage there is in principle no need for the use of additional ad hoc expertise support. The use of ad hoc expertise support is suggested in the following stages.

Expertise support in Action planning network will be structured and organised in the following way:

- Support with Network development, dynamics, and network results management (approx. 45 days, exclusively for Lead experts). This includes:
 - ✓ Support Lead partner with partnership dynamics including network coordination meetings
 - ✓ Delivery of the Baseline study and production of Network Roadmap including bilateral visits and development of network E&L methodology
 - ✓ Support the Mid-term reflection process
 - ✓ Production of Integrated Action Planning report
- Support to transnational network activities (approx. 60 days for Lead experts and Ad hoc experts). Including:
 - ✓ Support the design and facilitation of core network meetings (Lead expert task)
 - ✓ Support the design and delivery of the customised set of exchange and learning activities in-person or online (Lead expert task)
 - ✓ Ad hoc expertise support at transnational network activities (task dedicated to Ad hoc expertise missions)
- Support to partners with the delivery of local activities (approx. 40 days for Lead experts and Ad hoc experts). Including:
 - ✓ One to one support for the set-up and sustainment of URBACT Local Groups and the use of URBACT toolbox
 - ✓ Support with Testing activities
 - ✓ Support partners with production and reviews of Integrated Action Plans
- Support with the knowledge capture and communication of network results (approx. 25 days for Lead experts and Ad hoc experts)
 - ✓ Support with the delivery of Communication plan and production of specific communication outputs defined by the network
 - ✓ Production of Quarterly Network Reports (Lead expert task)
 - ✓ Production of core network articles (Lead expert task)
 - ✓ Production of Network Results Product/s

Most of these listed tasks will have pre-defined suggestions of deliverables. Exact mapping of tasks together with expert workplan management and expert reporting templates will be provided to approved networks at the start of the journey.

Network Results management framework

In order to ensure the quality of expertise support across networks all Lead experts will need to participate in essential information and training sessions and embrace the tools proposed by URBACT. For this purpose, specific guides will be designed for delivery of expected services.

Lead experts play a key role for the network development and dynamics. The quality of the support provided will be assessed twice during network journey:

- The performance evaluation by partners at the end of Activation stage
- The Mid-term reflection process at the end of Planning actions stage

Network results management framework will be introduced to all Lead experts which includes:

- The use of digital tools (i.e. Miro) for monitoring partner progress and capacity building support
- The State of Actions Report to be shared at the end of Planning actions stage
- The Integrated Action Planning Report to be provided at the end of the project
- Regular Check-in sessions with Lead experts to share the experience and ideas around the delivery of different support activities as well as the development of methodological approaches and tools.
- The use of well-established tools suggested by the programme for ensuring the balanced progress across networks notably related to the application of Integrated and participatory approaches and the IAP co-production process.
- The dedicated Lead expert space on Basecamp for programme support as well as 24/7 “peer support shop” - sharing experiences and ideas with other appointed network Lead experts.

THE “URBACT” Glossary

The URBACT Method¹

It is a series of processes and tools that enable an environment for promoting integrated sustainable urban development through effective learning and practice. The building blocks of the method are:

- ✓ Networking amongst EU cities to exchange good practices and find solutions to their policy challenges with expert support
- ✓ Applying the integrated and participatory approaches at local level to solving concrete challenges with variety of stakeholders within the framework of URBACT Local Group.
- ✓ Expertise support, capacity-building and training for urban practitioners to empower them to drive change within cities.
- ✓ Capitalisation and communication of knowledge and practices to reach and provide a wider community of urban practitioners in Europe and beyond with concrete solutions.

Network Lead Partners and Project Partners

Each network has to appoint a Lead Partner with full responsibility for network management, coordination of activities among the transnational partners, and implementation of the work programme. The Lead Partner also bears financial and legal responsibility and liability for the whole partnership towards the Managing Authority.

URBACT Local Group

The URBACT Local Group (ULG) is a fundamental building block of the URBACT programme. In every partner city, the ULG brings together all relevant local stakeholders related to the chosen policy challenge that the city wants to tackle. The ULG is the vehicle for a participatory process allowing relevant stakeholders to be involved in the co-production of Integrated Action Plans.

URBACT Joint Secretariat

The URBACT Joint Secretariat, housed within the French Managing Authority (L'Agence nationale de la cohésion des territoires), is in charge of implementing and managing the Programme on behalf of the Member and Partner States of the European Union. The Joint Secretariat follows and supports networks on all aspects of their work from peer-learning processes, capacity building, communication activities, and capitalisation efforts to management & financial support.

URBACT Monitoring Committee

It is a committee of EU Member/Partner States set up to monitor the implementation of the URBACT Programme, in agreement with the Managing Authority. The Monitoring Committee reviews the implementation of the Programme and progress towards achieving its objectives and functions. It adopts the methodology, criteria for selection and the eligibility rules before the launch of each call for proposals as well as approves the selection of Networks.

National URBACT Point (NUP)

The URBACT Programme currently runs 24 [National URBACT Points](#) covering 27 countries (Austria-Germany, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus-Greece, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France-Luxembourg, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and UK). National URBACT Points, represented by ministries, associations of cities, universities, or consultant agencies, are in charge of communicating and supporting URBACT-related activities in their countries and in their native languages.

Cities should make contact with their National URBACT Points and explore what kind of support they can provide.

¹ [URBACT Programme Manual](#) sets out the *modus operandi* of the URBACT IV programme.

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URBACT



**Co-funded by
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Call for Proposals for the creation of up to 30 Action Planning Networks under URBACT IV

Terms of Reference

**Call for Proposals open between
09 January 2023 – 31 March 2023**

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INTRODUCTION – CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The URBACT IV Cooperation Programme (CCI 2021TC16FFIR001) was officially adopted on 19 September 2022 by Commission Implementing Decision C (2022) 6771 final. The adopted Cooperation Programme can be found on the URBACT website¹.

This official document foresees that URBACT IV shall facilitate the sharing of knowledge and good practice between cities and other levels of government. The purpose is to promote integrated sustainable urban development, improve cities' policies and the effectiveness of Cohesion Policy in cities.

In this context, the “Agence nationale de la cohésion des territoires” (ANCT) (France), Managing Authority of the URBACT IV Operational programme, issues a CALL FOR PROPOSALS FOR THE CREATION OF UP TO 30 ACTION PLANNING NETWORKS.

The terms of reference of the present call for proposals have been approved by the URBACT IV Monitoring Committee on 29th November 2022.

This Call for Proposals is open from 09 January 2023 until 31 March 2023, 15:00 CET².

SECTION 1 - ABOUT URBACT IV & TRANSNATIONAL NETWORKS

1.1. The URBACT IV programme

The URBACT IV Programme is part of the European Territorial Cooperation Objective of the Structural Fund policies for the period 2021-2027. The URBACT IV Programme is financed through the European Regional Development Fund, whose principles and regulations are laid down in Regulations (EU) N° 2021/1058, 2021/1059, and 2021/1060 as well as IPA III, whose principles and regulations are laid down in Regulation (EU) 2021/1529.

URBACT's mission is to enable cities to work together and develop integrated solutions to common urban challenges, by networking, learning from one another's experiences, drawing lessons and identifying good practices to improve urban policies.

As stated in the Cooperation Programme, as URBACT IV will build the institutional capacity of cities needed to implement territorial strategies, it directly contributes to Policy Objective PO5 in particular: a Europe closer to citizens, by supporting locally-led development strategies and sustainable urban development across the EU.

To reach this objective URBACT IV has three aims:

- 1) Use transnational networks to improve the capacity of European cities;
- 2) Improve the capacity of urban stakeholders to design and implement sustainable urban development policies, practices and innovations in an integrated, participative and place-based way;

¹ The URBACT IV Cooperation Programme is available [here](#)

² The online tool for submitting Proposals, SYNERGIE-CTE, will close at 15:00 pm CET on 31 March 2023. More details on the submission procedure for proposals are provided in the sections 7 and 8 of the present Call for Proposals.

3) Ensure that URBACT knowledge and practice is made accessible to urban practitioners and policymakers to feed into local, regional, national and European urban policies, in particular through the European Urban Initiative; and contributing to the Urban Agenda for the EU.

1.2. Transnational exchange and learning networks in URBACT IV

The core strand of activities of the URBACT IV Programme is composed of transnational exchange and learning networks. URBACT transnational networks aim to impact local policies and practices by supporting the design and implementation of sustainable and integrated urban policies. There are 3 different types of networks (please refer to the Cooperation Programme and Programme Manual for more details):

- Action Planning Networks
- Transfer Networks
- Innovation Transfer Mechanism

The focus of this particular call is on Action Planning Networks. It is the first call for proposals for Action Planning Networks under URBACT IV. Action Planning Networks allow cities to work together to find solutions to common urban challenges and exchange about the opportunities of sustainable urban development. Through exchange and learning with European peers, cities can develop and test solutions to the challenges they have identified. Using the URBACT Method of transnational exchange, integrated and participatory approach and co-creation, the cities will develop strong Integrated Action Plans at local level to include concrete actions to deal with the challenge identified. Ultimately, the cities will improve their integrated urban policies and the delivery of these policies on the ground.

The principles and regulations for transnational exchange and learning networks to be implemented within the programme are laid down in the URBACT IV Cooperation Programme. In addition to the Cooperation Programme, the URBACT IV Programme Manual includes specific sections outlining how the different tools and actions shall be implemented and shall operate³. In particular, Action Planning Networks' applicants are invited to refer to the following sections:

- Book 1 – Section A. PRESENTATION OF THE URBACT NETWORKS
- Book 1 – Section B. CREATING AN URBACT NETWORK
- Book 1 – Section C. MANAGING AN URBACT NETWORK
- Book 1 – Section D. MANAGING COSTS AND REPORTING PROGRESS
- Book 1 – Section F. COMMUNICATION AT NETWORK LEVEL

1.3. What is in it for cities?

By taking part in an URBACT Action Planning Network it is possible to make real sustainable change in cities. Through peer exchange and learning, more informed, coordinated and successful local policies can be developed to tackle local challenges, harness potential opportunities and deal with common problems. By applying the URBACT Method cities can develop a participatory culture in policy-making which includes all relevant stakeholders and increases transparency and opportunities for successful implementation.

With transnational exchange and learning networks, the URBACT programme provides cities and urban practitioners with opportunities to:

- share and learn from peers in cities across the European Union, Switzerland, Norway and IPA countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia)

³ The URBACT IV Programme Manual is available [here](#).

- work with other cities around a specific policy challenge, to design innovative local solutions in the format of Integrated Action Plans
- test new ideas and solutions during the network's lifetime
- benefit from tools and training in the field of integrated and participatory approaches to urban challenges and policies
- access expertise to support the development and delivery of integrated and participatory policy-making, as well as thematic expertise to feed into local policies and practices
- obtain financial support to work with other cities around Europe and develop Integrated Action Plans
- create networks of cities for further cooperation and exchange of best practices to improve and elaborate innovative solutions.

More detailed information on how cities can benefit from taking part in an URBACT network, feedback from previous partners, information about the URBACT Method and more about what is expected from partners is available in the Guide to Action Planning Networks⁴ published alongside the present Call for Proposals.

⁴ The Guide to Action Planning Networks is available [here](#).

SECTION 2 – ABOUT ACTION PLANNING NETWORKS & BENEFICIARIES

2.1. Main objectives of Action Planning Networks

The main objective of Action Planning Networks is to improve the capacity of cities to manage sustainable urban policies, and more specifically, to improve the capacity to design integrated urban action plans in cities.

Action Planning Networks are expected to support an organised process of exchange and learning among peers, with a view to improving local policies through concrete action planning.

By taking part in an Action Planning Network, cities exchange on specific policy challenges and share experiences, problems and possible solutions, generating new ideas to address challenges related to integrated sustainable urban development.

As a starting point, cities willing to get involved in Action Planning Networks shall identify a policy challenge they want to address at local level. Then, they shall commit to develop an Integrated Action Plan that will address this challenge. This Integrated Action Plan will be both a driver of the transnational exchange and learning activities and a key concrete output of their participation in the Action Planning Network.

Cities interested in participating in an Action Planning Network shall also commit to work on their policy challenges with a participatory approach involving all relevant local stakeholders (from within the local administration and beyond, civil society, private sector, associations, etc.) in the action-planning process. These key stakeholders will be gathered in an URBACT Local Group. They will be actively involved in the transnational exchange activities and in the co-production of the Integrated Action Plan to be produced by the city. The participatory approach shall improve the action-planning process and the subsequent delivery of the local policies (strengthening the evidence base, ensuring understanding and ownership of the problems identified and of the solutions / policies developed, creating the conditions for a successful delivery, etc.).

Throughout the network duration, cities will be communicating to an external audience about their work and results. The URBACT Secretariat will provide specific tools and guidance for this purpose.

2.2. Eligible beneficiaries

For transnational exchange and learning activities (and thus for Action Planning Networks), the URBACT IV Cooperation Programme identifies the Programme area and defines two categories of beneficiaries: the main beneficiaries (city partners) and other beneficiaries (non-city partners).

The URBACT IV **programme area** consists of:

- The 27 EU Member States
- Partner States Norway and Switzerland. Partners from Norway and Switzerland cannot make use of ERDF allocations. Partners from Switzerland can be co-financed at 50% by a national fund⁵. Partners from Norway may participate in Action Planning Networks with Norwegian national funds covering up to 50% of the costs⁶.

⁵ Swiss participants are asked to contact the Federal Office for Spatial Development (ARE) to receive information on the available funds under this call.

⁶ Norwegian participants are asked to contact the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development (KDD) to receive information on the available funds under this call.

- The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. Partners from IPA countries can participate in operations using IPA funding, without receiving ERDF co-financing.
- Other countries. Partners from other countries, anywhere in the world, can participate with their own funding.

The **main beneficiaries** for Action Planning Networks shall be **cities** from 27 EU Member States, Norway, Switzerland, as well as IPA countries willing to develop integrated strategies and action plans for sustainable urban development. The beneficiary type “city” refers to the public local authority representing:

- Cities, municipalities, towns;
- Local agencies defined as public or semi-public organisations set up by a city, partially or fully owned by the city authority, responsible for the design and implementation of specific policies (economic development, energy supply, health services, transport, etc.)
- Infra-municipal tiers of government such as city districts and boroughs in cases where they are represented by a politico-administrative institution having competences for policy-making and implementation in the policy area covered by the URBACT network concerned in which they are willing to get involved;
- Metropolitan authorities and organised agglomerations in cases where they are represented by a politico-administrative institution having delegated competences for policy-making and implementation in the policy area covered by the URBACT network concerned.

There is no limit of population size for cities wishing to participate in URBACT activities. URBACT specifically supports urban authorities from neighbourhood to functional urban area level depending on the topic covered and the impact that can be made. This includes urban-rural linkages and cross-border functional urban areas.

Cities with no previous URBACT experience are particularly invited to apply.

A balance between cities from EU's more developed, less developed and transition regions will be ensured and monitored using the eligibility criteria of this call for proposals.

All URBACT networks will link to the European Urban Initiative (EUI)⁷. Specifically, the work of the Action Planning Networks in developing the capacity of cities to co-design integrated urban action plans is relevant for many cities working on sustainable urban development as referred in the **Article 11 of the ERDF Regulation⁸. The involvement of Article 11 cities and other cities benefiting from Cohesion policy funds will be sought for, as well as the alignment with Cohesion policy characteristics.**

In addition to city partners, Action Planning Networks can also include a limited number of **other eligible beneficiaries (non-city partners)**. In the case of Action Planning Networks, the list of other eligible beneficiaries is defined as follows:

- Provincial, regional and national authorities, as far as urban issues are concerned;

⁷ More detailed information is presented under section 3.3 of the present Call for Proposals.

⁸ Article 11 Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 requires that a minimum of 8% of ERDF resources per Member State be allocated to integrated territorial development focused on urban areas (sustainable urban development). Special attention shall be given to tackling environmental and climate challenges, notably the transition towards a climate neutral economy by 2050, to harnessing the potential of digital technologies for innovation purposes, and to supporting the development of functional urban areas.

- Universities and research centres, as far as urban issues are concerned;
- Managing Authorities of Cohesion Policy and EU Solidarity Funds.

In order to be eligible, non-city partners must be public authorities or Equivalent Public Bodies⁹. Please refer to Section 4 for further specific details about eligible beneficiaries for this call.

SECTION 3 - THEMATIC COVERAGE FOR ACTION PLANNING NETWORKS

3.1. URBACT cross-thematic objective

The overall objective of URBACT IV according to Article 3 EU Regulation 2021/1059 is to reinforce the effectiveness of Cohesion Policy by promoting exchange of experiences, innovative approaches and capacity building. URBACT IV addresses the capacity needs of urban authorities in designing and implementing sustainable urban development strategies and plans according to an integrated, participatory and place-based approach, replicating good practices and designing investment plans for innovative urban actions. This approach aims to support cities to comply with Article 29 EU regulation 2021/1060. This is primarily a challenge of a cross-thematic nature that URBACT wants to tackle through transnational networking, capacity-building activities and knowledge sharing.

Given that the needs and solutions are cross-thematic, URBACT IV will have one cross-thematic objective. URBACT will not directly support implementation actions but aims to build the governance capacity of cities so they, in turn, can effectively implement sustainable urban development strategies under the different policy objectives of Cohesion Policy. Therefore, URBACT activities are programmed under the Interreg Specific Objective (ISO) 1: A better cooperation governance.

URBACT supports networks in any thematic issues on better cooperation governance. The present Call for Proposals for Action Planning networks is open to any specific urban challenge or topic that is relevant to the candidate cities.

The programme structure around one single cross-cutting priority means that beneficiaries can potentially cooperate on any topics of shared relevance in line with their local needs, as long as this falls within the scope of Cohesion Policy. When considering the thematic coverage of the Action Planning Networks, this scope includes **the five policy objectives** as defined in Article 3 of the ERDF regulation (EU) 2021/1058:

- 1. a more competitive and smarter Europe** by promoting innovative and smart economic transformation and regional ICT connectivity;
- 2. a greener, low-carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy and resilient Europe** by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate change mitigation and adaptation, risk prevention and management, and sustainable urban mobility;

⁹ Based on EU Public Procurement Law, **equivalent public body** refers to any legal body governed by public or private law:

1. established for the specific purpose of meeting needs in the general interest, not having an industrial or commercial character (which does not exclude bodies partly having an industrial or commercial character), and
2. having legal personality, and
3. a) either financed, for the most part, by the State, or regional or local authorities, or other bodies governed by public law, b) or subject to management supervision by those bodies, c) or having an administrative, managerial or supervisory board, more than half of whose members are appointed by the State, regional or local authorities or by other bodies governed by public law."

3. **a more connected Europe** by enhancing mobility;
4. **a more social and inclusive Europe** implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights;
5. **a Europe closer to citizens** by fostering the sustainable and integrated development of all types of territories and local initiatives.

From a thematic perspective, this scope includes the topics defined by the policy objectives and specific objectives of Cohesion Policy as presented in Article 5 of the Common Provisions Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 and Article 3 of the ERDF regulation (EU) 2021/1058. Despite the selection of one single priority, the actions of the programme are still organised according to the different specific objectives of the Cohesion Policy. This allows a coherent clustering of the activities supported. This also means that projects need to explain how their proposal links to the Cohesion Policy Objectives referred to in Article 5(1) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 in their application form.

While addressing the main topic the URBACT networks will choose to work on, they will also have to reflect on how their activities and action plans address the **cross-cutting principles of green transition, digital transformation, and gender equality**. Whether cities aim to address mobility issues, cultural heritage, financial engineering, energy transition or any other topic, URBACT invites to take the extra mile and consider how these holistic themes can be part of the analysed challenges and solutions.

