



URBACT III

# Guide to Action Planning Networks

PHASE 1



EMPOWER

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CHANGE

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IMPACT



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## FOREWORD

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URBACT supports European cities to develop sustainable integrated responses to the pressing challenges they face today. It offers them 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 a European incubator for sustainable integrated urban development enabling cities to benefit from the tried and tested URBACT Method.

Since 2002, nearly 1 000 EU cities involved in URBACT have experienced the added value of transnational cooperation, the transfer of good practices beyond national borders, and support around participatory approaches to policy-making. URBACT continues to bring cities together with this call for Action Planning Networks, open from 7 January to 17 April 2019. This second round of Action Planning Networks will build upon the successful established URBACT model used by more than 200 cities over the last 3 years.

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 Phase 1 of the Action Planning Network, including how to set up a partnership, define the thematic focus, produce a work plan for Phase 1, develop a budget and manage an URBACT network (in case you wish to be a Lead Partner). It also outlines the main URBACT rules and procedures as well as providing useful tips for adding the value to your proposals.

This guide should be read alongside the "Terms of Reference for the Call for Proposals for the creation of Action Planning Networks". It draws on several URBACT Programme Manual factsheets, relating to the management of networks (Factsheet 2E), and the Action Planning Networks specifically (Factsheet 2A).

The Call for Proposals for Action Planning Networks will be a competitive process where 23 approved networks will be able to develop their project in Phase 1. We hope that this Guide to Action Planning Networks will provide you with useful advice on building a successful proposal as the (future) Lead Partner or Project Partner.

We wish you good luck!

The  URBACT Team



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## TABLE OF CONTENT

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|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| FOREWORD  | 3         |
| TABLE OF CONTENT  | 5         |
| <b>1. HOW CAN AN URBACT NETWORK HELP YOUR CITY?</b>                           | <b>6</b>  |
| 1.1. SOME REFLECTIONS TO START WITH...  | 7         |
| 1.2. WHAT CAN URBACT NETWORK OFFER TO YOUR CITY?                              | 7         |
| 1.3. WHAT IS EXPECTED FROM YOU AS A PARTNER ?                                 | 14        |
| 1.4. THE TWO-PHASE JOURNEY OF AN URBACT ACTION PLANNING NETWORK               | 16        |
| <b>INFOGRAPHIC: THE URBACT ACTION PLANNING NETWORK JOURNEY</b>                | <b>19</b> |
| <b>2. SETTING UP AN ACTION PLANNING NETWORK</b>                               | <b>20</b> |
| 2.1. THE THEMATIC CONTENT   | 21        |
| 2.2. BUILDING THE PARTNERSHIP   | 24        |
| 2.2.1. PARTNERSHIP SET UP & ELIGIBILITY                                       | 24        |
| 2.2.2. RELEVANCE OF PARTNERS  | 25        |
| 2.2.3. SEVEN TIPS FOR BUILDING A “GREAT” PARTNERSHIP                          | 26        |
| <b>SUPPORT DURING THE OPEN CALL FOR THIS SECTION</b>                          | <b>28</b> |
| <b>3. PHASE 1 OF ACTION PLANNING NETWORKS - THE DEVELOPMENT PHASE</b>         | <b>29</b> |
| <b>INFOGRAPHIC: ZOOM IN THE ACTIVITIES OF THE TRANSFER NETWORK IN PHASE 1</b> | <b>30</b> |
| 3.1. WORK PACKAGE 1 – PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION                     | 31        |
| 3.1.1. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AN EFFICIENT DELIVERY OF ACTIONS                   | 32        |
| 3.2. WORK PACKAGE 2 – PROJECT DEVELOPMENT                                     | 35        |
| 3.2.1. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AN EFFICIENT DELIVERY OF ACTIONS AND OUTPUTS       | 35        |
| 3.3. EXPERTISE FOR PHASE 1  | 40        |
| 3.3.1. APPOINTING AND CONTRACTING THE LEAD EXPERT                             | 40        |
| 3.3.2. ALLOCATION OF DAYS AND TASKS TO BE PERFORMED BY THE LEAD EXPERT        | 42        |
| 3.4. BUDGET FOR PHASE 1   | 44        |
| 3.4.1. HINTS AND TIPS FOR BUDGETING YOUR PHASE 1 APPLICATION                  | 44        |
| <b>SUPPORT DURING THE OPEN CALL FOR THIS SECTION</b>                          | <b>46</b> |
| THE “URBACT” GLOSSARY   | 47        |

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# 1. How can an URBACT Network help your city?



This section provides a general understanding about the URBACT Method - the main features of the URBACT Action Planning Network framework and experience.

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## 1.1. SOME REFLECTIONS TO START WITH...

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Before moving on to the next chapters of this Guide, think about why you are interested in the URBACT Programme and why you would lead or join an Action Planning Network. A good starting point is to check where you stand regarding the following statements:

- Your city needs to tackle an urban problem or address an urban policy challenge and develop solutions through the production of an integrated action plan
- Your city wishes to improve or change local policies through the development of an integrated strategy/ action plan for sustainable urban development
- Your city wants to build the capacities of local civil servants and stakeholders to design integrated strategies/ action plans for sustainable urban development
- Your city is willing to share experiences and exchange knowledge with other European cities working on similar challenges
- Your city is eager to involve inhabitants and relevant key stakeholders in the design and delivery of local urban policies
- Your city hopes to practice participatory culture by learning new tools and methods for effective policy- making
- Your administration can commit to this network (resources and staff) over the network lifetime

If you agree with one or more of these statements, we invite you to move on to the next chapters and learn more about what to expect as a partner (or Lead Partner), the added value of joining an URBACT Network, but also the requirements, commitments and the different phases of an URBACT Action Planning Network.

## 1.2. WHAT CAN AN URBACT NETWORK OFFER TO YOUR CITY?

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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<sup>1</sup> which uses integrated and participatory approaches to develop an Integrated Action Plan for your city.

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<sup>1</sup> Please check as well:

- the article: <http://urbact.eu/urbact-opportunity-action-and-change>
- the Interactive presentation (supported only in google chrome browser) available [here](#)

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Here, at a glance, is what you can expect:

- a. Learning from peers across Europe
- b. Designing and testing small scale solutions at local level
- c. Enhancing capacities for policy-making
- d. Accessing financial resources and support tools for exchange and learning
- e. Adding value through the URBACT knowledge hub and programme experts

## A. Learning from peers across Europe

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, the tools 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 SUMPs<sup>2</sup>, we all grew richer in terms of knowledge and capacities and became friends by our joint work.”***

***Bielefeld (DE), Lead Partner coordinator for CityMobilNet***

## B. Designing and testing solutions at local level

In the framework of the URBACT Action Planning Networks, exchange and learning activities are conceived as a tool for European cities to improve their local policies and capacities to design integrated action plans for sustainable urban development.

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<sup>2</sup> Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans



