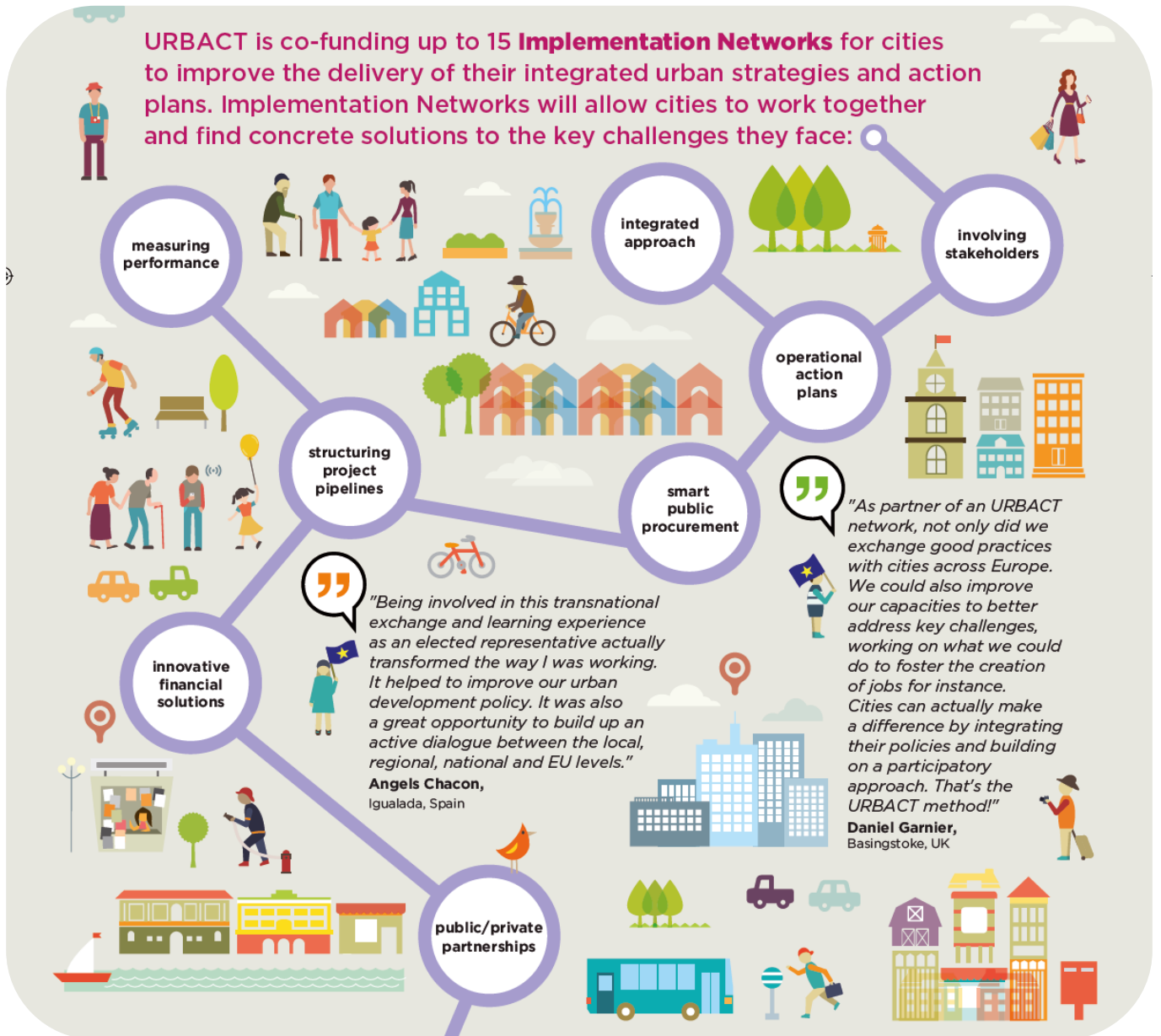


The Guide to URBACT Implementation Networks

URBACT is co-funding up to 15 **Implementation Networks** for cities to improve the delivery of their integrated urban strategies and action plans. Implementation Networks will allow cities to work together and find concrete solutions to the key challenges they face:



April 2016



Foreword

URBACT supports European cities in addressing the pressing urban challenges they face today and developing sustainable integrated responses to those challenges. URBACT networks foster the exchange of experience and good practices across cities and build the capacities of urban practitioners and decision-makers to develop efficient solutions for their cities.

Implementation Networks are one of the three types of networks developed under URBACT III, along with Action Planning Networks and Transfer Networks. Implementation Networks are aimed at all cities that have a strategy or action plan for sustainable integrated urban development and the resources to implement all or part of their plan. Those cities may have developed their strategies and/or action plans in other networks whether through URBACT itself, through other EU programmes such as Horizon 2020, through national or regional programmes or through their own independent actions. They may also have been selected for ERDF funding under Article 7 of the ERDF (see annex 1).

This guide aims to introduce potential partners to URBACT Implementation Networks. It will allow you to have a better understanding of what you can expect by joining an URBACT Implementation Network and clarifies the commitment and contributions expected from you.

You will get here detailed information on how to design a proposal for Implementation Networks: how to define a work plan, deliverables, budget, and how to manage an URBACT network. It outlines the main rules and procedures to be respected as well as references to good practices related to the implementation of network activities.

This guide has been conceived to complement the Terms of Reference for the Call for Proposals for the creation of Implementation Networks and to assist you in preparing a quality project proposal. It draws on several factsheets of the URBACT Programme Manual, which explain different procedures related to management of networks (Factsheet 2E), or the Implementation Networks specifically (Factsheet 2B).

Use this guide as much as possible; it contains the basic principles for the successful development of your project and, at the end of the day, for a positive impact on your local policies.

The Call for Proposals for Implementation Networks will be a competitive process to approve the best networks. In previous calls the number of bids has been as much as five times the number of approved networks.

We hope that this Guide to Implementation Networks will provide you with useful suggestions and ideas on how to build a successful proposal.

We wish you good luck!

The URBACT Team

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Glossary

Implementation Network:

Implementation networks are one of the three types of networks developed under URBACT III. They are EU-funded projects, which allow up to 9 cities to network, benefit from peer-learning and external expertise whilst implementing a strategy or action plan previously developed.

Operational Implementation Framework:

The Operational Implementation Framework is the key output that each partner of an Implementation Network will have to deliver as a result of its involvement in the network. It will be composed of all the policy instruments/ solutions each partner will have developed to address the implementation challenges identified at the beginning of the network life cycle.

Baseline Study:

The Baseline Study is a document that will be drafted at an early stage of the network development by the network lead expert. It is one of the deliverable required at the end of the first six months of the network (Phase 1). It builds on a review, by the Lead expert, of the local situations (state of play, challenges, needs and resources). It should be used to analyse the existing experience of each partner, and identify the challenges that will be addressed by the network to support partners with the implementation of their urban strategies/ action plans.

URBACT local group:

The URBACT Local Group (ULG) is a fundamental building block of the URBACT programme. In every partner city, the ULG brings together all relevant local stakeholders related to the chosen policy challenge that the city wants to tackle. The ULG is the vehicle of a participatory process allowing relevant stakeholders to be involved in the production of the different components of the Operational Implementation Framework.

Lead Expert:

One of the benefits of taking part in an URBACT network is to receive expert support. The Lead Expert is expected to provide both thematic and methodological support. The Lead Expert is appointed by the partnership to support partners in designing and delivering efficient exchange and learning activities, in producing the deliverables expected from the network (outputs, events), and with thematic expertise related to the policy challenge tackled in the network.

Ad hoc Expert:

Ad hoc Experts may also be commissioned to provide support on specific needs identified by networks concerning the methodology for exchange and learning, thematic expertise or support to partners¹.

¹ More information on the general principles for expertise is provided in the URBACT Programme Manual (fact sheet 2B) and in section 5.5 of this guide. Details on the selection, appointment and contracting of Lead and ad hoc experts are also available in sections 4.3 (for Phase 1) and 5.5 (for Phase 2) of this guide.

Programme Expert:

Six Programme Experts have been appointed by the URBACT programme. Each of them follows several URBACT Networks. They provide external expertise at both network and programme level. They are in charge of the capitalisation of knowledge on a number of thematic area, building on results coming from the URBACT networks.

URBACT joint secretariat:

The URBACT Joint Secretariat, in the name of the French Managing Authority, is in charge of implementing and managing the Programme on behalf of the Member and Partner States. They follow and support networks in their roll-out, in the peer-learning process, in their communication activities, and capitalisation efforts.

CHAPTER 1

BEING PARTNER OF AN URBACT IMPLEMENTATION NETWORK

1.1. What cities are we targeting?

We are targeting cities that have already developed an integrated strategy or action plan for sustainable urban development and have a budget to finance its implementation.

If you do not have a strategy or if you do not have resources, you should not join this type of network.

If you think you are eligible the second question to ask is to examine where you stand regarding the statements below:

- Your city wishes to improve the implementation of local policies and address specific implementation challenges
- Your city wants to improve the capacities of local government officials and other stakeholders to implement 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 problems/ challenges
- Your city wants to involve inhabitants and relevant key stakeholders in the delivery of local urban policies

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 requirements, commitments and the different phases in the life of an URBACT Implementation Network.

1.2. What you can expect when joining an URBACT Implementation Network

Joining an URBACT Implementation Network will allow you to benefit from a structured and organised process of exchange and learning with peers across Europe, with a view to improving the implementation of your local strategy/ policy. Here is, at a glimpse, what you can expect:

- Learning from peers across Europe
- Concrete solutions to your implementation challenges
- Enhanced capacities for policy-making and delivery
- Support from experts and from the URBACT secretariat
- Financial resources for exchange and learning
- Closer relations with funders

1.2.1. Transnational exchange and peer learning

Networking with other European cities within URBACT will allow you to exchange and share your experiences, challenges, problems, and develop solutions with peers across Europe.

Transnational exchange and learning in URBACT builds on visiting and meeting with partners with the support of experts who provide methods to ensure active learning. Transnational meetings include peer reviews and site visits during which partners have the opportunity to learn how other cities are concretely dealing with the implementation of their integrated strategies/ action plans and with related challenges and problems. While exchanging with the host city and other network partners, cities are also led to reconsider their own approaches to similar issues they may be confronted with. Hence identifying the relevant common implementation challenges among the partners are crucial for the success of the Network.

Participating in network seminars will also be a great opportunity to benefit from the thematic inputs provided by European urban experts, academics and researchers, as well as policy-makers beyond your single network.

1.2.2. Concrete solutions to your implementation challenges

Exchange and learning activities are conceived as a tool to improve capacities to implement integrated strategies or action plans for sustainable urban development. Joining an URBACT Implementation Network, you will have the opportunity to explore specific problems or challenges you are facing in relation to the implementation of your existing integrated strategy/ action plan (in terms of participatory approach, funding, public procurement, project management, etc.), and to work out solutions to these problems. It is thus crucial to ensure that there is strong political support in your city to address these implementation challenges.

Exchange and learning activities at transnational level will provide you with practical knowledge, experience and good practices from peers and experts. This will feed into the work you will be doing at local level.

In each partner city, an URBACT Local Group will be set up gathering all stakeholders concerned by the integrated strategy/ action plan that will be at the core of your network activities. The main objective of this URBACT Local Group will be to develop concrete solutions to those problems or challenges that you will have identified in the first phase of the network life cycle.

A key deliverable for each partner involved in an URBACT Implementation Network is the Operational Implementation Framework²: a portfolio of policy instruments that will each address one of the implementation related challenges identified by the partner city.

After being involved for nearly 3 years in an Implementation Network, you can expect progress in the implementation of your integrated urban strategy and actions plan, in terms of:

- **impact** (quality of actions and progress on the ground),
- **coherence** (looking for a real integration and coherence of actions),
- **efficiency** (better use of resources),
- **political and financial support** (involving local stakeholders, financiers, etc.).

1.2.3. Enhanced capacities for policy-making and delivery

URBACT activities are designed to enhance capacities of city staff and other local urban practitioners involved in the programme in the field of sustainable integrated urban development. Being an active partner in an Implementation Network will allow you to strengthen your capacities and develop new skills.

The teams involved at local level in the delivery of integrated urban strategies/ action plans are often different from those tasked with designing these strategies/ plans. They also have specific implementation needs that arise during the implementation phase. These might include:

- managing public procurement processes,
- launching calls for projects
- obtaining permissions and consents,
- checking on state aids,
- implementing new financial engineering tools,
- budgeting,
- project management,
- monitoring the results achieved by the programme, etc.

Each of these aspects requires capacities to be developed in the teams that are leading the work within the city and in cooperation with local stakeholders.

Through the network exchange, you will develop a better understanding and knowledge of the policy challenges addressed by the network and develop solutions to these challenges. Doing so, you will also build up professional skills in participatory implementation, while working with other local stakeholders on your Operational Implementation Framework.

In addition to the activities implemented by the networks themselves, the URBACT Programme offers regular training and capacity-building activities for partners and local stakeholders involved in approved Implementation Networks.

² this is to be conceived as an instrument for partner to improve the delivery of strategies and actions, taking into account the local context, challenges and resources

These include:

- a transnational URBACT Summer University for key stakeholders,
- ad hoc training schemes on participatory and integrated implementation of urban policies organised at national level,
- targeted training schemes for elected representatives, Managing Authorities of Operational Programmes, among others.

These activities are complementary to network activities and designed to provide urban players with the tools they need to actually deliver on all network activities, and more especially on the outputs they should produce at local level (eg the Operational Implementation Framework). Costs for participation in these activities are eligible on the network budget. Through these activities, URBACT intends to go beyond individual learning and to allow cities to improve the way they are working with their communities beyond the life span of the URBACT network.

1.2.4. Support from URBACT Experts

The Programme provides to each Implementation Network a specific budget for the appointment of URBACT Experts who are commissioned to support the exchange and learning process, to provide thematic input in relation to the policy challenges addressed by partners, to draw lessons and package learning coming from the network activities, etc.

Each Implementation Network shall appoint a Lead Expert who will assist the partnership over the entire duration of the network. Ad hoc experts may also be recruited to provide additional support on in terms of methodology for exchange and learning, thematic expertise or support to local partners³.

At Programme level, approved Implementation Networks will receive additional support from Programme Experts. These Programme Experts will be appointed by the URBACT Programme and will work closely with the Joint Secretariat. They will support network partners and experts to achieve quality results both at transnational and local level and to disseminate these results beyond the network.

1.2.5. Support from the URBACT Secretariat

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

To support beneficiaries, the URBACT Secretariat also:

- organises training sessions for network Lead Partners and experts,
- keeps in regular contact with network lead partners in order to review progress on delivery of planned activities,

³ Both Lead experts and Ad hoc Experts shall be selected from the pool of validated URBACT experts available on <http://urbact.eu/experts-list> More information on the general principles for expertise is provided in the URBACT Programme Manual (fact sheet 2B). Details on the selection, appointment and contracting of Lead and ad hoc experts are also available in sections 5.3 (for Phase 1) and 6.5 (for Phase 2) of this guide.