Proposals should demonstrate added value compared to the networks already financed by URBACT in the past. The details of the topics tackled under previous networks can be found on the URBACT website: <https://urbact.eu/networks>

The knowledge exchange and learning activities undertaken by the networks shall ensure a more integrated approach to the urban challenges addressed and produce up-to-date analysis of city policy and practice to be shared beyond URBACT, in particular through the European Urban Initiative (EUI) and through contributions to the Urban Agenda for the EU (UAEU).

3.2. Other considerations within and beyond the new EU regulatory framework

Within and beyond what is specifically foreseen within the new EU regulatory framework, notable policy strategic initiatives and programmes aimed at cities can be noted, in particular:

3.2.1. Urban Agenda for the European Union

Since the 2016 Pact of Amsterdam¹⁰, the European Commission, EU Member States, cities and other stakeholders have been working together in multi-level partnerships for the Urban Agenda for the EU. The Urban Agenda focuses specifically on three pillars of EU policy-making and implementation, namely better regulation, better funding and better knowledge. Fourteen thematic partnerships linked to sustainable urban development policies in the EU were launched from 2016 to 2019 and have produced action plans tackling specific issues within the three pillars.

The full list of the 14 UAEU topics can be found below:

¹⁰ <https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/content/pact-amsterdam>

- Air quality
- Circular economy
- Climate adaptation
- Culture and cultural heritage
- Digital transition
- Energy transition
- Housing
- Inclusion of migrants & refugees
- Innovative & responsible public procurement
- Jobs & skills in the local economy
- Sustainable use of land & nature-based solutions
- Urban mobility
- Urban poverty
- Security in public spaces

The New Leipzig Charter “The transformative power of cities for the common good”¹¹ adopted in November 2020 provides a European policy framework for sustainable urban development. It considers the Urban Agenda for the EU as the key vehicle for its implementation. In 2021, the renewal process of the Urban Agenda for the EU started, in line with the directions provided by the New Leipzig Charter and its implementing document.

On 26 November 2021, EU Ministers responsible for Urban Matters adopted the [Ljubljana Agreement and its Multiannual Working Programme](#) that materialise the start of a new phase of the Urban Agenda for the EU, including its operational parameters, work method and steps. The agreement also comprises the addition of four new themes: Greening cities, Sustainable tourism, Food and Cities of equality. Two new thematic partnerships on Greening Cities and Sustainable Tourism have been launched in 2022.

Applicants are encouraged to take into consideration, when relevant, how the network can link to the partnerships developed for the Urban Agenda for the European Union, for example by tackling one of the actions signposted in the Partnership Action Plans. More information about the Urban Agenda for the EU, and the detailed action plans, can be found on the dedicated website for the Urban Agenda for the EU: <https://www.urbanagenda.urban-initiative.eu/>

In the 2021–2027 period, support to the Urban Agenda for the EU is provided under the European Urban Initiative.

3.2.2. European Urban Initiative

URBACT IV shall complement the actions being delivered by the European Urban Initiative under Article 12 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 as part of the urban dimension of Cohesion policy.

Transnational networking of cities will remain the focus of the URBACT IV programme in the 2021–2027 period, and the core of such activity will be the exchange of experiences, innovative approaches and capacity building in relation to the identification, transfer and capitalisation of urban good practices on integrated and sustainable urban development¹². Therefore, the intervention logic of the EUI includes a work stream ‘Networks of cities supported by URBACT IV’ under its sub-strand (b.1) Capacity building. The specific objective of this work stream is to create a strong interconnection between the EUI and URBACT IV, and in particular, between the EUI and the URBACT IV transnational networks of cities.

3.2.3. Others

Other considerations can include:

¹¹ <https://futurium.ec.europa.eu/en/urban-agenda/library/new-leipzig-charter-and-implementing-document>

¹² Article 3(3)b of the ETC Regulation (EU) 2021/1059

- Relevant EU initiatives and programmes such as the European Innovation Partnership on smart cities and communities, the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, the EU Mission on 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities, the Intelligent Cities Challenge, the Digital Europe Programme and Connecting Europe Facility Digital Programme.
- The New European Bauhaus (NEB) shares many key principles with the URBACT programme including cross-disciplinary working, participation, sustainability and inclusiveness. Through its activities, the URBACT programme shall also be able to contribute to the NEB initiative.
- The New Leipzig Charter, and to the extent possible its Implementing document adopted in November 2020. The Charter puts forward a revised vision for sustainable urban development in Europe and considers the Urban Agenda for the EU as a key vehicle for its implementation. The Charter places the emphasis on the transformative power of cities for the common good. This is to be achieved through actions taken within the three thematic dimensions - 'Just, Green and Productive Cities' - as well as through one cross-sectoral dimension 'Digitalisation' that are implemented in a format of multi-level governance. The Charter enshrines the five EU principles of good urban governance that comprise "policy for the common good", "integrated approaches", "multi-level governance", "place-based approaches" and "participation and co-creation".
- The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda¹³, and in particular, the Goal 11 "Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable". In line with the Article 12 of the ERDF/CF Regulation, special attention will be given to the challenges of 'localising' the SDGs on the ground across EU cities and regions, in particular, regarding capacity building and strategic correlations between Cohesion Policy, SDGs and the key principles laid out by the New Urban Agenda¹⁴.

Applicants are encouraged to take into consideration, when relevant, how the network can link to these initiatives.

¹³ <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>

¹⁴ <https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2019/05/nua-english.pdf>

SECTION 4 - PARTNERSHIPS FOR ACTION PLANNING NETWORKS

4.1. General framework

Transnational partnerships are cornerstones of URBACT Action Planning Networks. The rules defined below shall apply to all partnerships involved in Action Planning Network proposals. These rules translate into eligibility criteria (see section 8.3.) and shall therefore be respected. Eligibility criteria are requirements, which must be all fulfilled for a proposal to be declared eligible. Only eligible proposals shall be considered for further assessment and approval.

4.2. Lead Partners

All Lead Partners in Action Planning Networks **MUST** be cities according to the description provided in section 2.2 above. Each network has to appoint a **Lead Partner**. Lead Partners are key actors of transnational partnerships for Action Planning Networks. They have full responsibility for network management, coordination of activities among the transnational partners, communication at network and EU levels, and implementation of the work programme. The Lead Partner also bears financial and legal responsibility and liability for the whole partnership towards the Managing Authority.

Only cities (according to the definition provided under section 2.2) from the 27 EU Member States¹⁵ can be Lead Partners of Action Planning Networks¹⁶.

The candidate Lead Partner SHALL be candidate Lead Partner in one URBACT proposal only under this call.

Further information on the roles and responsibilities of Lead Partners and Project Partners is available in the Programme Manual, Book 1 – Section MANAGING AN URBACT NETWORK and Section F. COMMUNICATION AT NETWORK LEVEL.

4.3. Action Planning Network Partnership

A **full partnership** shall be set up for the submission of the application.

The **partnership** to be proposed **must include a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 10 partners from eligible countries.**

One city (as defined under section 2.2) will be designated as Lead Partner (as defined under section 4.2 above).

4.3.1 Eligible partners to funding

ERDF PARTNERS

The project partners that are located in the 27 EU Member States (see section 2.2) are co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). They can be involved as full Project Partners under this call for proposals, provided all eligibility criteria are respected. Compliance with the eligibility criteria will be confirmed during the eligibility check.

¹⁵ Since a Norwegian or a Swiss Lead Partner would not have financial responsibility regarding ERDF funding, cities from Norway and Switzerland cannot currently be Lead Partners of Action Planning Networks.

¹⁶ Cities from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia (IPA countries) cannot currently be Lead Partners of Action Planning Networks. Cities from these countries will be able to lead future networks once the legal framework is in place.

IPA PARTNERS

Countries concerned by the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA fund) within the URBACT Programme are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia.

IPA cities cannot act as Lead Partners.

IPA partners can apply as Project Partners provided that their legal status is coherent with the Programme rules and that the legal framework is fully set in the relevant IPA countries. The conditions to participate will have to be checked with the national authorities concerned.

More detailed information and contact details are available upon request.

4.3.2 Partnership composition

Partnerships shall respect the following rules:

- The partnership may include 2 “non-city partners” maximum (as defined under section 2.2);
- A beneficiary (city and non-city partners) may not be a partner in more than two approved Action Planning Networks at the time;
- A candidate city can be candidate Lead Partner of one Action Planning Network proposal only but can be also a Project Partner in another network at the time.

A 70% balance of cities from EU regions is necessary as follows:

- a minimum of 6 partners from Less Developed and Transition Regions where the total number of partners is 8 to 9.
- a minimum of 7 partners from Less Developed and Transition Regions where the total number of partners is 10.

In case of partners from Norway, Switzerland or IPA countries, they should not be counted in that balance. For example, for a partnership with a total number of 10 partners including 1 city from an IPA country, the balance will apply on the total number of 9 partners from EU regions.

The map showing the categorisation of EU Regions for 2021-2027 can be found [here](#). The full list of regions eligible for funding from the ERDF and the ESF Plus and of Member States eligible for funding from the Cohesion Fund for the period 2021-2027 is available at this link [here](#).

SECTION 5 - ACTIVITIES AND WORK PACKAGES

Action Planning Networks shall operate and implement the network activities **structured into four stages around three work packages:**

- Work package 1 (WP1) – Network management
- Work package 2 (WP2) – Network Level Activities
- Work package 3 (WP3) – Local Level Activities

Communication activities shall be conceived and implemented as part of the three work packages.

The activities to be implemented by Action Planning Networks, in each of the stages, are organised around work packages. Work packages allow partners to develop a shared understanding about the project's structure. Each work package has specific objectives, defined activities and related expected deliverables.

More detailed information about the Action Planning Network journey is available in the Guide to Action Planning Networks.

Under this call, networks are approved for a total duration of 31 months and shall NOT submit a new application for assessment before entering into Stage 2.

At the end of Stage 1, the Network Roadmap (Baseline Study) will be reviewed by the External Assessment Panel to ensure sufficient quality to proceed into Stage 2.

The passage from Stage 1 to Stage 2 is NOT automatic. No official approval will be needed to proceed into Stage 2 but projects can be stopped if they are considered to be of poor quality.

5.1. Stage 1 of Action Planning Networks

The duration of Stage 1 – Activation is 7 months, starting from 1st June 2023. Stage 1 is dedicated to developing detailed network activities and ensuring a well-balanced and coherent partnership.

During Stage 1 partners involved in approved networks will work, with the support of an URBACT validated Lead Expert, on the development of the project workplan, the identification of relevant local stakeholders to be involved in the URBACT Local Groups, refining the network topic to meet the needs of the cities involved, completing a Network Roadmap (Baseline Study) and working on the communication strategy and plan for the network.

The main deliverables of Stage 1 shall include:

- To organise two transnational meetings gathering all partners (a kick-off and one meeting towards the end of this stage)
- To consolidate the partnership
- To set-up an URBACT Local Group in each partner city
- To complete and submit a Network Roadmap (Baseline Study) presenting the theme of the network and the relevance to all the partners. This document will also outline the methodological framework for the Action Planning Network activities (further detailed guidelines will be available to approved projects at the start of Stage 1)
- To develop and produce a Communication Plan for their network.

5.2. Stages 2 to 4 of Action Planning Networks

Networks considered to be of sufficient good quality to continue for Stage 2 and beyond shall be devoted to the implementation of the activities foreseen in the application form, at transnational and local level, aimed at designing Integrated Action Plans in each partner city that use the transnational exchange and learning activities/outputs to inform and detail concrete actions to address the challenge locally.

The duration of Stages 2 to 4 is 24 months, starting from 1st January 2024. These 24 months are dedicated to the implementation of network activities spread across:

Stage 2 – Planning Actions: 12 months

Stage 3 – Preparing/Getting ready for Implementation: 9 months

Stage 4 – Finale: 3 last months

Main activities and deliverables of Stages 2 to 4 shall include:

- Transnational exchange and learning meetings, events and activities to identify and share

- ideas about solutions to the network thematic challenge,
- The co-design of Integrated Action Plans by stakeholders gathered in an URBACT Local Group in each partner city
 - Integrated Action Plans delivery and testing with Small Scale Actions
 - Quarterly Network Reports
 - Communication and outreach activities like maintaining a network webpage on the URBACT website, communicating on social media, organisation of dissemination events, etc.
 - Network Result Product that captures the learning from all cities and provides clear recommendations to other cities, policy-makers and European organisations on the theme of the network.

Detailed information concerning specific objectives, activities and expected outputs under each Stage and Work Package is provided in the Book 1, Section A. of the URBACT IV Programme Manual and in the Guide to Action Planning Networks.

In order to support the implementation of the activities of Action Planning Networks, the URBACT Programme provides each approved Action Planning Network with an additional specific budget for the **appointment of experts** (see section 6.3 for expertise resources).

SECTION 6 – BUDGETARY ELEMENTS AND EXPERTISE RESOURCES

6.1. URBACT IV Eligible Intervention rates

The ERDF's co-financing rate for an Action Planning Network is calculated at network level on the basis of the different co-financing rates for each partner.¹⁷

- Partners from “more developed regions” are co-financed up to 65% by ERDF.
- Partners from “transition regions” are co-financed up to 70% by ERDF.
- Partners from “less developed regions” are co-financed up to 80% by ERDF.
- Switzerland is a Partner State of the URBACT programme. Partners from Switzerland are co-financed up to 50% by a Swiss national fund.¹⁸
- Norway is a partner state of the URBACT programme. Partners from Norway may participate in Action Planning Networks with Norwegian national funds covering up to 50% of the costs¹⁹.
- Partners from IPA countries are co-financed by up to 95% by IPA Funds.²⁰
- Partners from other countries may participate in Action Planning Networks at their own cost for this call.

6.2. Action Planning Network Budgets

The maximum total eligible budget for an Action Planning Network shall be EUR 850 000 (including ERDF, IPA funds and local co-financing).

Action Planning Networks shall be financed using European Regional Development Fund or IPA Fund and local, regional or national contributions from city partners according to the rates outlined in section 6.1 above.

Considering the foreseen workload required in the first 7 months to ensure a well-balanced and coherent partnership, the set-up of the URBACT Local Groups and a high-quality baseline study, the costs incurred for this first Stage of work shall be considered eligible for refund regardless of the passage of the network into Stage 2.

The budget shall be presented using five budget categories as follows:

- i) **Staff Costs**
Expenditure on staff members employed by the partner organisation, who are formally engaged to work on the project.
- ii) **Office and Administration Costs**
General office and administration expenditures of the partner organisation that supports delivery of project activities.
- iii) **Travel and Accommodation Costs**

¹⁷ The map showing the categorisation of EU Regions for 2021-2027 can be found [here](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32021D1130). The full list of regions eligible for funding is available at this link here: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32021D1130>.

¹⁸ Swiss participants are asked to contact the Federal Office for Spatial Development (ARE) to receive information on the available funds under this call.

¹⁹ Norwegian participants are asked to contact the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development (KDD) to receive information on the available funds under this call.

²⁰ IPA partners can apply as Project Partners provided that their legal status is coherent with the Programme rules and that the legal framework is fully set in the relevant IPA countries. The conditions to participate will have to be checked with the national authorities concerned. More detailed information and contact details are available upon request.

Expenditures on travel and accommodation costs of partner organisations' staff that are related to delivery of the project. This category includes travel costs, accommodation costs, costs of meals, visa costs, and/or daily allowances/per diems.

iv) External expertise and service Costs

Expenditure for external expertise and services provided by a public or private body or a natural person outside of the partner organisation. This category covers costs paid on the basis of contracts or written agreements and against invoices or requests for reimbursement to external experts and service providers that are requested to carry out certain tasks or activities, linked to the delivery of the project. All additional costs related to external experts (e.g. travel and accommodation expenses for external experts) should be recorded under this budget category. This category also includes all costs linked to the organisation of meetings.

v) Equipment

Expenditure for equipment purchased, rented or leased by the partner organisations, necessary to achieve the objectives of the project. Costs for equipment shall be moderate and clearly justified in the application form. As the purchase of equipment cannot be a core element in an URBACT project, it should remain exceptional.

Detailed information about the eligibility of costs, the methods for calculation and programme specific rules is available in the URBACT IV Programme Manual, Book 1, Section D.2. - Eligibility of expenditure per budget category, as well as in the Guide for Action Planning Networks linked to this call.

6.3. Expertise

In order to support the implementation of the activities of Action Planning Networks, the URBACT Programme provides each approved network with an additional specific budget for the **appointment of experts**. Experts support partners in implementing their network activities with both thematic content and methods for exchange and learning.

More specifically, the expertise budget should provide all partners with a package of services including:

- Expertise for the production of a Network Roadmap (Baseline Study)
- Support the Lead Partner with the development of the network methodology
- Support for setting up URBACT Local Groups in each partner city
- Expertise for the design and delivery of transnational exchange and learning activities in collaboration with partners
- Thematic expertise related to the policy challenge being addressed
- Support partners in applying integrated and participatory approaches
- Support partners with the design and peer review of the Integrated Action Plans
- Production of key network outputs and contribution to programme-level activities on relevant topics.

6.3.1 Expertise budget

Each network shall have a specific expertise budget of EUR 144 500 to cover the costs of expertise support over the entire lifetime of the project. This expertise budget is in addition to the network budget and without the co-funding rates applied. The daily expertise fee for URBACT network experts is set at EUR 850 per day all taxes included, therefore a maximum of 170 days of expertise is available for each network regardless of the number of partners.

Networks shall appoint a Lead Expert, as well as at least two Ad-Hoc Experts throughout the network lifetime for support with the delivery of all planned activities and expected deliverables. Specific expertise support framework provided by URBACT Secretariat at the start of the project shall be followed for designing network experts' work plans. The allocation of days to the Lead Expert shall not exceed 82% of the total budget (max. 140 days). Therefore, a minimum of 18% of

the expertise budget (min. 30 days) shall be allocated to Ad-Hoc Experts supporting the network. Please refer to the guide for detailed information about the framework for the use of expertise in Action Planning Networks.

The available budget shall cover days of expertise only. **Travel and accommodation costs for Lead and Ad-Hoc Experts MUST be covered by the network budget.**

Action Planning Network partners can contract additional experts for specific local tasks (e.g. coordination of the URBACT Local Group, local facilitation, project management support, etc.) through the network budget under the budget category “External expertise and services”.

6.3.2 Appointing experts

Appointed experts to be funded from the dedicated expertise budget shall be selected from the pool of Validated URBACT Experts. New experts can apply to join the pool at any time²¹.

Three potential URBACT Validated Lead Experts shall be proposed by the Lead Partner after the network approval.

All approved networks will be requested (with e-mail notification letter) to propose 3 Lead Expert candidates based on the principles and the selection criteria for the use of expertise defined in the application form.

Experts coming from (at least) two different countries of residence or nationalities shall be proposed among the 3 proposed Lead Experts. The proposal shall as well include at least one female expert.

Letters of intent (the template will be provided by the URBACT Secretariat) duly signed by proposed Lead Experts shall be attached to the request.

All Lead Partner candidates are encouraged to consult the pool of URBACT Validated Experts already during the open call for networks and make contacts in order to assess their relevance to the proposed network theme and seek in-principle an agreement from them. It is strongly suggested to have the shortlist of experts you would like to work with ready before the network approval. Approved Networks will have limited time after the approval to find adequate experts. (For exact time frames, please see Section 11 – Important dates for applicants).