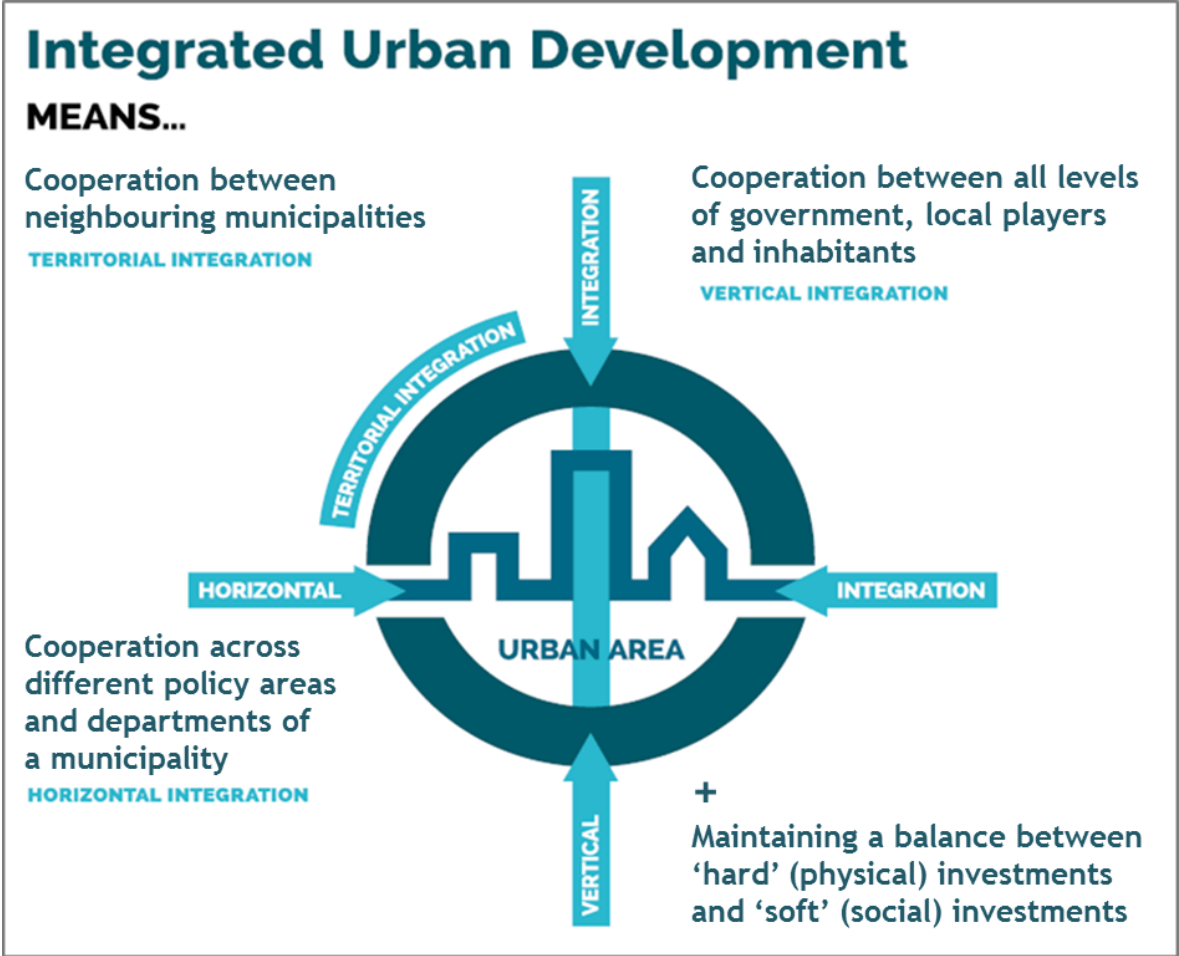
As a partner you will have the opportunity to practice and use URBACT tools to develop an integrated approach (see scheme 1 below) with your citizens, NGOs, public partners and businesses to co-produce an Integrated Action Plan (IAP) to tackle the specific policy challenge identified. This co-production process, and the IAP it will produce, will be the main objective of the URBACT Local Group to be created in each partner city.

Each partner in the Action Planning Network will undertake this work. The appointed URBACT Lead Expert will design a customised network exchange and learning methodology based on the partner city needs. This will be included in the Baseline Study to be produced in Phase 1.

*“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.”*

*Glasgow City Council (UK), partner in RESILIENT EUROPE*

Scheme 1 – “Learning by doing” the integrated approach at local level



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## C. Enhanced capacities for policy-making and delivery

URBACT aims to enhance the capacities of city staff and other local practitioners and policy makers involved in sustainable integrated urban development.

In addition to the network activities, the URBACT Programme offers regular training and capacity-building activities for partners and local stakeholders involved in approved networks, which include:

- ✓ tailor-made capacity-building activities<sup>3</sup> in response to identified needs of Action Planning Networks,
- ✓ ad hoc training schemes designed to support urban stakeholders,
- ✓ targeted training schemes for specific stakeholder groups, including elected representatives, local practitioners, among others.

Costs for participation in these activities are eligible within the network budget. 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 already provides significant support for network cities: e.g. offers textbooks, best practices, case studies, and webinars. It organises URBACT Summer University which is extremely helpful. We took advantage of those tools.”***

*Koszalin (PL), partner in Procure*

## D. Financial resources and support tools for exchange and learning

The URBACT Programme provides financial resources to support network activities. The maximum eligible budget of an Action Planning Network will be up to EUR 750 000. This budget is split between Phases 1 and 2<sup>4</sup>. The eligible budget for phase 1 is up to EUR 150 000.

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) co-finances network costs, with the following co-financing rates<sup>5</sup>:

- ✓ 70% for cities located in more developed regions
- ✓ 85% for cities located in less developed and transition regions

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<sup>3</sup> For example: URBACT Summer University is an established and unique format of its kind. You can get some impressions from the 2016 edition dedicated to the first generation of Action Planning Networks via <http://urbact.eu/was-urbact-summer-university-2016>

<sup>4</sup> More details are available later in this guide as well as in Section 6 of the Terms of Reference for the Call for Proposals for Action Planning Networks.

<sup>5</sup> The map of regions for co-financing rates of Structural funds is available [here](#).

- 
- ✓ Partners from Switzerland will be co-financed at up to 50% by Swiss national funds
  - ✓ Partners from Norway may participate in Action Planning Networks at their own cost for this call (this current situation will be reviewed on an annual basis by the competent authorities)
  - ✓ The modalities of funding partners from United Kingdom will be determined as part of the Brexit negotiations

## Budget for expertise

The Programme provides each Action Planning Network with a specific budget<sup>6</sup> for the appointment of validated URBACT Experts to support the exchange and learning process.

Each Action Planning Network will appoint a Lead Expert who will assist the network over its entire duration with both methods and tools for exchange and learning activities and thematic expertise. Ad hoc URBACT Experts will also be recruited (in Phase 2 only) to provide support on specific needs identified by networks concerning the methodology for exchange and learning, thematic expertise or support to local partners.

The expertise support includes:

- Expertise for the design and delivery of transnational exchange and learning activities
- Thematic expertise on content related to the urban policy challenges addressed by the network
- Expertise to support partners in designing integrated and participative policies and in particular the Integrated Action Plan

## URBACT Joint Secretariat

The URBACT Joint Secretariat plays an important role in supporting and guiding networks as well as in setting the conditions for quality results. It produces guidelines for all partners on various dimensions of Action Planning Network activities: network management, methods for exchange and learning, production of outputs, communication, etc.

To support beneficiaries, the Joint Secretariat also:

- ✓ organises training sessions for Lead Partners and network experts,
- ✓ maintains regular contact with network Lead Partners in order to review progress on delivery of planned activities,
- ✓ provides ongoing support, and
- ✓ facilitates exchange of experience and good practices across networks.

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<sup>6</sup> This represents 170 days of expertise for appointed network experts (40 days for Phase 1 and 130 days for Phase 2) at a standard rate of EUR 750 per day all taxes included, which is equivalent to EUR 127 500. (Further information is provided in section 3.3. of this guide)

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The Joint Secretariat actively contributes to the visibility of all Networks by sharing their findings through:

- ✓ the Programme's website [www.urbact.eu](http://www.urbact.eu) (Programme website), on which each Action Planning Network has its own dedicated space (Network page) and where thematic, in-depth articles are published in English;
- ✓ URBACT's social media channels (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube);
- ✓ newsletters
- ✓ National URBACT Points in order to foster communication and dissemination of the networks' results in different languages.

## National URBACT Points

24 National URBACT Points covering 27 countries are in charge of communicating and supporting URBACT-related activities in their countries and in their native languages. Specifically, they are responsible for:

- ✓ Communicating on open calls for networks and good urban practices. To this end, National URBACT Points organise national info-days, and communicate on URBACT cities' through their URBACT national webpages, social media, newsletters, events, publications, videos, and others.
- ✓ Strengthening the links between local, regional, national and EU levels on integrated urban development. National URBACT Points organise closed and open meetings for URBACT cities to allow national networking and exchange of ideas, actions and results; but also meetings between different government levels like ministries, association of cities and local authorities to influence public policies and to promote URBACT's activities and results.
- ✓ Supporting the URBACT Joint Secretariat in activities aiming to increase the capacity and skills of local authorities in designing and implementing integrated and participative urban policies.

## E. Adding value with URBACT knowledge hub and programme experts

The URBACT Knowledge Hub is where the programme brings together the learnings from the different networks, on the site [urbact.eu](http://urbact.eu), through dedicated publications as well as through dedicated projects or working groups. The objective is to help share what network partners have learned beyond the partnerships, and make their findings accessible to the wider urban community.

The URBACT Joint Secretariat appoints 'Thematic Programme Experts' to work on key urban issues tackled by networks. Network partners and lead experts will have the opportunity to contribute to the Knowledge Hub through their own network activities or by participating in dedicated thematic activities organised at programme level, combining the work of several networks.

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*Example: TechPlace has grown from several URBACT Action Planning Networks including TechTown, GEN Y CITY and Interactive Cities and is a capitalisation initiative sharing learnings from these partnerships as well as a wide range of case studies and stories about cities growing their tech economies.*

**Accessible via:** <https://www.techplace.online/>

In addition, the URBACT Joint Secretariat also appoints 'Programme Experts on methods and tools' which provide specific methodological support and coaching as well as capturing, connecting and sharing trends to ensure the effective exchange and learning among networks.

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## 1.3. WHAT IS EXPECTED FROM YOU AS A PARTNER ?

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### The essentials

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

- ✓ have identified a specific challenge on which they would like 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 all the necessary resources – financial and staff are available<sup>7</sup>.

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 activities<sup>8</sup>,
- ✓ 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.

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<sup>7</sup> Further information on necessary resources is provided in section 3 of this guide.