- provides ongoing support, and
- facilitates exchange of experience and good practices across networks, etc.

The URBACT Secretariat contributes to enhance the visibility and communication of Implementation Networks and the dissemination of their findings by:

- providing a flagship website www.urbact.eu (Programme website), on which each Implementation Network has its own dedicated space (Network websites/mini-page),
- publishing newsletters,
- working closely with the National URBACT Points in order to foster communication and dissemination of the networks' results in different languages
- organising capitalisation activities to consolidate network results and capitalisation events to share the results with a wide audience across Europe.

1.2.6. Financial resources for exchange and learning

The URBACT Programme provides financial resources to support network activities. The total eligible budget of an Implementation Network will be between 600 000 € and 750 000 € based on the justification provided (number of partners, volume of activity, local costs etc.). This budget is split between Phases 1 and 2⁴.

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

- 70% for cities located in more developed areas
- 85% for cities located in less developed and transition areas.

Beneficiaries from Norway and Switzerland are also eligible to participate in URBACT networks and are financed at up to 50% by the national funds of the respective countries.

All partners are asked to confirm the local contribution to the project by a letter of commitment ensuring that all the necessary financial resources are available⁵.

URBACT also provides each network with an additional expertise budget of up to 127 500€, that represents 170 days of expertise at a standard rate of 750€ per day, to support networks and their partners in implementing their activities⁶.

1.2.7. Closer relations with funders

Through involvement in an Implementation Network, cities will develop closer relations with funders. Managing authorities as well as national or regional authorities can be involved with the help of URBACT and National URBACT Points; connections can be built with the main European financiers: European Commission DGs, European Investment Bank, and others.

Involving funders is essential to the success of an Implementation Network; it can be done especially through the involvement of funders in the URBACT Local Group to be set up by every city involved in an Implementation Network.

⁴ More details are available later in this guide as well as in Section 7 of the Terms of reference for the Call for Proposals for Implementation Networks.

⁵ (letters of commitment to be provided with the applications for phase 1 and for phase 2)

⁶ More information can be found in section 5.5 of the guide.

1.3. What is requested from you?

The creation of Implementation Networks will be a competitive process and not all cities in Europe will get to benefit from URBACT funding and networking activities. In order to ensure that cities will actually make the most of their participation in an Implementation Network, they will have to commit to delivering on the core objectives of the Programme. This commitment applies to the following activities:

1. To identify a clear set of challenges and/ or problems linked to the implementation of your integrated urban strategy or action plan.
2. To commit to produce concrete solutions and policy instruments to address the challenges you will have identified at local level.
3. To set up and run an URBACT Local Group.
4. To actively take part in transnational exchange and learning activities.
5. To manage the project and the partnership in a sound way.
6. To ensure communication and dissemination of project results.

1.3.1. To identify a clear set of challenges linked to the implementation of your integrated urban strategy

Partners of an Implementation Network will first come together around common policy challenges that will be at the centre of their urban strategies or action plans and as a consequence the focus of their network exchange and learning process.

Each Implementation Network proposal will also have to identify a set of Implementation Challenges that will be common to all partners involved in the proposal and which they will explore through transnational network activities. A list of challenges is predefined in the call for proposal, which applicants will have to refer to, some of them being mandatory and other optional⁷:

1. **Fostering the integrated approach (mandatory)**
2. **Involving local stakeholders (mandatory)**
3. **Measuring impact (mandatory)**
4. Building the project pipeline (optional)
5. Organising decision-making for delivery (optional)
6. Moving from strategy to operational action-plan (optional)
7. Developing Public Private Partnerships (optional)
8. Setting up smart public procurement (optional)
9. Enhancing funding of urban development policies through financial innovation (optional)

⁷ Further information in section 2.2.

1.3.2. To commit to produce concrete solutions and policy instruments

The ultimate aim of an Implementation Network is for each city to improve the delivery of strategies and action plans through concrete solutions and policy instruments. As partner in an Implementation Network, you will be expected to explore and develop, in collaboration with the relevant local stakeholders, concrete solutions to the Implementation Challenges you will have identified at the beginning of the network life cycle.

This requires the commitment of senior politicians and officials within each city be informed - and as much as possible involved- and commit to manage change within organisations responsible for delivery.

1.3.3. To set up and run an URBACT Local Group

Each partner joining an URBACT Implementation Network is requested to involve the relevant local stakeholders in identifying the implementation challenges that will be at the heart of the network activities (this should happen during the 6-month development phase of the Implementation Networks – See section 4.1 for more details on the 2 phases of an Implementation Network). Later stakeholders involved in the partner's URBACT Local Group (ULG) will work on developing solutions and policy instruments to address these challenges and produce the Operational Implementation Framework to be delivered by each partner.

You will therefore commit to set up and run an URBACT Local Group that will bring together representatives of different departments within the local administration and relevant agencies (in order to ensure horizontal integration), as well as elected representatives and decision-makers in charge of policy areas addressed by the concerned integrated urban strategy or action plan. This participatory process should also include representatives of communities, residents, or other beneficiaries of the policy you intend to deal with, as well as representatives of delivery agencies, third sector and private interests should be on board when relevant. The requirement to develop a participatory approach through the URBACT Local Group should not lead to redundancy. Partners should build on existing local partnerships when appropriate.

Within the network budget, the URBACT Programme provides financial resources, tools and methods to support you in developing and delivering this participatory implementation process. The financial resources provided are meant to cover the costs of organising the different local activities for the co-design of the Operational Implementation Framework as well as to cover the costs for the participation of local stakeholders to the transnational exchange and learning activities. In the framework of an URBACT Network, this involvement is particularly important because it allows local stakeholders to benefit from the learning that will take place at transnational level and to bring it back home in order to feed in the co-production of the Operational Implementation Framework. Last but not least, network budget also include resources for ULG members to take part in the URBACT Summer University that is normally organised at the beginning of the network life cycle once it has been approved for implementation.

As for all participatory processes, running an URBACT Local Group requires time and human resources. Your city will have to identify a person who will be in charge of running the local partnership and supporting the involvement of local stakeholders in the production of the

Operational Implementation Framework as well as in the network transnational activities. This person is the ULG coordinator.

Each URBACT Local Group needs to appoint a coordinator, who will be in a position not only to contribute to the exchange and learning process but also to take the learning back to your city and to use it for policy-making and implementation purposes.

Guidance on how to set up and run a URBACT Local Group is available in the Local Support Group Toolkit available in all EU languages⁸.

1.3.4. To actively take part in transnational exchange and learning activities

When becoming a partner of an URBACT Implementation Network, you commit to take an active part in transnational exchange and learning activities, not only by attending meetings but also by contributing to the preparation and delivery of these activities (e.g. providing materials and inputs, mobilizing local stakeholders to take part, hosting meetings, etc.).

This requires time. On average, an Implementation Network organises 8-10 meetings over its 30 months' duration (Phase 1 and 2). Transnational exchange and learning seminars usually last for 2-3 days and not all partners benefit from an easy access to international airports. It is important that participants stay for the entire meeting in order to actually benefit from and contribute to the exchange and learning experience.

Each URBACT Local Group needs a designated coordinator. It also requires human resources, and not just any human resources. You are expected to appoint the "right person", who will be in a position not only to contribute to the exchange and learning process but also to take the learning back to your city, to use it for policy-making and implementation purposes and to disseminate it within the local administration and more widely. This means appointing and sending delegates with good language skills (if interpretation is sometimes provided at major events, English remains the official working language and is often the only language at network events) and good practical knowledge on the implementation issues addressed by the network.

Officers in charge of European projects or International Affairs usually possess suitable language skills but may be less capable of bringing concrete experiences to the thematic discussions and peer reviews on the active inclusion of marginalized target groups, energy efficiency in building refurbishment, competitiveness of SMEs, or other policy issues addressed by the network. They do not have day-to-day experience of managing the implementation of urban strategies and action plans.

It is also important to ensure some continuity in terms of participation to transnational meetings. These 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 Operational Implementation Framework. While you may want to involve new delegates according to the themes being dealt with during each meeting, it is recommended that the officer in charge of the Implementation Network at local level - the "local coordinator" is always on board.

⁸ Toolkit at http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/urbact_toolkit_online_4.pdf

1.3.5. To manage the project and the partnership in a sound way: time and resources required

Managing an URBACT Implementation Network requires time and resources. You will be expected to ensure that sufficient resources are made available for the management of tasks. A lead partner should foresee two full time posts whereas a project partner should ensure the functions of coordination and financial management, which is the equivalent of one full time post.

The time required to monitor project development and claim incurred expenditure should be realistic – a half time post is required for all matters linked to financial management⁹.

The role of the Lead partner is particularly important to ensure a successful project. The lead partner must be a strong leader with a relevant experience in the network theme. The lead partner staff should have sufficient experience of dealing with transnational projects to be aware of the skills required to manage and motivate a group of strangers and to transform this group into a network of individuals with the same goal. Strong communication skills are essential in the lead partner functions as well as an organized approach which is second to none¹⁰.

The required resources should not be under-estimated and the selection of experienced staff with appropriate skills (project management, communication and partnership working in an international environment, fluency in English, etc.) should be a high priority.

1.3.6. To ensure communication and dissemination of project results

Joining an URBACT Implementation Network, you will learn a lot and have the opportunity to develop skills necessary to implement integrated policies for sustainable urban development. Nevertheless, you should bear in mind that you will not be working only for yourself or only for the benefit of your own city. It will be your responsibility to share the learning and the results of your networking experience with local stakeholders beyond the URBACT Local Group and more widely, with all urban practitioners who may be facing similar policy challenges across Europe.

URBACT experts will support network partners in this endeavour, yet each partner has a role to play in sharing learning and good practices with those who could not take part in the network. While exchanging, learning and working on their Operational Implementation Frameworks, URBACT partners should foresee actions to communicate on their activities and disseminate their findings, practical knowledge, policy recommendations, good practices identified through the exchanges. This should be done during the life of the network through a number of communications tools and activities (regular update of the network website embedded in the URBACT website, newsletters, social media campaigns, local dissemination events in partner cities, production and dissemination of thematic reports/ publications/ articles presenting the findings or learning from the different transnational exchange activities, etc.). At the end of the network life cycle, it is requested that specific

⁹ More information on the levels of staffing required can be found in Factsheet 2E of the URBACT Programme Manual.

¹⁰ All the responsibilities and duties of Lead Partner and Project Partner can be found in Factsheet 2E of the URBACT Programme Manual.

dissemination activities be organised to share the network results and findings (production of a final report, local events in all partner cities, network final conference, etc.).

Lead partner cities of URBACT Implementation networks are expected to play a strong role in communications activities (a communications officer shall be identified and responsible for the implementation of the network communications strategy, with support and guidance from the URBACT Secretariat).

The URBACT Secretariat will also support the communication on network activities and the dissemination of network results on an ongoing basis, through programme level communications tools (website, newsletter, National URBACT points, social media, annual conferences and other programme level events). Guidance and training will also be provided to network Lead Partners to foster efficient communication and dissemination of results. Capitalisation activities developed at programme level will largely draw on network activities and deliverables. Network lead partners and partners will therefore be expected to contribute to these capitalisation activities on an ongoing basis. Specific capitalisation activities will be developed around implementation including relevant publications about how specific implementation challenges have been addressed. Illustrative examples might include: using social and environmental clauses in public procurement, new forms of financing, and governance for public private partnerships.

CHAPTER 2

THE POLICY ISSUE ADDRESSED AND THE IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

For Implementation Networks, there are 2 aspects that need to be considered in terms of content for the exchange and learning activities:

- the common urban Policy Challenge addressed by partners' integrated strategies/ action plans
- the "Implementation Challenges" faced by all partners with regard to the implementation of their integrated strategies/ action plans

2.1. The policy challenge addressed by partners' integrated urban strategies or action plans

An Implementation Network shall gather partners around **a common policy challenge** they are dealing with at local level in the field of sustainable urban development. This common policy issue should be at the center of the partners' integrated strategies/ action plans.

If cities are coming together with integrated strategies/ action plans dedicated to the regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods, then "regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods" is the common policy issue covered by the network. If cities are coming together all benefiting from an Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) working with surrounding municipalities around questions of transport and access to work places (factories and offices), then they might describe their policy issue as "city-region commuter mobility".

It makes sense when choosing partners of a network that you ensure that partners are working with similar topics and geographies/ territorial scales. For example, it is best not to mix cities that are working at functional urban area level with those that are focusing on neighbourhoods and vice versa¹¹.

Once you have identified the common urban policy challenge to be addressed by the network, in relation to partners' strategies/ action plans, you need to find a way of relating this to the **Thematic Objectives of the EU Cohesion Policy** (TOs).

The URBACT III Programme covers 10 Thematic Objectives (TOs)¹² of the EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020¹³:

1. Strengthening research, technological development and innovation
2. Enhancing access to, and use and quality of, information and communication technologies
3. Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs
4. Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy
5. Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management
6. Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency
7. Promoting sustainable transport and improving network infrastructures
8. Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility
9. Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination
10. Investing in education, training and lifelong learning

This covers a wide range of policy challenges that European cities can address in the framework of an Implementation Network.

¹¹ This description of the policy issue is dealt with in section 2.1 of the terms of reference of the call.

¹² The eleventh TO is for capacity-building, which is the core objective of URBACT and therefore is not included in the programme Thematic Coverage.

¹³ The list of the 10 Thematic Objectives included in the URBACT Thematic Coverage is available in Annex 1 of this guidance. A description of the urban dimension of the 10 TOs is available in the URBACT III Programme Manual – Fact Sheet 1. <http://urbact.eu/open-calls-networks>

The ten TOs are also strongly interlinked and are on the whole relevant to sustainable urban development. The experience of more than 500 European cities involved in URBACT II clearly shows that the challenges facing urban areas – economic, environmental, climate, social and demographic – are interwoven and success in urban development can only be achieved through an integrated approach. For example, in the case of interventions in deprived neighbourhoods, measures concerning physical urban renewal might be combined with measures promoting education, economic development, social inclusion and environmental protection. Nevertheless, you will be requested to position your network under one of the ten TO only¹⁴.

Over the programming period 2014-2020, URBACT III will concentrate 70% of resources for exchange and learning activities on 5 of the 10 TOs covered by the programme:

- TO 1 Innovation,
- TO 4 Low carbon economy,
- TO 6 Environmental protection and resource efficiency,
- TO 8 Employment and
- TO 9 Social inclusion.

In the application form, you will have to explain the link between the policy challenge to be addressed by the network and the main Thematic Objective selected above. You should also highlight the links with other Thematic Objectives (the integrated approach) and explain how the network activities will contribute to achieving the EU2020 goals for smart, inclusive and sustainable growth.