URBACT Secretariat will check all the proposed Lead Expert candidates in order to identify any overlaps with other approved networks. The coherence with the selection criteria defined in the application form will be performed before the confirmation of the “1st option Lead Experts”. Immediately after the confirmation, several dates for the interview with the proposed Lead Expert, Lead Partner and URBACT Secretariat are foreseen in order to ensure the suitability of the expert. Interviews with several Lead Expert candidates can be organised depending on the result of the initial interviews. A mutual agreement between the Lead Partner and the URBACT Secretariat is essential for the final selection of the Lead Expert.

The contract with standard workplans will be signed between URBACT Secretariat and the appointed expert for the first stage of Action Planning Networks. A clear evaluation procedure verifying the quality of outputs and contributions will be set out to assess the work carried out during the first stage. New contracts with Lead Experts will be issued based on the expertise request form submitted by Lead Partners at the end of the first stage with customised work plans for the remaining duration of the network.

²¹ The call for Experts will remain open over the entire duration of URBACT IV programme. The call and online application form will open in January 2023 and be accessible via this link: <https://urbact.eu/expert-form> (available from January 2023 onwards)

In order to be considered as an URBACT Lead Expert for this call the expert application should be submitted before the end of April 2023 in order to ensure the visibility of the expert profile within the URBACT pool of Validated Experts.

It should be noted that only experts who have not been directly involved in developing the network application can be proposed. A strict conflict of interest procedure will be followed.

SECTION 7 - THE CREATION OF ACTION PLANNING NETWORKS

In order to improve the quality of networks approved for funding, the URBACT IV Programme foresees a two-stage process for Action Planning Networks. The process includes:

- **Stage 1:** Approved Action Planning Networks enter the seven-month Stage 1. The main aim of Stage 1 is to provide partners of Action Planning Networks with the time and resources to ensure:
 - the development of a common understanding of the challenge identified,
 - the consolidation of the partnership by exploring the specific needs of all partners,
 - the elaboration of a shared methodology for exchange and learning activities
 - the development of a communication plan.

These elements shall be explored in the Network Roadmap (Baseline Study) exercise, the results of which shall be submitted at the end of Stage 1.

- **Stages 2 to 4:** Action Planning Networks considered as of sufficient quality to proceed further enter the 24-month Stages 2 to 4 for the implementation of the activities at transnational and local level as foreseen in the network proposals. Some small-scale testing of actions planned in the Integrated Action Plan may be carried out at these stages.

As a consequence of the stage approach, the creation of Action Planning Networks in URBACT IV is a step-by-step process as described below.

7.1. Submission of Applications

The submission of Applications is the first step. Its purpose is to select and approve projects that will be funded. Information to be provided by candidate networks in the Applications is introduced under Section 10 of the present Call for Proposals and detailed in the “Guide to Action Planning Networks”. Annex 1 presents an outline of the main headings of the application form.

Applications will be checked against the eligibility criteria by the URBACT Joint Secretariat and assessed against the assessment criteria by the External Assessment Panel (EAP). The EAP is made up of independent experts specifically appointed to assess the quality of the proposed networks based on the published assessment criteria. Eligible applications, along with EAP assessment results and recommendations, will be submitted by the URBACT Managing Authority to the URBACT Monitoring Committee (national representatives of EU Member and Partner States and IPA countries) for approval. Only Action Planning Networks’ proposals approved by the Monitoring Committee will receive funding to implement the activities planned in accordance with the submitted applications.

Eligibility and assessment criteria for the selection of Action Planning Networks are presented under Section 8 of the present Call for Proposals.

7.2. Passage to Stage 2 and beyond

The purpose of passage to Stage 2 is to assess the quality and relevance of network proposals, along with the Network Roadmap (Baseline Study) to be submitted at the end of Stage 1. Entering Stage 2 is not a competitive process as is the case for Stage 1. Assessment for Stage 2 is about the quality of the proposed network and the coherence of the proposed activities and expected results.

The External Assessment Panel (EAP) may organise hearings of Lead Partners and Lead Experts as part of the assessment process. Only Action Planning Networks proposed by the EAP and approved by the Monitoring Committee will receive funding to implement the activities planned for Stages 2 to 4. Quality assurance criteria for passage to Stage 2 will be available for approved projects at the start of their Stage 1.

Projects not approved for Stage 2 will be refunded for the costs incurred during Stage 1 up to a maximum total eligible budget for an Action Planning Network of EUR 150.000²².

SECTION 8 – DETAILED PROCEDURE FOR THE CREATION OF ACTION PLANNING NETWORKS IN THE FRAME OF THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

8.1. General overview

Projects applying to this Call for Proposals are required to follow a structured application procedure and will be subject to a selection process.

Decisions by the Monitoring Committee shall be final. May the decision be appealed against by a project's Lead Partner, the complaint procedure shall apply (see section 9).

The different steps of the application procedure can be summarised as follows:

1. APPLICATION	
<u>Step 1</u>	Lead Partners complete and submit the Application form and all requested documents to the URBACT Joint Secretariat by 31 March 2023 ²³
<u>Step 2</u>	URBACT Joint Secretariat performs eligibility check by 7 April 2023 (estimated date).
<u>Step 3</u>	External Assessment Panel carries out assessment of eligible project proposals and issues recommendations by 21 April 2023 (estimated date).
<u>Step 4</u>	URBACT Managing Authority submits a proposal for the approval of up to 30 Action Planning Networks to the Monitoring Committee. The Monitoring Committee decides on networks' approval – by end of May 2023 (estimated date). The approved Action Planning Networks shall receive a subsidy contract that marks the final stage of the approval of the project.
SEVEN-MONTH STAGE 1 FOR APPROVED ACTION PLANNING NETWORKS (1 June 2023 – 31 December 2023)	
2. APPLICATION QUALITY ASSURANCE	
<u>Step 5</u>	External Assessment Panel carries out the assessment of project applications as a result of Stage 1 activities (building on the baseline study and partnership consolidation) to ensure sufficient quality to proceed into Stage 2. No official approval needed but projects can be stopped if of poor quality – December 2023

²² This does not include the URBACT expertise fees that are paid with an additional specific budget envelope for the appointment of experts (see section 6.3 for expertise resources).

²³ More detailed information about the fixed deadline and requested documents is presented under section 8.2 of the present Call for Proposals.

24-MONTH STAGES 2 TO 4 FOR APPROVED QUALITY NETWORKS (1 January 2024 – 31 December 2025)

8.2. Step 1 – Procedure for the submission of Applications

The submission of the Application package is paper-free. The application is submitted through the online system SYNERGIE-CTE. Detailed information on how to create and submit Applications through the online system SYNERGIE-CTE is provided in the Practical guide to SYNERGIE application.

To submit a network proposal, applicants shall complete the following steps:

- 1) Complete and submit their Application through SYNERGIE-CTE in English. Only applications submitted using SYNERGIE-CTE will be accepted.

The deadline for the online submission of the Applications is 31 March 2023, 15:00 CET.

After this deadline, the SYNERGIE-CTE system will be closed.

- 2) Send the application package composed of the scan of the signed PDF document of the Application generated through SYNERGIE-CTE and all additional requested documents (*a list of additional documents is provided below*) by email to APN@urbact.eu.

The e-mail shall be received by the URBACT Joint Secretariat no later than 3 April 2023, 15:00 CET.

Applicants shall send by email **all** of the following documents:

- Scanned signed PDF version of the submitted Application generated through SYNERGIE-CTE. It must be duly signed by the Project Coordinator in the Lead Partner city;
- Letters of commitment in English for ALL partners included in the partnership (one letter for the Lead Partner plus one letter for each Project Partner) using the templates provided in annexes 2 and 3 of this Call for Proposals. Letters of Commitment shall be signed by an elected representative of the partner institution;²⁴
- CV of the Project Coordinator at the Lead Partner.

8.3. Step 2 – Eligibility check of Applications

The URBACT Joint Secretariat will check all received applications against the eligibility criteria. Eligibility criteria for applications are minimum requirements, all of which must be fulfilled before a project can be declared eligible for further assessment. They cover organisational, administrative and commitment requirements. Only eligible projects can be submitted by the Managing Authority to the Monitoring Committee for approval.

²⁴ The signing person has to be an elected representative with authority to sign for the Project Partner. In case the Project Partner institution has no elected representatives, the signing person must be in the position of committing the institution's resources to be engaged in the project (staff, budget, etc.)."

The proposals submitted to the URBACT Joint Secretariat within the deadline and respecting the procedure outlined in the call will be checked for compliance with the eligibility criteria listed below:

Eligibility Criteria

- The application package is submitted in English, respecting the procedure outlined in the Terms of Reference and within the notified deadline.
- The application package is complete including the required documents set out in the Terms of Reference.
- The proposal is complete in terms of information and data required in the documents (Application Form and letters of commitment from partners have been properly filled in and signed, are correctly completed; and all letters use the official templates according to the instructions).
- The proposal fulfils the partnership requirements bringing together between 8 and 10 candidate partners including the Lead Partner.
- The proposed partnership includes no more than 2 non-city partners.
- The proposed partnership respects the minimum 70% of partners from Transition and Less Developed Regions.
- The candidate Lead Partner is a candidate Lead Partner in one URBACT proposal only under this call.
- All candidate partners are eligible according to the URBACT Programme rules.
- The partners in the application cover a **minimum of 7 countries**.
- The maximum budget for Action Planning Networks (EUR 850.000 total eligible budget) has been respected.

8.4. Step 3 – Assessment of eligible Applications

Eligible Applications shall be assessed by an External Assessment Panel. The EAP is made up of independent experts specifically appointed to assess the quality of the proposed networks based on the published assessment criteria. The assessment criteria for project proposals are outlined below:

Assessment Criteria

Criterion 1: Relevance of the topic/theme/policy issue addressed (10%)
<p>For this criterion, assessors will more especially consider the following dimensions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The proposal contributes to the objectives of the Cohesion Policy 2021-2027 2) The proposal is relevant in the current European urban policy context (in particular the Cohesion Policy objectives and scope) 3) The policy challenge is relevant to the URBACT Programme and complements previous projects
Criterion 2: Proposal to address URBACT cross-cutting objectives (equality (including gender), green transition and digital transition) (10%)
<p>For this criterion, assessors will more especially consider the following dimensions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The proposal demonstrates a good understanding of the cross-cutting objectives of the URBACT programme

- 2) The proposal provides concrete examples of the implementation of the cross-cutting objectives of the URBACT programme

Criterion 3: Quality and Relevance of Partnership (35%)

For this criterion, assessors will more especially consider the following dimensions:

- 1) The policy challenge proposed is relevant for all of the cities in the partnership
- 2) The proposed partnership covers an appropriate mix of EU Member States (for example ensuring adequate coverage of Central and Eastern Europe, Northern, Western and Southern Europe). In cases where the geographical coverage is limited, this is clearly justified.
- 3) The strategic environment of partner cities is relevant to address the challenges identified
- 4) The partners have understood the urban dimension of Cohesion Policy and have explained how it links to their involvement in this network
- 5) The partner cities demonstrate a willingness and ability to undertake the activities (e.g. having appropriate competence, resources, political support and motivation and a clear understanding of the work necessary to produce an Integrated Action Plan)
- 6) The partner cities have clearly identified the added value of benefitting from the URBACT Programme and the potential for change
- 7) The types of stakeholders identified in all the URBACT Local Groups are relevant and comprehensive
- 8) The potential to fund the actions developed by the network is considered high based on the information provided
- 9) The appointed local project and URBACT Local Group coordinators have the relevant profile and position to contribute to the delivery of foreseen activities and outputs
- 10) Overall, the partnership is coherent and it is clear why these cities should work together

Criterion 4: Quality of the proposed methodology and activities (25%)

For this criterion, assessors will more especially consider the following dimensions:

- 1) The proposal demonstrates a good understanding of the objectives of an URBACT Action Planning Network using the URBACT Method
- 2) The proposed work plan is clearly presented and shows a good understanding of what is expected in terms of activities and outputs from Action Planning Networks, in all work packages
- 3) Work packages are clearly explained with sufficient detail. The proposed methodology and activities are creative, coherent, logical and appropriate for the partnership. Activities are logically sequenced linking local and transnational level
- 4) The proposed outputs are clearly explained with details about how they will be developed and used during the network lifetime
- 5) The proposed tools, content and methodology respond to the theme and the needs of the partner cities
- 6) The communication approach of the network and cities seems feasible and relevant to the network methodology
- 7) The proposal presents some innovative and interesting approaches to transnational exchange and learning

Criterion 5: Project Management and Expertise (10%)

For this criterion, assessors will more especially consider the following dimensions:

- 1) The Lead Partner demonstrates competency in managing EU co-financed projects or can ensure adequate measures for management support

- 2) The named person to act for the Lead Partner (project coordinator) has experience (from the attached CV) of this type of work
- 3) The project coordination at the Lead Partner's is well organised and clearly presented (who will perform concrete tasks). Sufficient resources are indicated for the Lead Partner tasks
- 4) The proposal demonstrates a clear understanding of the role of the Lead Expert and explains clearly what the network expects from the appointed expert
- 5) The proposal demonstrates a clear understanding of the role of the Ad-Hoc Experts and explains clearly what the network expects from the appointed experts

Criterion 6: Budget Proposal (10%)

For this criterion, assessors will more especially consider the following dimensions:

- 1) The project budget is coherent with the work plan and the main outputs in the proposal
- 2) The total partner budgets reflect real partners' involvement (are balanced and realistic)
- 3) The project budget is justified, clear and realistic

8.5. Step 4 – Submission to the Monitoring Committee and approval

Building on the report provided by the External Assessment Panel, the Monitoring Committee shall decide on the approval of projects to be funded. Decisions by the Monitoring Committee shall be final.

After approval by the Monitoring Committee, the information on approved projects shall be published on the URBACT website.

Approved applications shall receive a subsidy contract which marks the final stage of approval of the project. Additional information on the subsidy contract is available in Book 1, Section B. of the URBACT IV Programme Manual. The project shall then be fully operational and can start working on planned activities.

All successful networks will be invited to a dedicated online Network launch meeting where Lead/Project Partners and Lead Experts can learn about expectations and activities to be delivered.

SECTION 9 – COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Lead Partners of rejected project proposals are informed in writing about the reasons why an application was not eligible or not approved. Questions in relation to the assessments will be examined and answered by the URBACT Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat. Projects that have not been selected for funding have the right to file a formal complaint about the decision of the Monitoring Committee.

In principle, complaints can only be lodged against the following criteria: (1) the assessment does not take into consideration information supplied in the application and (2) the project assessment and selection process failed to comply with the specific procedures laid down in the call publication and Programme Manual, which as a consequence may have affected the decision.

Only the project's Lead Partner can file a complaint. Potential Project Partner complaints have to be passed through the Lead Partner. Complaints should be submitted electronically to the URBACT Joint Secretariat within 3 weeks after the official notification of the non-selection of the project by the Managing Authority. This deadline shall not prejudice the start of the other projects approved by the Monitoring Committee.

The complaints will be examined and answered by a complaint panel involving the Chair of the URBACT Monitoring Committee, the URBACT Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat and the Chair

of the External Assessment Panel. If deemed necessary, the complaint panel may decide to submit a complaint to the Monitoring Committee of the Programme for review.

SECTION 10 - CONTENT OF APPLICATION

Projects wishing to apply for funding within the frame of this Call for Proposals shall fill in and submit their Application through the online SYNERGIE-CTE platform. All applications shall be completed in English.

Here below is the list of the main sections to be completed in order to submit a proposal:

- **Presentation of the network theme:** applicants shall define the main issue/policy challenge to be addressed by the network, highlighting the link to European urban policy context 2021-2027 (in particular the Cohesion Policy objectives and scope). The proposal should also explain how the network will contribute to the specific objective for Action Planning Networks, i.e. Interreg Specific Objective 1 (ISO 1): a better cooperation governance, in particular Europe Closer to Citizens (PO5).
- **Description of how the networks address cross-cutting considerations such as green transition, digital transformation and gender inclusive approach in their working methods:** Concrete examples of how equal opportunities (especially gender), environmentally sustainable actions and digitalisation have been integrated into the working of the network should be outlined.
- **Presentation of the proposed partnership:** In the framework of the Application form, applicants are requested to present all partners included in the partnership. More especially applicants are requested to highlight:
 - The local situation of partners in relation to the policy issue/topic addressed by the network
 - The experience of partners in dealing with the policy issue/topic addressed by the network and their potential contribution to the exchange and learning activities
 - The specific needs and expected results of partners and how URBACT can respond to these needs
- **Description of the main activities to be implemented:** applicants shall describe how the main activities included under the Work Packages will be implemented. More especially applicants are requested to detail the proposed approach for the production of the Network Roadmap (Baseline Study) and to present their communication approach at local and network levels.
- **Description of the Network Team:** applicants shall describe the experience of the proposed Lead Partner and Project Coordinator. Applicants shall indicate the needs identified by the network for the use of URBACT Lead Experts and Ad-Hoc Experts to assist the network.
- **Budget:** applicants shall provide information about the budget required to deliver the activities proposed based on 5 budget categories. An individual Project Partner budget shall also be provided. More detailed information on budgetary issues can be found in section 6 of this document and in the Guide for Action Planning Networks.

For the preparation of high-quality network proposals applicants are strongly advised to refer as well to the explanations and suggestions provided in the Guide to Action Planning Networks.

SECTION 11 - IMPORTANT DATES FOR APPLICANTS

Applicants are invited to take note of the following five milestones:

➤ **URBACT Secretariat webinars on the call in 2023: save the dates!**

- 17 January, 10:00 - 11:00 CET: The call in a nutshell and its features: Q&A
- 19 January, 10:00 - 11:00 CET: How to build a strong partnership for an Action Planning Network
- 7 February, 10:00 - 11:00 CET: Exchange and learning during the network journey
- 7 March, 10:00 - 11:00 CET: Time to submit your application: tech & troubleshooting
- 16-17 March: Q&A at the Cities Forum, Torino (IT)

➤ **Submission of proposals**

Applications shall be submitted online by **31 March 2023²⁵ - 15.00 CET at the latest**, following the procedure outlined above in section 8. **The application package should be also sent by e-mail by 3rd April 2023 - 15.00 CET at the latest.**

➤ **Approval**

Eligible project proposals will be submitted to the URBACT Monitoring Committee for approval of funding in May 2023. Approved networks will start working officially in June 2023.

• **Selection and appointment of Lead experts:**

Notification e-mails shall be sent to the approved networks by 23 May 2023.

Approved networks will be requested to send three Lead Expert letters of intent by 31 May 2023.

Interviews with shortlisted Lead Experts shall take place the week of 5 June 2023. Several time slots will be proposed.

Lead Expert contracts with standard work plans for the first stage of networks shall be issued the week of 12 June 2023.

• **Network launch meeting**

Lead Partners (LPs) and URBACT Validated Lead Experts (LEs) of approved projects **MUST** attend the Network launch meeting organised online shortly after the start of the networks. **The dates of this meeting are set for late June 2023: 20 June with LPs and LEs and 22 June will all LEs, LPs and network partners.**

As this is considered a capacity-building event, attendance is compulsory.

• **URBACT Summer University 2023**

Cities and Lead Experts of approved projects **MUST** attend the URBACT University 2023. This University will last three days and it is planned to take place within 28-31 August 2023.

URBACT Universities are large transnational trainings, with around 450 participants from Action Planning Networks' cities, usually organised over 3 days aiming to provide URBACT networks' partners and their local stakeholders with tools and methods to develop integrated and participatory approaches for the design and implementation of urban policies.

²⁵ The online tool for submitting Proposals, SYNERGIE-CTE, will close at 15:00 CET on 31 March 2023. More detailed information about the submission procedure, list of required documents and deadline is provided in section 8 of the present Call for Proposals.