<sup>8</sup> This requires "relevant people" on board - working on the policy issue addressed by the network, being able to contribute with policy content and capture learnings from transnational exchange, as well as having full professional proficiency in English.

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## Local activities

The co-production of an Integrated Action Plan by the URBACT Local Group<sup>9</sup> 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.

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<sup>10</sup>.

***The program provides not only opportunities to extend knowledge and build skills, it also encourages to take bold actions, try things, engage people, and strive for change that is much needed.***

*Cēsis (LV), partner in TechTown*

## Communication

By joining an URBACT Action Planning Network, you will learn and develop skills necessary to design integrated policies for sustainable urban development. However, you will not be working only for yourself or for the benefit of your own city. The learning and the results of your networking experience should be shared more widely, with all urban practitioners who may be facing similar policy challenges across Europe.

Communication must be understood as a strategic tool, which contributes to achieving the network’s objectives. It is embedded in the whole network lifecycle. The journey you will undertake as project partner is as important as its final result (the Integrated Action Plans). Documenting and communicating is the key.

This will be done during the life of the network through a number of communication tools and activities. Thematic reports, articles presenting the network/ partner findings and learning from the URBACT experience should be published on the network page on the URBACT website and promoted via social media, newsletter, and during events at local level.

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<sup>9</sup> More information about the URBACT Local Group is available in section 3.2.1 of this guide.

<sup>10</sup> More information about recruiting appropriate staff is available in section 3.1.1 of this guide.

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## 1.4. THE TWO-PHASE JOURNEY OF AN URBACT ACTION PLANNING NETWORK

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In order to improve the quality of networks approved for funding, the URBACT III Programme foresees a two-phase process for Action Planning Networks. The two phases will take place within a specific time frame therefore it is important to verify if the proposed time frame fits the agenda of your city.

Each phase is subject to an eligibility check by the URBACT Joint Secretariat, assessment by an external panel of experts, and approval by the Monitoring Committee. Cities wishing to set up an Action Planning Network are requested to submit a first network proposal to get funding for the 6-month development phase (Phase 1), in the form of a Phase 1 Application. If their proposal is approved for Phase 1, they will have 6 months to prepare and submit a complete project proposal in the form of a Phase 2 Application, including a baseline study. The two-phase journey includes:

### Phase 1 (September 2019 – March 2020)

Action Planning Networks approved by the Monitoring Committee (26 June 2019) will enter a 6-month Phase 1. The main aim of this phase is to provide network partners with time and resources to:

- ✓ Generate a clear and detailed analysis of the network policy challenge;
- ✓ Review the network partnership by assessing the relevance and understanding of the challenge in partner cities;
- ✓ Complete a detailed Baseline Study including findings of the partner review and customised methodology for exchange and learning at network level;
- ✓ Produce the Phase 2 Application, incorporating the components above

N.B. the Phase 1 application is expected to include the full partnership from the beginning. There is no partnership enlargement phase in Phase 2

The detailed description of the challenge to be addressed, partner profiles assessing the relevance to the challenge and a detailed proposal for exchange and learning in Phase 2 will be included in the Baseline Study. This study will be an integral part of the application for Phase 2. Some specific guidance will be developed to define in more detail the content of the Baseline Study.

Details on objectives, work packages - activities and deliverables for **Phase 1** are provided in the following chapters of this guide.

Detailed guidance for **Phase 2** will be produced and circulated to all approved networks at the beginning of Phase 1.



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## Phase 2 (May 2020 – May 2022)

Based on the positive assessment and the Monitoring Committee's approval (approx. May 2020) the Action Planning Networks will be able to start their 24-month transnational exchange and learning journey set out in the Phase 2 applications. The main result of phase 2 will be the Integrated Action Plans developed by each partner city.

The activities to be delivered in Phase 2 are not presented in the Phase 1 application. Nevertheless, it is important to understand the whole journey from start to end and what to expect if deciding to experience an Action Planning Network. In phase 2, each network will follow a customised work plan at transnational and local level.

Regardless of the uniqueness and creativity of network work programmes, the activities in Phase 2 are always structured around 4 work packages (WP):

### WP1 – Network management and coordination

This includes:

- Contracting of network partners
- Coordination of network experts
- Network (Steering group) coordination meetings
- Official reporting documents partners – every 12 months
- Regular network management 'health checks' with the URBACT Joint Secretariat
- Final closure documents (end of the project) to be submitted by all partners

### WP2 - Transnational Exchange and Learning Activities

Aim to support partners in improving their local policies in relation to the policy challenge. It includes:

- 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

### WP3 - Impact on Local Governance and practices

The URBACT Local Group (ULG) enables experimentation 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 includes:

- Development of organisational culture by building bridges inside the city administration as well as with external actors.
- Designing and testing solutions within ULG explored at transnational level (sharing events with citizen, larger participative workshops for testing pilot actions, etc.).
- Practicing tools & methods for effective design processes and group workshops.
- Taking part in URBACT capacity-building events.

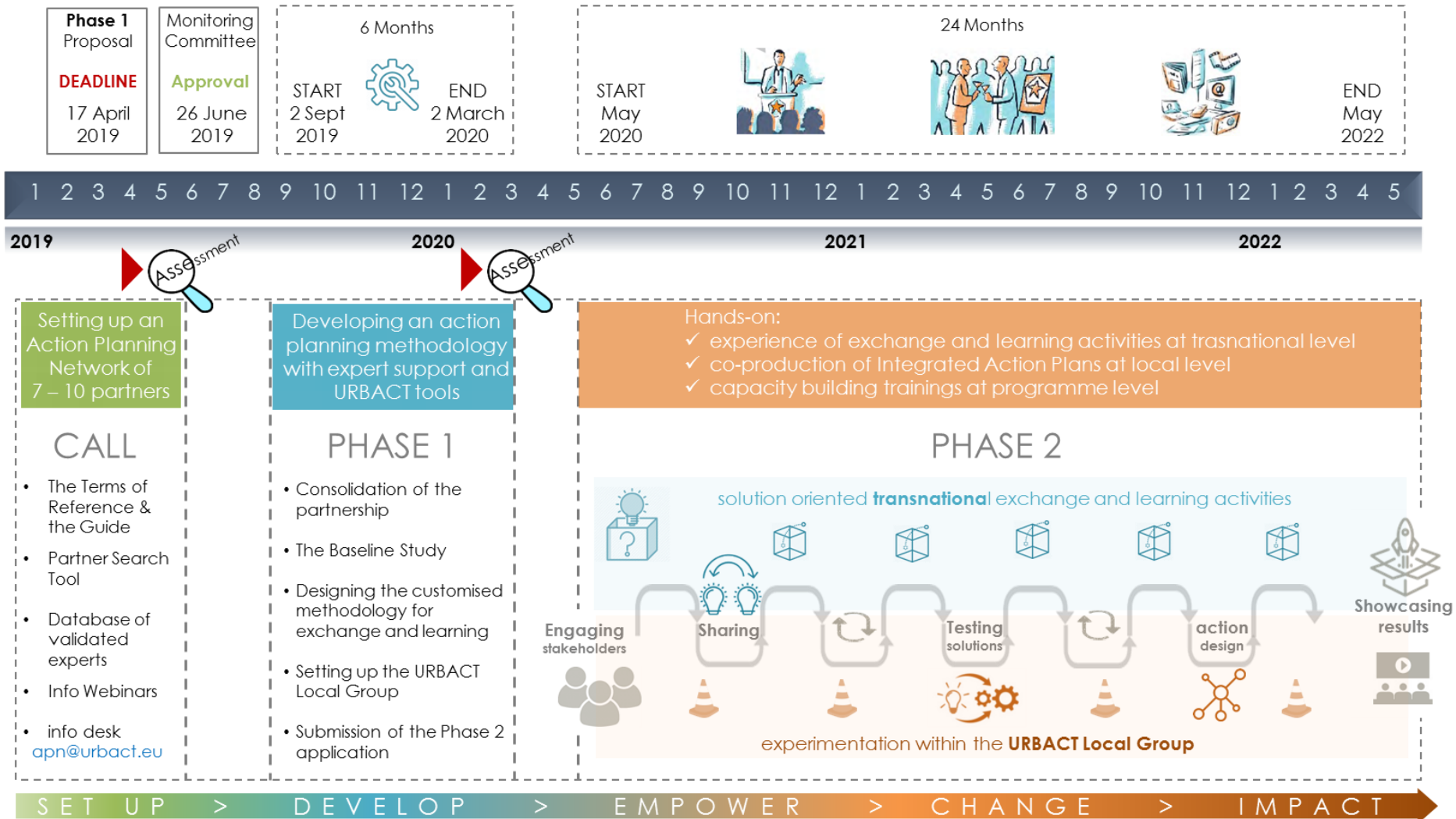
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#### WP4 - Communication and Dissemination

Is about implementing the network Communication plan produced at the beginning of Phase 2 - showcasing results from network activities on an ongoing basis to the wider community of urban practitioners outside the network. It includes:

- Interim network outputs (thematic reports, case studies, articles, videos)
- Partner level outputs (experience stories and videos)
- Network final product/s
- Organisation of final network event for wider audience

# INFOGRAPHIC: THE URBACT ACTION PLANNING NETWORK JOURNEY



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## 2. Setting up an Action Planning Network



This section includes details for the corresponding sections of the application form for Action Planning Network proposal, these are the following:

Understanding the policy challenge:

- ✓ Application form for Phase 1 section 2 – Thematic content

Finding the right partners:

- ✓ Application form for Phase 1 section 3 – Rationale of proposed partnership

*The information provided in this section is instrumental for both Lead Partners and Project Partner candidate cities.*

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## 2.1. THE THEMATIC CONTENT

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An URBACT Action Planning Network is built around a shared policy challenge providing the platform for the exchange of learning. The shared challenge addressed by the network creates a bond between partners.