¹⁴ For some of you, this will be based on the EU Thematic Objectives selected in the Operational Programmes that are supporting the partners' strategies or action plans. This will be the case for cities that are designated under Article 7 of ERDF for instance. Yet in the case of an Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI), there will often be more than one Thematic Objective, in which case you will need to select one as your primary Thematic Objective.

2.2. Description of the implementation challenges to be addressed

Implementation Networks are aiming at enhancing the implementation of integrated urban strategies/ action plans by supporting partners in dealing with problems or difficulties they may face when delivering their strategies/ action plans.

The identification of these problems or difficulties, defined as “*Implementation Challenges*” within URBACT, is a key initial step when preparing your application for an Implementation Network.

To support applicants and beneficiaries in framing these challenges in a consistent way, URBACT has defined 9 implementation related challenges. Some are recurrent and are to be addressed by all network proposals. Others are proposed as optional so as to better respond to local needs.

The following table presents these Implementation Challenges:

Table 1 - Compulsory and optional implementation challenges to be addressed by Implementation Networks

Implementation Related Challenges	Definition and key questions	Mandatory/ Optional
1. Fostering the integrated approach	The integrated approach as understood by URBACT brings together social, economic and environmental actions to address a policy challenge in a holistic manner so as to avoid negative externalities and to promote a genuine solution to complex urban problems. How cities ensure horizontal, vertical and territorial integration in the delivery of their urban strategies/ action plans is a key challenge to be addressed by the network. How would you define this challenge for your city?	Mandatory – To be addressed by all networks
2. Involving local stakeholders	Partnership involves the bringing together of the key economic, social and environmental actors (from public, private and third sectors) in the URBACT local group. Participation is also the engagement of local citizens, whether in their role as service users, entrepreneurs, residents, tenants etc. in policy-making and delivery. Enhancing participation and maintaining it in the delivery phase is a key challenge to be addressed by the network. How would you define this challenge for your city?	Mandatory – To be addressed by all networks
3. Measuring impact	The results framework specifies that a result is the change to be achieved in the future through the policy intervention. The result indicator is the proxy chosen to measure that change. Attention should be paid to defining result indicators, ensuring that there are real, tangible and measurable. Measuring the results and outputs of an urban strategy/ action plan and setting up the appropriate monitoring and reporting structures are key for the success of delivery. This is a challenge to be addressed in the network. How would you define this challenge for your city?	Mandatory – To be addressed by all networks

<p>4. Building the project pipeline</p>	<p>Building the project pipeline for selecting and monitoring projects involves three stages. 1. Pre- approval support and preparation of the projects, 2. The organization of calls for proposals and tenders, processes for checking eligibility and for selecting projects using robust criteria and 3. Supporting project delivery (project visits, checking that necessary finance and consents have been secured, trouble-shooting on delays, monitoring spend and outputs). How to organize the project pipeline or improve the existing framework?</p>	<p>Optional</p>
<p>5. Organising decision-making for delivery</p>	<p>Defining the relevant organisation of decision-making for the implementation of the strategy/action plan is key in the success of delivery. How to set up appropriate structures for committees, delivery units and/or arms-length agencies that will ensure transparency, reporting, and separation of powers? How to best organize/ re-organise city departments and staff for delivery (e.g. joint units)?</p>	<p>Optional</p>
<p>6. Moving from strategy to operational action-plan</p>	<p>Moving to an operational action plan requires that often broad strategic objectives are translated into operational and detailed specifications that can be used for calls for proposals and public procurement of contracts. It is about specifying actions that will deliver the strategy. In this process, it is challenging to maintain the integrative and participatory approaches that informed the original strategy. How to move from strategy to implementation and ensure that the corresponding actions represent good practice at EU level and deliver the best value for the invested budget and citizens?</p>	<p>Optional</p>
<p>7. Developing Public Private Partnerships</p>	<p>Private and civil society actors are a key player in delivering local policies. Building partnerships with private sector players and binding them into agreements is key to maximize the benefits and minimize the risks. How to build such Public Private Partnerships for the successful implementation of integrated urban strategies/ action plans?</p>	<p>Optional</p>
<p>8. Setting up smart public procurement</p>	<p>Commissioning goods and services from private and social sector organisations is an important part of the delivery process. New opportunities through the use of social and environmental clauses enable other objectives to be achieved while achieving good value for the invested budget. But this has to be developed in a highly regulated environment at both EU and national levels. How can cities be smarter with procurement and improve their procurement strategies?</p>	<p>Optional</p>
<p>9. Enhancing funding of urban development policies through financial innovation</p>	<p>Cities are using equity instruments, revolving funds, crowd funding and other financial innovations to raise money in these austere times. How can this be organised for the delivery of urban strategies/ action plans, so as to maximize benefits, minimize lead times and mitigate risks?</p>	<p>Optional</p>

Networks will be required to cover the three compulsory challenges and to choose at least one additional implementation challenge from the six optional ones. These, in the context of the Network topic will then constitute the learning itinerary of the Network to be developed in the programme of transnational exchange meetings.

Beyond the mandatory challenges, the selection of the optional challenges should be based on an honest assessment of the challenges that each city is facing in turning a broad strategy or action plan into a deliverable set of actions.

Implementation challenges must be discussed within the proposed partner cities, and in each city, with colleagues of different departments, elected representatives and other relevant stakeholders (including residents and final beneficiaries).

You should make sure that there is a clear understanding of the implementation challenges you intend to address, that they are considered as priorities in the local political agenda and shared by other departments, that there is a clear political willingness to support the development of the Operational Implementation Framework. This preliminary assessment is essential for all partners involved in the network.

If the project proposal is approved for the 1st phase (6-month development phase – see chapter 4), then each partner will have the opportunity to further explore and refine their local implementation challenges, with the support of the Lead expert in charge of completing the baseline study. This will help the partnership to identify areas of common interest that can then constitute the learning itinerary for the transnational meetings in Phase 2 of the project.

2.3. Potential added-value compared to past URBACT networks

Since 2007 the URBACT Programme has supported more than 500 cities in 52 different Networks¹⁵. These Networks have addressed a wide range of urban policy challenges producing valuable knowledge for cities involved but also for other practitioners and policy makers at different levels. You should make sure that your proposal builds on the knowledge produced on similar issues by previous URBACT Networks and that your expected results (in terms of knowledge) bring concrete added-value.

¹⁵ The full list of networks financed under URBACT II is available here: <http://urbact.eu/all-networks>
Each network has its own dedicated website where you can find all the outputs produced.

CHAPTER 3

PARTNERSHIPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

NETWORKS

The exchange and learning activities at transnational level will be the core activities of Implementation Networks. Cities involved will exchange and share experiences, problems and possible solutions, generating new ideas to address challenges related to sustainable urban development.

The transnational partnership is therefore an essential component of any Implementation Network. A partnership composed of committed partners with different but complementary experiences is a key ingredient for a successful URBACT network.

When building the transnational partnership for your Implementation Network you should ask yourself the following questions:

- Is the proposed partnership eligible in the framework of the present Call for Proposals? More specifically do all the proposed partners really satisfy the entry ticket criteria (1. to have an integrated strategy or action plan , 2. to have the resources to implement)?
- Are the local situations and experiences of partners involved relevant to the topics to be addressed by the network? Do they have challenges and scale that make them suitable partners?
- Do all partners demonstrate a clear commitment?

3.1. Eligible beneficiaries

For Implementation Networks targeted eligible beneficiaries include all cities implementing integrated strategies/plans for sustainable urban development in the framework of Articles 7 of the ERDF Regulation for 2014-2020.

Eligible targeted beneficiaries for Implementation Networks are only cities fulfilling the following specific criteria:

- Strategy or action plan: Having an integrated strategy/plan for sustainable urban development, addressing all three dimensions of sustainable development (social, economic and environmental sustainability), including a participative approach in its design and implementation and having received formal approval by the city council;
- Funding: Having secured funds for a significant proportion of projects/actions listed in the action plan in order to demonstrate that the city is ready to enter/has entered the implementation phase

In URBACT III, the beneficiary “city” refers to the public local authority representing:

- Cities, municipalities, and towns;
- Infra-municipal tiers of government such as city districts and boroughs in cases where they are represented by a politico-administrative institution having competences for policy-making and implementation in the policy area covered by the URBACT Network concerned in which they are willing to get involved;
- Metropolitan authorities and organised agglomerations in cases where they are represented by a political and administrative institution having delegated competences for policy-making and implementation in the policy area covered by the URBACT Network concerned.

3.2. Eligibility of the partnership

When considering setting up or joining a partnership for an Implementation Network in the framework of an open call for proposals, you should bear in mind a number of eligibility criteria¹⁶.

The partnership for Phase 1 must:

- include cities only (see section 3.1. above for definition)
- gather minimum 7 and maximum 9 cities, including the Lead Partner
- be composed by cities from at least 3 different Member/Partner States
- be balanced with cities from More Developed, Less Developed and Transition Regions, meaning:
 - Networks composed by 7 partners shall include at least 3 cities from Less Developed Regions
 - Networks composed by 8 or 9 partners shall include at least 4 cities from Less Developed Regions

The partnership for Phase 2 shall build on the partnership approved for Phase 1. Initial partnerships may be adjusted as a result of phase 1 activities, due to the necessity to replace a partner dropping out or to the opportunity of involving an additional partner.

If a new partner is to join the project (whether as a replacement or as an additional partner) during phase 1, this participation will be introduced in the Phase 2 application and will become effective once the project is approved for Phase 2. In any case, it will be mandatory that this partner be covered by the baseline study exercise to be completed during phase 1 by the Lead Expert (see chapter 5 – Phase 1 of an Implementation Network).

In any case, the partnership proposed for phase 2 shall be composed of minimum 7 and maximum 9 partners including the Lead partner city, and respect the eligibility criteria outline above for Phase 1.

In the framework of each Call for Proposals, a partner can be involved in maximum two approved Implementation Networks.

A city may not be Lead Partner in more than one approved project at a time under the same call.

When establishing a contact with a potential partner, it will be important to ask the partner city whether they are already committed in other project proposals to avoid potential issues upon approval.

¹⁶ You can find detailed information on the requirements for the composition of the transnational partnership in Fact Sheet 2B of the URBACT Programme Manual.

3.3. Relevance of partners

In terms of relevance of partners, the following considerations should help you in selecting the partner institutions to be involved:

- *The implementation challenges addressed are relevant for all partners.* As for your own institution, you should ensure that all local stakeholders are facing similar implementation challenges at local level, that the local needs are clearly identified and documented and there is a commitment to implement the strategy/ action plan through an Operational Implementation Framework (political support, existing plans or strategies, funding secured, etc).
- *The experiences of all 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, etc. In your application you should highlight possible complementarities and differences in terms of needs and previous experience.

3.4. Commitment

As already stressed in previous sections of this guide, a successful participation in an Implementation Network requires that all partners ensure two levels of **commitment**:

- Commitment to take part in the transnational exchange and learning activities. The active contribution of all partners to the transnational activities is a key condition for a rich and effective exchange and learning process for all partners. When building the transnational partnership, you should make sure that all candidate partners have a clear understanding of the tasks to be performed (preparation and contribution to the transnational seminars, hosting a transnational event, ensuring a proper administrative management at local level, etc.) as well as of the resources to be committed (in terms of human, time and financial resources). It is essential that all partners identify as soon as possible the “right” local coordinator for the network
- Commitment to work on the Operational Implementation Framework with the local stakeholders involved in the URBACT Local Group. The co-production of an Operational Implementation Framework by the URBACT Local Group is a compulsory requirement for all partners involved in an Implementation Network. Beyond the contractual requirement, this is the main added-value that an Implementation Network can bring to a partner city. When building the transnational partnership, you should make sure that this final aim is understood by all partners and that all partners are committed to engaging with local stakeholders and to mobilizing the resources needed (in terms of human, time and financial resources). Clear political support for the participation of the city in the Implementation Network should be demonstrated by all partners involved

CHAPTER 4

THE TWO PHASES OF URBACT IMPLEMENTATION NETWORKS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR APPLICANTS

4.1. The 2 phases of an URBACT Implementation Network

In order to improve the quality of networks approved for funding, the URBACT III Programme foresees a two-phase process for Implementation Networks. The process includes:

- **Phase 1:** Implementation Networks approved by the Monitoring Committee enter a 6-month Phase 1. The main aim of Phase 1 is to provide partners of Implementation Networks with time and resources to:
 - Ensure the development of a common vision of the policy challenges and implementation related challenges to be addressed through the network activities;
 - Check that all proposed partners are sufficiently advanced in the implementation process for fruitful collaborations to be possible through the elaboration of a shared methodology for the exchange activities.

These elements shall be explored in the Baseline study exercise, the results of which shall be included in the Proposal for Phase 2 to be submitted for approval at the end of the initial 6-month Phase 1.

- **Phase 2:** Implementation Networks approved by the Monitoring Committee enter in the 24-month Phase 2 for the implementation of the activities at transnational and local level as foreseen in the Phase 2 Proposals.

More details on objectives, work packages, activities and deliverables for each phase are provided in the 2 following chapters (see Chapter 5 and Chapter 6).

Each phase is subject to eligibility check by the Secretariat, assessment by an external panel of experts, and approval by the Monitoring Committee. Cities willing to set up an Implementation Network are thus requested to submit a 1st proposal to get funding for the 6-month development phase (phase 1), in the form of a phase 1 Application Form. 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 Form.

4.2. Procedure for the creation of an Implementation Network in the framework of a call for proposals

As an applicant involved in an Implementation Network proposal, you will have to follow a structured application procedure and will be subject to a selection process. Each project shall be submitted **twice** to the URBACT III Monitoring Committee:

- in the form of a “Phase 1 Application” to be submitted in the framework of the open call for proposals
- in the form of a “Phase 2 Application” to be submitted, at the end of phase 1, by networks that have been approved and funded for phase 1

The different stages of the application procedure are outlined in detail in the Programme Manual (URBACT Programme Manual, Fact Sheet 2D - Network Creation). They can be summarised as follows:

0. Open call for proposals for the creation of Implementation Networks	
<i>APPLICATION PHASE 1</i>	
<u>Stage 1</u>	Lead Partner creates and submits Phase 1 Applications and all requested documents to the URBACT Secretariat by the deadline set in the call
<u>Stage 2</u>	URBACT Secretariat performs eligibility check.
<u>Stage 3</u>	External Assessment Panel carries out assessment of eligible project proposals and issues recommendations.
<u>Stage 4</u>	URBACT Managing Authority submits proposal for the approval of up to 15 Implementation Networks to the Monitoring Committee. Monitoring Committee approves projects for the 6-month Phase 1. Implementation Networks approved for Phase 1 shall receive funding and a subsidy contract that marks the final stage of approval of the project for Phase 1.
6-MONTH PHASE 1 FOR APPROVED IMPLEMENTATION NETWORKS	
<i>APPLICATION PHASE 2</i>	
<u>Stage 5</u>	Lead partner submits Phase 2 Application along with requested documents 6 months after the start of Phase 1. Phase 2 Proposal will be completed as a result of Phase I activities (building on the baseline study) 6 Months following notification of approval by MC
<u>Stage 6</u>	URBACT Secretariat performs eligibility check.
<u>Stage 7</u>	External Assessment Panel carries out assessment of eligible project applications and issues recommendations. EAP may interview candidate Lead partners and Lead experts and issues recommendations for possible improvements of applications if relevant.
<u>Stage 8</u>	URBACT Managing Authority submits to the Monitoring Committee a proposal for the approval of Implementation Networks for Phase 2. Implementation Networks approved for Phase 2 shall receive funding and a subsidy contract that marks the final stage of approval of the project for Phase 2 ¹⁷ .
24-MONTH PHASE 2 FOR APPROVED IMPLEMENTATION NETWORKS	

¹⁷ Projects not approved for Phase 2 will be refunded for the costs incurred during Phase 1 up to a maximum of 150.000 euros.