As this is a major capacity-building event, attendance of all Lead Partners, Lead Experts and Project Partners is compulsory.

SECTION 12 - USEFUL RESOURCES

12.1. URBACT Joint Secretariat

Applicants may contact members of the URBACT Joint Secretariat for clarification related to the submission of applications. For all questions concerning the Call for Proposals for Action Planning Networks, applicants are invited to contact the URBACT Joint Secretariat at the following dedicated e-mail address: apn@urbact.eu.

12.2. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section is available on the URBACT website: <https://urbact.eu/get-involved>

12.3. Useful Documents

In preparing their Application, applicants are invited to refer to the following documents in addition to the Terms of Reference:

- Guide to Action Planning Networks (necessary for a quality application submission)
- URBACT IV Cooperation Programme
- URBACT IV Programme Manual – Book 1
- SYNERGIE-CTE Practical Guide for the creation and submission of applications of Action Planning Networks

Key documents are available on the [webpage here](#).

12.4. Finding an Expert

The call for the URBACT IV pool of Validated Experts will open in January 2023 and will remain open for the entire duration of URBACT IV. The first expert profiles are expected to be published on the URBACT website in February 2023. Applicants are invited to check the [pool of URBACT Validated Experts](#) regularly for newly added validated experts in order to identify most relevant network Lead Expert candidates to be proposed after networks' approval.

12.5. Partner Search Tool

A specific tool dedicated to assisting with the partner search has been developed on the URBACT website. It can be accessed at this address: <http://urbact.eu/partnersearchtool>

12.6. National URBACT Points

National URBACT Points are in charge of communicating to cities and urban professionals in their respective countries in native languages. They also provide support to URBACT beneficiary cities in terms of communication, capacity-building, sharing of knowledge, and connection with other EU and national funds.

They are represented by national ministries, city associations, universities or other private agencies. As of March 2021, 24 National URBACT Points operate in 27 countries (Austria & Germany, France & Luxembourg, Greece & Cyprus having a joint National URBACT Point).

For this call of Action Planning Networks, most of the National URBACT Points will organise info sessions from January to early March 2023.

More information and contact details about National URBACT Points can be found at this link: <https://urbact.eu/how-find-us>.

ANNEX 1 – OUTLINE OF MAIN COMPONENTS OF THE APPLICATION FORM

1. PROJECT SYNTHESIS
1.1. Project identity (incl. title and duration)
1.2. Summarised description of the issue to be addressed by the network
1.3. Proposed partnership
1.4. Links to the Cohesion Policy Objectives
1.5. Total budget
2. PRESENTATION OF PROJECT PROPOSAL
2.1. Thematic Content
2.1.1. Definition of the issue / policy challenge to be addressed (<i>word limit to apply</i>)
2.1.2. Link to European urban policy context 2021-2027 (in particular the Cohesion Policy objectives and scope) (<i>word limit to apply</i>)
2.2. Shall the proposal contribute to the URBACT Specific Objective 2 (related to Action Planning Networks)?
2.3. How will gender-equal policy making be addressed by the network? (<i>word limit to apply</i>)
2.4. How will green transition be addressed by the network? (<i>word limit to apply</i>)
2.5. How will digital transformation be addressed by the network? (<i>word limit to apply</i>)
2.6. What is the added value of this network related to the theme proposed? (<i>word limit to apply</i>)
3. RATIONALE OF PROPOSED PARTNERSHIP
3.1. Profile of the Partner Cities (<i>Repeated for each Project Partner City (up to PP10)</i>)
3.1.1. Local challenges of city partners specific to the network theme
3.1.2. Local strategic framework of the city specific to the network theme
3.1.3. Local links to Sustainable Urban Development through Cohesion Policy (through IPA flagships and priorities where relevant)
3.1.4. Motivation and commitment of each city to join the network
3.1.5. Local Stakeholders to be involved in the URBACT Local Group
3.1.6. Potential for actions to be funded/ implemented
3.2. Why does it make sense for these cities to work together? What added value will be created? (<i>word limit to apply</i>)
4. ACTIVITIES AND EXPECTED OUTPUTS
4.1. Description of Work Package 1- Network management
4.1.1. Organisation of the project coordination
4.1.2. Activities to be implemented under WP1
4.2. Description of Work Package 2 – Network Level Activities
4.2.1. General framework for Network Level Activities
4.2.2. Proposed approach to network communication
4.2.3. Proposed content, tools and methods for the transnational exchange and learning activities
4.2.4. Expected outputs under WP2
4.3 Description of Work Package 3 – Local Level Activities

4.3.1	General framework for Local Level Activities
4.3.2	Short description of the principles for linking transnational activities under WP 2 and local activities under WP3
4.3.3	Proposed approach to local level communication
4.3.4	Expected outputs under WP3
5. PROJECT WORK PLAN	
6. PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP	
6.1.	Lead partner experience (highlights of city's experience)
6.2.	Experience of proposed project coordinator
6.3.	Presentation of the Lead Partner's project team (roles and responsibilities)
7. USE OF EXPERTISE	
7.1.	Proposed use of expertise resources allocated by the Programme
7.1.1.	Proposed use of URBACT Lead Experts
7.1.2.	Proposed use of URBACT Ad-Hoc Expert(s)
8. BUDGETARY PROPOSAL	
8.1.	Financial contribution by Partner and source (incl. ERDF, IPA III funds and local contribution)
8.2.	ERDF/IPA per year
8.3.	Expenditure per Partner, per year and budget subcategory
8.4.	Expenditure per year and budget category
8.5.	Project cost per budget line
8.6.	Project costs per budget category – Justification/Explanation
9. SIGNATURE	
Signature of the Lead Partner/project coordinator	

ANNEX 2 - TEMPLATE LETTER OF COMMITMENT FOR THE LEAD PARTNER

The text shall be inserted in the Lead Partner's headed paper with the relevant project data.

URBACT IV Managing Authority
20, Avenue de Ségur
TSA 10717
75334 Paris Cedex 07
France

Dear Madam, Sir,

The city of [... *name of the institution*...] confirms its commitment to be the Lead Partner in the activities of the URBACT *Action Planning Network* proposal entitled [...*project title* ...].
The specific challenge we wish to address as a Lead Partner in this *Action Planning Network* is [...*brief description of the theme*.....].

We are convinced that by working through this URBACT network, we will be able to better address these challenges. In this context, if the proposal is approved within the framework of the URBACT IV Programme, we will ensure the overall coordination of the network, take on roles and implement activities as indicated in the application work programme. More especially, we commit to organise transnational meetings, to consolidate the partnership, to coordinate the production of the Network Roadmap (Baseline Study), to identify key local stakeholders to be involved and to produce a communication plan.

To this end we also formally commit to engage the funds needed to co-finance the ERDF²⁶. The details of this contribution are outlined within the application.

Yours sincerely²⁷

Name in capital letters:

Function

Official stamp

²⁶ Only ERDF as cities from Norway, Switzerland and IPA countries cannot be Lead Partners of Action Planning Networks under this call.

²⁷ The signing person has to be an elected representative with authority to sign for the Lead Partner. In case the Lead Partner institution has no elected representatives, the signing person must be in the position of committing the institution's resources to be engaged in the project (staff, budget, etc.).

ANNEX 3 – TEMPLATE LETTER OF COMMITMENT FOR A PROJECT PARTNER

The text shall be inserted in the Partner's headed paper with the relevant project data.

URBACT IV Managing Authority
20, Avenue de Ségur
TSA 10717
75334 Paris Cedex 07
France

Dear Madam, Sir,

The city of [.....*name of partner institution*.....] confirms its commitment to be Project Partner in the activities of the URBACT Action planning network proposal entitled [.....*title of project*.....] led by [.....*name of Lead partner institution*.....].

The specific challenge we wish to address in this Action planning network as a Project Partner is [.....*brief description of theme addressed*.....].

We are convinced that by working through this URBACT network, we will be able to better address these challenges. In this context, if the proposal is approved within the framework of the URBACT IV Programme, we will participate in the project, take on roles and implement activities as indicated in the application work programme. More especially, we commit to participate in the transnational meetings planned, to contribute to the production of the Network roadmap (Baseline study), to identify key stakeholders to be involved and to contribute to the production of the communication plan.

To this end we also formally commit to engaging the funds needed to co-finance [...*ERDF or CH/NO or IPA funds project*...]²⁸. The details of this contribution are outlined within the application.

Yours sincerely²⁹

Name in capital letters:

Function

Official stamp

²⁸ For project partners, to be chosen according to the relevant fund concerned.

²⁹ The signing person has to be an elected representative with authority to sign for the Project Partner. In case the Project Partner institution has no elected representatives, the signing person must be in the position of committing the institution's resources to be engaged in the project (staff, budget, etc.).

The URBACT Programme presents

European Regional Development Fund 2021 -2027
European Territorial Cooperation Programme

URBACT IV COOPERATION PROGRAMME CCI 2021TC16FFIR001



Version from June 2022

URBACT



Co-funded by
the European Union
Interreg

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1. Joint programme strategy: main development challenges and policy responses

1.1. Programme area (not required for Interreg C programmes)

Reference: point (a) of Article 17(3), point (a) of Article 17(9)

URBACT facilitates the sharing of knowledge and good practice between cities and other levels of government. The purpose is to promote integrated sustainable development in cities, improve city's policies and improve the effectiveness of cohesion policy in cities.

The URBACT IV programme area covers:

- EU 27 Member States
- Norway
- Switzerland
- IPA countries: Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, North Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina
- Other countries – at own costs

The programme is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) with a budget of EUR 79,769m and by the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance with a budget of EUR 5m for the period 2021-2027.

URBACT IV will complement in a coordinated way the actions being delivered by the European Urban Initiative under Article 12 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1058. 202120220212021/1058.

During the implementation of the programme the managing authority will promote the strategic use of public procurement to support policy objectives (including professionalisation efforts to address capacity gaps). Beneficiaries should be encouraged to use more quality related and lifecycle cost criteria. When feasible, environmental (e.g. green public procurement criteria) and social considerations as well as innovation incentives should be incorporated into public procurement procedures.

1.2 Joint programme strategy: Summary of main joint challenges, taking into account economic, social and territorial disparities as well as inequalities, joint investment needs and complimentary and synergies with other funding programmes and instruments, lessons-learned from past experience and macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies where the programme area as a whole or partially is covered by one or more strategies.

Reference: point (b) of Article 17(3), point (b) of Article 17(9)

An analysis of the urban policy context – economic, social, environmental and territorial

a) Main joint challenges, taking into account economic, social and territorial disparities

The last decade has shown that crises can emerge with little notice and that cities are often in the centre. That was the case for the financial crisis in 2008, immigration crisis in 2014-2015, terrorism attacks in 2015, 2016, COVID-19 crisis in 2020. In a longer term perspective cities play a crucial role in achieving sustainable development, especially mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

There is extensive literature available on the main joint challenges cities in Europe face [1]. The Future of European Cities report from 2019 combines many sources to give an up-to-date picture of trends and challenges in European cities. The Report on the quality of life in European cities (2020) brings in the perspective of residents through 58,100 interviews in 83 cities [2]. In addition to existing literature, a public survey was carried out by URBACT from 19 February 2020 – 19 March 2020 which asked specifically about challenges of cities and means to tackle these challenges in preparation of URBACT IV[3].

Trends and challenges in European cities[4]

Knowledge on trends in urbanisation has hugely improved over the last several years. Notably through combined work done by the Joint

Research Centre of the European Commission, DG REGIO and the OECD. This has resulted in a harmonised definition of a city, town and functional urban area (or metropolitan area). Metropolitan areas generally encompass cities together with their adjacent communities that have a high degree of economic and social integration with the city. These adjacent communities represent a commuter belt that generates a daily flow of people into the city and back. The concept of metropolitan areas is often referred to as “functional” because it captures the full economic function of a city. A metropolitan area definition is particularly useful to inform policy-making in a number of domains, including transport, economic development and planning [5].

More than two-thirds of OECD metropolitan areas have established a specific body in charge of organising responsibilities among public authorities for metropolitan wide development. These arrangements can vary from informal/soft coordination (52% of OECD metropolitan areas that have a metropolitan governance body); inter-municipal authorities (24%); supra-municipal authorities (16%); and a special status of “metropolitan cities” (8%)[6].

Another OECD publication [7] stresses the benefits that urban-rural partnerships can bring. Urban and rural areas enjoy different and often complementary assets, and better integration between these areas is important for socio-economic performance. Potential linkages include demographic, labour, public services and environment aspects. The New Leipzig Charter recognises the transformative power of European Cities which residents experience in their day-to-day life at different spatial scales: at neighbourhood level, at municipal level and at functional area level. Urban challenges manifest themselves at these different spatial scales and need solutions, often in a concerted way, at these scale levels.

The urbanisation rate in Europe (EU-28) was 72% in 2015[8]. European city residents are concentrated in cities with populations between 250,000 and 5 million. On average, the European network of cities is denser than in other parts of the world, with predominantly mid-sized rather than large cities.

For functional urban areas (FUAs) in the EU-28, modelled using population projections from 2010-2050, there are two main trends:

- Path 1: Stagnant or slightly increasing total populations, with medium densification of the city centre and densifying suburbs. In some cases, mainly in capital cities, this trend is stronger, with the population increasing considerably; a significant densification of city centre and medium densification of suburbs is projected.

- Path 2: A decreasing overall population, with the city centre de-densifying and suburbs slightly densifying (especially in Eastern Europe and Germany). In some cases (mainly in Spain), the same trend is seen but with strongly densifying suburbs[9].

Next to the fact that total population is expected to remain stable or decline, the population is also aging. In 2016, the average life expectancy at birth in the EU-28 was 80, and it is expected to increase to 86.1 for men and 90.3 for women by 2070. The old-age dependency ratio is expected to almost double by 2070.

While the majority of larger cities, which remain highly attractive to all age groups, may not be so affected and can maintain mean population ages that are lower than the national average, a growing number of Europe's cities are experiencing a shrinking total population, which means that old-age dependency ratios are rising[10].

Not only population size of cities and their growth or decline matters to put in context cities' trends and challenges, also their territorial embeddedness is relevant. Medium-sized cities in a rural area have a different function and associated challenges than medium-sized cities in the proximity of a large city. A particular case are cities situated at national borders and are often part of larger cross-border functional urban area. In addition to the trends and challenges outlined below, these urban areas face the fact that different domestic institutions need to come together that are characterised by sometimes contrasting political settings and cultures, different languages, policy paradigms and need to overcome a 'multi-level-mismatch' of competencies[11].

In the following section trends and challenges are grouped under the three dimensions the New Leipzig Charter acknowledges as the transformative power of cities: just, green and productive. With a special mention of digitalisation as a major transformative, cross-sectoral trend.

Just Cities

The urban environment affects health outcomes, resulting in both an 'urban health advantage' and an 'urban health penalty'. On the upside there can be better access to health infrastructure and services in general. An unhealthy urban environment can contribute to a greater prevalence of non-communicable diseases, communicable diseases through crowding and spreading of infections, lack of adequate ventilation and sanitation, and acute respiratory diseases from outdoor and indoor air pollution and mouldy housing interiors. Mental health is also frequently poorer in cities, due to negative social and environmental determinants [12]. The Covid-19 pandemic has shown also again that cities are also the place disease spread rapidly and widely. In 2017, of the 112 million EU inhabitants at risk of poverty or social exclusion, corresponding to 22% of the total population, 47 million were living in cities. Compared to the situation only three years earlier, the number of people living in vulnerable conditions in cities increased by 13 million [13]. Even though more recent figures were not available at time of writing, the COVID-19 pandemic is poised to increase these numbers significantly due to the unprecedented economic shock urban economies are enduring.

Particularly in recent years, wealth has increasingly accumulated among the few, and the polarisation of wealth is most concentrated in urban areas. Cities in western Europe, in particular, are among the least inclusive, given their relatively high shares of people living at risk of poverty and in low work intensity households, and/or high unemployment rates [14]. In other European countries poverty is still far higher in rural areas.

Within a city there are strong differences between neighbourhoods. For example, life expectancy can vary a lot depending on where you live. Turin (IT), Barcelona (ES), Stockholm (SE) and Helsinki (FI) reveal a significantly higher risk of death among residents in more deprived neighbourhoods, although the correlation differs between cities [15].

Living in an adequate housing context is fundamental because, as the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) points out, housing is 'an integrative good, it is linked to many other sectors such as: health, economic security, energy security, transportation,

education, employment. Housing also influences issues such as social cohesion and neighbourhood security [...] [16].

Cities will need to provide sufficient affordable housing to an increasingly varied population, ensuring inclusiveness and integration among its communities, and reducing environmental impacts. Lockdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 highlight the impact the quality of housing has on both physical and mental health. Finding affordable housing is more difficult for residents living in cities in western EU, northern EU and EFTA countries and harder to find in capital cities versus non capital cities [17].

Growing polarisation can be addressed by inclusive and equitable place-based policies. These should take into account the multiple factors at play in deprived neighbourhoods (e.g. health, housing conditions, and ethnic background), and look at the causes of and solutions to segregation that go beyond the boundaries of the segregated area [18].

Respondents to the URBACT IV survey mention different aspects of the social inclusion challenge; avoid anonymity and isolation (especially for older people), inclusion of migrants, improve labour market access for persons with disabilities, attract young professionals (in order to avoid depopulation in small and medium cities) and encourage intergenerational work. Buildings should be adapted to persons with disabilities and older generations and should be affordable to fight social segregation. High rents in the city centre and tourism are seen as challenges for the housing market. Making social services accessible for all either physically or digitally and creating more local actions are seen as other social challenges.

In addition, the URBACT IV survey highlights issues of healthcare quality and accessibility for the elderly. Sometimes other topics are linked to wellbeing and health, such as the creation of green spaces, redesign of city centres, accessibility of housing and the participation of residents in the development of the city. All these actions are considered to create healthier habits and create a better wellbeing.

Green Cities

Climate change is consistently mentioned as the most important long-term challenge cities face. Cities generate about 70% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and, at the same time, are

particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The climate hazards will translate into sea-level rise affecting coastal cities, impacts on built infrastructures, health problems arising from higher average temperatures and extreme events, an increase in energy demand and use, and adverse effects on water availability and resources[19].The social consequences linked with these changes create new challenges for cities.

Respondents to the survey stress that climate change challenges touch cities of all sizes. Cities face challenges in mitigating climate change by reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions such as reducing private car use for commuting and promoting environmentally friendly forms of urban mobility.. The dominance of personal cars should be drastically reduced in favour of more efficient public transport, walking and cycling, shared and active mobility, and new working patterns; switching to low and zero-emission means of private & public transport should be promoted by cities. This needs to happen both within cities, but also between the city centre and the metropolitan area. Sustainable urban planning is needed to reduce urban sprawl, organise amenities at walking distance and allow for the efficient organisation of public transport. During the COVID-19 crisis in 2020 (current at time of writing), many cities are dramatically expanding the space reserved for cyclists and pedestrians, simply because the capacity of public transport cannot be used fully in a safe manner. Another key challenge for GHG reduction is to increase the energy efficiency of the housing stock [20] which contributes at the same time to addressing of energy poverty. For climate adaptation cities try to increase the number of green spaces. Several lifestyle and behavioural changes can help city inhabitants significantly reduce their environmental footprint, such as shifting to a healthy diet, reducing waste, using active or public mobility modes or choosing sustainable energy sources [21].

Cities try to sensitize residents to the different issues of climate change and involve them in the decision-making process. Tools and funding are needed. Some cities have created plans to be a zero-carbon city by 2030. More than 10 000 towns and cities are committed to the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy to go beyond national GHG reduction targets.