The identification of the policy challenge to be addressed in an URBACT Action Planning Network is an initial key step when preparing a Phase 1 Application in the framework of the call for proposals.

### *Have you consulted what your colleagues from another department 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:

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

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 partners in the design of integrated policies for sustainable urban development, but they are also expected to generate knowledge (in the form of case studies, thematic reports, policy recommendations, etc.) to feed into the debate at EU, national and regional level.

### *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 CO<sub>2</sub> emissions etc.). It should provide some explanation of why this particular challenge was selected and how it is relevant for the network partners.

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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 EU urban 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 of European cities.

Secondly, the policy challenge should reflect the European Union urban policy priorities which are reflected within the URBACT Programme objectives and set out within the 10 Thematic Objectives (TOs)<sup>11</sup> of the EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020<sup>12</sup>.

Complementing these objectives, by mid-2019 the Urban Agenda for the EU will have established 14 Working Partnerships<sup>13</sup>, tasked with examining ways to improve the efficiency of European funds and regulations in urban areas. The partnerships have an interest in practical solutions, particularly where EU funds have been optimised, so applicants may refer to how their selected policy challenge relates to these.

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

There are themes that have never been developed in an URBACT network. We would like to address this point in this call for Action Planning Networks by giving some hints and by encouraging cities to come forward with high quality proposals for some of these themes.

To date the URBACT III programme has financed 48 networks. Overall these networks provide a very good thematic coverage of the 10 Thematic Objectives (TO), however some are less common (the table below illustrates the number of networks financed under each TO). This second call for proposals for Action Planning Networks is looking to ensure a strong coverage of these Thematic Objectives. New proposals should demonstrate added value when considering the networks already financed.

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<sup>11</sup> The eleventh TO is for capacity-building, which is the core objective of URBACT and therefore is not included in the programme Thematic Coverage.

<sup>12</sup> The description of 10 Thematic Objectives included in the URBACT Thematic Coverage is available in the [URBACT III Programme Manual – Fact Sheet 1](#).

<sup>13</sup> Details of the Partnerships are at the EU's [Futurium](#) website.

Please consult as well the 'urban topics' and 'networks' at [urbact.eu](http://urbact.eu) website which can give you an idea about the structure of topics tackled in URBACT. <http://urbact.eu/all-networks>

Table 1 – Thematic Coverage of URBACT III Networks (closed and ongoing)

| THEMATIC OBJECTIVE (TO)   | N° OF NETWORKS | %           |
|---|----------------|-------------|
| Strengthening research, technological development and innovation (TO1)  | 8              | 17          |
| Enhancing access to and use and quality of ICT (TO2)  | 2              | 4           |
| Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs (TO3)   | 6              | 13          |
| Supporting the shift towards a low carbon economy in all sectors (TO4)  | 2              | 4           |
| Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management (TO5)                                       | 1              | 2           |
| Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency (TO6)  | 8              | 17          |
| Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures (TO7)                   | 1              | 2           |
| Promoting employment and supporting labour mobility (TO8)   | 2              | 4           |
| Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty (TO9)  | 16             | 33          |
| Investing in education, skills and lifelong learning by developing education and training infrastructure (TO10) | 2              | 4           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>48</b>      | <b>100%</b> |

Applicants shall submit their proposal under 1 of the 10 above mentioned Thematic Objectives, depending on the main policy challenge selected. When considered from an integrated approach perspective, all 10 topics are strongly inter-related. For instance, fostering economic competitiveness goes hand in hand with improving social inclusion, and vice-versa. It is expected that the selected Thematic Objective will be the main entry point into the network while allowing partners to explore connections with other Thematic Objectives.

The important issue of gender equality should be mainstreamed into all proposals and there is a specific question on this point in the application form for Phase 1.

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## 2.2. BUILDING THE PARTNERSHIP

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An effective transnational partnership is central to the success of the Action Planning Networks. Since 2002, the URBACT Programme has supported around 1 000 cities in nearly 100 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 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?
- ✓ Does each of the partners have a commitment to design an Integrated Action Plan using the URBACT Method?
- ✓ Does each partner commit to provide sufficient resources for their network activities as required<sup>14</sup>?
- ✓ Is the proposed partnership eligible in the framework of the present Call for Proposals?

### 2.2.1. PARTNERSHIP SET UP & ELIGIBILITY

When considering setting up or joining a partnership for an Action Planning Network in the framework of the call for proposals, you should bear in mind the following eligibility criteria<sup>15</sup>:

- ✓ Partnerships proposed for the Action Planning Networks should comprise between 7 and 10 partners including the Lead Partner
- ✓ Lead Partner city can only be Lead Partner in one project proposal
- ✓ Any beneficiary<sup>16</sup> from one of the 28 EU Member States, plus Switzerland and Norway, is eligible.
- ✓ Non-EU cities can participate as partners but only at their own cost.

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<sup>14</sup> *Templates for the Letters of Commitment to be provided with the application for Phase 1 are available in Annexes 2 and 3 of the Terms of Reference for the Call for Proposals for Action Planning Networks*

<sup>15</sup> *You can find detailed information on the requirements for the composition of the partnership in section 4 of the Terms of References for the Call for Action Planning Networks.*

<sup>16</sup> *For the exact definition of the eligible beneficiary 'city' and 'non-city' please check the section 2.2. in the Terms of References for the Call for Action Planning Networks.*



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## 2.2.2. 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.

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 1 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 1 – Simple questionnaire for assessing relevance of partners

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#### **Institution details**

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

#### **Partner profile**

- Have you already been involved in an URBACT Network? What is your motivation to join this network?

- What are the problems and challenges faced by the partner city in relation to the theme?
- What are the policies and concrete actions developed by the partner city so far in relation to the policy challenge?
- What could be the scope of the Integrated Action Plan to be produced by the partner city within the framework of the network?
- Who will be involved in the initial URBACT Local Group to be set up by the partner city?
- What is the potential contribution of the partner city to the network activities and what does the partner expect from the network?
- What is the experience of the partner city in terms of working through transnational exchange in relation to the policy challenge?

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It is important to consider geographical balance within the partnership. Whilst not an eligibility criteria, this is an important consideration during assessment.

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

**2.2.3. 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 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 for phase 1 i.e. joins another Network proposal, does not provide the signed Letter of Commitment on time, etc. Anything can happen!

*Balancing with less developed regions*

The partnership for Action Planning Network shall, according to the eligibility criteria, include at least 3-5 cities from Less Developed regions (depending on total number of partners). In this regard, we recommend you to 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.

*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 our guiding principle is to ensure participation of a maximum number of cities in URBACT networks and fill in all the seats available. At the same time you should aim for geographical balance across Europe: we are always striving to expand our reach and to provide a real added value to cities needing the support of their peers and the URBACT programme to find solutions. We are particularly seeking to support cities which are new to the URBACT 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.

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### *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' (see section 1.3) 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 for Phase 1 and activities get started, some partners can turn out to be less active than expected. Therefore developing a small partnership of 7 cities is also risky should some of them turn out to be 'sleeping partners'. Even though you can replace partners during Phase 1 (please see section 3.2.1. for details) the dynamics in the partnership and the richness of the transnational exchange may be impacted.

### *Be smart*

It is not always easy to assess these dimensions during the short period available for partner search during the application process. This is why the programme provides the URBACT Partner Search tool and contacts of National URBACT points (Please see section below - support during the call) which can be very useful for finding right partners from different countries. Please do not hesitate to contact us especially if you need help with checking the eligibility of “non-city” partners. 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 make a decision. Try to avoid cities which are 'sold' by consultants but do not have real interest and/or capacity to become committed and active partners (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.