CHAPTER 5

PHASE 1 OF IMPLEMENTATION NETWORKS

Phase 1 of an Implementation Network aims to provide partners with time (6 months) and resources (up to 150.000 euros plus expertise) to finalize their Phase 2 application form which should set out a consolidated project. The partners will work with the Lead expert and their partnership to develop their project by refining the issues to be addressed, preparing a detailed work plan and defining the key project deliverables.

Phase 1 of Implementation Networks should be structured around 2 Work Packages:

WP1 – Project Management and Coordination

WP2 – Project Development

5.1. Work Package 1 – Project Management and Coordination

The activities to be developed under Work Package 1 aim to ensure a sound management and coordination of the project concerning both the overall project management and all aspects linked to the financial management.

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

5.1.1. Main activities for Work Package 1

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

- a) To sign all the contractual documents at programme and project 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 6 monthly reporting review of documents before submission
- e) To attend organised training sessions and other programme level events
- f) To receive and transfer ERDF funds to partners
- g) To ensure proper management of the expertise resources (Lead expert) and monitoring of the Lead expert's work programme

5.1.2. Recommendations for 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 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 project. 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

- Each project partner should identify a qualified project coordinator who, wherever possible, should remain the same person for the whole project 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 speak English to a very good level.
- For the Lead Partner, the staff required for the project will be significantly more than for a project partner. The Lead partner should appoint a project coordinator, a finance officer and a communication officer – these activities will require the equivalent of 2 full time posts. For the project partners the equivalent of one full time post should be foreseen.

c) To hold regular management meetings to ensure strong communication between partners concerning project coordination

- It is important to allow time during your meetings to discuss common issues linked to the project management, reporting of activity and budget provisions. A session on administrative questions could be organised during the transnational meetings or better still specific physical or virtual meetings involving a wider participation can be organized on a monthly basis to coordinate the project management. Examples of how these meetings have been managed include a monthly management meeting via Skype or other on line tool, specific physical meetings before or after your transnational meetings to focus on management issue, one to one support for partners experiencing difficulties etc.
- 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 Secretariat has a range of guidance notes at your disposal on the www.urbact.eu website and can also participate in your meetings to assist if necessary.

d) To assist project partners in 6 monthly reporting review of documents before submission

- For each project there is a compulsory reporting session every 6 months. This session allows you to present an update on progress towards your objectives and to declare your incurred expenditure for refund. More detail on the schedule for reporting and the documents required can be found in Factsheet 2E of the URBACTIII Programme Manual. Partners often struggle in the early stages of the Network and may need support from the Lead Partner to resolve problems or get advice on the logic of the project application.

e) 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 subjects, which can help you to deliver your project successfully. Examples include general project management, public procurement issues, addressing state aids, reporting costs, setting up and running an URBACT

Local Group, producing an Operational Implementation Framework¹⁸ organizing efficient exchange and learning transnational activities, etc. Attendance at these sessions is compulsory and the Programme covers travel 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.

f) 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 project based on the costs declared for each partner using their approved intervention rate.
- The Lead Partner must transfer the correct ERDF to the project partners in accordance with the Joint Convention as soon as possible after receipt. In order to fulfill this responsibility, it is useful to set up an internal procedure in consultation with the financial services department of your 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).

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 Lead expert's work programme. The allocation for Network experts is additional to the Network budget and it amounts to an envelope of 170 days which at €750 per day amounts to 127.500€ for the whole lifetime of the Network (Phase 1 and Phase 2).
- Even though the Lead Expert and Ad hoc expert support is managed by the Lead partner city, it is a resource for the whole partnership. More especially, the expertise envelope should provide you and your partners with a package of services including: expertise for the design and delivery of transnational exchange and learning activities; thematic expertise; expertise support to local authorities and other stakeholders in delivering integrated and participatory policies.

5.1.3. Main deliverables for Work Package 1

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

- Final reporting and closure documents at the end of the Phase 1 – See Factsheet 2E of the Programme Manual
- Approval documents for the First Level Controllers of project partners – See Factsheet 2E of the Programme Manual
- Lead expert request form at the beginning of Phase 1

¹⁸ this is to be conceived as an instrument for partner to improve the delivery of strategies and actions, taking into account the local context, challenges and resources.

5.2. Work Package 2 – Project development

The activities to be developed under WP2 will be designed to achieve the following aims:

- To confirm the initial partnership.
- To identify the implementation challenges to be addressed (including partners' expectations and potential contribution, topic of the Operational Implementation Framework, provisional composition of the URBACT Local Groups)
- To design the methodology for exchange activities both at transnational and local level and in particular to create a coherent learning itinerary for phase 2

5.2.1. Main activities for Work Package 2

Activities to be implemented under WP2 should include the following actions:

- a) To proactively engage with partners to be involved in the final partnership for Phase 2
- b) To organise at least two transnational meetings
- c) To complete the Baseline Study describing, for each partner, the situation regarding the existing integrated strategy/ action plan, the implementation challenges faced by each partner level¹⁹, and the expected results (to be developed as components of the Operational Implementation Framework).
- d) To design the learning itinerary (to be based on the synthesis of the baseline study)
- e) To identify the key local stakeholders to be involved in the URBACT Local Groups
- f) To develop a project logo and provide information to feed URBACT communication activities (incl setting up of the network page on the URBACT website)
- g) To complete and submit the Phase 2 Application package (Phase 2 application form, commitment letters, baseline study, etc.

The baseline study is to be completed by the Lead Expert in close cooperation with all partners. The Lead Expert is required to visit all partners in order to develop the partners' profiles for the baseline.

The baseline is the corner stone of the project for phase 2. It should be used to analyse the existing experience of each partner in the different dimensions of implementation (governance, project management, delivery instruments and topic specific aspects). From this base, the second step is to identify which implementation challenges the partners wish to work around and then to explore which of these are common to several partners and can form the basis for the learning itinerary of the Network. From this starting point the topics of the transnational exchange and learning meetings can be specified.

¹⁹ See chapter 2, full list of implementation challenges to be explored by Implementation Networks.

5.2.2. Recommendations for efficient delivery of actions

Building on the experiences of previous URBACT Networks funded in the programming period 2007-2013, here are some recommendations for efficient delivery of these actions.

a) To confirm the partners to be involved in the final partnership

The process of confirmation of the initial partnership should be led by the Lead Partner in close coordination with the other partners and the Lead Expert.

Information concerning the local situation, needs, expectations and potential contributions of all partners must be included in the Baseline study (see below).

b) To organise two transnational meetings

During the 6-month Phase 1, approved Implementation Networks must organize two transnational meetings: the kick-off meeting and the final project meeting.

Kick-off meeting:

- The kick-off meeting should be organized as soon as possible after the official approval for Phase 1 and after the training session organized by the URBACT Secretariat for Lead Partners and Lead Experts of approved networks. The kick-off meeting is a key moment that will allow partners to meet physically for the first time and start the discussion on a common set of challenges and issues to be addressed by the network in Phase 2.
- During the kick off meeting, partners should agree on the dates for the visit of the Lead Expert for the production of the Baseline Study
- The kick off meeting will be the moment to introduce the URBACT objectives and expected results as well as the contractual and administrative requirements. It should include a presentation of the online accounting and management tool SYNERGIE-CTE. Members of the URBACT Secretariat will attend the kick off meetings as much as 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

Second Network meeting in Phase 1:

- All partners involved in the partnership for phase 2 should attend the second meeting
- The whole partnership should agree on the final details related to the Network's focus, methodology and work plan for Phase 2. The final discussion should build on the main findings and conclusions of the Baseline study and in particular confirm the proposed learning itinerary based on the implementation challenges for each partner.
- The Lead Partners should verify that each partner is finalizing the required contractual documents for the submission of the Phase 2 Application (letter of commitment, Audit trail, etc.) and in position to provide the necessary support
- The second meeting of Phase 1 should be organized once the Lead Expert has completed the visits to all partners for the Baseline. In the meantime, the meeting should be fixed sufficiently in advance of the date of submission of the Phase 2 application to allow the Lead Partner to include the final decisions concerning the focus, methodology and work plan in the documents to be submitted.

c) To complete the Baseline study

The Baseline study is a compulsory deliverable to be produced during Phase 1 by all approved Implementation Networks. The production of the Baseline study is the main responsibility of the Lead Expert, but requires the input of all partners joining the Network. More details on the components of the Baseline study can be found later in this section.

The production of the Baseline will build on the different contributions provided by partners (local data, information on existing plans and strategies, etc.) as well as on the visits of the Lead Expert to each partner city during Phase 1.

The Lead Expert should visit all partners involved in order to present the URBACT framework and the specific objectives and focus of the Network, to review the local situation and experiences in relation to the urban policy challenge to be addressed, to identify the implementation challenges/ issues the partners intend to address through the Operational Implementation Framework.

The visits should be organized in close cooperation with the partners and include as much as possible meetings with the local project coordinator, elected representative(s), civil servants concerned by the policy challenge addressed, local stakeholders identified as potential members of the URBACT Local Group.

Guidelines for the production of the Baseline Study will be available for Lead Partners and Lead Experts of Implementation Networks approved for Phase 1. Detailed guidance will also be provided during the training session for Lead Partners and Lead Experts to be held at the beginning of Phase 1.

d) To identify the key local stakeholders to be involved in the URBACT Local Group

During Phase 1, partners should identify key local stakeholders to be involved in the URBACT Local Group. Partners are invited to organize during Phase 1 one meeting with the stakeholders initially identified to discuss the key issues to be addressed in the network, the possible focus of the Operational Implementation Framework, etc. This step is crucial in laying a sound foundation for the network and in involving local stakeholders in the development of the project from the beginning.

Experience of previous URBACT Networks allows us to make the following recommendations:

- Each partner should appoint as soon as possible an URBACT Local Group Coordinator.
- 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 Implementation Network, the added value for partners as well as requirements from them when taking part in an URBACT Network
- The first meeting of the initial members of the URBACT Local Group could be organized 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 Toolkit²⁰. The URBACT Toolkit has been developed in the framework of URBACT II to support previous Thematic Networks. Yet information and guidance concerning the main activities (and related tools) for URBACT Local Group remain relevant.

e) To develop project logo and provide information to feed URBACT communication activities

During Phase 1, the URBACT Joint Secretariat will manage external communication activities for all the Networks. More precisely, the Joint Secretariat will be in charge of the creation and update of a Network Page on the urbact.eu website as well as communicating Network news and results to all the programme's relevant stakeholders.

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

- a project logo (to be defined within two months of project start)
- all relevant information concerning the activities of the network (meetings, publications etc.) to be displayed on the network webpage and disseminated through programme communication activities and tools

All communication activities (together with a communication strategy and detailed graphic identity) will be developed directly by the Lead Partner, with the support and guidance of the Joint Secretariat (incl. trainings for network Communication officers) in Phase 2 of the project.

Furthermore, Lead Partners should inform the public about the support obtained from ERDF funding providing on their institutional websites a short description of the project (aims, results and ERDF financial support).

f) To complete and submit Phase 2 Application

Following the 2-step process for the creation of Implementation Networks, projects 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's focus and methodology, on the final partnership as well as on the work plan and budget for Phase 2. During Phase 1, the URBACT Joint Secretariat will provide Lead Partners of approved Networks detailed guidance on the Phase 2 Application to be submitted.

²⁰ The URBACT Toolkit: http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/urbact_toolkit_online_4.pdf

5.2.3. Main deliverables for Work Package 2

Outputs to be delivered as a result of the actions under Work Package 2 should include:

- 2 project meetings
- The Baseline study
- The Phase 2 Application

For the Baseline study, this is defined as a compilation of 3 elements (Implementation challenges, Partner profiles and Synthesis), which should feed into the design of the project proposal and the Phase 2 Application. This implies that the Lead Expert is expected to deliver these components not at the very end of Phase 1, as a final output, but during the lifecycle of the project development in phase 1.

- I. **The “Implementation Challenges”** paper is a review of the existing knowledge, tools, programmes, etc. related to the project focus, to be delivered by the Lead Expert as soon as possible during Phase 1.
 - The “Implementation challenges” paper (about 15-20 pages) should ideally be ready for the kick off meeting of Phase 1, at least in draft version, to inform thinking among partners about the nature of the policy challenges to be addressed, to provide key definitions and to ensure that the Network builds on and takes into account already existing knowledge, such as existing good practices in Europe and previous relevant URBACT Networks.
 - The “Implementation Challenges” paper should be illustrated with some examples of good practice in the topic from beyond the Network.
 - The “Implementation Challenges” paper should help the partners to focus discussions about future actions beyond Phase 1 and provide a shared vocabulary on the topic and implementation related challenges.
 - The “Implementation Challenges” paper is targeted at the Network partners and members of their Local URBACT Groups. But it can be very useful and interesting for an external audience of policy-makers and practitioners, so it is important that it is edited and produced in a stand-alone format and uploaded as soon as possible on the network’s website (i.e.within three months of the start date).
- II. **Partner profiles**, presenting the local situation, challenges/problems, existing policies, expectations vis-à-vis the network, etc. of all partners involved in the final partnership.
 - Partner profiles (5-6 pages each) should be completed for all partners involved.
 - Partner profiles should be mostly aimed at an internal audience, particularly useful for URBACT Local Group members as a starting point for the Operational Implementation Framework but also useful for partners and others to act as a briefing when they visit the city.
 - Partner profiles should help the Lead Expert to develop some comparative analysis of local situations in order to identify complementarities in terms of experiences and potential contribution to the network.
- III. **The Synthesis** of the issues to be addressed by the Implementation Networks in Phase 2, resulting from confrontation with the Implementation Challenges paper and the partners’ challenges and expectations (to feed into the Phase 2 Application and more especially into the design of the Network’s focus and methodology for Phase 2).
 - The synthesis (5-10 pages) should be conceived for an internal audience in order to support partners in making decisions about the organization of the work plan for Phase 2

- The synthesis should be discussed with all partners during the final project meeting of Phase 1

See examples of Baseline studies produced by previous URBACT Networks (note that these were produced for a for Action Planning Networks working under different guidelines):

- o EVUE Baseline study: http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/EVUE/outputs_media/2010-05-21_Final_EVUE_Baseline_study.pdf
- o Sustainable Food in Urban Communities Baseline study: http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/Sustainable_food_in_urban_communities/documents_media/URBACT_Baseline_Sustainable_Food.pdf
- o USE – ACT Baseline study: http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/USE_ACT/outputs_media/USEAct_BASELINE_STUDY_01.pdf

Please note, all project communication materials must respect the URBACT Graphic Charter as well as the EU regulations concerning publicity and the use of logos²¹.