The European Green Deal (EGD) identifies 5 priorities areas under EU policy, air quality, water, nature/biodiversity, waste/circular

economy, noise. Earth biodiversity is under pressure. Wildlife populations worldwide have seen a two-thirds decline on average since 1970. The Cities and Biodiversity Outlook highlights that urbanisation is both a threat to biodiversity through the consumption of land, but that cities can also be biodiversity hotspots [22]. To reduce and ultimately reverse this loss in biodiversity, cities need to shift to land-use planning that balances production and conservation objectives on all managed land, notably by reducing land take and soil artificialisation and supporting urban regeneration and green and blue infrastructures.

Other environmental challenges mentioned by cities are unsustainable tourism, waste and air quality which is taken into account by the Zero Pollution Action Plan. All these challenges of green cities are closely interlinked. The COVID-19 crisis in 2020 has provided short-term environmental benefits like improved air quality, less GHG emissions and a reduction of over-tourism.

Productive cities

Cities are the motors of the European economy. GDP growth since 2000 was 50% faster in cities than in other areas [23]. Cities boost productivity because they have on average more tertiary educated residents and more innovation, more high-growth firms, higher employment rates and better accessibility and connectivity. However, employment rates of city residents born outside the EU are considerably lower and housing in cities is expensive, small and crowded [24].

However, cities are places where most of the world population live and work accounting for up to 80% of greenhouse gas emissions, two-thirds of total energy demand, and 50% of waste generation [25]. The circular economy can provide a policy response to cope with the above challenges, as a driver for economic growth, jobs and environmental quality. Cities and regions have a key role to play as promoters, facilitators and enablers of the circular economy. The circular economy potential in cities can be greatly enhanced by spatial planning policies, which promote the efficient use of space, urban land and buildings. Municipalities have an important lever at their disposal through the public procurement of goods and services [26] and adequate economic and governance conditions should be in

place to unlock its potential. Community-based/collaborative sharing of resources should also be encouraged.

The fact that over half of European cities will see their population decline in the future means that most of the changes in Europe will have to take place in an integrated, affordable and sustainable fashion within pre-existing urban fabric. An ageing EU population will require the further adaptation of infrastructure and services; this is particularly the case in smaller cities with growing needs in health and social care. From the URBACT IV survey it follows that 'providing sustainable and efficient public and commercial services, and building a strong local economy' is by far considered the biggest challenge by the smallest towns. The effect COVID-19 will have on population and economy in towns and cities (e.g. level of teleworking with a reduction in commuting, reduced attractiveness of larger cities) is as yet unknown, but what appears to be clear is that especially commercial city centres and also some of the sub-urban areas face a sharp decline in footfall and vitality that might outlast temporary restrictions and which calls for place-based and plan-led urban regeneration to deliver revitalised mixed-use urban places and targeted measures to reduce vacancy and retrofit existing building stock.

Digitalisation a major transformative, cross-sectoral trend

The Future of European Cities report recognises that new and emerging technologies could help cities improve public services, better interact with residents, increase productivity, and address environmental and sustainability challenges. In sum, evolve toward smart cities. An ESPON survey[27] of around 136 European cities found that 91% of these cities found their city services had improved thanks to digitalisation and 39% saw a substantial uptake in the use of these services after digitalisation. The COVID-19 pandemic has hugely accelerated existing trends towards remote working and the provision of commercial digital services such as online shopping. These trends could have both negative (vitality of urban centres, increase in commercial transport) and positive impacts (reduced transport to and from home, improved quality of life).

This same research found that large cities tend to be at the forefront of digitalisation due to higher demand for more complex services and interactions, and their capacities to develop and provide those

services. The degree to which cities can capitalise on potential benefit of digitalisation will depend on a variety of factors - including the availability of co-working hubs /incubator space, and the provision of improved connectivity and digitisation to drive innovation and enterprise development and promote the regeneration of city and town centres. The main factors constraining the digital transition of cities are lack of funds and lack of skills. A lack of strategic vision is considered an additional constraint in smaller towns.

Respondents to the URBACT IV survey add new technologies as a means to attract population, but they also raise several issues, including data privacy and ownership, appropriate and consistent legislation, data sharing and standards, and cyber security. Cities play a central role in innovation dynamics: geographical proximity of stakeholders and multidisciplinary interaction enable innovation. The variety of approaches to innovation enhances the identity of cities, their traditions and their cultural heritage. Although capital cities and metropolitan areas remain major drivers of creativity and innovation, favourable conditions can also be found in smaller cities[28].

Digital transition and ICT are strongly present in the interests of URBACT cities both in the networks as well as in good practices. Digital transition has mostly been tackled through the lenses of economic development and improvement of public services, especially in narrowing the distance between public institutions and residents such as online and mobile apps management of services, information, easing mobility and in e-democracy and governance.[29].

b) An analysis of city needs

The disparity in Europe's urban configuration, polycentricity and demography, as outlined previously, naturally make it difficult on one hand to implement a one-size-fits-all approach to cities; on the other hand it is the aim of cohesion policy to deal with these territorial disparities.

Globally and within Europe, national and international bodies have recognised the important role cities play in pushing forward societal change and tackling the effects of the challenges outlined above. The four principles described below to tackle these challenges refer to the

main principles guiding the urban dimension of Cohesion policy. The UN-Habitat New Urban Agenda, the 2016 Pact of Amsterdam (European Union –the Urban Agenda for the EU with 14 thematic partnerships), and the New Leipzig Charter (2020) are clear that cities need to have the capacities to lead this transformation. Translating these general principles of sustainable urban development agreed at EU and international level into daily practice of urban management has proved to be challenging for the cities themselves. This was the case throughout the 2014-2020 period and continues to be so.

URBACT III capitalisation work looking in detail at how the principles of sustainable urban development are understood and implemented by cities shed some light on the progress some cities have made, yet reveal the need for continued support at national and EU level.

According to the New Leipzig Charter, urban governance needs to be strengthened in order to empower cities to transform. Therefore cities need legal framework conditions, investment capacities, adequately skilled employees, access to and the ability to steer infrastructure, public services and public welfare.

The Future of Cities report identifies physical interventions, governance, new technologies and resilience as key means for cities to address their challenges. Cities themselves gave governance and physical interventions the highest scores in the URBACT IV survey.

Governance

Weak governance and the presence of corruption are detrimental to economic development and prosperity, both at the national and local level[30]. Half the city residents (51%) agree that corruption is present in their local public administration. On average, in the cities in the Western Balkans and Turkey, more than two in three agree (68%) while in the eastern EU cities it was almost as high (65%). In northern and western EU cities, agreement is much lower (below 40%)[31]. Good governance is also a necessary condition for security and social inclusion and increases urban resilience in the face of environmental, socioeconomic, and political uncertainty and risk.

There has been a trend towards strengthening urban governance in the EU. New forms of urban governance are already being stimulated in many cities, and the importance of city networks is expected to

further increase[32]. Urban governance arrangements become more important when administrative municipal borders do not correspond with the functional reality of urban areas.

This ascertainment is in line with, and corroborated by the main principles guiding sustainable urban development in the EU. The Commission's Directorates-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO) and the Joint Research Centre (JRC) have published a Handbook[33] of sustainable urban strategies as well as a Self-Assessment tool for Sustainable Urban Development. The Handbook draws on the milestones in European urban development (intergovernmental cooperation, cohesion policy, Urban Agenda for the EU) to individuate the main building blocks which are characterising the EU approach to sustainable and integrated urban development:

- An approach which promotes a **strategic vision** for the development of urban areas.
- An approach which addresses **cities of all sizes**, promoting the **integration among scales**, from neighbourhoods to wider territories.
- A **multi-level governance and multi-stakeholder approach**, which coordinates different actors according to their respective roles, skills and scales of intervention, ensuring also the active engagement of residents.
- An approach which is **cross-sectoral integrated**, pushing cities to work across policy-areas.
- An approach based on the **integration of multiple sources of funding**, encompassing also the engagement of the private sector.
- An approach promoting result-oriented logic, setting-up frameworks for **monitoring and evaluation** [34].

Integrated approach

Building on the well-established URBACT method[35] from the 2014-20 period, cities continue to need support in implementing an integrated approach to sustainable urban development. Central elements in this definition of integrated approach are cooperation

between neighbouring municipalities, cooperation between all levels of government and local players, cooperation across different policy areas and departments of a municipality and maintaining a balance between physical investments and social investments, with the municipality applying a holistic vision to urban development. These elements have to come together in Integrated Action Plans, a core focus of the URBACT programme since its creation.

Detailed research exploring integrated working in practice[36] suggests that for many cities, the **process of developing the Integrated Action Plan is even more valuable**, in terms of transforming cross-departmental cooperation, local stakeholder involvement, understanding of thematic challenges and possible integrated solutions than the actions themselves.

Participation

Cities need practical support to build their capacity to encourage citizen participation. In particular, small and medium-sized cities which often have less capacity to act. Participation is an important issue for local democracy. This political element is crucial to weigh different interests on local development and choose the best solutions that suit local needs.

URBACT III networks applied the concept of participation using the 'local group' tool which had responsibility for co-design of the Integrated Action Plan. 97% of URBACT cities having completed this process considered that the participatory approach used during their network would continue after[37]. In addition, URBACT III capitalisation work[38] on how cities understand and implement these principles shows that the benefits of engaging with residents in a participatory process are not always clearly seen. Demonstration effects from cities more advanced in community engagement and support in understanding the mechanisms and the skills involved are necessary. New forms of participation should be encouraged and improved, including co-creation and co-design in cooperation with inhabitants, civil society networks, community organisations and private enterprises.[39]

Place-based

The New Leipzig Charter builds on some important pieces of research from previous years, notably the Barca Report, anchoring the principles of sustainable development in the context of each specific territory. When it comes to exchange and learning, cities are obliged to adapt any process or action to their own geo-spatial and administrative context[40]. Support on understanding the success factors of any particular approach is necessary, and can be organised EU-wide/transnationally. The specifics of urban policy are such that the national context and involvement of national (or sub-national) urban policy stakeholders is crucial for longer-term policy change. URBACT III Transfer Networks were an excellent example of how cities can acknowledge their specificities whilst taking advantage of other cities' tried and tested good practices.

c) Increased importance of sustainable urban development in European Cohesion Policy

The new regulatory framework for the period 2021 - 2027 is set out by the regulations for Cohesion Policy[41]. These regulations offer a range of support for European cities with a view to addressing the disparities across the EU. The emphasis on sustainable urban development and territorial and local development strategies within this new framework is demonstrated by the set of cohesion policy tools which are made available to support cities in the design and implementation of their urban policies.

This new framework includes:

- Article 5 Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 sets out five key policy objectives all of which are relevant for EU cities. Particular attention shall be paid to PO5 'a Europe closer to citizens by fostering the sustainable and integrated development of all types of territories and local initiatives'.
- Article 28 Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 establishes that a member state should use Integrated Territorial Investments, Community-led local development or another territorial tool designed by the member state where it supports integrated territorial development through territorial or local development strategies.

- Article 29 Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 lists several elements that should be included in territorial strategies that are funded by Cohesion Policy; a defined geographical area, an analysis of its development needs and potential, a description of the integrated approach and involvement of partners in its preparation and implementation.
- Article 32 Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 lists several elements that should be included in a Community-led Local Development Strategy
- Article 11 Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 requires that a minimum of 8% of ERDF resources per Member State be allocated to integrated territorial development focused on urban areas (sustainable urban development)[42]. Special attention shall be given to tackling environmental and climate challenges, notably the transition towards a climate neutral economy by 2050, to harnessing the potential of digital technologies for innovation purposes, and to supporting the development of functional urban areas.
- Article 12 Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 foresees the creation of the European Urban Initiative. The initiative shall cover all urban areas, including functional urban areas, and has two main strands of activity: support of innovative actions and support of capacity and knowledge building, territorial impact assessments, policy development and communication. The EUI shall ensure appropriate coordination and complementarities with URBACT.

The URBACT IV programme is also an important part of this package offering cities a unique opportunity to address their urban challenges in an integrated and participatory way through transnational knowledge exchange and capacity building. The regulation that sets the rules for the URBACT IV programme specifically is the Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 on the European Territorial Cooperation goal (Interreg).

URBACT IV will include IPA countries and the priorities of the multi-annual strategy document will be addressed in line with Regulation (EU) 2021/1529.

Article 3 (3)b of this regulation defines the objectives of URBACT IV as follows:

Interregional cooperation to reinforce the effectiveness of cohesion policy (Interreg C) by promoting exchange of experiences, innovative approaches and capacity building in relation to the identification, transfer and capitalisation of good practices on integrated and sustainable urban development, taking into account the linkages between urban and rural areas, supporting actions developed in the framework of Article 11 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 and while also complementing in a coordinated way with the initiative outlined in Article 12 of that Regulation (the 'URBACT programme');

This regulation sets out three main tasks for URBACT IV:

1. exchange of experiences, innovative approaches and capacity building in relation to the identification, transfer and capitalisation of urban good practices on integrated and sustainable urban development, taking into account the linkages between urban and rural areas
2. supporting actions developed in the framework Article 11 Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 for sustainable urban development.
3. The activities undertaken by the URBACT IV programme shall be developed to complement in a coordinated way the European Urban Initiative referred to in Article 12 Regulation (EU) 2021/1058.

In addition to what is specifically foreseen within the new EU regulatory framework, we can also note the European Innovation Partnership on smart cities and communities, the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, the Horizon Europe Mission on 100 Climate Neutral and Smart Cities, the Intelligent Cities Challenge, the Digital Europe Programme and Connecting Europe Facility Digital Programme as notable policy initiatives aimed at cities.

URBACT III financed 19 cities in a network dedicated to the localisation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). This network highlights the strategic role of cities in achieving the targets and has developed tools like local reviews and the definition of indicators to assist cities to navigate the SDGs. SDG 11 focuses specifically on cities but many others are also highly relevant (7,8,9 and 10 especially).

The New European Bauhaus shares many key principles with the URBACT programme including cross disciplinary working, participation, sustainability and inclusiveness. It is for this reason

through its activities the URBACT programme will be able to contribute to the NEB initiative. The Recovery and Resilience Facility and the Just Transition Mechanism of the European Green deal s could also benefit local authorities under certain conditions.

Complementarity with the European Urban Initiative

URBACT and the European Urban Initiative will complement each other in a coordinated way. URBACT will contribute to the value chain of the European Urban Initiative that is aimed to offer coherent support to cities. The EUI will provide support to innovation, capacity and knowledge building, territorial impact assessments, policy development and communication. In this context, it identifies urban challenges, deploys instruments for support of innovation, capacity and knowledge/evidence building, analyses results and undertakes capitalisation activities, fosters communication and dissemination as well as deploying and assessing the outcome.

-URBACT supports Strand A on innovative actions

The aim of the EUI for Strand A is to test new solutions to urban challenges of EU relevance and to spread innovation (scaling-up, knowledge dissemination and transfer) into Cohesion Policy 2021-2027 and beyond. Notwithstanding the URBACT programme's more widespread promotion of innovative processes and governance , URBACT will build on its 'understand-adapt-reuse' method for good practices transfer as well as the pilot Transfer Mechanism tested in URBACT III to develop a specific mechanism to support the transfer of urban innovative actions. UIA projects from calls 2 to 5 of the UIA (2014-2020) will be invited to join transfer activities across the implementation period of the programme. Timing of activities will take into account the implementation cycle of Urban Innovative Actions, and will be planned according to budget availability.

-URBACT will play a supporting role in Strand B1 capacity building

Through transnational URBACT networks, programme and national level capacity-building activities, URBACT aims to increase the capacity in integrated and participatory approaches of urban

practitioners and local stakeholders that are part of the URBACT networks.

Cities that benefit from sustainable urban development (Article 11 Regulation (EU) 2021/1058) and other Cohesion Policy funds will participate in these networks. In accordance with Article 3 (3b), URBACT capacity building activities will support actions developed in the framework of Article 11 (Regulation (EU) 2021/1058) and complement in a coordinated way capacity building activities developed by EUI.

Tools and practices developed by the EUI will also be shared with cities participating in URBACT capacity building activities. URBACT cities will also be able to participate in EUI capacity building activities and some activities will be organised jointly.

-URBACT will contribute to Strand B2 on knowledge, territorial impact assessments, policy development and communication

URBACT will contribute to the knowledge and communication activities of this strand. It will provide input to the Knowledge Sharing Platform with knowledge and methods on sustainable urban development that are gained through URBACT networks and URBACT knowledge activities, including to the benefit of the Urban Agenda for the EU. At national level, National Points (irrespective of their institutional set up) will work closely together in fields of information and outreach activities, capacity-building at national level and facilitating national dialogue on sustainable integrated urban development.

d) Lessons learnt from past experience

Since 2002, URBACT has financed 161 networks which have tackled major challenges faced by cities such as social inclusion, physical planning and urban renewal, competitiveness of SMEs, employment and labour mobility, etc. In addition to burning issues of today, like housing, migration, new economy and digitalisation, environmental protection and climate change, recent URBACT networks and knowledge activities cover newly emerging topics.

It has taken such time for URBACT to develop strong links with cities, develop effective cooperation mechanisms and build up national points that can inspire next developments in complementarity with the European Urban Initiative. This experience and URBACT's extensive evaluations have permitted the programme to become a trusted brand for cities and make some bigger and many incremental improvements over the course of the programming periods. The URBACT III implementation evaluation, along with other sources of evaluating programme activities provides a strong basis on which URBACT IV can be built; what should be continued and what can be improved.

Networking is an efficient tool for capacity building & knowledge sharing

The URBACT way of transnational exchange, learning and knowledge capitalisation financed by the programme through the support of international experts and capacity-building activities is highly appreciated among the participating cities.

Transnational learning takes time, needs sustained interaction and is useful at different stages of the design and implementation of action plans. The duration of the networks is considered appropriate.

There is a demand to expand this transnational exchange methodology to transfer good practices and innovative actions among cities. For some more ad-hoc knowledge exchanges the network approach is not suited and shorter exchanges could be envisaged.

Even though cities find participation in URBACT networks very rewarding, it also requires a certain time investment, capacity to follow administrative procedures and political support that is in general harder to secure by smaller cities. Additional actions might need to be taken to ensure that the transnational exchange networks benefit an increasing number of cities, in particular cities benefiting from Cohesion policy.

The capacity of cities to act does increase, especially for smaller cities

The work of the URBACT programme to develop, with cities, a method which brings together stakeholders to design integrated action plans to respond to city challenges, and share the learning widely, is unique in Europe. Participating cities showed a significant increase of capacities from 47% with significant knowledge on integrated and participatory urban development in 2016 (baseline) to 67% in 2018[43].

These increased capacities include new skills and methods used in cities for more integrated planning and implementation of actions.

The programme was also credited with functioning as a stepping stone to EU funding and project management for small and medium-sized cities with 48% of the Integrated Action Plans (98 IAP) produced having secured funding[44]. Still, many cities would like to see increased possibilities in the programme to test solutions that result from the transnational exchange.

Integrated Action Plans support the smarter use of EU funds

Integrated action plans (IAP) are designed to access finance by regional/national/EU programmes: among the 98 IAP having secured funds, 34% are using ERDF and ESF to implement their actions.

URBACT cities have also gained further funding through Urban Innovative Actions, Horizon 2020, Just Transition Plans, etc. In addition, the URBACT III Programme exceeded its target of involving Article 7 ERDF cities in URBACT activities. Still, the link with managing authorities will be further strengthened and URBACT will support cities to improve access to resources and funding and in integrating different planning requirements.