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## SUPPORT DURING THE OPEN CALL FOR THIS SECTION

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### **URBACT Joint Secretariat**

- ✓ Several information webinars will be organised (online):

11 January 11h:

General presentation focusing on all aspects of the call (will include Q&A)

7 February 14h:

FOCUS - building the partnership (with Q&A)

- ✓ You can reach us anytime via [apn@urbact.eu](mailto:apn@urbact.eu). We will try to answer your question/ partner eligibility request in shortest time possible.
- ✓ We are frequently updating our webpage with frequently asked questions. Please check it here: <http://urbact.eu/faq>

### **Partner Search Tool**

Previous experience shows that the creation of partnerships takes place from the very beginning of the call therefore the Partner Search Tool – <http://urbact.eu/partner-search-tool> can be a very useful way to find the right partners.

It allows you to post your network proposal, check other proposals, send/ receive an expression of interest to/ from potential partners as well as signal a need for validated URBACT Lead Expert.

### **National URBACT Points (NUPs)**

NUPs can act as matchmakers across countries for cities having difficulty in finding partners on a specific topic. Contact details of all NUPs are available [here](#).

Most NUPs will organise national info days on the Call for Action Planning Networks from January 2019 onwards. Exact dates and practical information are regularly updated on this [webpage](#).

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## 3. Phase 1 of Action Planning Networks - the development phase



Phase 1 of an Action Planning Network aims to provide partners with sufficient time and resources to develop the project in each partner city. The partners will be supported by a Lead Expert who will help define the policy challenge and exchange and learning methodology.

This section provides relevant information for building your network proposal regarding the expected activities in Phase 1 of the Action Planning Network which correspond to the following sections of the application form for Phase 1:

Activities to be proposed in each work package of Phase 1:

- ✓ Application form for Phase 1 section 4 - Activities and expected outputs

Setting up the Lead Partner coordination team:

- ✓ Application form for Phase 1 section 6 - Project management and leadership

Finding the right experts:

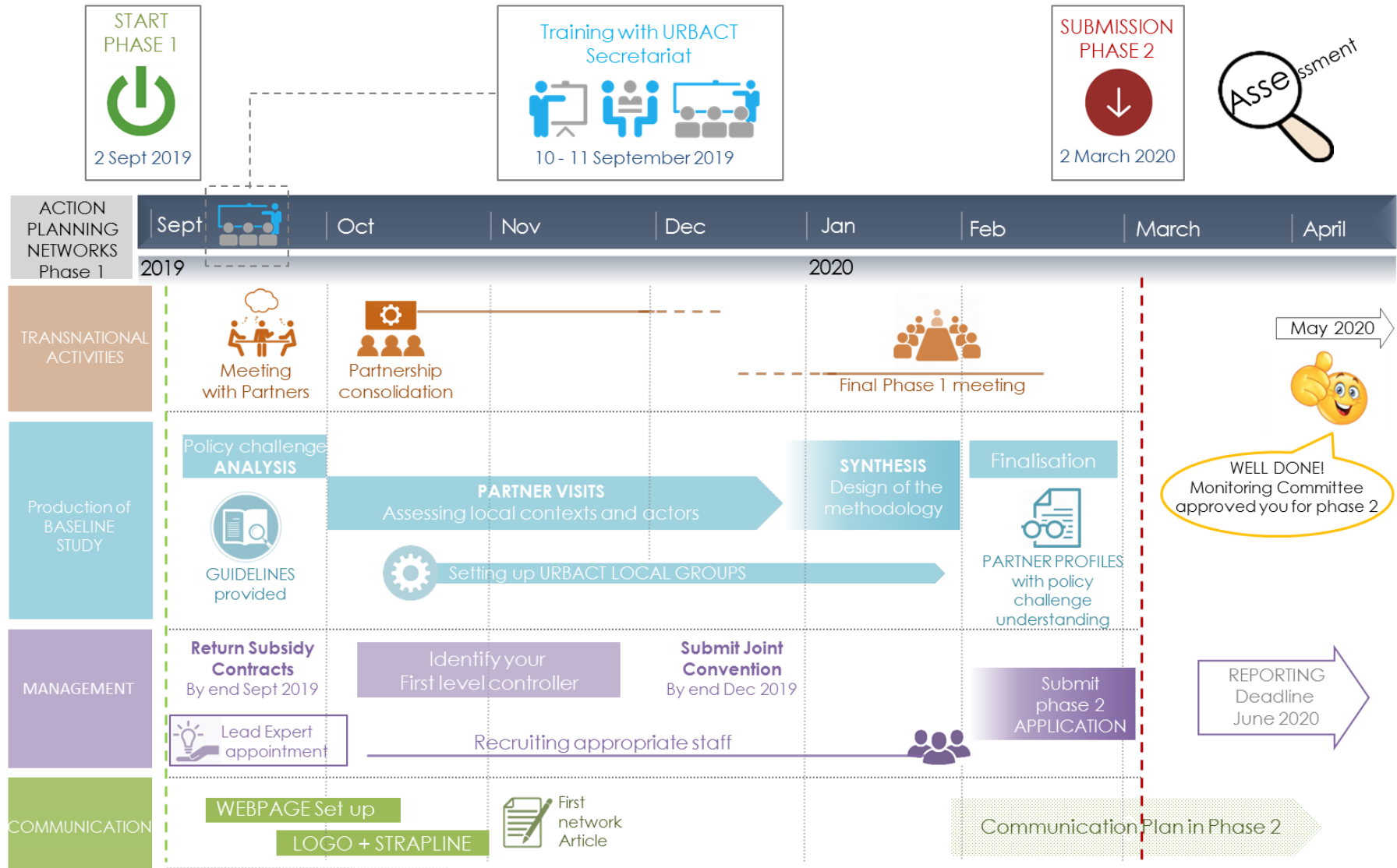
- ✓ Application form for Phase 1 section 7 – Use of expertise

Forecasting the budget:

- ✓ Application form for Phase 1 section 8 – Budgetary proposal

*The information provided in this section is instrumental mainly for Lead Partner candidate cities which will submit the Phase 1 application. Nevertheless, it is important that Project Partner candidate cities understand all network activities in Phase 1 and contribute to the conception of the proposal.*

# INFOGRAPHIC: ZOOM IN THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ACTION PLANNING NETWORKS IN PHASE 1



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Activities in Phase 1 of Transfer Networks are structured around 2 Work Packages:

- ✓ WP1 – Project Management and Coordination
- ✓ WP2 – Project Development

### 3.1. WORK PACKAGE 1 – PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION

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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 – including budget and finance.

It aims to organise the work between the partners by building a strong collaborative relationship. The organisation of partners' responsibilities should result in the successful submission of all required documents for the final application for Phase 2 as well as the administrative documents for reporting and project management.

#### **Main activities for Work Package 1:**

Activities to be implemented under Work package 1 are compulsory to ensure the correct functioning of the network. These include:

- a. To sign all the contractual documents at programme and network level
- b. To recruit appropriate staff to ensure efficient project management
- c. To hold regular management meetings to ensure strong communication between partners concerning project coordination
- d. To assist Project Partners in the reporting of Phase 1 activities (6 months)
- e. To receive and transfer ERDF funds to partners (Lead Partner's responsibility)
- f. To attend organised training sessions and other events organised by the URBACT Joint Secretariat
- g. To ensure proper management of the expertise resources (Lead Expert) and monitoring of the Expert's work programme

Outputs to be delivered as a result of the actions under Work Package 1 are the following:

- ✓ The Subsidy Contract and the Joint Convention at the beginning of Phase 1
- ✓ The Expert request form at the beginning of Phase 1
- ✓ Approval documents for the First Level Controllers of Project Partners – [See Factsheet 2E of the Programme Manual](#)
- ✓ Final reporting documents at the end of Phase 1 – [See Factsheet 2E of the Programme Manual](#)
- ✓ Lead Expert Phase 1 performance review (template to be provided to all approved networks in Phase 1)

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### 3.1.1. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AN EFFICIENT DELIVERY OF ACTIONS

Some examples and recommendations on how to undertake these activities are outlined below:

#### *A. To sign all the contractual documents at Programme and project level*

The Lead Partner is responsible for signing the subsidy contract for the project. This document is in English and French and needs to be signed by an appropriate person (usually an elected representative) in the municipality. Other contractual documents exist and need to be adapted for the specificities of the project. An example includes the Joint Convention, this document is the official agreement between the Lead Partner and Project Partners outlining the project roles and responsibilities and the specific points to note concerning the network. This document helps to resolve issues at a later stage if there are disagreements between partners.

#### *B. To recruit appropriate staff to ensure efficient project management*

The Lead Partner should appoint a project coordinator, a finance officer and a communication officer (if not taken over by another partner) – these activities will require the equivalent of 2 full time posts

Each Project Partner should identify a qualified project coordinator who should (in principle) remain the same person for the whole network duration. During Phase 1 the project coordinator should participate in activity at transnational level and set up the URBACT Local Group (see details in Work package 2 for Phase 1). The project coordinator must have full professional proficiency in English.

For the Project Partners the equivalent of one full time post should be foreseen<sup>17</sup>.