5.3. Expertise for Phase 1

The following section provides information concerning the expertise to be provided to Networks in Phase 1. More especially you will find information on:

- Tasks to be performed by the Lead Expert in Phase 1
- Allocation of days for Lead Expert in Phase 1
- Appointing and contracting Lead Expert in Phase 1

5.3.1. Tasks to be performed by the Lead Expert in Phase 1

During Phase 1, approved Implementation Network should appoint a Lead Expert. Only Lead Experts can be appointed at this stage. Ad-hoc experts may be appointed during Phase 2.

For 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 partners in defining the project methodology, common implementation challenges work plan and deliverables
- Supporting partners in identifying the key stakeholders to be involved in the URBACT Local Group
- Supporting Lead Partner and project partners in organizing and delivering the 2 transnational meetings to be held during Phase 1

The Lead Expert will be person responsible for the production of the Baseline study. In this perspective Lead Experts should visit all partners), meet the local coordinators, elected representatives, civil servants, potential members of the URBACT Local Groups, etc. to present the objectives of the Network, to identify local challenges and expectations as well as potential contributions to the exchange and learning activities.

²¹ EU Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 on publicity and use of logos.

5.3.2. Allocation of days for Lead Expert in Phase 1

Each approved Implementation Network will have an additional allocation of 127.500€ 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 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 30.000€ (40 days of expertise, including participation at training sessions organized by the URBACT Joint Secretariat).

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: 18 days on average
- Production of the Baseline study: 10 days on average
- Support the preparation and delivery of the 2 project meetings of Phase 1: 5 days on average (including preparation of the agenda, participation and moderation, reporting on meeting)
- On support to partners to complete the Phase 2 Application: 3 days on average (main contributions expected relate to the Network focus and methodology)
- On participating in the training sessions organized by the URBACT Secretariat: 4 days on average

The additional allocation for expertise covers the expertise fees only. Costs for travel and accommodation for the Lead Expert to visits partners and to participate in the 2 project meetings is covered by the Network budget (within the "External expertise and services" budget category).

5.3.3. Appointing and contracting the Lead Expert for Phase 1

When submitting the Phase 1 Application, you are requested to propose a Lead Expert. Lead Experts should be selected only from the pool of validated URBACT experts. A Call for Applicants for the pool of URBACT Experts has been launched at the beginning of the programme and will remain open on a permanent basis until the end.

The information on validated experts included in the pool of URBACT Experts (type of expertise, skills, past experiences, detailed CV) is available in the online database²² on the URBACT website. The online database of URBACT Experts is updated on an ongoing basis with new validated experts. 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. The process of assessment of Application Form for URBACT experts normally takes 2 weeks.

In any case, before selecting the Lead Expert, you should establish a short-list of potential candidates and organize phone/ skype 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.

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

Lead Experts cannot be appointed to support more than one network at a time (whatever the type of network).

Bear in mind that only experts validated as Lead Experts can be proposed as Lead Experts and that a Lead Expert can be appointed by only one URBACT network at a time.

The CV of the expert identified as Lead Expert should be attached to the Phase 1 Application. After the approval of the network proposal by the Monitoring Committee for Phase 1, Lead Partners will submit to the Joint Secretariat an Expertise Request Form in which they confirm the expert they wish to commission for Phase 1, building on discussions within the initial partnership.

Following validation of the Lead partner's request by the URBACT Joint Secretariat, a contract will be established between the expert and the URBACT Managing Authority. 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.)

Ideally, the Lead Expert for Phase 1 should continue supporting the network as Lead expert if the project 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 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.

5.4. Budget for Phase 1

The total eligible cost for the Phase 1 of an Implementation Network is set at a maximum of 150.000€. All partners will need to confirm their commitment to engaging the funds needed to co-finance ERDF by letter. The ERDF co-financing rate for an Implementation Network is calculated at network level on the basis of the different co-financing rates for each partner.

An Implementation Network budget must be presented in line with the 5 budget categories available in the SYNERGIE-CTE system:

- 1) Staff costs
- 2) Office and Administration Costs
- 3) Travel and accommodation
- 4) External expertise and services
- 5) Equipment

An example of the kinds of costs, which can be funded in each budget category, can be found in the summary table below:

1) Staff costs	Expenditure on staff members employed by the partner organisation, who are formally engaged to work on the project
2) Office and Administration Costs	Operating and administrative expenses of the partner organisation that support delivery of project activities
3) Travel and accommodation	Expenditure on travel and accommodation costs of staff of partner organisations and associated partners that relate to delivery of the project. This category included travel costs, accommodation costs, costs of meals, visa costs, and/or daily allowances/per diems.
4) External expertise and services	Expenditure for external expertise and services provided by a public or private body or a natural person outside of the partner organisation. This category covers costs paid on the basis of contracts or written agreements and against invoices or requests for reimbursement to external experts and service providers that are requested to carry out certain tasks or activities, linked to the delivery of the project. All additional costs related to external experts (e.g. travel and accommodation expense for external experts) should be recorded under this budget category. This category also includes all costs linked to the organisation of meetings.
5) Equipment	Expenditure for equipment purchased, rented or leased by a partner, necessary to achieve objectives of the project.

A detailed explanation of these costs including how to report can be found in Fact Sheet 2F of the URBACT programme Manual.

Below you will find some useful hints and tips for budgeting your Phase 1 application.

- **Staff costs**

Staff costs are specifically for staff employed by the partner. External employees must be reported in the budget category External expertise. Staff costs should not usually represent more than 30-35% 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 budget staff costs be included consideration should be given to the varying salary levels across Europe to ensure the most accurate budget estimation possible

In SYNERGIE-CTE it is advisable to group together staff costs for the Lead Partner into one budget line 'Lead Partner staff'. If project partner costs are to be included these should also be grouped into one line 'Project Partners staff'.

- **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 option, partners do not need to document that the expenditure has been incurred and paid, or that the flat rate corresponds to the reality.

- **Travel and Accommodation**

This category is, not surprisingly, one of the highest representing about a 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). On average a trip to a transnational seminar consisting of transport and 2-3 nights' accommodation costs around 650€ on average per person.

URBACT Local Group (ULG) meetings by nature have fewer costs as travel is limited.

The costs for travel to the final transnational meetings should also be carefully considered. Possible new project partners presented for Phase 2 are not official partners and as such will need to be covered by the Phase 1 budget.

In SYNERGIE-CTE for Phase 1, these costs can be grouped together into one budget line for general travel for all partners with details outlined in the description of your activities.

- **External expertise and services**

This budget category varies considerably between networks based on the need for external support for project management and/or development. It is recommended to review the needs of project partners in terms of possible costs for expertise before estimating the budget needed for the Phase 1.

All expertise travel should be considered in this category (average costs are the same as those for transnational meetings above)

In SYNERGIE-CTE it is advisable to record experts travel into one single budget line "Travel and accommodation for external experts and service providers".

Costs in this category also include costs linked to the organisation of meetings (room and equipment hire, interpretation and catering). It is often possible to minimize room hire costs by using venues in project partner's premises. Costs for interpretation can also vary based on the country and the languages needed. On average a 2-day transnational meeting with between 30 and 40 people present costs approx. 12 000€.

Local ULG meetings are often not budgeted as they are hosted in the local offices, catering for these meetings can be included in the budget if required.

In SYNERGIE-CTE for Phase 1, it is advisable to group meeting costs together to simplify the reporting. Details of each kind and number of meetings are presented in the description of activities and outputs.

In this budget category, you will also find costs linked to newsletters, brochures, other tools, printing and translation but they are usually quite limited in Phase 1 with an average total budget of around 7.000€ presented.

For information completed projects in the last programming period reported on average about 35.000€ of external expertise and services costs in total (incl. all costs covered cumulatively under this budget category).

- **Equipment**

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

CHAPTER 6

PHASE 2 OF IMPLEMENTATION NETWORKS

Phase 2 will be devoted to the implementation of the activities, at transnational and local level, aiming at the co-production of an Operational Implementation Framework by each partner involved in approved Implementation Networks.

The duration of Phase 2 is 24 months, starting from the official notification of approval, following the final decision of the Monitoring Committee. Phase 2 of an Implementation Network is structured around 4 Work Packages:

- WP1 – Project management and Coordination
- WP2 – Transnational Exchange Activities
- WP3 – Impact on Local Governance and Implementation of Urban Policies
- WP4 – Communication and Dissemination

6.1. Work Package 1 – Project Management and Coordination

The activities to be developed under Work package 1 for Phase 2 include all those mentioned in WP 1 for Phase 1 – all such actions aiming to ensure a sound management and coordination of the project.

6.1.1. Main activities for Work Package 1

In addition to those activities outlined previously under WP1 of Phase 1 (see chapter 5), those projects approved in Phase 2 will have to deliver 2 other activities:

a) Complete a mid-term review 12 months after project approval

- All project proposals must include a mid-term review in their work-plan for Phase 2. This mid-term review will be planned 12 months after the beginning of the Phase 2 project and will lead to the submission of a mid-term review report to the URBACT Joint Secretariat. More specifically, it will be crucial to check the functioning of URBACT Local Groups, the progress in the production of the Operational Implementation Frameworks and other expected outputs.
- The mid-term review will also lead to the update of the communication plan targeted at the dissemination of project's results and outputs.
- The review will be completed with the active contribution of the Lead expert, programme level experts supporting networks and in association with the URBACT Joint Secretariat. Project partners will be provided with the necessary terms of reference and guidelines for this exercise.

b) Complete a single reprogramming of the Phase 2 application

- Following the mid-term review exercise, a thorough review of the project application will be carried out. All aspects of the project will undergo a reality check and any necessary changes will be requested according to the established procedure.
- This reprogramming session is the only possibility you will have to review your project budget, outputs, key milestones so it must be well managed and be undertaken in an open and transparent way including all partners in the consultation.

6.1.2. Main Deliverables for Work Package 1

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

- Expertise request forms for the Lead expert at the beginning of Phase 1
- Expertise request forms for other ad hoc expertise recruited in the course of project implementation
- Approval documents for the First Level Controllers of project partners
- Mid-term review report, to be submitted to the URBACT Joint Secretariat 12 months after project approval
- Official reporting documents – every 6 months
- Final closure documents at the end of the project

6.2. Work Package 2 – Transnational Exchange and Learning Activities

Work Package 2 includes the transnational exchange and learning activities, which form the core of all URBACT networks. The lessons learnt and good practices identified during the transnational activities of exchange are key ingredients of the Operational Implementation Framework that each city commits to producing as result of their involvement in Implementation Networks. The experiences of other cities will inspire partners to adapt this knowledge at local level to define concrete solutions to the local challenges identified.

The activities under this work package will be designed to achieve the following aims:

- Sharing: To foster the exchange of experiences among project partners and identify good practices of implementation
- Learning: To strengthen the practical knowledge and skills of partners connected to the implementation related challenges addressed by the network
- Mainstreaming: To draw lessons from the exchange on an ongoing basis and to apply them at local level, especially through the production of the Operational Implementation Frameworks
- Supporting: To support partners in improving the implementation of strategies and action plans through producing their Operational Implementation Frameworks

6.2.1. Main activities for Work Package 2

Activities to be implemented under WP2 should include the following actions:

- a) To organise transnational exchange among partners by means of seminars and other learning processes. Transnational seminars should be a combination of different components including field visits, peer review sessions, local dissemination activities, etc. The transnational exchange seminars should be the main method to deliver the learning itinerary that has been defined during Phase 1 based on analysis of experience and needs of the network partners. They can be completed by other vehicles such as online exchange and learning activities.
- b) To draw lessons out of the transnational exchange activities and produce thematic outputs (interim and final) relating to implementation issues capturing the knowledge generated during the transnational seminars and the main findings of the exchange activities

Building on the experience of URBACT II, hereafter are some recommendations for efficient delivery of these actions:

a) To organise transnational exchange and learning activities

- o **Methodological approaches for transnational exchange and learning activities:**

Experience indicates that the methodological approach to structure and organize transnational exchange and learning is key to a successful URBACT Implementation Network. As transnational exchange is, by definition, collaboration across language, culture, governance models, a clearly defined framework is vital.

The Lead Partner and Lead Expert will determine the detailed methodology for the transnational activities, and all partners should have some role in the design process.

The Implementation Networks need to focus both on the policy topic and on specific implementation challenges that are likely to arise during the delivery.

Given the range and diversity of URBACT networks, there is no single preferred methodological approach to the transnational element. We have seen a variety of effective ones, and some examples are set out below. However, the proposed methodology should allow the network to address the overarching implementation issues identified in a manageable way. The methodological framework should also help networks to achieve their results. Here are some ways in which previous URBACT Action Planning Networks have addressed this. In principle the same methods for transnational work will be useful for Implementation Networks.

- The Sustainable Food in Urban Communities²³ project, led by Brussels Capital Region, divided its focus into three aspects of food – producing, delivering and enjoying. Following a sequential approach, transnational exchange and learning activities were structured around each of these, with host cities taking the lead in sharing relevant lessons and structuring activities
- The Roma-Net²⁴ project, led by the city of Budapest, had an overall focus on improved integration of Roma communities. However, for practical purposes they introduced a set of sub-themes (Housing, Health and Education). Each sub-theme was addressed within a smaller working group of partners having expressed their interest. Different working group meetings were organised simultaneously in different cities as the participation of all partners was not requested. The series of working group meetings was always followed by a common transnational meeting in order to ensure coherence among the different working groups and provide a general overview to all partners.
- The My Generation at work²⁵ project, led by the city of Rotterdam, focused on youth entrepreneurship and innovation. As for other networks, the overarching theme was split into three sub-themes (career guidance, space for innovation and system planning). But instead of having separate working group meetings, all partners attended common transnational meetings where, after the initial plenary, they engaged in parallel workshops in smaller groups, allowing for more detailed investigation of the sub-theme. Transnational meetings were normally closed by common session where partner could ‘un-pack’ the knowledge gained and explore connections and externalities with other sub-topics.
- The EUniverCities²⁶ project, led by the city of Delft, worked on improving relationships between universities, businesses and the public sector. Following the so-called Implementation Lab methodology which is a form of simplified peer review. In this method, host cities invited partners to advise on ways to improve their local approach, creating a de-facto micro-consultancy method with partners. With this approach the focus of each transnational seminar is determined by the specific needs of the hosting partner.