The URBACT III Programme evaluation findings have shown consistently that URBACT III contributed directly and clearly to the eleven Thematic Objectives of the Cohesion Policy. The thematic concentration the programme aimed at the start of the 2014 period has been achieved through the bottom-up selection process of the transnational networks. However, cities might need additional capacity-building support to better include cross-cutting considerations such as digital, environment and gender equality in their working methods.

The core principles of integration, participation and action-learning in the URBACT method respond fully to the minimum requirements outlined in Article 29 Regulation (EU) 2021/1060. The URBACT method evolved during the 2014-2020 programme period to include improved support with funding and resourcing. Although access to funding is not the main attraction of cities joining an URBACT network, the role of the URBACT programme as part of Cohesion Policy is to support cities in the design of integrated action plans and strategies and that these plans should where possible be funded using Cohesion Funds.

URBACT evolves as a knowledge hub

More than 600 cities taking part in URBACT III have contributed to a vast trove of knowledge about sustainable urban development across a range of themes. Main tools to ensure knowledge outreach showed significant reach considering the means available. The URBACT website has registered a constant increase in users (15,000 monthly average in 2017, to more than 30,000 monthly users in 2021) and a total of 1,450 participants across three editions of the URBACT City Festival[45]. Dedicated thematic capitalisation activities have ensured contributions to all EU Urban Agenda partnerships[46], and helped to develop the multi-level approach between urban players at all levels.

Key stakeholders and several participants to the URBACT IV survey expressed the wish for a stronger coordination of URBACT's capitalisation and knowledge with other urban initiatives in order to increase impact on national and European policy development. Knowledge exchange between all URBACT actors (experts, NUPs, representatives of URBACT cities) could also be strengthened further.

In this context, relevant parts of the URBACT knowledge hub will feed into and create close interaction with the EUI Knowledge Sharing Platform, ensuring synergies.

Respondents to the URBACT networks' Closure Survey appreciate URBACT's strong connection with the Urban Agenda of the EU and added value to the partnerships but the URBACT III Implementation Evaluation report recommends clarifying the focus in the framework

of urban initiatives: streamline capitalisation activities; focus on tangible results and good practice.

National URBACT points play an important role in linking local, national and EU urban policy

The 25 National URBACT Points covering 28 countries communicate on programme activities, disseminate URBACT results at national level in local language, and operate as a national platform for dialogue, exchange and learning on sustainable urban development. Several countries have gone further to develop a national network based on URBACT method and principles, reaching out to include cities from other urban-funded initiatives, and those not receiving funding.

The URBACT III implementation evaluation echoes the findings from the Action Planning Networks closure survey: reinforced support at national level for city actions. The Implementation Evaluation finds that the Programme has less control over the quality and the extent of direct contact that the partner cities receive. When it comes to ensuring the capacity-building of all local partners, facilitating a more direct exchange between cities and sources of funding, or embedding policy change at local level, further support from the national level could be provided. Both respondents from the URBACT IV survey and key stakeholders express the wish for capacity building for cities that will benefit from cohesion policy funding (Article 11 Regulation (EU) 2021/1058), both for learning the 'URBACT method' of bottom-up, participatory and integrated strategy design and to increase their implementation capacity. Given the different national settings, national specific capacity-building events might be the most appropriate.

URBACT response

URBACT has extensive experience of supporting cities to improve their urban policies through transnational cooperation. The 'bottom up' approach of the programme allows cities to define their own needs whilst ensuring a strong link to the Cohesion Policy framework.

-In the period 2021-2027 URBACT will promote integrated Sustainable Urban Development through cooperation and will also contribute to a Europe closer to citizens (PO5). More specifically, URBACT can help more cities build their capacities to design and deliver sustainable urban development plans and strategies;

URBACT's clear added-value in building the capacity of cities has been demonstrated in the course of previous URBACT programmes and should continue for URBACT IV. It should be available to cities and towns of all sizes including those receiving cohesion policy funding. Smaller cities might need additional support to be able to make the first step. The programme will strive for further administrative simplification and transnational learning will have an increased focus on testing solutions and broaden the scope to the transfer of good practices. URBACT will maintain efforts to integrate new cities, in particular cities receiving cohesion policy funding as well as those from the poorest regions of the European Union.

-URBACT can help cities understand and put into practice the key principles of EU sustainable urban development and integrated territorial development (Article 28 Regulation (EU) 2021/1060)

The URBACT method provides a concrete, hands-on approach for cities to translate high-level principles into everyday working. The programme should continue to promote integrated approaches, while further developing bottom-up, participatory processes to link high-level EU policy frameworks to local needs. Innovations in the form this support takes can cover specific actions for dedicated, defined target groups (such as Article 11 cities, innovative actions) based on the needs and demands

-URBACT can contribute to European cohesion and solidarity through peer learning and exchange, among cities of all sizes from all regions of Europe.

By targeting cities and towns from all EU member and partner states, and ensuring through eligibility criteria in calls for proposals that at least half of the cities in a network are from less-developed regions, URBACT directly contributes to the main objective of Cohesion Policy. Transnational exchange networks have been shown to be an effective mechanism for peer learning useful for all cities in Europe including those which will benefit directly from cohesion policy funding.

- URBACT can build on a body of evidence-based knowledge to ensure coherent links with other EU urban policy initiatives.

Capitalising on the rich source of city learning based on practical experience remains crucial to ensuring a wider uptake of URBACT results. URBACT can work closely with other Interreg C programmes and their knowledge platforms (e.g. Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platforms, ESPON Database and Thematic Action Plans, etc.), both organising joint activities on shared priorities and target groups. Fostering the wider goal of translating actions into policy change necessitates the involvement of urban policymakers at local, national and EU level. URBACT will work closely with the European Urban Initiative to ensure knowledge coming from URBACT networks and activities is made available to the wider European urban community, and contribute to the Urban Agenda for the EU.

- URBACT can improve the awareness and inclusion of cross-cutting considerations such as digital, environment and gender in the working methods of all URBACT actors.

URBACT can trust cities to select cooperation themes that are closest to their needs and in line with European priorities and to communicate the results of their work effectively to their target groups. Building on the experience of taking cooperation digital during the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, the URBACT programme can support further programme level capacity building on digital, environmental and gender-inclusive aspects.

Although URBACT operates a 'bottom up' principle to allow cities to identify their own challenges, the horizontal principles (EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, gender equality, non-discrimination, sustainable development, accessibility) outlined in Article 9 Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 will be addressed by all networks as part of the assessment criteria for selecting projects. The ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the networks will aim to highlight good practice in these areas. Specific training on gender equality, digital transition and climate action will be compulsory for all networks.

Similarly the ambition set in recital 11 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 concerning mainstreaming of biodiversity actions is relevant to the URBACT programme. A number of URBACT III networks have worked on this theme. Given the structure of the programme it is impossible to allocate specific expenditure or types of actions to biodiversity as

the ambition states but the contribution of URBACT to these objectives will be monitored as part of the ongoing evaluation of our activities (see additional indicators in the Performance Framework).

Due to its core focus on Capacity Building, the URBACT IV programme will not have a direct impact on the environment. URBACT was not therefore subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as confirmed by the French Decree N° 2021-1000 of 31st July 2021.”

[1] Notably the Future of Cities report (2019) by the JRC and the State of the European Cities report (2016) by the European Commission

[2] DG REGIO, Report on the quality of life in European cities, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2020

[3] A total of 534 replies were received, of which 322 from cities.

[4] All sources are about EU cities

[5] OECD/European Commission (2020), Cities in the World: A New Perspective on Urbanisation p. 24

[6] OECD (2015), Governing the City, OECD Publishing

[7] OECD (2013), Rural-Urban Partnerships: An Integrated Approach to Economic Development, OECD

publishing

[8] JRC calculation based on the GHSL datasets.

[9] JRC (2019), The Future of Cities report, p. 22

[10] Dekker et al., 2008; Peen et al., 2010 cited in JRC (2019), The Future of Cities report, p. ?

[11] ESPON (2010), METROBORDER targeted analysis, p. 11

[12] JRC (2019), The Future of Cities report, p. 62

[13] JRC (2019), The Future of Cities report, p. 68

[14] EUROSTAT, 2016

[15] Marinacci et al., 2017

[16] UNECE, 2015

[17] DG REGIO, Report on the quality of life in European cities, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2020, p. 47

- [18] JRC (2019), The Future of Cities report
- [19] JRC(2019), The Future of Cities report, p. 84
- [20] Through replacement, thermal modernization of buildings, heat recovery from ventilation, intelligent energy management and the use of energy-efficient lighting and RTV / household appliances. "
- [21] JRC (2019), The Future of Cities report
- [22] Brussels, for example, contains more than 50% of the floral species found in Belgium.
- [23] Data elaborated by the JRC from the Urban Data Platform, accessible at: <https://urban.jrc.ec.europa.eu>.
- [24] DG REGIO (2016), State of the European cities report
- [25] OECD, Programme on the Circular Economy in Cities and Regions
- [26] Urban Agenda for the EU, Circular Economy Action Plan, 2018
- [27] ESPON Working Paper and policy brief (2018) 'Territorial and urban dimensions of digital transition in Europe'
- [28] JRC (2019), The Future of Cities report
- [29] URBACT contribution after the pact of Amsterdam: The Urban Agenda for the EU
- [30] Acemoglu et al., 2005; RodríguezPose, 2013
- [31] DG REGIO, Report on the quality of life in European cities, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2020, p92
- [32] JRC (2019), The Future of Cities report
- [33] The building blocks structuring the handbook reflect the minimum requirements to implement integrated territorial development supported by Cohesion policy according to CPR Art.29
- [34] JRC (2020), Handbook of Sustainable Urban Strategies
- [35] The URBACT method is defined in <https://urbact.eu/toolbox-home>
- [36] Study on Integrated Action Plans (2019), E40 group for URBACT
- [37] Results of self-assessment of partners from Action Planning Networks first round
- [38] 2018 City Lab on participation in cities
- [39] New Leipzig Charter
- [40] Including the alignment to relevant Macro-regional and Sea basin strategies
- [41] Regulation (EU) 2021/1060/ Regulation (EU) 2021/1058

[42] URBACT IV will use the term sustainable urban development in the meaning of integrated territorial development focused on urban areas

[43] Results of self-assessment of partners from Action Planning Networks first round

[44] Among 205 cities from 20 URBACT III Action Planning Networks completed in May 2018 (based on the closure reports

[45] 90% of the participants to the Festival in Lisbon (2018) said they would use the acquired knowledge back home^[1]

[46] URBACT participated to nearly all partnerships with experts and staff and tried to make the link with around 400 cities of all sizes involved in URBACT networks; it contributed in addition with its capitalisation activities. A total of nearly 1 Million Euros was invested in these activities directly linked with UAEU.

1.3. Justification for the selection of policy objectives and the Interreg-specific objectives, corresponding priorities, specific objectives and the forms of support, addressing, where appropriate, missing links in cross-border infrastructure

Reference: point (c) of Article 17(3)

Table 1

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
6. Interreg: A better Cooperation Governance	ISO6.1. Enhance the institutional capacity of public authorities, in particular those mandated to manage a specific territory, and of stakeholders (all strands)	PA1. Promoting Integrated Sustainable Urban Development through Cooperation	The overall objective of URBACT IV according to Article 3 EU Regulation 2021/1059 is to reinforce the effectiveness of Cohesion Policy by promoting exchange of experiences, innovative approaches and capacity building. URBACT IV addresses the capacity needs of urban authorities in designing and implementing sustainable urban development strategies and plans according to an integrated, participatory and place-based approach, replicating good practices and designing investment plans for innovative urban actions. This approach aims to support cities to comply with Article 29 EU regulation 2021/1060. This is primarily a capacity-building challenge of a cross-thematic nature that URBACT wants to tackle through transnational networking, general capacity-building activities and knowledge building and exchange. Given that the needs and solutions are cross-thematic URBACT IV will have one cross-thematic objective. URBACT will not directly support implementation actions but aims to build the governance capacity of cities so they, in turn, can effectively implement sustainable urban development strategies under the different policy objectives of cohesion policy. Therefore URBACT activities will be programmed under the specific Interreg objective: a better cooperation governance.

2. Priorities

Reference: points (d) and (e) of Article 17(3)

2.1. Priority: PA1 - Promoting Integrated Sustainable Urban Development through Cooperation

Reference: point (d) of Article 17(3)

2.1.1. Specific objective: ISO6.1. Enhance the institutional capacity of public authorities, in particular those mandated to manage a specific territory, and of stakeholders (all strands)

Reference: point (e) of Article 17(3)

Interreg Specific Objective 1 (ISO 1): a better cooperation governance by enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders to implement urban territorial strategies. As URBACT IV will build the institutional capacity of cities needed to implement territorial strategies, it directly contributes to PO5 in particular.

2.1.1.1 Related types of action, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, where appropriate

Reference: point (e)(i) of Article 17(3), point (c)(ii) of Article 17(9)

To reach this objective URBACT IV has three aims:

1) Use transnational networks to improve the capacity of European cities to:

-co-design and implement Integrated Action Plans linked to common sustainable urban development challenges

-transfer established urban good practices

-design investment plans for replicating elements of Urban Innovative Actions

Expected results: improved local policies through local actions designed in an Integrated Action Plan and the reuse of good practices, increased capacity of cities benefiting from territorial tools[1] to use them, improved deployment of actions due to testing, promote replication of innovative actions through investment plans using cohesion policy funds and programmes.

Aim 1 - Actions:

In **Action Planning Networks (APN)** city practitioners will co-design integrated action plans (IAP) with an URBACT Local Group

comprising all relevant stakeholders (different city departments, different tiers of government, different policy relevant sectors and target groups). The IAP, as the key deliverable for each city, will respect the minimum requirements outlined in Article 29 EU Regulation 2021/1060, as well as the main principles of the New Leipzig Charter, ensuring a common approach to Sustainable Urban Development in Cohesion Policy. There will be an increased focus on implementation and funding, in particular Cohesion Funds, as networks will be able to test and experiment small actions from the integrated action plans. All cities in Europe can join an APN, in accordance with Article 3 3b of EU Regulation 2021/1059. Action Planning Networks will support Article 11 cities.

Transfer Networks will foster the transfer of validated urban good practices through a refined methodology with additional focus on supporting the upscaling of the good practice, if possible through links to Cohesion policy funds and other funding programmes.

An Innovation Transfer Mechanism is specifically aimed at cities that seek to develop an investment plan to replicate innovative actions projects using Cohesion policy programmes and/or other European, and national public or private funding. This transfer mechanism will build on the pilot activities developed under URBACT III. It will be coordinated with the EUI to disseminate innovation and to support cities in the transfer of innovative practices.

URBACT networks will be supported by international experts in integrated sustainable urban development. Expertise shall include both the urban topic of the networks as well as tools and methods for exchange and learning.

2) Improve the capacity of urban stakeholders to design and implement sustainable urban development[2] policies, practices and innovations in an integrated, participative and place-based way[3]

Expected result: Urban practitioners in cities have increased their knowledge and capacity in relation to integrated sustainable urban development strategies. There is improved awareness of the entire URBACT community about carbon reduction and gender mainstreaming. Local stakeholders, lead partners and lead experts

have improved their ability to use digital tools in their networks and their capacity to innovate.

Aim 2 - Actions:

At programme level URBACT will deploy capacity-building activities such as URBACT Universities, National Campuses and on-going and dedicated support to all beneficiaries. Participants will work together to improve skills needed for the design and implementation of Integrated Action Plans for sustainable urban development.

URBACT IV will increase the capacity building offer linked to digital, green and gender as cross-cutting elements for all networks and activities of the programme. Capacity-building on these topics may take the form of training available for all URBACT beneficiaries or organised once in the lifetime of a network. Complementarity with EUI capacity building activities is ensured; and where synergies are identified, Joint training will be organised.

Programme-level capacity building will be supported by international experts in integrated sustainable urban development and green, digital and gender equality.

3) Ensure that URBACT knowledge and practice is made accessible to urban practitioners and policymakers to feed into local, regional, national and European urban policies, in particular through the European Urban Initiative; and contributing to the Urban Agenda for the EU

Expected results: urban practitioners and policymakers increasingly access URBACT knowledge and URBACT city experiences inspire local, regional, national and European urban policy.

Aim 3 - Actions:

At programme level URBACT will play a role as a knowledge broker – bringing urban actors together to facilitate knowledge sharing interconnecting with the EUI, and as a knowledge producer – developing new products building on existing URBACT experience and those from EUI and from complementary European projects/programmes

Thematic communities: these will allow cities to meet and exchange on topics cutting across URBACT networks, including green, digital and gender-inclusive. The exchanges will ensure a more integrated approach to the partner topic and produce up-to-date analysis of city policy and practice to share beyond URBACT, in particular through the EUI and through contributions to the Urban Agenda for the EU.

EU urban policy focused knowledge sharing: URBACT IV will aim to inspire and inform urban policies by making knowledge available to the wider European urban community, in particular through the European Urban Initiative. URBACT will also contribute specifically to the Urban Agenda for the EU through its participation in UDG and delivering on specific and approved actions of the partnerships or other forms of cooperation.

Expertise support is provided to build and manage knowledge on sustainable urban development. The **URBACT website** will operate as a knowledge hub providing open access to knowledge, good practices and know-how around thematic priorities. It will be interlinked with, and selected outputs will be available on, the EUI knowledge sharing platform. In addition to the strategic cooperation with EUI, URBACT IV will cooperate with other organisations (programmes, networks, etc.) operating in the area of sustainable urban development.

National URBACT Points[4] are in charge of communicating on URBACT activities and disseminating URBACT results at national level in local language. They play an important role in linking URBACT knowledge to national and regional stakeholders and in stimulating a wide participation in networks and capacity-building activities. They can support programme capacity building efforts at national level, adapt and translate programme methods and tools into national language. They will also aim at linking with the Cohesion policy requirements and programmes in complementarity with the EUI Contact Points. In line with 'Implementing the New Leipzig Charter', member states are called to look for a common narrative and clear division of tasks and where possible, to have the same structure when setting up national contact points for URBACT, the European urban initiative and any other urban national point.

NOTE: the types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they are not expected to have any significant negative environmental impact due to their nature.

[1] In the meaning of article 22 of the CPR regulation.

[2] In the meaning of Article 28 Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 and Article 11 Regulation (EU) 2021/1058

[3] In line with principles of the New Leipzig Charter

[4] Each Member/ Partner State shall appoint, in agreement with the Managing Authority, a public or equivalent or not for profit body in their country that shall operate as National URBACT Point. The conditions of this appointment shall be laid down in a convention between the selected body and the Managing Authority. Should a Member/ Partner State not be able to appoint such a body or should no such suitable public body exist, an open call for tender may be launched by the Managing Authority

2.1.1.1b. Definition of a single beneficiary or a limited list of beneficiaries and the granting procedure

Reference: point (c)(i) of Article 17(9)

2.1.1.2. Indicators

Reference: point (e)(ii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iii) of Article 17(9)

Table 2 - Output indicators

Priorit y	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)
PA1	ISO6.1	OI3	Participation in programme level events aimed at knowledge sharing	Number	1080	4410
PA1	ISO6.1	OI1	Article 11 cities participating in URBACT networks	Number	143	352
PA1	ISO6.1	RCO8 5	Participations in joint training schemes	participations	500	2400
PA1	ISO6.1	RCO8 3	Strategies and action plans jointly developed	strategy/action plan	0	640

Table 3 - Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Reference year	Target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
PA1	ISO6.1	RI3	People with increased URBACT knowledge due to their participation in programme level events aimed at knowledge sharing	number	0.00	2021	3,528.00	Self-assessment survey	
PA1	ISO6.1	RI1	Joint Strategies and Action Plans taken up by organisations using Cohesion Policy funds	Number	0.00	2021-2029	230.00	Programme information system and surveys	
PA1	ISO6.1	RCR81	Completion of joint training schemes	participants	0.00	2021-2027	1,920.00	Certificate	
PA1	ISO6.1	RCR79	Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations	joint strategy/action plan	0.00	2021-2027	512.00	Survey	

2.1.1.3. Main target groups

Reference: point (e)(iii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iv) of Article 17(9)

The three different aims of the URBACT IV programme have partly different target groups.