Network communication activities are important in URBACT. A communications officer will be identified and responsible for the implementation of the network communications strategy. S/he can be appointed by either the Lead Partner or Project Partner (with the equivalent staff time). Further support and guidance will be provided by the URBACT Joint Secretariat during Phase 1.

#### *C. To hold regular management meetings to ensure strong communication between partners concerning project coordination*

It is important to foresee time to discuss common issues linked to project management, reporting of activity and budget provisions. A session on administrative questions could be organised during the transnational meetings or a dedicated meeting – on-site or online - could be organised separately for relevant personnel. Examples of how these meetings have been managed include a monthly management meeting via different online conference call tools, specific physical meetings before or after transnational meetings to focus on management issues, one to one support for partners experiencing difficulties etc.

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<sup>17</sup> Detailed information on roles and responsibilities of Lead Partner and Project Partners for project management is available in [URBACT III Programme Manual - Factsheet 2E](#) – Network Management



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It is important that all partners are involved and that the right people are present (often the local practitioner is not the person really carrying out the administrative tasks). Additional meetings should be scheduled before the reporting deadlines to ensure all partners are reactive and able to respect the deadlines.

The URBACT Joint Secretariat has a range of guidance notes at your disposal on the [www.urbact.eu](http://www.urbact.eu) website<sup>18</sup> and can also participate in your meetings to assist if necessary.

#### *D. To assist Project Partners in reviewing reporting documents before submission*

For each network there is a compulsory reporting session. This session allows declaring your incurred expenditure for refund in Phase 1. More details can be found in Factsheet 2E of the URBACT III Programme Manual. Partners often struggle in the early stages of the network and may need support from the Lead Partner to resolve problems. Nevertheless, Lead Partners are closely supported by the URBACT Joint Secretariat during the reporting process.

#### *E. To receive and transfer ERDF funds to partners*

The Lead Partner is responsible for receiving the ERDF refunds for all partners. A single payment claim is prepared for the whole network based on the costs declared for each partner using their approved intervention rate.

The Lead Partner must transfer the correct ERDF amount to the Project Partners in accordance with the Joint Convention as soon as possible after receipt. In order to fulfil this responsibility, the Lead partner is advised to set up an internal procedure in consultation with the financial services department in the municipality. All transfers should be made according to the agreed procedure in the Joint Convention and within a reasonable timeframe (normally no longer than 1 month).

#### *F. To attend organised training sessions and other Programme level events*

For the Lead Partner's team, the URBACT Joint Secretariat organises several training sessions on topics which can help deliver the project successfully. Examples include general project management, first level control issues, addressing state aid, reporting costs, setting up and running an URBACT Local Group, organising efficient exchange and learning transnational activities, ensuring effective communication etc. Attendance at these sessions is compulsory and the URBACT Programme covers travel and accommodation costs. Lead Partners should ensure that the most appropriate person attends these training sessions and that the key materials and messages are transferred to the Project Partners. In addition, a webinar for online accounting and management tool SYNERGIE-CTE will be organised by the Joint Secretariat for all the partners.

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<sup>18</sup> *Guide to Network Management available [here](#)*

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### *G. To ensure proper management of the expertise resources*

The Lead Partner is responsible for managing the expertise resource (Lead Expert in Phase 1) and monitoring delivery of the expert's work programme. The allocation for Experts is additional to the network budget which is equal to 170 days at EUR 750 per day, equivalent to EUR 127 000 for the whole lifetime of the Network (Phase 1 and Phase 2). The maximum of 40 days can be used in Phase 1 (further information in section 3.3.).

Even though the expert support is managed by the Lead Partner, it is a resource for the whole partnership. More especially, the expertise budget should provide all partners with a package of expertise services including:

- ✓ design and delivery of transnational exchange and learning activities;
- ✓ thematic expertise;
- ✓ support to local authorities and other stakeholders in delivering integrated and participatory policies.

The Lead Partner will be responsible for certifying the services performed by the Lead Expert and validating the expert's activity reports (including deliverables, number of days claimed, etc.)

At the beginning of Phase 1 Lead Partners will receive the template for the performance review of Lead Expert work in Phase 1. This will help partners effectively assess their collaboration with the Lead Expert and performance in relation to Phase 1 tasks.

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## 3.2. WORK PACKAGE 2 – PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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The activities to be developed under Work Package 2 will be designed to achieve the following aims:

- ✓ To consolidate the partnership by reviewing the relevance of project partners to the policy challenge addressed
- ✓ To fully analyse the policy challenge at the heart of the network
- ✓ To design the methodology for exchange and learning activities both at transnational and local level and in particular to create a coherent learning itinerary for Phase 2

### **Main activities and outputs for Work Package 2**

Activities and outputs to be implemented under WP2 should include:

- a. To proactively engage with partners to be involved in the final partnership for Phase 2
- b. To organise 2 transnational meetings gathering all partners
- c. To complete the Baseline Study describing the policy challenge, the partner city contexts and including the design of an exchange and learning methodology and work programme
- d. To identify the key local stakeholders to be involved in the URBACT Local Groups and appoint the URBACT Local Group coordinator
- e. To develop a visual identity and provide information to feed URBACT communication activities and set up the Network's webpage on the URBACT website
- f. To complete and submit the Phase 2 Application package (Phase 2 application form, commitment letters, Baseline Study, etc.)

### 3.2.1. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AN EFFICIENT DELIVERY OF ACTIONS AND OUTPUTS

#### *A. To proactively engage with partners to ensure active involvement in Phase 2*

One of the main aims of the two-phase process for Action Planning Networks is to provide networks approved for Phase 1 with time and resources in order to consolidate and review the relevance of the partnership for Phase 2.

The process of review of the partnership should be led by the Lead Partner with the Lead Expert support which will be based on the partner visits for the Baseline Study. It is important to agree on the interpretation of the policy challenge and develop a shared understanding.

In case of partner drop-outs in Phase 1, the network will have the possibility to find new partners. The network will also be able to add new partners during Phase 1.

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However, it is important to identify issues and consolidate the partnership as soon as possible during Phase 1 (within first 3 months) in order to have sufficient time to prepare the Phase 2 activities. Information concerning the local situation, needs, expectations and potential contributions of additional partners must be included in the Baseline Study (see below) and clearly outlined in the Phase 2 application.

### *B. To organise 2 transnational meetings gathering all partners*

During the 6-month Phase 1, approved Action Planning Networks must organise 2 transnational meeting:

- ✓ Kick-off meeting with all partners
- ✓ Final Phase 1 meeting with the full partnership (to be proposed for Phase 2) focused on validating the Baseline Study and the customised exchange and learning methodology and work programme.

#### **Kick-off meeting:**

The kick-off meeting should be organised as soon as possible after the official approval for Phase 1 following the training session organised by the URBACT Joint Secretariat (in Paris, 10 - 11 September 2019) for Lead Partners and Lead Experts of approved networks.

The network kick-off meeting is a key moment that will allow partners and the Lead Expert to meet physically for the first time and start the discussion on a set of activities to be addressed by the network in Phase 1 - introduce the URBACT objectives and expected results as well as the contractual and administrative requirements.

**During the kick off meeting, partners should agree on the dates and the process of the production of the Baseline Study.**

#### **Final Phase 1 meeting:**

All partners involved in the partnership for Phase 2 should attend the Final Phase 1 meeting. It can be hosted by any partner, however, it is important to provide the first opportunity for an investigation at network level of the policy challenge selected.

The whole partnership should agree on the final details related to the Network, methodology and work plan for Phase 2. The final discussion should build on the main findings and conclusions of the Baseline Study in relation to shared barriers and assets related to the policy challenge.

The Lead Partners should ensure that each partner is finalising the required contractual documents for the submission of the Phase 2 Application (letter of commitment) and in a position to provide the necessary support.

The Final Phase 1 meeting should be organised once the Lead Partner and Lead Expert have completed the visits to all partners for the Baseline Study. In the meantime, the meeting should be fixed sufficiently in advance of the date of

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submission of the Phase 2 application to allow the Lead Partner to include the final decisions concerning the methodology and work programme in the documents to be submitted.

The meeting can also include a presentation of the online accounting and management tool SYNERGIE-CTE. Members of the URBACT Joint Secretariat will attend the Final Phase 1 meetings when possible to present the general framework of the URBACT Programme and to assist the Lead Partner with the presentation of the administrative and financial framework.

For both meetings networks will be able to use Lead Expert support which shall help with the design and organisation of the meeting agenda as well as the facilitation of specific sessions related to production of the Baseline Study and the design of coherent transnational exchange and learning methodology and work programme in phase 2. The design and facilitation of meetings is one of the main tasks to be performed by Lead Experts which shall be evaluated accordingly during Phase 1 by all the partners.

### *C. To complete the Baseline Study*

The Baseline Study is a key network deliverable to be produced during Phase 1. It will describe in clear details the policy challenge the network is facing, placing it within the context of the EU's urban policy priorities. The study will provide key details of each partner's background, the local conditions, context as well as potential for engagement. Most importantly, the study 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 study 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 Baseline Study visits from the Lead Expert and Lead Partner.