²³ Sustainable Food in Urban Communities: <http://urbact.eu/sustainable-food>

²⁴ Roma-Net: <http://urbact.eu/roma-net>

²⁵ My Generation at Work: <http://urbact.eu/mygeneration-at-work>

²⁶ EUniverCities: <http://urbact.eu/eunivercities>

- In URBACT II, several networks, in order to complement the transnational seminars gathering all partners, have organised bilateral/trilateral meetings. These are normally organised when partners are already in an advanced stage of their and when they have clearly identified common interests and complementarities with specific partners. Bilateral/trilateral meetings can allow partners to deepen the exchange on specific dimensions of the policy issue addressed by the Network. It will be important that knowledge produced during these meetings is properly captured²⁷ and shared with other partners during the general transnational meetings. Lead Partners and Lead Experts are responsible to ensure the coherence of the bilateral/ trilateral activities with the overarching focus of the network. Bilateral/ trilateral meetings cannot replace transnational seminars gathering all partners.

These methods are not presented as an exhaustive list and URBACT does not adopt a prescriptive approach. URBACT welcomes innovative models and also, where appropriate, hybrid proposals. The most important thing is that the methodology proposed is realistic, clearly explained and has a logical rationale, taking into account the policy issues addressed as well as the needs and the experiences of all partners. Implementation Network partners should also pay special attention to defining a methodological approach that will generate a continuous flow of knowledge between the transnational and the local level to feed in the co-production process of the Operational Implementation Framework within the URBACT Local Group.

- o **Main components of transnational exchange and learning activities**

URBACT networks use a wide range of transnational exchange and learning activities. The Programme places strong emphasis on the participatory principle, and expects transnational meetings to be interactive, stimulating and enjoyable. Consequently, whatever methodological approach is defined; networks are expected to think seriously about the design and delivery of transnational seminars, so that participants get maximum benefit from the experience.

Transnational seminars are the spaces where most of the exchange and learning will take place to deliver the learning itinerary, and in selecting activities, partners should take into account key factors, including language, culture and different learning styles. The most important thing is that each network undertakes activities that are relevant, appropriate and effective, depending on their Implementation Network configuration. The Phase 1 Application should provide first ideas of the activities to be implemented and explain why they have been proposed and how they will contribute to the network results.

The thematic focus and implementation related challenges defined by the network will have an impact on the types of stakeholders that will be involved in the transnational meetings and thus on the type of activities that can be proposed during the seminars. For example, a network focusing on youth inclusion will have a high proportion of youth participants in the transnational meetings and it is likely to adopt different activities to one that involves transport planners. If public procurement is to be examined, then relevant departments will need to be involved.

At the design stage of transnational exchange and learning seminars, different activities can be considered. These include:

²⁷ See the report of the Trilateral meeting organised by USE-Act: http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/USE_ACT/outputs_media/London_First_Bilateral_Meeting_Report.pdf

- Inputs from external expert speakers (these might be Lead Experts and / or ad hoc experts working with the project, local experts on a particular topic or guest speakers from other networks and organizations)
- Site visits (with the active involvement of local stakeholders of the hosting city)
- Peer review exercises
- Group problem solving
- Structured discussion and analysis sessions (using different animation techniques like the Fishbowl technique outlined in the URBACT Guide to effective animation – see below).

URBACT has produced a Guide to effective animation of transnational meetings²⁸. This covers practical points – such as venue selection, pacing of activities, etc. – as well as providing examples of the repertoire of activities in use. During Phase 1, approved Implementation Networks will receive a revised version of this Guide and training, building also on the experiences of the latest networks approved under URBACT II and which are still ongoing at the time of writing.

Again, it is important to stress that this list is not exhaustive, and that some networks will find some activities more relevant than others. Most successful networks bring a repertoire of activities to select from, and this is where the experience and knowledge of the Lead Expert should play a key role.

A key aspect of learning in Implementation Networks is to observe implementation in practice in partner cities in which meetings take place. In this sense field visits to projects are expected to play a key role in developing shared learning for all partners. We anticipate that methodologies for getting the most out of field visits will develop considerably in these networks and go beyond the various forms of peer review that exist already in URBACT and elsewhere. In particular, the notion of critical practice reviews needs to be developed.

It is also worth noting that some networks have designed, within the transnational seminars, specific activities for particular target groups. These have included specific activities for representatives of Managing Authorities of Operational Programmes. Another group which has had parallel activities organized during a transnational seminar is composed by elected officials from the partner cities, who can also find it particularly useful to liaise with their peers. However, although special activities may be organized for such groups, there should be ample opportunity for them to participate in the overall programme with all stakeholders.

○ Practical points

- Typically, during the course of an Implementation Network, there will be between seven and nine transnational seminars, in addition to the final conference. Each seminar is likely to take place over a period of two to three days
- From experience, networks have found that involving different partners to host – or even co-host – transnational seminars is a good way to gain their active participation in the project. At the planning stage, partners should identify the aims and focus of each of the proposed transnational seminars, reflecting the overall shape of the projects but also the specific experiences, needs and potential contributions of the host city.

²⁸ “Getting results through animated meetings. Seven top tips”: http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/animation_techniques.pdf

- During the transnational seminar itself, it is a good idea to ensure that participants get a feeling of the host cities and more especially of what the host city is doing in relation to the policy challenge and implementation challenges addressed by the network. Seeing is believing. This can be ensured through site visits²⁹ where the local stakeholders of the hosting city should play a key role in presenting their local implementation challenges, needs and experiences/ solutions. Certainly all partners should receive some orientation material in advance, so they arrive with some understanding of the local context (several networks have used the updated partner profiles of the Baseline study for this purpose)
- Detailed advance planning is an important part of effective transnational seminars. At the very least, this means collaboration between the Lead Expert, Lead Partner and host partner around the agenda, contributors and the logistics. In some cases, Lead Experts have visited the host city in advance to see venues and meet the hosts. In other cases, they have organized planning meetings via virtual meeting tools (Skype, WebEx, GoToMeeting, etc.) in advance of the transnational seminars
- Virtual meeting tools are becoming an increasingly important complement to physical transnational seminars. As well as their use in pre-planning, networks are also increasingly relying on them to maintain project momentum between transnational seminars. The ability to convene virtual meetings between transnational cycles provides an additional dimension to networks and Lead Partners should show awareness of this in their proposals.
- Another issue to consider is the ‘housekeeping’ dimension of the network – which includes finance, administration and communication issues. As much as possible, it is advisable to manage these aspects of the network outside the main business of the transnational seminars. This might mean via virtual online meetings, separate to the transnational seminars. However, there will be points when face to face time is required, and in such cases it is best to bolt these meetings on either before or after the main programme, as not all participants will be involved
- Finally, a few points about social media, linking into the wider guidance on communication. Increasingly, networks are using social media (in particular Twitter, Facebook and Flickr) to complement their transnational activities. All networks are encouraged to establish a social media profile and these tools can be very effective to enhance the internal communication among partners as well as to promote transnational events and to engage with a wider audience in proceedings.

b) To draw lessons and produce thematic outputs (interim and final) capturing the learning and knowledge generated during the transnational seminars and the main findings of the exchange activities

URBACT Implementation Networks are requested to capture, organize and document the knowledge generated through the transnational exchange and learning activities. This process is a key and compulsory element for Phase 2 of all approved networks and it is linked to two main objectives:

²⁹ See the URBACT Blogpost “Six URBACT ‘Golden Nuggets’ for Successful Partner Visits”:
<http://www.blog.urbact.eu/2014/03/six-urbact-golden-nuggets-for-successful-partner-visits/>

- To feed into the local process of co-production of the Operational Implementation Frameworks making available to local stakeholders the knowledge generated at transnational level, in terms of key findings, good practices, ideas, policy recommendations
- To make the knowledge generated by the network available to an external audience of local, regional, national and EU level policy-makers and practitioners not directly involved in the network activities

The Operational Implementation Framework should be, for each partner, the result of the co-production process within the URBACT Local Group, building on the contributions of the local key stakeholders involved. In addition, it should also be inspired and enriched by the knowledge generated through the exchange and learning activities at network level. Good practices identified in partner cities, suggestions and advice given by other partners through peer review exercises, contributions from external experts are all key inputs that will help the URBACT Local Group in producing a better Operational Implementation Framework.

For this to happen, the knowledge coming from the transnational level should be effectively captured, organized and documented in order to be easily accessible to all stakeholders involved in the local co-production process.

As already stressed above, you should bear in mind that you will not be working only for yourself or only for the benefit of your own city.

Implementation Networks and their partners are expected to draw lessons from their exchanges and to share these with urban practitioners in cities all over Europe, who could not take part in the network activities. Other cities in Europe (and beyond) are facing similar challenges to the ones you would like to address through URBACT and they would greatly benefit from the key lessons of your Implementation Network, the good practices identified, the recommendations produced. The network findings and recommendations can also influence decision and policy makers at EU, national, regional level in the perspective of integrated and sustainable urban development.

In some cases, a single thematic output can achieve both objectives, reaching both audiences (the local stakeholders at partner level and the external audience of other cities and institutions). However, in most cases networks should differentiate the thematic production and identify the right content and the right format for each target audience. Examples of thematic outputs produced by previous URBACT networks are provided in the section below.

The Lead Expert is the main person responsible for the coordination of the production of thematic outputs, through close coordination with the Lead Partner and with the active contribution of all partners and contributors to the transnational activities. Ad hoc experts or external experts can be commissioned to contribute to the production of thematic outputs.

In the Phase 1 Application, candidates Lead Partners and Lead Experts should start to reflect on how to ensure this key activity of WP2 and make concrete proposals (in terms of target audience, content and format of thematic outputs).

6.2.2. Main deliverables for Work Package 2

Outputs to be delivered as result of the activities under Work Package 2 should include the following:

- Transnational exchange and learning seminars/ activities
- Thematic outputs

Each transnational seminar that the network will organize during Phase 2 is to be considered as an output of the project and counted in the list of expected deliverables.

Concerning the thematic outputs, hereafter are some examples from previous URBACT Action Planning Networks. For implementation networks, thematic outputs will be rather linked with the urban issue covered or with the implementation challenges.

- o **Thematic Outputs targeting mainly an internal audience (local coordinators, members of the URBACT Local Group, etc.):**
 - **Seminar reports** produced after each transnational event providing a summary of the main topic/issues addressed, highlighting the main contributions, learning points and conclusions. These documents should be more than simple minutes of proceedings and should not consist of a compilation of PowerPoints (such documents are useful for internal purpose only, to be shared among partners). Seminar reports should be designed to share thematic content, findings, and policy recommendations. The Thematic Seminar Report of USE-Act³⁰ is a good example. More innovative ways of producing seminar report can also be tested as the case of My Generation at Work with the Digital Memory Aid³¹. This was designed primarily as an online product that captures and organizes the contributions of all partners during the event (these are easily accessible via hyperlinks embedded in the document).
 - **Peer review reports** capturing the main conclusions of the exercise with the partners in the transnational seminar, their conclusions, ideas and concrete suggestions to be taken into account when producing the Operational Implementation Framework. The results of the peer reviews can be conceived as a stand-alone document or as part of the seminar report if the peer review is part of a wider transnational event. For inspiration, you can look at the EUniverCities Peer Review Report³².
 - **Site visits reports.** Site visits are a key component of transnational seminars. They can be documented as part of the seminar report or as stand-alone document. In some cases, networks can decide to organize site visits to cities not involved in the network but with interesting experiences and good practices related to the policy issue addressed. This was the case for the CityLogo project that organized site visits to Barcelona and Zurich.³³

³⁰ USE-Act Thematic Seminar Report:

http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/USE_ACT/outputs_media/USEAct_II_report_Nitra.pdf

³¹ My Generation at Work Digital Memory Aid:

http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/My_Generation_at_Work/documents_media/DMA_Tampere_final.pdf

³² EUniverCities Peer Review Report:

http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/EUnivercities/outputs_media/Peer_Review_Report_Aveiro_02.pdf

³³ Citylogo Study visit in Zurich: <http://urbact.eu/city-branding-zurich-work-progress-0>

- **Videos and animations.** URBACT networks can also make good use of videos and animations to complement other thematic outputs. The Sustainable Food in Urban Communities network has used short simple animation to capture key points from transnational seminars³⁴. The videos have been used by coordinators of URBACT Local Group to report back to local stakeholders the key findings of each transnational seminar.
- o **Thematic outputs targeting both an internal and external audience:**
 - **Collection of case studies and/or good practices** focusing on specific good practices and experiences successfully implemented in partner cities. Case studies should be organised following a common template, clearly presenting the local context, the practices, the key enabling factors and actors. Examples of Collection of case studies are provided by the Roma-Net network³⁵, the ESIMEC network³⁶, the CSI Europe network³⁷, PREVENT³⁸. A more detailed model of producing case studies has been used in workstreams³⁹ and for studies.
 - **Interim thematic reports** presenting interim results (lessons learnt, policy recommendations, tools, good practices, etc.) relating to a specific sub-topic addressed by the network. Interesting examples are the Interim Thematic Reports of Sustainable Food in Urban Communities⁴⁰ (one for each of the three network's sub-topics Growing, Delivering and Enjoying), the JOBTOWN Learning Modules⁴¹ and the 4D Cities Intermediary Reports.⁴²
 - **Final thematic reports** gathering all lessons learnt throughout the project life cycle, both from the transnational exchange and learning activities on the implementation issues addressed and from the local level in relation to the co-production of the Operational Implementation Framework. For some examples you can refer to the final reports of the Hero⁴³ network, the EVUE network⁴⁴, the Enter.Hub network⁴⁵ or the Sustainable Food in Urban Communities network.⁴⁶
 - **Videos and animations** can complement the interim and final thematic outputs. They can be a good tool to vehicle to an external audience the main messages and lessons learnt through the involvement in an Implementation Network. The

³⁴ Sustainable Food in Urban Communities video animations: <https://vimeo.com/67285763>

³⁵ Roma-net Case Study on "Promoting Self-Employment" in Hungary:
http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/media/case_study_kiut_20140918_ah.pdf

³⁶ ESIMEC Case Study on "Developing an innovation plan in Sabadell":
http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/general_library/Sabadell.pdf

³⁷ CSI Europe Case study:
http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/08_csi_europe_state_aid_case_study_northwest_urban_development_fund_.pdf

³⁸ PREVENT Good Practice Sourcebook:
http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/PREVENT/outputs_media/Prevent_good_practice_BD_01.pdf
<http://urbact.eu/urbact-capitalisation-workstreams-2015-now-published>

⁴⁰ Sustainable Food in Urban Communities Interim Report 'Delivering':
http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/Sustainable_food_in_urban_communities/documents_media/SustainableFood-Thematic-Interim-Report-DELIVERING-Nov13_02.pdf

⁴¹ Jobtown Learning Modules: http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/en_1_jobtown_thematic_publication.pdf

⁴² 4D Cities Intermediary Report 'Business opportunity for local health innovation':
http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/4D_CITIES/documents_media/4D_Cities_I_Output_Report_Business.pdf

⁴³ HerO Final Report – Guidebook – The Road to Success – Integrated Management of Historic Towns:
http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/HERO/projects_media/hero_guidebook_FINAL_01.pdf

⁴⁴ EVUE Final report:
http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/EVUE/documents_media/EVUE_report_280912_FINAL.pdf

⁴⁵ Enter.Hub Final Report: <http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/finalreport.pdf>

⁴⁶ Sustainable food in urban communities Final Handbook: http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/sustainable_food_handbook_2015-02-25.pdf

CSI Europe network⁴⁷ produced a video animation to present the main lessons learnt concerning the use of financial instruments for urban development and that complements the final report and the collection of case studies.