1) Use transnational networks to improve the capacity of European cities to:

- co-design and implement Integrated Action Plans linked to common sustainable urban development challenges**
- adapt and transfer established urban good practices**
- design investment plans for replicating elements of Urban Innovative Actions**

The main beneficiaries of actions implemented under this first aim shall be cities from EU 27 Member States, Norway and Switzerland as well as IPA countries willing to develop integrated strategies and action plans for sustainable urban development. The beneficiary “city” refers to the public local authority representing:

- cities, municipalities, towns;
- Local agencies defined as public or semi-public organisations set up by a city, partially or fully owned by the city authority, responsible for the design and implementation of specific policies (economic development, energy supply, health services, transport, etc.);
- Infra-municipal tiers of government such as city districts and boroughs in cases where they are represented by a politico-administrative institution having competences for policy-making and implementation in the policy area covered by the URBACT network concerned in which they are willing to get involved;
- Metropolitan authorities and organized agglomerations in cases where they are represented by a politico-administrative institution having delegated competences for policy-making and

implementation in the policy area covered by the URBACT network concerned.

The specificities of the IPA cities participating in URBACT will be addressed through a dedicated needs analysis exercise. The cities will receive support related to the design of integrated action plans for SUD and will have the opportunity to share experience with EU peers supporting the preparation of these countries for accession to the EU. This target group will benefit from dedicated capacity building, communication and national URBACT Point support.

In addition, a number of non-city partners are eligible for actions implemented under Aim 1. The list of other eligible beneficiaries is defined as follows:

- Provincial, regional and national authorities, as far as urban issues are concerned;
- Universities and research centres, as far as urban issues are concerned;
- Managing Authorities of Cohesion Policy Funds.

All URBACT networks will link to the EUI. Specifically, the work of the APN in developing the capacity of cities to co-design integrated urban action plans is relevant for many cities working on sustainable urban development as referred in the Art 11 of the ERDF Regulation. The involvement of Art. 11 cities and other cities benefiting from Cohesion policy funds will be sought for, as well as the alignment with Cohesion policy characteristics.. Efforts will be made to attract cities that have not yet participated in URBACT networks and smaller cities for which international networking demands an additional effort. A balance between cities from EU more and less developed regions will be ensured and monitored using eligibility criteria in the calls for proposals.

2) Improve the capacity of urban stakeholders to design and implement sustainable urban development[1] policies, practices and innovations in an integrated, participative and place-based way

This is a cross-cutting aim for the entire URBACT IV programme, the target audience is therefore quite broad. On the one hand, this

concerns the beneficiaries of all URBACT networks and local stakeholders – URBACT Local Group members and elected city officials. On the other hand the target audience also comprises other urban actors such as non-URBACT cities implementing article 11, innovative actions or part of the Urban Agenda for the EU.

3) Ensure that URBACT knowledge and practice is made accessible to urban practitioners and policymakers to feed into regional, national and European urban policies, in particular through the European Urban Initiative; and contributing to the Urban Agenda for the EU

Based on the proposed distinction between URBACT knowledge sharing actions and those of the EUI, there are two clear and distinct target audiences for sharing knowledge and know-how. To ensure that urban practitioners and policymakers have access to URBACT thematic knowledge:

a) Cities, urban authorities/policymakers, local practitioners and regional authorities as the target of actions sharing and transferring good practice and project results, in particular those not involved in URBACT networks.

To ensure that URBACT thematic knowledge feeds urban policies, in particular national and EU policies:

b) European Urban Initiative target audience and governance

c) Urban Agenda for the EU target audience, governance and partnerships.

Through these initiatives URBACT contributes to actions tackling regional, national and European level policymakers involved in sustainable urban development, 'translating' URBACT content into relevant policy contributions.

[1] In the meaning of article 28 Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 and Article 11 Regulation (EU) 2021/1058

2.1.1.4. Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article point (e)(iv) of 17(3)

The URBACT programme covers the entire territory of the participating countries and is open to cities of all sizes. URBACT specifically supports urban authorities from neighbourhood to functional urban area level depending on the topic covered and the impact that can be made. This includes urban-rural linkages and cross-border functional urban areas.

Supporting sustainable urban development through an integrated, participatory and place-based approach is the core of URBACT IV. However, URBACT IV will support capacity-building, networking, learning and testing, but will not fund implementation of sustainable urban development strategies or action plans directly.

While the programme will not use ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools itself, it seeks to build the capacity of all EU cities and towns including those that will use these tools to implement their sustainable urban development strategy (Article 11 Regulation (EU) 2021/1058).

This is done in Action Planning Networks and as part of programme-level capacity building activities. Since the implementation of these tools is often dependent on national or regional frameworks, national level events and National URBACT Points will play an important role.

2.1.1.5. Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: point (e)(v) of Article 17(3)

The use of financial instruments is not foreseen. The special characteristics of the URBACT programme, most notably that its

supported operations do not generate revenue, does not allow to use financial instruments.

2.1.1.6. Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: point (e)(vi) of Article 17(3), point (c)(v) of Article 17(9)

Table 4 - Dimension 1 – intervention field

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
PA1	ISO6.1	ERDF	173. Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders to implement territorial cooperation projects and initiatives in a cross-border, transnational, maritime and inter-regional context	79,769,799.00
PA1	ISO6.1	IPA III	173. Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders to implement territorial cooperation projects and initiatives in a cross-border, transnational, maritime and inter-regional context	5,000,000.00

Table 5 - Dimension 2 – form of financing

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
PA1	ISO6.1	IPA III	01. Grant	5,000,000.00
PA1	ISO6.1	ERDF	01. Grant	79,769,799.00

Table 6 - Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
PA1	ISO6.1	IPA III	26. Other approaches - Cities, towns and suburbs	5,000,000.00
PA1	ISO6.1	ERDF	26. Other approaches - Cities, towns and suburbs	79,769,799.00

3. Financing plan

Reference: point (f) of Article 17(3)

3.1. Financial appropriations by year

Table 7 - Reference: point (g)(i) of Article 17(3), points (a) to (d) of Article 17(4)

Fund	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
ERDF	0.00	13,627,089.00	13,845,981.00	14,069,251.00	14,296,986.00	11,846,778.00	12,083,714.00	79,769,799.00
IPA III	0.00	839,033.00	861,750.00	873,234.00	890,708.00	760,023.00	775,252.00	5,000,000.00
Total	0.00	14,466,122.00	14,707,731.00	14,942,485.00	15,187,694.00	12,606,801.00	12,858,966.00	84,769,799.00

3.2. Total financial appropriations by fund and national co-financing

Table 8 - Reference: point (f)(ii) of Article 17(3), points (a) to (d) of Article 17(4)

Policy objective	Priority	Fund	Basis for calculation EU support (total eligible cost or public contribution)	EU contribution (a)=(a1)+(a2)	Indicative breakdown of the EU contribution		National contribution (b)=(c)+(d)	Indicative breakdown of the national counterpart		Total (e)=(a)+(b)	Co-financing rate (f)=(a)/(e)	Contributions from the third countries
					without TA pursuant to Article 27(1) (a1)	for TA pursuant to Article 27(1) (a2)		National public (c)	National private (d)	Total (e)=(a)+(b)	Co-financing rate (f)=(a)/(e)	Contributions from the third countries
6	PA1	ERDF	Total	79,769,799.00	73,860,925.00	5,908,874.00	23,133,738.00	23,133,738.00	0.00	102,903,537.00	77.5190059794%	102,934.00
6	PA1	IPA III	Total	5,000,000.00	4,629,630.00	370,370.00	160,000.00	160,000.00	0.00	5,160,000.00	96.8992248062%	0.00
	Total	ERDF		79,769,799.00	73,860,925.00	5,908,874.00	23,133,738.00	23,133,738.00	0.00	102,903,537.00	77.5190059794%	102,934.00
	Total	IPA III		5,000,000.00	4,629,630.00	370,370.00	160,000.00	160,000.00	0.00	5,160,000.00	96.8992248062%	0.00
	Grand total			84,769,799.00	78,490,555.00	6,279,244.00	23,293,738.00	23,293,738.00	0.00	108,063,537.00	78.4444053502%	102,934.00

4. Action taken to involve the relevant programme partners in the preparation of the Interreg programme and the role of those programme partners in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation

Reference: point (g) of Article 17(3)

Role of the relevant partners in the preparation and implementation of the cooperation programme

Working in partnership has always been a key feature of the URBACT programme. Principles that need to be taken into account are set out in the European code of conduct on partnership [Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 240/2014 of 7 January 2014] that continues to apply, in Article 8 Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 that sets out minimum requirements and Article 30 Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 on the role of the Monitoring Committee.

Identifying the relevant partners

The URBACT programme has a wide geographical base covering all Member States and Partner states. This wide coverage requires a coordinated approach to the partnership principle which should operate on several levels:

Programme Level – competent National Authorities / Cohesion policy actors such as the European Urban Initiative (EUI), the European Commission, the European Committee of the Regions, other Interreg programmes/ other relevant EU level bodies including networks, associations / EU bodies responsible for the application of horizontal principles

National Level – relevant national authorities with competence in sustainable urban development / national representatives of universities, research centres / nationally recognised social partner' organisations / associations of cities and local authorities / nationally

recognised business associations / national bodies responsible for the application of horizontal principles

Sub-National Level – regional authorities / managing authorities of cohesion policy programmes / local authorities / cities / city networks and associations / bodies working in the field of sustainable urban development

Design of the Cooperation Programme

Programming Committee, Task Force and National Points

URBACT IV is co-designed by the Programming Committee (PC). All Member and Partner States of URBACT III (with the exception of UK) are present in the PC.

PC Members are national or regional authorities for the most part, but also comprise European organisations representing cities such as Eurocities and CEMR, and European institutions such as the European Commission and the Committee of the Regions. The group met several times physically and digitally and documents were placed on the shared work space Basecamp. This shared work space also served as a continuous feedback channel where texts were shared and discussed between meetings.

The meetings of the PC were prepared by the Task Force (TF). Task Force members were the European Commission, URBACT Managing Authority and Joint Secretariat, and the Member States that held the presidency of the Council during the programming period.

National URBACT Points were used to promote the URBACT IV survey among national stakeholders and their comments and suggestions concerning the definition of objectives and actions for URBACT IV were collected.

Specific Tasks for preparing a Cooperation Programme in Partnership

i) Analysis and identification of Needs

Over the period 19 February – 19 March 2020 a survey was launched with questions about cities' challenges and their means to tackle these challenges, ideas for future focus areas and activities for URBACT IV. In the space of one month, the survey gathered an impressive 532 responses from nearly all URBACT member countries. The largest group of responses (322) came from towns and cities. Furthermore, the responses were well spread across cities of all sizes - from towns with less than 20 000 inhabitants, to cities of over two million. Other replies came from associations of cities, managing authorities, Member and Partner states, National URBACT Points, regional governments, NGO's, research institutes and universities, private companies and citizens.

ii) Definition of objectives, priorities, actions and indicators

The PC members are responsible for agreeing these aspects.

iii) The allocation of funding

Upon approval of the programme budget the PC decides upon the programme budgetary structure and will outline the amounts of funding to be dedicated to each kind of action.

iv) European level consultation

In close coordination with the EUI, EU wide organisations and European Interregional Programmes concerned by the URBACT IV Programme were identified, specifically with the aim to set up and design an URBACT programme that is complementary to other EU-level urban initiatives. An URBACT event was organised 14 January 2021 to consult these partners and to ensure that the programme is addressing their needs as much as possible. In addition, the content of the draft CP was available on the URBACT website for a period of 3 months to allow stakeholder across the EU to comment.

In addition to these open consultations, Member and Partner States carried out during the whole year 2021 specific national level

consultation exercises based on the draft cooperation programme in accordance with their own legal requirements.

Relevant partners, especially beneficiaries, members of the Monitoring Committee and of the National URBACT Points, will be regularly involved in the preparation of calls for proposals, in monitoring progress of the programme, in the final performance report preparation, in evaluation activities.

Implementation and monitoring of the Cooperation Programme

The Monitoring Committee

The Monitoring Committee (MC) will be set up to ensure clear and transparent arrangements for managing the programme. It will be composed by representatives of the Commission, Member States, Partner States, IPA Countries, Committee of the Regions and Council of European Municipalities and Regions. The MA will aim to promote equality between men and women in this committee. The members of the MC will be made public and each member will be asked to sign a confidentiality and non-conflict of interest statement.. In view of ensuring complementarity with the EUI, the EUI secretariat will be invited to observe the MC meetings and the URBACT Managing authority and secretariat will be invited to observe the EUI Steering Group. Other EU bodies and programmes may be invited to attend as appropriate.

In line with the URBACT III MC Survey carried out in September-October 2019, the MA of URBACT IV will strive for better collaboration, interactivity and joint decision making in the MC through co-creation, transparency, adaptability, flexibility and ambition. MC meetings will be designed with space for exchanges on strategic direction and on content related to urban issues with network presentations, in-depth discussions on thematic capitalisation topics, site visits. A good combined use of physical or online meetings, written procedures and exchange on the platform Basecamp is necessary. Shared management means that the MC members have the opportunity to give their own view, not only about URBACT implementation, but also about needs of cities,

thematic priorities, programme links with EUI and cohesion policy in their respective countries and at European level.

The MC will agree to the rules of procedure which will outline in a clear and transparent manner the internal arrangements for the MC.

Urban dimension of Regional Policy and Coordination with EUI

In the 2021-2027 programming period Cohesion policy will spend a significant percentage of its funding in urban areas with a dedicated percentage (at least 8% of ERDF resources) for integrated sustainable urban development with a decision-making role for urban authorities. These are known as 'article 11' cities^[1].

The European Urban Initiative established under Article 12 Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 targets cities interested/involved in Cohesion Policy, Art. 11, and innovative actions, managing authorities, but also URBACT and UAEU cities, and other stakeholders.

Extensive discussions have taken place during the programming phase, bilaterally, and through the Task Forces and Programming Committee to ensure that the activities of URBACT and EUI are complementary. A dedicated coordination mechanism is to be set up between EUI and URBACT to ensure continued coordination and complementarity during the implementation of the programme.

The EUI will continue to specifically fund innovative actions. In addition, there will be a broad range of funding opportunities for sustainable urban development strategies. There are the funds and programmes under shared management (ERDF, ESF, EAFRD, EMFF, Interreg, JTF) or direct management such as Horizon Europe or LIFE that will provide funding support to different types of activities."

Synergies with other programmes

In addition to the coordination with EUI, URBACT IV will coordinate with the other interregional cooperation programmes Interreg

Europe, Interact and ESPON on to share their know-how create synergies for the following actions:

- Bilateral cooperation events (European Week of Regions and Cities, thematic events, etc.);
- Joint capitalisation and dissemination activities;
- Joint exhibitions, workshops, information / awareness-raising actions concerning territorial development.

Evaluation of the Cooperation Programme

For the evaluation of the programme an Evaluation Steering Group will be set up. This Steering Group will meet at all the key steps of the monitoring of the evaluation plan. In addition to face-to-face meetings the members of the group will provide feedback on reports, terms of reference etc. The Steering Group will ensure that the interests of all major stakeholders/partners are taken into consideration and that the institutions which might have to act on the recommendations are involved. During continuous evaluations of different elements of the programme URBACT IV will work directly with its urban partners.

[1] They are so called because they receive cohesion policy funding to implement sustainable urban development according to Article 11 Regulation (EU) 2021/1058.

5. Approach to communication and visibility for the Interreg programme (objectives, target audiences, communication channels, including social media outreach, where appropriate, planned budget and relevant indicators for monitoring and evaluation)

Reference: point (h) of Article 17(3)

This communications strategy outline is designed to help the URBACT programme achieve its overall objective and aims as outlined in 2.1.2.

It will provide a framework for developing more specific communication plans throughout the programme implementation. A total budget of € 5.345m is designated by the programming committee for communication and visibility purposes, from 2021 until 2029. This represents 5.7% of the total programme budget.

Communication objectives

The objectives are designed to cover the full programme cycle, so the importance of one or other objectives may be prioritised at a given moment.

1. Raise awareness of programme features to a wide range of (potential) beneficiaries defined in 2.1.4
2. Support beneficiaries and internal stakeholders in implementing and communicating on the actions and results of EU-funded projects
3. To ensure programme calls, results and other relevant information is made available to the widest number
4. To facilitate uptake of URBACT knowledge
5. To ensure a coordinated approach to programme activities and promotion, in particular with the European Urban Initiative

Target audiences

1. Potential beneficiaries (as per 2.1.4 above)
2. Cohesion Policy stakeholders: managing authorities, cities implementing cohesion funds
3. Multipliers: partner states, European Commission (communication services), European Urban Initiative, Urban Agenda for EU, European Parliament, Committee of Regions,

European networks and organisations, other Interreg programmes, national or regional contact points, associations of cities

4. Public Entities: Partner states, DG Regio, EUI entrusted entity/secretariat, UDG/DGUM

5. Thematic knowledge organisations at European level (incl. OECD and UN Habitat)

6. Wider urban community, incl. elected representatives

The beneficiaries will be supported to communicate directly with their general public. Relevant programme actions will also be open to the general public.

Communication channels

The programme will support a multi-level communication strategy, at European, national and local level. The particularity of URBACT's communication is that some aspects will be developed and delivered with EUI, others with national contact points – who are both targets and channels. The following is a non-exhaustive list of the main communication channels that may evolve throughout the programme lifetime:

a) Programme website (as required by Article 46 Regulation (EU) 2021/1060), meeting standard criteria for accessibility, link with EUI Knowledge sharing platform. The programme's website will be linked to the single website portal providing access to all programmes of the MS, as requested by Article 46(b)) CPR.

b) Social media channels: based on information available at time of writing the main channels are Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram. The social media mix in particular may evolve significantly according to new developments in tools or user profiles.

c) Institutional and Public relations, partnerships: establishing mechanisms to coordinate relevant activities and share information with key stakeholders and partners, particularly the EUI secretariat; also other Interreg programmes such as Espon,

Interreg Europe and Interact. Cooperation with other organisations operating in Europe and beyond in the area of sustainable urban development.

d) Events: a mix of physical and online events, in line with the specific event objectives, reach and content. These include major programme events for outreach and knowledge sharing (City Festivals), including for operations of strategic importance, capacity building events (Summer/e-Universities), trainings, seminars, policy labs, dedicated meetings with lead partners and experts; and events co-organised in the frame of EUI. Participation in external events will also be included in the mix, in particular EU Cities Forum (DG REGIO).

e) Publications: print, online, and video productions following the publicity requirements to support the programme's outreach, information, knowledge sharing and capacity building actions, including for operations of strategic importance. Audio (podcasts) may also be used.

f) National URBACT points: to reach certain target groups at local level, in national language, and adapt URBACT's communication to different contexts.

The programme will ensure beneficiaries are aware of responsibilities outlined in Article 50 Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 and will support their implementation.

As per Article 48 Regulation (EU) 2021/1060, the programme will appoint a communication person who will be in charge of the implementation of communication and visibility actions and work closely with the national communication coordinator in France.

Monitoring and evaluation

The programme will establish a dashboard of key performance indicators to monitor the implementation of the communication strategy along the different channels used. Examples include: no of applicants (per geography; size; experience); no of website sessions; % satisfaction rate for events. Data for defining baseline

and monitoring evaluation will come from website and social media analytics, surveys and feedback forms, internal statistics.