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Guidelines for the production of the Baseline Study will be available for Lead Partners and Lead Experts of Action Planning Networks approved for Phase 1. Detailed guidance will also be provided by the URBACT Joint Secretariat during the training session for Lead Partners and Experts to be held at the beginning of Phase 1 (in Paris, 10 – 11 September 2019).

The production of the Baseline study is the main responsibility of Lead Expert. It will be used to assess the performance of Lead Experts in relation to the knowledge of policy issues tackled by the network, as well as, the writing skills.

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

- URBACT III Action Planning Network – [TechTown Baseline Study](#)
- URBACT III Action Planning Network – [RetailLink Baseline Study](#)

#### *D. To identify the key local stakeholders to be involved in the URBACT Local Group and appoint the URBACT Local Group coordinator*

During Phase 1, partners should identify key local stakeholders to be involved in the URBACT Local Group. Partners are invited to organise during Phase 1 one meeting with the stakeholders initially identified to share information on the network. This step is crucial in laying a sound foundation for the network and in involving local stakeholders in the development of the network from the beginning.

#### **Recommendations based on previous URBACT Networks' experience:**

- ✓ Each partner should appoint an URBACT Local Group Coordinator as soon as possible.
- ✓ The local stakeholders identified as potential members of the URBACT Local Group should be informed, through the Local Group Coordinator, about the objectives of the Action Planning Network, the added value for partners as well as requirements from them when taking part.
- ✓ The first meeting of the initial members of the URBACT Local Group could be organised back-to-back with the visit of the Lead Expert to the partner (in the framework of the production of partner profiles for the Baseline Study).
- ✓ Detailed information on the roles and responsibilities of the URBACT Local Group Coordinator as well as on how to set up and successfully run the URBACT Local Group is available in the URBACT Toolkit<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> The [URBACT ULSG Toolkit](#) has been developed in the framework of URBACT II to support previous Thematic Networks. A revised version will be produced in 2019, yet information and guidance concerning the main activities (and related tools) remain relevant.

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### *E. To develop a visual identity and provide information to feed URBACT communication activities*

During Phase 1, the URBACT Joint Secretariat will manage basic external communication activities for all the networks. More precisely, the Joint Secretariat will be in charge of creating and updating a network page on the [urbact.eu](http://urbact.eu) website as well as communicating network news and results to the programme's relevant stakeholders.

Nevertheless, in order to successfully complete these activities, Lead Partners should provide the Joint Secretariat with all relevant information:

- ✓ A final network name (clear, specific & short)
- ✓ A project logo and tagline (stand-alone elements summarising what the network is about to be defined within two months of network start), in line with URBACT's graphic identity principles<sup>20</sup>.
- ✓ Details concerning the activities of the network (meetings, events, articles etc.) and partners profiles to be displayed on the network webpage and disseminated through programme communication activities and tools.
- ✓ Network social media accounts

Lead Partners should inform the public about the support obtained from ERDF funding providing a short description of the network (aims, challenges, expected results, partners, key dates, and ERDF financial support) on their institutional websites, and in poster form<sup>21</sup> in a publicly-accessible part of their institution's premises.

In Phase 2, all communication activities (detailed in a Communication Plan) will be developed directly by the network. A communications officer shall be identified and responsible for the implementation of the network communications. S/he can be appointed either by Lead Partner or Project Partner. Each partner will have its own local communication needs, which should also be taken into consideration. Further support and guidance will be provided by the URBACT Joint Secretariat (incl. training for network Communication officers).

### *F. To complete and submit Phase 2 Application*

In accordance with the 2-step process for the creation of Action Planning Networks, networks approved for Phase 1 should complete and submit, at the end of the 6-month period, their complete proposal in the form of a Phase 2 Application. The document, to be submitted through the online platform SYNERGIE-CTE, will include detailed information of the network theme and methodology, partnership as well as the work plan and budget for Phase 2. During Phase 1, the URBACT Joint Secretariat will provide Lead Partners of approved networks with detailed guidance on the Phase 2 Application to be submitted.

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<sup>20</sup> URBACT Network identity guidelines can be viewed [here](#)

<sup>21</sup> Please check a poster example from Making Spend Matter Transfer network. Downloadable [here](#).

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### 3.3. EXPERTISE FOR PHASE 1

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During Phase 1, approved Action Planning Networks will be supported by a validated URBACT Lead Expert which contributes to the design and implementation of the network methodology, reviewing the suitability of partners, coaching support for the exchange and learning process and the identification and sharing of learning outputs.

Experts being appointed to carry out the expertise support in Phase 1 can be chosen amongst experts validated as Lead Experts included in the URBACT pool of validated experts. The information on validated Lead Experts included in the pool (type of expertise, skills, past experiences, detailed CV) is available in the online database on the URBACT website<sup>22</sup>.

A Call for Applicants<sup>23</sup> for the pool of URBACT Experts is permanently open until the end of the Programme period (2014 – 2020). The online database of URBACT Experts is updated on an ongoing basis with new validated experts.

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.

#### 3.3.1. APPOINTING AND CONTRACTING THE LEAD EXPERT

In their application form, project applicants should generate a profile of the skills and experience required from their Lead Expert. In many cases these will be generic, including:

- ✓ Experience in working with complex transnational partnerships
- ✓ A track record in getting results
- ✓ Expertise in the design and use of partnership tools and exchange and learning methodologies
- ✓ A commitment to the URBACT principles of participation and integrated approaches
- ✓ Relevant thematic knowledge
- ✓ Solid facilitation skills
- ✓ Coaching skills
- ✓ Perfect spoken and written English

In some cases, applicants may have specific additional competencies in mind when considering their expertise requirements.

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<sup>22</sup> URBACT III Pool of validated Experts: <http://urbact.eu/experts-list>

<sup>23</sup> Experts can apply anytime: <http://urbact.eu/become-urbact-expert>



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## Selection of experts

When submitting the Phase 1 Application, potential Lead Partners must propose THREE Lead Experts, who can only be selected from the URBACT pool of validated experts. A clear description of the expert profile should be included in the application form for ALL selected experts based on clear selection criteria and clear arguments for prioritisation. It is preferable that at least one of the proposed experts is female.

If applicant Lead Partners do not find the relevant expertise in the pool of validated URBACT experts, they may invite experts they know and have worked with to apply for validation following the procedure defined in the open Call for Experts<sup>24</sup>. The assessment of the Application Form for URBACT experts normally takes 3 weeks. Only the expert applications submitted before the end of the call (17 April 2019) will be considered.

Before selecting the 3 experts, you should establish a short-list of potential candidates and organise phone/ online calls to discuss and verify the interest for the topic to be addressed by the network, the potential contribution and the availability of the expert. Their intent and interest will be confirmed in a standard letter available in the Terms of Reference for this call.

Please note that some URBACT validated Lead Experts have never been involved actively in an URBACT Network. This should not be the reason for non-selection. The programme is striving to enlarge the base of high quality and experienced experts. The URBACT programme equips all Lead Experts of approved networks with necessary tools for the proper implementation of expertise services. During Phase 1 the URBACT Joint Secretariat is closely following expert activities and coordinates exchange between new and experienced experts to ensure better performance.

Validated Lead Experts currently appointed in URBACT Transfer Networks cannot be proposed for expertise services in Phase 1 of Action Planning Networks. This will be indicated at the respective online expert profiles accordingly. Please note that Experts can only be proposed for a maximum of THREE Action Planning Networks, therefore please check their possible multiple commitment prior to selection.

## Appointment and contracting

Lead Experts in Phase 1 of Action Planning Networks cannot be appointed to support more than one Action Planning Network at a time.

The CVs of the proposed Lead Experts should be attached to the Phase 1 Application. The External Assessment Panel will make recommendations regarding the expertise use in Phase 1 based on the proposed Lead Expert profiles. After the approval of the network proposal by the Monitoring Committee for Phase 1, Lead

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<sup>24</sup> Call for applicants for the constitution of the URBACT III pool of validated experts: <http://urbact.eu/become-urbact-expert>

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Partners with members of the URBACT Joint Secretariat will conduct interviews of all recommended experts to finalise their selection. Other experts can be proposed should these interviews be unsatisfactory.

When experts are confirmed as Lead Expert of an Action Planning Network the Lead Partner will submit an Expertise Request Form to commission the proposed Lead Expert for Phase 1. Following validation of the Lead Partner's request by the URBACT Joint Secretariat, a contract will be established between the Lead Expert and the URBACT Managing Authority. Payments to experts are carried out directly by the URBACT Joint Secretariat. A rigorous quality assessment and evaluation procedure will be set out to ensure the Lead Experts are fulfilling the required tasks appropriately.