○ **Thematic outputs targeting specific audiences (mainly decision and policy makers at EU, national, regional and local level):**

- **Policy Implementation recommendations.** Networks can produce suggestions for the improvement of legal or regulatory frameworks building on the main lessons learnt and on the common discussions among partners. These can be produced as stand-alone documents or as part of the final report. In URBACT II examples of policy recommendations are provided by the CASH network⁴⁸ and the HerO network.⁴⁹
- **Recommendation about implementation challenges.** Networks can produce recommendation concerning different aspects of implementation of integrated urban strategies and actions.
- **Political declarations.** These are normally agreed and produced as result of specific transnational meetings with the participation of elected representatives from partner cities. Political declarations can be particularly helpful in reinforcing the main messages and recommendations coming from the network and demonstrate a strong political support for the key findings. This type of output has been produced (in different formats) by networks like Enter.Hub⁵⁰, CASH⁵¹, Sustainable Food in Urban Communities⁵².
- **Position papers.** Networks can produce position or policy papers about implementation in order to contribute to debates at EU, national or regional level. For example, the HerO network (approved between 2009 and 2011) contributed to the public consultation on the definition of the thematic priorities for the Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 with the Strategy Paper 'The untapped potential of cultural heritage'⁵³.

⁴⁷ CSI Europe video animation – How to build a rocket: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c5HX7lrVVRU&feature=youtu.be>

⁴⁸ CASH Policy recommendations: <http://urbact.eu/%E2%80%9C9-cash-policy-recommendations-make-best-use-new-structural-funds-sustainable-housing-%E2%80%93-guide-eu>

⁴⁹ HerO Policy Recommendations:

http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/HERO/projects_media/HerO_Policy_Recommendations.pdf

⁵⁰ Enter.Hub Protocol of Intent: <http://urbact.eu/enterhub-policy-makers-sign-protocol-intents-development-mobility-hubs>

⁵¹ CASH Mayors Declaration of Intent: <http://urbact.eu/cash-mayors-declaration-intent-signed-brussels-november-292012>

⁵² Sustainable Food in Urban Communities – Commitments of elected officials: <http://www.sustainable-everyday-project.net/urbact-sustainable-food/2015/03/17/the-partners-cities-elected-officials-commit-to-sustainable-food-in-2015-and-beyond/>

⁵³ HerO – Strategy Paper 'The untapped potential of cultural heritage': http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/hero_strategy_paper.pdf

6.3. Work Package 3 – Impact on local governance and practices

In order to foster the impact of the transnational activities on the local policies and governance, each partner joining an URBACT Implementation Network is requested to involve relevant local stakeholders in the production of the Operational Implementation Framework to be produced by the network.

You and your partners will commit to setting up and running an URBACT Local Group (ULG) that will gather officials of different departments, elected representatives as well as relevant stakeholders (representatives of other tiers of government, local agencies, NGOs, associations, etc.) linked to the policy area concerned by the Operational Implementation Framework to be developed. The funders of the elements of the strategy or action plan may be particularly useful contributors. These could include Managing Authorities, especially where the city has been designated as a recipient under Article 7 of the ERDF.

URBACT Local Groups are responsible for analysing local implementation challenges, designing solutions and ultimately co-producing the Operational Implementation Frameworks which will consist of chapters based on the ULG approach to addressing implementation challenges. Local stakeholders involved in the ULG should also contribute to the exchange and learning process at transnational level and be responsible for embedding the learning from the transnational exchange (practical knowledge, good practices, ideas, etc.) into the local implementation process.

The activities to be developed under this work package are designed to achieve the following aims:

- To support transnational exchange activities through the preparation of input for the project meetings (e.g. case studies, site visits, etc.)
- To foster the impact of transnational exchange activities in order to implement local policies, strategies and actions
- To strengthen the capacity of local stakeholders in integrated urban policies and participative implementation of urban policies
- To develop participative implementation processes for the production of Operational Implementation Frameworks
- To ensure dissemination of lessons learnt (good practices, policy recommendations, etc.) to local stakeholders involved in urban development

6.3.1. Main activities for Work Package 3

Activities to be implemented under WP3 should include the following actions:

- a) To set up and run an URBACT Local Group in each partner city for the co-production of an Operational Implementation Framework
- b) To take part in the exchange activities at transnational level and contribute to these activities (participation in seminars, organisation of study visits, inputs, etc.)
- c) To take part in the capacity-building schemes organised by URBACT for core URBACT Local Group members (e.g. URBACT Summer University)

- d) To cooperate with the Managing Authorities of Operational Programmes (ERDF, ESF)

All the activities under this Work Package are primarily dedicated to allow Implementation Networks to have an impact on local policies and practices through the co-production of Operational Implementation Frameworks. To support this process, resources are available:

- At project level for partners to appoint an URBACT Local Group Coordinator and to run their ULG (e.g. using local experts if required for animation, facilitation, co-production of the Operational Implementation Framework, and for meeting spaces, tools, design, local communication activities, etc.)
- At Programme level, with capacity-building activities dedicated to core ULG members and organized in the different Member and Partner States. These include transnational URBACT Summer Universities for local stakeholders, training schemes on participative implementation organised at national level, targeted training schemes for elected representatives, Managing Authorities of Operational Programmes, etc.
- The URBACT Toolkit is available in several EU languages, providing guidance and support to partners in setting up their URBACT Local Group (e.g. stakeholder analysis) and work on the co-production of the Operational Implementation Framework (e.g. problem tree, activity table, etc.). More guidance will be provided to approved Implementation Networks at the beginning of Phase 1 and during the training sessions organized by the Secretariat.

6.3.2. Recommendations for efficient delivery of activities

Building on the experiences of URBACT II, below are some recommendations for efficient delivery of these activities:

a) To set up and run an URBACT Local Group in each partner city for the co-production of an Operational Implementation Framework

Each partner commits to setting up and running an URBACT Local Group in order to co-produce the policy solutions/ instruments that will allow the city to deal with the implementation challenges identified (these will be collated Operational Implementation Framework. Below are some of the key steps to be undertaken:

- **Appointing an URBACT Local Group Coordinator:**

At local level, each partner is responsible for designating an URBACT Local Group Coordinator in charge of leading the URBACT Local Group and ensuring the group delivers

according to plan. The ULG Coordinator acts also as a bridge between the transnational networking activities and the URBACT Local Group. Their task is to:

- organise URBACT Local Group meetings
- oversee the production of the Operational Implementation Framework (according to the Road Map)
- report on URBACT Local Group activities at local and network level
- organize the URBACT Local Group contribution to transnational activities
- take part in transnational network meetings and capacity-building seminars organized by the Programme
- report back to URBACT Local Group members

Situations vary considerably regarding who, at partner level, is in charge of coordinating the ULG, depending on the partner's resources, experience and capacities. In most cases in URBACT II, the local coordinator in charge of the URBACT network for the partner city was also the ULG Coordinator. This allows strong connections between the network activities at transnational level and the ULG activities.

In cases where the partner lacks the capacity, especially due to insufficient experience in running participative processes of implementation, the partner may consider hiring a local external expert to support the ULG coordinator with some of the tasks to be achieved by the URBACT Local Group (e.g. animation and facilitation of meetings, etc.). In some other cases the role of the ULG Coordinator can be completely externalized to a local external expert.

Generally, partners are encouraged to hire specific animation and training expertise if they consider it necessary. This should be discussed with the Lead Partner and all partner when setting the budget for the network as this type of local expertise is covered by the network's budget.

○ **Setting up an URBACT Local Group**

There is no pre-defined list of who should be involved in the URBACT Local Group. Each partner should engage relevant stakeholders coming from public and third sector organizations as well as the private sector concerned by the policy area covered by the network.

If an effective structure already exists there is no need to set up a new group but there is an expectation that the Group should be reviewed for the purpose of the URBACT network, and URBACT record keeping maintained.

Special attention should be given to the participation of local elected representatives and the private sector in order to ensure that the initiatives and actions identified by the URBACT Local Group have the appropriate political endorsement and that they are 'on the radar' of the strategic decision makers at city (and also regional) level.

Special attention also needs to be given to involving the MA either directly (i.e. in ULG meetings) or indirectly through bilateral exchanges to ensure that they are up-to-date with how the ULG is working. Other stakeholders that bring resources to implement the strategy or action plan are equally important.

Section 1.2 of the URBACT Toolkit provides useful practical information and tools on how to identify and engage with local stakeholders to be involved in URBACT Local Groups.

- **Running an URBACT Local Group**

To ensure long-term commitment of local stakeholders in the ULG, it is important that all members are aware of the objectives of the group, the links with the transnational networking activities, what is expected in terms of involvement and responsibilities, the resources available, the schedule, etc. It is recommended that each partner establish a road map outlining the main tasks to be performed and a work plan.

This road map should build on the following components:

- **ULG meetings at local level:** Regular meetings should be organized to allow the group to work on the different tasks they are entrusted with, among which the production of the Operational Implementation Framework, the contribution to the transnational network activities, feeding back to the group on lessons learnt from the transnational seminars, etc. Section 1.3 of the URBACT Toolkit provides examples on how to organize effective and productive meetings with local stakeholders.
 - **Co-production of the Operational Implementation Framework** using participatory methods and tools. The Operational Implementation Framework should bring concrete answers and sustainable solutions to the issues addressed by the partner when joining the network. From the outset the Operational Implementation Framework should be rooted in the city profiles described in the Baseline Study produced in Phase 1.
 - **Participation in transnational network seminars:** it is important that ULG members take part in the network meetings and are directly involved in the learning process. Each partner will have to identify the most relevant stakeholders depending on the topic of each event. The number of ULG members travelling to network meetings will have to be agreed with the Lead partner and all project partners, in order to foresee the necessary budget for travel and accommodation expenses in the network budget. ULG delegates taking part in transnational meetings will represent the whole ULG and be responsible for bringing input as well as providing feedback after the event. To ensure proper links between activities at local and transnational levels it is recommended to schedule ULG meetings before transnational events in order to prepare the contribution of the ULG, and afterwards to share lessons learnt and follow-up on activities.
 - **Dissemination and communication of the network and ULG activities:** Partners should communicate about ULG and network activities, to highlight the URBACT added value, the participative approach, etc. This communication should be organised as an ongoing process, throughout the life of the network, while the Operational Implementation Framework is being developed, and once the Operational Implementation Framework is completed and validated at political level, . Network level communication tools such as the dedicated website or the newsletter should also profile ULG progress and activity.
- b) To take part in the exchange activities at transnational level and contribute to these activities (participation in seminars, organisation of study visits, production of inputs, etc.)**

As stated above, members of the URBACT Local Groups are invited to take part in and contribute to the exchange and learning activities at transnational level. This contribution should be considered as part of a two-way bridge between the local and the transnational level. URBACT Local Groups provide quality and relevant inputs for the transnational activities (in terms of local practices and experiences). In turn the knowledge produced during transnational exchange and learning activities feeds back in, enriching the discussion at local level, enhancing capacity among stakeholders and finally leading to the production of better Operational Implementation Frameworks.

c) To take part in the capacity-building schemes organised by URBACT for core URBACT Local Group members

Lack of capacity in developing and running participatory implementation processes and integrated approaches to urban development has been identified as a major challenge for cities. The URBACT programme organises capacity-building sessions at national level in national language and at transnational level for core ULG members (e.g. URBACT Summer Universities). The initiatives aim at strengthening the capacity of local stakeholders in developing and running a participative action-planning process in the field of integrated and sustainable urban policies.

For each partner involved in an URBACT network, it is expected that the local project coordinator and the ULG Coordinator (if different) as well as other core members active in the group, will take part in the capacity building activities. The costs for travel and accommodations are covered by the network budget.

These sessions will provide local actors with methods and skills, as well as opportunities to network with other cities involved in URBACT, with the national authorities and possibly with Managing Authorities of the Operational programmes. More detailed information will be provided to partners once their proposal has been approved for Phase 1.

d) To cooperate with the Managing Authorities of Operational

Representatives of the Managing Authorities should be involved, as much as possible, in the process of co-production of the Operational Implementation Framework to be elaborated by the URBACT Local Group as result of the network activity. Other funders may also be invited (e.g. public funders, crowd funding platforms, social investors, private investors). Managing Authorities have specialised knowledge about some of the pitfalls that occur in implementing a strategy or action plan – for example concerning procedures for public procurement and state aids.

6.3.3. Main deliverables for Work Package 3

Outputs to be delivered as result of the activities under Work Package 3 should include the following:

- One URBACT Local Group set up by each partner
- An Operational Implementation Framework per partner city
- Other outputs aiming to achieve the aims defined for this Work Package

Regarding the Operational Implementation Framework, this is to be conceived as an instrument for partner to improve the delivery of strategies and actions, taking into account

the local context, challenges and resources. As a consequence, the content, length, format of the Operational Implementation Framework will differ according to the type of partner (city partner or non-city partner), the existing local situation and policies, the problems and challenges identified by each URBACT Local Group.

It is suggested that specific components or modules of the Operational Implementation Framework are developed as the network progresses so that they can be applied in practice as soon as they are ready. The final version brings all the modules together in a single document. Where things have moved on (as a result of implementation) it will be possible to update the module for publication in the final version.