6. Indication of support to small-scale projects, including small projects within small project funds

Reference: point (i) of Article 17(3), Article 24

Not applicable to URBACT – no small scale projects will be developed.

7. Implementing provisions

7.1. Programme authorities

Table 9 - Reference: point (a) of Article 17(6)

Programme authorities	Name of the institution	Contact name	Position	E-mail
Managing authority	Agence Nationale pour la Cohésion des Territoires (ANCT)	François-Antoine MARIANI	Directeur général délégué en charge de la Politique de la ville - Adjoint au Directeur général	secretariat-dvcu@anct.gouv.fr
Audit authority	Commission Interministérielle de Coordination des Contrôles des Opérations cofinancées par les Fonds	Martine MARIGEAUD	Présidente de la CICC	martine.marigeaud@finances.gouv.fr

Programme authorities	Name of the institution	Contact name	Position	E-mail
	Européens (CICC)			
Body to which the payments are to be made by the Commission	Agence Nationale pour la Cohésion des Territoires	Mickael DEZWARTE	Agent Comptable	Mickael.DEZWARTE@anct.gouv.fr

7.2. Procedure for setting up the joint secretariat

Reference: point (b) of Article 17(6)

In line with point (b) of Article 17(6) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 [ETC], for the implementation of the programme, the managing authority and the monitoring committee are assisted by a Joint Secretariat (hereinafter referred to as JS) to carry out their respective functions.

The JS is set up after consultation with the MS/PS under the responsibility of the managing authority and located in Region Ile de France/France. Given the fact that the JS for URBACT IV will overlap with the JS for UIII there will be continuity in the staff already in post. This provides several benefits to ensure the programme gets off to a quick start, minimising the delays as well as the experience built up by the staff over the current period. Any additional recruitment will respect the EU Regulations in terms of openness, transparency, non-discrimination and equal opportunities and shall be balanced in terms of nationality and gender.

The JS is funded from the technical assistance budget. The JS guarantees the impartiality of the project application and evaluation process. It shall also provide information to potential beneficiaries about funding opportunities under the programme and shall assist beneficiaries in the implementation of operations.

Based on article 46(3) of Regulation (EU) No 2021/1059 [ETC], the programme Member and Partner States decided that the management verifications ("First level control") will not be done by

the MA/JS, but through the identification by each Member/Partner State of a body or person responsible for this verification on its territory.

Should the MC decide to reimburse part of the project costs through simplified cost options in line with points (b) to (f) of Article 53(1) of Regulation (EU) No 2021/1060 [CPR], the MC could, in a separate decision, decide on alternative FLC arrangements, which will be laid down in the description of management and control system.

The JS under the responsibility of the MA shall ensure that the principles of E-cohesion in accordance with Article 32(1) Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 and Annex XIV of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 are respected. The e-cohesion system that will be used will be the same as for the previous period (Synergie-CTE system). It will be fully functional in accordance with art 69.8 and annex XVI from the start of the programme period ensuring that the system is operational by the end of 2022.

7.3. Apportionment of liabilities among participating Member States and where applicable, the third or partner countries and OCTs, in the event of financial corrections imposed by the managing authority or the Commission

Reference: point (c) of Article 17(6)

Reduction and recovery of payments from beneficiaries

The managing authority shall ensure that any amount paid as a result of an irregularity is recovered from the project via the lead partner. Project partners shall repay the lead partner any amounts unduly paid. The managing authority shall also recover funds from the lead partner (and the lead partner from the project partner) following a termination of the subsidy contract in full or in part based on the conditions defined in the subsidy contract.

If the lead partner does not succeed in securing repayment from another project partner or if the managing authority does not succeed in securing repayment from the lead or sole beneficiary, the EU Member State or third country on whose territory the beneficiary concerned is located is registered, shall reimburse the managing authority based on Article 52(3) of Regulation (EU) No

2021/1059 [ETC]. In accordance with Article 52(3) of Regulation (EU) No 2021/1059 [ETC], “once the Member State or third country reimbursed the managing authority any amounts unduly paid to a partner, it may continue or start a recovery procedure against that partner under its national law”. Details on the recovery procedure will be included in the description of the management and control system to be established in accordance with Article 69 of Regulation (EU) No 2021/1060 [CPR].

The managing authority shall be responsible for reimbursing the amounts concerned to the general budget of the Union in accordance with the apportionment of liabilities among the participating Member States and third countries as laid down in the cooperation programme and in Article 52 of Regulation (EU) No 2021/1059 [ETC].

With regard to financial corrections imposed by the Managing Authority or the Commission on the basis of Articles 103 and 104 of Regulation (EU) No 2021/1060 [CPR], financial consequences for the EU Member States are laid down in the section “liabilities and irregularities” below. Any related exchange of correspondence between the Commission and an EU Member State will be copied to the managing authority/joint secretariat. The managing authority/joint secretariat will inform the accounting body and the audit authority/group of auditors where relevant.

Liabilities and irregularities

The Member State, Partner State or third country will bear liability in connection with the use of the programme ERDF, Norwegian and Swiss funding and third countries funding as follows:

- For project-related expenditure granted to project partners located on its territory, liability will be born individually by each Member State, Partner State or third country.
- In case of a systemic irregularity or financial correction (decided by the programme authorities or the Commission), the EU Member State will bear the financial consequences in proportion to the relevant irregularity detected on the respective Member State territory. Where the systemic

irregularity or financial correction cannot be linked to a specific EU Member State territory, the Member State shall be responsible in proportion to the ERDF contribution paid to the respective national project partners involved in the programme.

- For the technical assistance expenditure (calculated as a flat rate in accordance with Article 27 of Regulation (EU) No 2021/1059 [ETC]), the above liability principles applicable for project-related expenditure and systemic irregularities / financial corrections may also be applied to TA corrections as they are the direct consequence of project expenditure related corrections.
- If the managing authority/joint secretariat, the accounting body, any EU Member State, Partner State or third country becomes aware of irregularities, it shall without any delay inform the liable EU Member State, Partner State or third country and the managing authority/joint secretariat. The latter will ensure the transmission of information to the liable EU-Member State, Partner State or third country (if it has not been informed yet directly), the accounting body and audit authority or group of auditors, where relevant.
- In compliance with Annex XII referred to in Article 69(2) and (3) of Regulation (EU) No 2021/1060 [CPR], each EU Member State is responsible for reporting irregularities committed by beneficiaries located on its territory to the Commission and at the same time to the managing authority. Each EU Member State shall keep the Commission as well as the managing authority informed of any progress of related administrative and legal proceedings. The managing authority will ensure the transmission of information to the accounting body and audit authority.
- If a Member State, Partner State or third country does not comply with its duties arising from these provisions, the managing authority may suspend services to the project applicants/partners located on the territory of this Member State, Partner State or third country. The Managing Authority will send a letter to the Member State/Partner State/Third Country concerned requesting them to comply with their

obligations within 3 months. If the concerned Member State/Partner State/Third Country's reply is not in line with the obligations, then the MA will propose to put this issue on the MC agenda for discussion and for decision.

For the URBACT programme the Audit Authority shall be assisted by a Group of Auditors composed of a representative of each member state in accordance with Article 48 EU Regulation 2021/1059 (INTERREG).

Special provisions on liabilities shall be provided in the IPA III beneficiary country agreement if needed.

8. Use of unit costs, lump sums, flat rates and financing not linked to costs

Reference: Articles 94 and 95 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 (CPR)

Table 10 – Use of unit costs, lump sums, flat rates and financing not linked to costs

Intended use of Articles 94 and 95 CPR	Yes	No
From the adoption, the programme will make use of reimbursement of the Union contribution based on unit costs, lump sums and flat rates under the priority according to Article 94 CPR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
From the adoption, the programme will make use of reimbursement of the Union contribution based on financing not linked to costs according to Article 95 CPR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Appendix 1

A. Summary of the main elements

Priority	Fund	Specific objective	Estimated proportion of the total financial allocation within the priority to which the simplified cost option will be applied in %	Type(s) of operation covered		Indicator triggering reimbursement		Unit of measurement for the indicator triggering reimbursement	Type of simplified cost option (standard scale of unit costs, lump sums or flat rates	Amount (in EUR) or percentage (in case of flat rates) of the simplified cost option
				Code(1)	Description	Code(2)	Description			

(1) This refers to the code for the intervention field dimension in Table 1 of Annex 1 CPR

(2) This refers to the code of a common indicator, if applicable

Appendix 2

A. Summary of the main elements

Priority	Fund	Specific objective	The amount covered by the financing not linked to costs	Type(s) of operation covered		Conditions to be fulfilled/results to be achieved triggering reimbursement by the Commission	Indicator		Unit of measurement for the conditions to be fulfilled/results to be achieved triggering reimbursement by the Commission	Envisaged type of reimbursement method used to reimburse the beneficiary or beneficiaries
				Code(1)	Description		Code(2)	Description		

(1) This refers to the code for the intervention field dimension in Table 1 of Annex 1 to the CPR and Annex IV to the EMFAF Regulation.

(2) This refers to the code of a common indicator, if applicable.

Appendix 3: List of planned operations of strategic importance with a timetable - Article 22(3) CPR

URBACT IV addresses the capacity needs of urban authorities in designing and implementing sustainable urban development strategies and plans according to an integrated, participatory and place-based approach, replicating good practices and designing investment plans for innovative urban actions.

URBACT will build up the institutional capacity of cities needed to implement territorial strategies; it directly contributes to PO5 in particular. All operations supported by the programme will contribute to this goal and are of strategic importance. However, the main activity of the URBACT programme is the creation of transnational exchange and learning networks and as such this activity and the 80 operations planned are considered to represent the operations of strategic importance (Article 22(3) CPR).

These transnational networks aim to improve the capacity of European cities to co-design and implement Integrated Action Plans linked to common sustainable urban development challenges, to transfer established urban good practices and to design investment plans for replicating elements of Urban Innovative Actions. A total of 80 such networks are planned.

Each call for networks will be accompanied by a dedicated communication campaign. The results of the completed networks will be the focus of specific communication activities for the programme. Each network has a dedicated space on the URBACT official website allowing for maximum visibility to these strategically important operations.

DOCUMENTS

Document title	Document type	Document date	Local reference	Commission reference	Files	Sent date	Sent by
Programme snapshot 2021TC16FFIR001 1.1	Snapshot of data before send	24-May-2022		Ares(2022)3913002	Programme_snapshot_2021TC16FFIR001_1.1_en.pdf	24-May-2022	BARILE, Jeanne



LOOKING FOR PARTNERS

URBACT PROJECT – WELCOMING MIGRANTS IN ARRIVAL TERRITORIES

Newly arrived migrants are often marginalized and local authorities struggle to meet their needs, because their reception is largely conditioned by policies decided on a national level. However, it is necessary to facilitate newcomers' integration in order to build inclusive and socially resilient societies, especially in preparation for any future climate migration waves. Local authorities, in coordination with all levels of government and other local partners, play a key role in integrating these newcomers and empowering them to contribute to their new communities. Local authorities have responded to the sudden arrival of thousands of fleeing Ukrainians seeking asylum in an efficient manner, which demonstrates their ability to play to welcome incoming migrants.

The project aims at empowering local authorities to successfully receive newcomers on their territory. It is expected to bring European local authorities together in order to improve public policies and develop new solutions which guarantee dignified reception conditions and facilitate migrants' integration in the host society.

LOCAL CONTEXT:

Utrecht is the 4th biggest city in the Netherlands and its population consists for 35% of migrant communities. Utrecht is a welcoming city for all migrants, refugees and Ukrainian refugees. Utrecht's Plan Einstein, started with the high influx of refugees in 2016, a concept based on the dignified reception of all refugees. Through Plan Einstein, we facilitate a free open space for meaningful encounters with an inclusive program right from day 1, involving not just the refugees but also including the neighboring citizens. We encourage the development of professional skills and participation, by offering all kinds of activities that stimulate their growth, from gardening, sports and culture to professional and linguistic activities. Beyond fostering their development, this interactive program also broadens their network within the city. This hands-on, ongoing outline from arrival to integration leads to better and quicker integration in the local society.

URBACT PROGRAM:

URBACT is an EU cooperation program that aims to promote sustainable and integrated development, covering: European Union, Norway, Switzerland, the IPA countries (Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, North Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina).

URBACT's call for Action Planning Networks supports the creation of local authorities' networks to find solutions to challenges faced by urban territories through consultation, experimentation, and exchanges of good practices.

Utrecht
Lead Partner

Project Partners
Looking for

9/01/2023 until 31/03/2023
Application Call

2.5 years
Project Duration

Migration
Topic

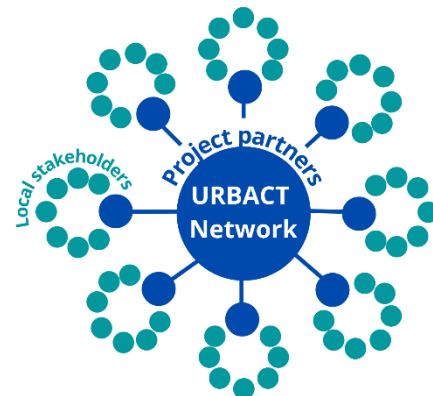
URBACT Fund
Financing tool

65% to 80% of expenses
Co-financing rate

European Union, Norway,
Switzerland, the IPA countries
(Albania, Montenegro, Serbia,
North Macedonia, Bosnia-
Herzegovina)
Eligible Countries

The objective of these networks is to **develop an action plan** specific to each participating territory, based on the discussions and exchanges carried out during the project at the European level with their Project Partners, and at the local level with stakeholders. URBACT also offers the possibility of **testing innovative small-scale solutions**.

Thus, project partners will exchange with their European peers on their challenges and practices and will have the opportunity to co-design solutions. This should lead to the development of innovative good practices and the improvement of public policies.



URBACT projects last two and a half years, during which a URBACT expert is made available to provide methodological support. URBACT covers 65% to 80% of expenses and, at the end of the project, the program facilitates access to other European funding for the implementation of the Action Plan.

PROJECT PROPOSAL:

The project aims at designing a global strategy to better welcome and integrate immigrants based on local authorities' experience and expertise.

The city of Utrecht proposes to develop the project around two specific objectives to meet the needs of migrants who have recently arrived in Europe:

1. **Safeguarding migrants' human rights:** welcoming foreigners with dignity and facilitating access to their rights (accommodation, health care and especially mental health care, education, employment, culture and sports, etc.).
Developing a plan towards inclusivity on the housing market, labour market and education system by focusing on distinguishing circumstances in the immigrant context and recognizing the local discriminatory and/or exclusionary systems and processes that may prohibit such actions.
2. **Facilitating migrants' integration into the territory:** promoting their inclusion and empowering them to develop connections with local residents, improving their skills, promoting their learning of the host country's language, etc.

The objective is to guarantee a dignified reception of foreigners, migrants (Ukrainian refugees) who have recently arrived and to promote their integration and inclusion, in order to improve resilience and inclusion in urban territories. Best practices as the Plan Einstein concept in Utrecht and all other concepts in the cities can inspire all the participants.

WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

- Between 7 and 9 partners, from the European Union, Norway, Switzerland, IPA countries (Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, North Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina).
- Local authorities willing to improve arrival conditions and integration of foreigners who recently arrived on their territory.
- Local authorities willing to exchange good practices, to build an action plan in a participatory way and experiment small-scale actions.

PROJECT PARTNERS' INVOLVEMENT:

- Participate in international meetings;
- Share and exchange knowledge with other European local authorities working on similar challenges;
- Involve inhabitants and relevant key stakeholders at the local level;
- Co-design a local Integrated Action Plan with the support of a URBACT Expert;
- Experiment small scale actions.

LEAD PARTNER CONTACTS:

Hans SAKKERS Strategic Advisor International Relations +31 6 46 22 04 94 h.sakkers@utrecht.nl	Jan BRAAT Senior Advisor Migration +31 6 51 79 64 92 j.braat@utrecht.nl
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NETWORK ACRONYM



Co-funded by
the European Union
Interreg

ERDF				
Name of partner	FORECASTED TOTAL BUDGET	% ERDF	FORECASTED ERDF	FORECASTED cofinancing
Utrecht	204.400,00 €	65%	132.860,00 €	71.540,00 €
Seine-Saint-Denis County	108.017,50 €	65%	70.211,38 €	37.806,13 €
Albacete	66.450,00 €	80%	53.160,00 €	13.290,00 €
Fundao	64.450,00 €	80%	51.560,00 €	12.890,00 €
Timisoara	66.450,00 €	80%	53.160,00 €	13.290,00 €
Cluj	64.450,00 €	80%	51.560,00 €	12.890,00 €
Liège	71.250,00 €	70%	49.875,00 €	21.375,00 €
Sosnowiec	64.450,00 €	80%	51.560,00 €	12.890,00 €
Lampedusa	73.250,00 €	80%	58.600,00 €	14.650,00 €
Osijek	66.450,00 €	80%	53.160,00 €	13.290,00 €
SUB-TOTAL	849.617,50 €		625.706,38 €	223.911,13 €

Norwegian/Swiss Fund				
Name of partner	FORECASTED TOTAL BUDGET	% NO/CH Fund	FORECASTED NO/CH Fund	FORECASTED NO/CH cofinancing
PP8	- €	50%	- €	- €
SUB-TOTAL	- €		- €	- €

IPA Fund				
Name of partner	FORECASTED TOTAL BUDGET	% IPA Fund	FORECASTED IPA Fund	FORECASTED IPA cofinancing
PP9	- €	95%	- €	- €
SUB-TOTAL	- €		- €	- €

OVERALL TOTAL BUDGET							
Whole partnership	ERDF Fund	PP EU cofinancing	NO/CH Fund	PP NO/CH cofinancing	IPA Fund	PP IPA cofinancing	OVERALL TOTAL BUDGET
TOTAL	625.706,38 €	223.911,13 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	849.617,50 €

ERDF	
ERDF per year	FORECASTED ERDF
2023	- €
2024	- €
2025	- €
TOTAL	- €

IPA	
IPA per year	FORECASTED IPA
2023	- €
2024	- €
2025	- €
TOTAL	- €

Oggetto: Presa d'atto Bando URBACT IV COOPERATICI PROGRAMME CCI 2021TC16FFIR001. Autorizzazione al Sindaco a partecipare al bando in qualità di Partner.

La presente deliberazione viene letta, approvata e sottoscritta.

L'Assessore Anziano
Sig.

Il Presidente
Filippo Mannino



Il Segretario Comunale
Dott. Vito Antonio Bonanno
(In videoconferenza)

CERTIFICATO DI PUBBLICAZIONE
(art. 11, comma 1 L.R. 44/91 s.m.i.)

Il sottoscritto Segretario Comunale certifica, su conforme attestazione dell'addetto, che la presente deliberazione è stata pubblicata all'Albo Pretorio il giorno del, e vi rimarrà per 15 giorni consecutivi.

E' rimasta affissa all'Albo Pretorio per 15 giorni consecutivi dal; al

Lampedusa li,

L'addetto
Barbera Pasquale



Il Segretario Comunale
.....

CERTIFICATO DI ESECUTIVITA'

Il sottoscritto Segretario Generale, visti gli atti d'ufficio

ATTESTA

Che la presente deliberazione è divenuta esecutiva il / /

() Decorsi 10 giorni dalla data di inizio della pubblicazione

☒ Dichiarata Immediatamente Esecutiva (art. 12, comma 2 L.R. n.44/91 s.m.i)

Lampedusa li, **29 MAR, 2023**;

Il Segretario Comunale
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