Ideally, the Expert for Phase 1 should continue supporting the network as Lead Expert if the network is approved for Phase 2. Yet the appointment for Phase 1 does not imply any contractual commitment for Phase 2.

At the end of Phase 1, the Lead Partner, in agreement with all partners, will review the performance of the Lead Expert in phase 1 and may propose a different Lead Expert for Phase 2. Phase 1 is considered to be an opportunity to test working relationships and the quality of the expert's work before envisaging further commitment for phase 2.

### 3.3.2. ALLOCATION OF DAYS AND TASKS TO BE PERFORMED BY THE LEAD EXPERT

In Phase 1, Lead Experts will support network partners with the following tasks:

- ✓ Producing the Baseline study to be used as a key input for the Phase 2 Application
- ✓ Supporting Lead Partner and Project Partners in defining the transnational exchange and learning methodology and work programme for Phase 2
- ✓ Supporting partners in identifying the key stakeholders to be involved in the URBACT Local Group
- ✓ Supporting Lead Partner and Project Partners in organising and delivering transnational meetings to be held during Phase 1
- ✓ Delivering an article for [urbact.eu](http://urbact.eu) outlining the Network's core business, challenges and partners' profiles based on the URBACT Writing Guidelines
- ✓ Supporting the Lead Partner with the content for the Phase 2 Application set out in the Baseline Study.

The Lead Expert will be the person responsible for the production of the Baseline Study. In this perspective the Lead Expert shall visit all partners. It is strongly suggested that the Lead Partner also participates in partner visits, to give them a better insight into partners' context, priorities and commitment.

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## Allocation of days for the Expert in Phase 1

Each approved Action Planning Network will have an additional allocation of EUR 127 000 to cover the costs of expertise over the lifetime of the network (Phase 1 and Phase 2). As the daily expertise fee for URBACT Experts is set at EUR 750 (all taxes included), this budget corresponds to an envelope of 170 days of expertise to be made available to the whole partnership.

For Phase 1, the expertise allocation available for each Network will be limited to EUR 30 000 (40 days of expertise, including participation at training sessions organised by the URBACT Joint Secretariat). In Phase 1, only one single expert may be appointed. No other experts may be appointed from the dedicated expertise envelope.

For Phase 1, the Lead Expert's work plan and expected deliverables will be standard for all approved Networks. The standard work plan will build on the following tasks:

- Visiting all partners for the production of the Baseline study: 19 days on average
- Production of the Baseline study and methodology for exchange and learning: 12 days on average
- Support the preparation and delivery of the two network meetings of Phase 1: 7 days on average (including preparation of the agenda, participation and facilitation, reporting on meeting)
- Supporting the Lead Partner with the content for the Phase 2 application: 2 days on average

The additional envelope for expertise covers the expertise fees only. Costs for travel and accommodation for the Lead Expert for partner visits as well as to participate in the transnational meetings is covered by the Network budget (within the "External expertise and services" budget category of the Lead Partner).

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## 3.4. BUDGET FOR PHASE 1

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The total eligible cost for the Phase 1 of an Action Planning Network is set at a maximum of EUR 150 000. All partners will need to confirm their commitment to engaging the funds needed to co-finance ERDF by way of a letter of commitment. The ERDF 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.

The Action Planning Network budget must be presented in line with the five budget categories available in the SYNERGIE-CTE system:

- a. Staff costs
- b. Office and Administration costs
- c. Travel and accommodation
- d. External expertise and services
- e. Equipment

A detailed explanation of these costs including how to report can them be found in [Factsheet 2F](#) of the URBACT Programme Manual.

### 3.4.1. HINTS AND TIPS FOR BUDGETING YOUR PHASE 1 APPLICATION

#### A. Staff costs

Staff costs are specifically for staff employed by the partner. External providers must be reported in the budget category External Expertise. Staff costs should not usually represent more than 35-40% of the total budget as a general rule.

For Phase 1 it is strongly encouraged that only Lead Partner personnel costs be budgeted. Should other partners' staff costs be included, consideration should be given to the varying salary levels across Europe to ensure the most accurate budget estimation possible.

#### B. Office and Administration Costs

Office and administration costs are calculated as a flat rate of 3% of staff costs. The flat rate covers all office and administration costs, i.e. there is no distinction between direct and indirect costs. By applying the 3% flat rate, partners do not need to document that the expenditure has been incurred and paid, or that the flat rate corresponds to the reality.

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### *C. Travel and Accommodation (T&A)*

This category is, not surprisingly, one of the highest representing about one third of the network total costs. As a general rule the most economical way of travel must be used (for example travel should be economy class). A trip to a transnational seminar consisting of transport and 2-3 nights' accommodation costs around EUR 650 on average per person.

During the project development process in Phase 1 you might have to add or replace a partner. These situations are rare, nevertheless, we suggest foreseeing some budget for covering the T&A costs for approximately two (new) partners. These costs can be shared among partners or covered only by the Lead Partner.

### *D. External expertise and services*

This budget category varies considerably between networks based on the need for external support. It is recommended to review the needs of Project Partners in terms of possible costs for expertise before estimating the budget needed for Phase 1.

All expertise travel should be considered in this category (Including Lead Expert's visits to produce the Baseline Study as well as participation of project coordinator in transnational meetings if external). Average costs are the same as those for transnational meetings mentioned above.

Costs in this category also include those linked to the organisation of meetings (room and equipment hire, interpretation and catering). It is often possible to minimise room hire costs by using venues in project partner's premises.

In this budget category, there are also costs linked to creation of visual identity, newsletters, brochures, printing and translation but they are usually quite limited in Phase 1 with an average total budget of around EUR 7 000 presented.

For information, previous networks reported on average EUR 40-45 000 of external expertise and services costs in total for Phase 1 (incl. all costs covered cumulatively under this budget category) representing about 25-30% of the total budget.

### *E. Equipment*

In Phase 1, normally no equipment costs should be presented.

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## SUPPORT DURING THE OPEN CALL FOR THIS SECTION

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### **URBACT Joint Secretariat**

- ✓ Several information webinars will be organised online:

7 March 14h:

FOCUS – Phase 1 activity (with Q&A)

4 April 14h:

FOCUS – Building your budget and submitting your Application form (with Q&A)

11 April 14h:

Last chance troubleshooting, especially in relation to SYNERGIE-CTE online application platform (with Q&A)

- ✓ You can reach us anytime via [apn@urbact.eu](mailto:apn@urbact.eu). We will try to answer your question in shortest time possible.
- ✓ We are frequently updating our webpage with frequently asked questions. Please check it here: <http://urbact.eu/faq>

## THE “URBACT” GLOSSARY

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### **The URBACT Method<sup>25</sup>**

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 approach at local level to solving concrete challenges with variety of stakeholders within the framework of URBACT Local Group.
- ✓ 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.

### **URBACT Action Planning Network**

It is one of the three types of networks developed under URBACT III (along with Implementation and Transfer Networks). It operates over 2 phases - 6 months of development and 24 months of network implementation and allows up to 10 cities to collaborate over a 30-month period. The network focus is to improve the design of integrated and sustainable policies tackling specific urban challenges by producing concrete Integrated Action Plans.

### **Lead Partner and Project Partners<sup>26</sup>**

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<sup>27</sup>**

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 (Commissariat Général à l'Égalité 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

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<sup>25</sup> [URBACT Programme Manual](#) sets out the *modus operandi* of the URBACT III programme.

<sup>26</sup> Further information about the roles of each is available in different sections of this Guide and the [Programme Manual – Factsheet 2E – Network management](#).

<sup>27</sup> The URBACT ULG Toolkit is available [here](#)

their work from peer-learning processes, capacity building, communication activities, and capitalisation efforts to management & financial support.

### **URBACT Programme Experts**

The URBACT Joint Secretariat contracts Programme Experts which provide external expertise at both network and programme level:

- Thematic Programme Experts capitalise on the knowledge and learning coming from the URBACT networks and other sources.
- Programme Experts on methods and tools help design and deliver the tools used for capacity building, notably with networks and capacity building actions.

### **Validated URBACT Experts<sup>28</sup>**

Experts that want to provide support to URBACT Networks need to be validated by the URBACT programme. All URBACT networks have access to expert support from validated URBACT experts. There are two types of validated URBACT experts:

- Lead Experts provide thematic and methodological expertise. S/he is appointed by the network to design and deliver efficient transnational exchange and learning activities and provide thematic expertise related to the policy challenge. They also bring expert coaching skills.
- Ad hoc Experts may also be selected to provide support on specific needs concerning the methodology for exchange and learning, thematic expertise or support to partners.

### **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<sup>29</sup> with their National URBACT Points and explore what kind of support they can provide.

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<sup>28</sup> Experts have to be selected from the URBACT pool of validated experts: <http://urbact.eu/experts-list>. Experts can apply anytime: <http://urbact.eu/become-urbact-expert>

<sup>29</sup> The [contact details](#) of all National URBACT Points





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for better cities with you!