Table 2: The Operational Implementation Framework: example of how implementation related challenges fit (note that this is a fictional example for illustration purposes only)

Implementation challenge selected by the city	Detail of problem	Contents of Operational Implementation Framework
Participatory approach	Difficulty of engaging private sector	Framework for engaging with private stakeholders (eg by means of meetings with in the evening and/ or at breakfast meetings) - Use of outreach techniques to engage
organising project management for delivery	Problem of conflict of interest when involving transport operators in project selection	Operational governance guidelines to ensure that project selection does not benefit stakeholders
Integrated approach	Coordination of timetable for hard and soft measures	Description of how coordination is being addressed in the partner city (temporal, thematic and practical e.g. through sub-group meetings)
Smart procurement	Building social and environmental clauses into procurement by all public agencies	Guidance on how to use new social clauses in procurement contracts/ New framework for public procurement at city level

In addition, based on their contributions, ULG members may also work together to produce contributions for network level outputs such as policy implementation recommendations and lessons learnt from the exchange and learning activities etc.

6.4. Work Package 4 – Communication and dissemination activities

URBACT projects have to share their results and outputs with an external audience made of urban stakeholders, policy and decision makers and practitioners across Europe. Therefore, external communication will be a key activity for the project.

The activities to be developed under this work package will be designed to achieve the following aims:

- To ensure communication on the project activity on an ongoing basis to urban practitioners outside the network
- To ensure dissemination of the project results and findings to the wider community of urban practitioners outside the network
- To implement the Communication plan produced at the beginning of Phase 2 to ensure communication around project's results on an ongoing basis (interim outputs and final outputs), both at project level and partner level

6.4.1. Main activities for Work Package 4

Activities to be implemented under WP4 should include the following actions:

- a) Produce a detailed communication plan and complete the graphic identity at the beginning of Phase 2
- b) Regularly update the network page on the URBACT website (at least once a month)
- c) Produce and share communication materials about network activities
- d) Organise a final event open to all target audiences and local communication events at partner level
- e) Participate in external events to promote the network activities and results

a) Detailed communication plan

Following the communication activities presented in the Phase 2 Application, the network should develop a full communication plan for the whole duration of network activities at the beginning of Phase 2. The plan should include communication activities both at network and at partner level.

The plan should include at least the following:

- the aims and target groups
- main project findings and outputs to be shared
- main communication partners
- communication tools
- communication work plan
- an indication of how the information and publicity measures are to be evaluated in terms of visibility and awareness

Based on the logo created during Phase 1, the network will create a complete graphic identity (e.g. publication, templates, colours, templates for PPT, font types, etc.)

A template for the communication plan will be provided by URBACT Secretariat at the beginning of Phase 2.

b) Regular updates of the network page on the URBACT website

URBACT website is the most central and widely accessible media available to URBACT networks. Each URBACT III network has its own dedicated pages on the URBACT website with its specific URL (www.urbact.eu/nameofyourproject). It is a showcase for the project and the partners, presenting the latest updates, the main challenges of the network, its activities and outputs.

The network Communication Officer, on behalf of the Lead partner, should regularly update the network page. It is requested that the Lead partner ensures that the network page is updated at least once a month.

Communication officers should follow the guidelines available when updating the network page. He/she must in particular promote the latest activities and content produced by the network, upload documents and promote network events, in the specific sections.

Particular attention must be paid when filling in the network page. The URBACT website and the network pages are communication spaces, broadcasting content which has been processed and validated, focusing on a basic range of topics and avoiding technical and internal documents. Content has to be legible, written in good English and lively. URBACT editorial strategy has to be applied with a journalistic style and with informative, jargon-free and clear information.

c) Produce and share communication materials about network activities

Lead Partners must promote the activities and the results of the project. You are strongly encouraged to produce communication materials as outlined below.

- A printed brochure introducing the project topic, challenges, partners etc. This publication should be distributed to all your target groups during meetings, conferences etc.

Examples of brochures⁵⁴

- 4D Cities brochure
(http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/4D_CITIES/documents_media/4DCities_brochure.pdf)
- ESIMeC booklet
(http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/ESIMEC/outputs_media/16228_Esimec_booklet_screen_view.pdf)
- My generation at Work brochure
(http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/My_Generation_at_Work/outputs_media/MG_atW_Brochure_Nov2013_01.pdf)
- Social Media account (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn group etc). The URBACT II Programme has developed an integrated social media strategy that will be continued and improved during URBACT III. The main programme social media tools are:

⁵⁴ Please note that the brochures presented here have been produced respecting the URBACT II graphic charter that no longer applies for URBACT III

twitter, Facebooks, LinkedIn, YouTube and Flickr. The URBACT blog is also an important tool with more than 3000 subscribers. Networks are invited to develop at least one social media tool specific for the network that should promote network events, results, partners' activities and any other news related to the projects life.

Examples of Social Media accounts

- Placemaking four Cities twitter account https://twitter.com/p4c_urbact
- Roma-Net II twitter account <https://twitter.com/romaneturbact>
- TUTUR Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/TUTURproject?fref=pb&hc_location=profile_browser
- My Generation YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/user/MyGenerationTV/videos>
- E-Newsletter: You can consider issuing an electronic newsletter to inform partners and a target audience outside the network about the network activities and findings (normally in English but possibly translated in partners' languages). Sending a newsletter is an easy way of informing your target groups on what is going on in your project. An updated contact list including URBACT Secretariat, project partners and targets groups (both at local, national and European levels) is necessary. The content of the Newsletter must be well targeted. You may also consider targeting existing newsletter and providing content on a regular basis.

Examples of Newsletters

- USEACT Newsletters http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/USE_ACT/outputs_media/USEAct_newsletter_1_HD.pdf
- USER Newsletters http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/USER/documents_media/Newsletter1_USER.pdf
- Promotional materials: You are encouraged to produce an exhibition stand to be displayed during meetings, conferences etc. and other promotional flyers and goodies⁵⁵ to be distributed during those events.
- Press releases: Generating positive editorial media coverage at local, national and European levels for the project is a challenge. The project Communication officer should take every communication opportunity to promote the project and the partners as well as highlight the people involved (events, interviews, project results etc.). The project Communication officer has to identify the key media at the different levels, regularly inform the targeted media and create and disseminate the relevant messages at the right time. We encourage you to produce a press kit, with press releases, fact sheets, possibly photos, etc. in compliance with the URBACT graphic and editorial charter. Partners should be involved in this process in particularly regarding the local media.

For an example of interesting use of broadcast on Euronews, see the EVUE project http://www.commentvisions.com/video-share/?dr_v_id=4290

⁵⁵ According to the EU Delegated Regulation (EU) No 481/2014, the cost for goodies should not be more than 50€ a head over lifetime. All goodies produced should serve the purpose of the project.

- The URBACT Graphic Charter and use of logos: all project communication materials must respect the URBACT Graphic Charter as well as the EU regulations concerning publicity and the use of logos⁵⁶. You must to apply the graphic guidelines of the URBACT Graphic Charter Guide and to use the available templates for all your documents.
- Furthermore, Lead Partners should inform the public about the support obtained from ERDF funding providing on their city websites with a short description of the project (aims, results and ERDF financial support).

d) Organise a final event for target audiences and local communication events at partner level

At the end of the project, networks must organise a final event open to all project target groups to present their final results and outputs. You are advised to organise this conference in an accessible European city as you want as many participants as possible to attend.

Each partner should also organise local communication events in their own city, in national language, to promote the results of the project (project conclusions, policy recommendations, tools, etc.) and to present the Operational Implementation Framework.

The project Communication Officer should promote these events using all the existing tools (network page, social media, press releases, newsletter etc.) and use the event as an opportunity to distribute brochures and final publications.

e) Participate in external events to promote the network

You are encouraged to take part in conferences and ‘networking’ events as well as present project activities and results at conferences dealing with your issue at local, national and European level. Meetings and conferences are great opportunities to spread and communicate around the results of your project, distribute communication materials and introduce the project activities during debates.

6.4.2. Main deliverables for Work Package 4

Outputs to be delivered as a result of the actions under Work package 4 should include the following elements:

- Detailed communication plan
- Active network page, within URBACT website, update at least once a month
- Communication materials (digital and print)
- Final conference for the communication of project results to a wide audience
- Local communication events, to be organised in each partner city at the end of the project to share the results of the project (project conclusions, policy recommendations, tools, etc.) and to present the Operational Implementation Framework.

⁵⁶ EU Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 on publicity and use of logos

6.5. Expertise for Phase 2

The following section provides you with information concerning the expertise to be provided to networks in Phase 2. More especially you will find information on:

- Tasks to be performed by the Lead Expert and ad hoc experts in Phase 2
- Allocation of days for Lead Expert and ad hoc experts in Phase 2
- Appointing and contracting Lead Expert and ad hoc experts in Phase 2

These are dealt with under headings below.

6.5.1. Tasks to be performed by the Lead Expert and ad hoc experts in Phase 2

During Phase 2, the Lead Expert will contribute to the delivery of the 4 Work Packages ensuring the following tasks:

- Supporting the Lead Partner to ensure the coherence of the transnational exchange and learning activities with the focus and the methodology agreed by all partners
- Playing a key role in the design and delivery of transnational exchange and learning activities including preparation of inputs, collecting info from partners, designing agenda with appropriate methodology and animation techniques, moderating sessions during meeting, etc.
- Defining and delivering thematic inputs that will nourish the exchange and contribute to the learning process of partners involved
- Drawing lessons from the transnational exchange and learning activities, capturing the key findings and knowledge produced at transnational level to feed into the Operational Implementation Frameworks at local level (see section 5.3)
- Coordinating the production of thematic outputs (interim and final) for an external dissemination of the main lessons learnt, good practices, policy recommendations generated by the network (see section 5.2)
- Coordinating, in close cooperation with the Lead Partner, the contribution of ad hoc experts commissioned on the additional expertise envelope allocated by the programme

During Phase 2, Implementation Networks will have the opportunity to appoint ad hoc experts to provide support on specific needs identified by networks concerning:

- Methodology for exchange and learning activities: Ad hoc experts can be appointed to support the Lead Expert and partners in designing and delivering specific transnational activities (e.g. bringing new techniques for peer review sessions)
- Thematic Expertise: Ad hoc experts can be appointed to provide the network with specific thematic input on particular sub-topic addressed by the project. Ad hoc expert can also be in charge of producing thematic outputs on a particular sub-topic
- Support to partners to implement integrated and participatory policies: Ad hoc experts can be appointed to support partners concerning the main steps for the co-production of the Operational Implementation Frameworks (identifying and engaging key stakeholders, co-generating ideas and solutions, building effective monitoring systems, identifying sources of funding, etc.)

6.5.2. Allocation of days for Lead Expert and Ad hoc experts in Phase 2

For Phase 2, the allocation of days to the Lead Expert should not exceed 80% of the days remaining in the expertise envelop after Phase 1. The work plan for the Lead Expert and the ad hoc experts will be discussed and defined during Phase 1 in consultation with all partners.

Further detailed guidelines for the definition of the work plan of the Lead Expert and ad hoc experts for Phase 2 will be provided to Lead Partners of approved Implementation Networks during Phase 1.

6.5.3. Appointing and contracting Lead Expert and ad hoc experts in Phase 2

After the approval of the project proposal by the Monitoring Committee for phase 2, Lead Partners should submit to the URBACT Joint Secretariat an Expertise Request Form which defines the main tasks of the proposed Lead Expert, the expected deliverables, the work plan of the expert and the number of days to be allocated in Phase 2.

Following validation of the Lead partner's request by the URBACT Joint Secretariat, a contract will be established between the expert and the URBACT Managing Authority. The Lead partner is responsible for certifying the services performed by the Lead expert and validating the expert's activity reports (including deliverables, number of days claimed, etc.)

Lead Experts cannot be appointed to support more than one network at a time (whatever the type of network).

Ad hoc experts can be appointed by approved networks under Phase 2, at the beginning of Phase 2 or during the network lifecycle as needs emerge. Ad hoc experts must be selected from the pool of validated URBACT Experts. The information on validated URBACT Experts is available in the database on the URBACT website.

For each ad hoc expert to be appointed, the Lead Partner shall follow the same procedure as for that of the Lead expert: submit an Expertise Request Form which defines the main tasks of the proposed ad hoc expert, the expected deliverables, the work plan of the Expert and the number of days to be allocated to the expert in Phase 2.

As for Lead Experts, following validation of the Lead partner's request by the URBACT Joint Secretariat, a contract will be established between the expert and the URBACT Managing Authority. The Lead partner shall 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.).

Ad hoc experts can be commissioned by more than a network at a time.

It is also possible to procure ad hoc experts using the project's own expertise budget. However, in this case care must be taken to abide by national rules for public procurement. Sometimes this budget has been used to pay an honorarium (e.g. 500 Euro) for an expert contribution in a transnational meeting.

6.6. Budget for Phase 2

The budget remaining un-spent from Phase 1 can be used in Phase 2 if the project is approved for Phase 2 activities.

The activities in Phase 2 are more consequent than those in Phase 1 and the duration of the project is clearly not the same. As a result, the budget for Phase 2 will be more detailed with more budget lines spreading out the different kinds of activity. There will also be a need to outline costs of Lead Partner and the Project partners separately in some cases.

The URBACT Joint Secretariat will be able to assist you in developing a coherent budget for Phase 2 but it can be noted that the budget categories and general eligibility rules are applicable for both Phase 1 and Phase 2 applications (see chapter 5).

ANNEX ON ARTICLE 7

The 2014-20 Programming period for European Structural and Investment Funds places a new emphasis on the importance of urban areas in Cohesion policy and acknowledges the lead role of cities and towns for the future development of Europe. According to Article 7 of the ERDF Regulation No 1031/2013, Structural Funds will support sustainable urban development through integrated strategies that tackle the economic, environmental, climate, social and demographic challenges of urban areas. Member States have been required to allocate at least 5% of ERDF resources at national level to integrated actions for sustainable urban development. There are three programming options for financing integrated strategies for sustainable urban development:

- Using the new Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) tool
- Through a specific “urban” priority axis within a national or regional operational programme
- Or by means of a specific Operational Programme

According to initial estimates by the European Commission, for 2014-2020, more than 16 billion € have been ring-fenced by EU Member States to finance integrated strategies for sustainable urban development (out of a total budget of 315 billion € for the entire Cohesion Policy). This represents approximately 8% of the total although this figure varies across the Member States, with a floor of 5%.

In addition to the ERDF funds ring-fenced for integrated strategies for sustainable urban development, significant Cohesion Policy investments will benefit urban areas through sectoral axes within the national and regional Operational Programmes (O.P.s) for ERDF and ESF. The sectoral axis, linked to specific Thematic Objectives⁵⁷, can address issues such as waste management, energy efficiency, mobility, innovation, employment, social inclusion etc. A full list is presented below:

1. Strengthening research, technological development and innovation
2. Enhancing access to, and use and quality of, information and communication technologies
3. Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs
4. Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy
5. Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management
6. Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency
7. Promoting sustainable transport and improving network infrastructures
8. Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility
9. Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination
10. Investing in education, training and lifelong learning
11. Improving the efficiency of public administration

⁵⁷ The list of the 11 Thematic Objectives for the EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 is available here: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index.cfm/en/policy/how/priorities