



GUIDANCE FOR URBACT NETWORKS

EVENTS GUIDE

How to organise successful events

Subject	Organising events
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FOREWORD

Events are a core activity of URBACT and very much the heart of URBACT networks. They represent moments of encounter, sharing and learning. While we all know how important they are, organising them well is not always easy.

During events, you are being an ambassador for URBACT. You are also an ambassador of your own work by sharing your findings, results and outputs with an external audience - made of urban stakeholders, policy and decision makers and practitioners across Europe - hence communication being one of your Work Packages.

Through your URBACT network, you have taken the engagement to organise different types of events:

- > Transnational meetings among network partners
- > Final events to promote the key results of your network (conclusions, policy recommendations, methods and tools, etc.) to an external audience
- > Local events organised by partner cities promoting the local conclusions, as well as the network's results.

This guide is designed to help you organise successful events, be they at local or transnational level. The guide is divided into three parts: the first one dedicated to planning the events, the second one to their unfolding and the third one to their follow-up.

We present you here the first part of this guide dedicated to planning your event.

For any questions you may have, do not hesitate to contact the URBACT Secretariat:
communication@urbact.eu

We hope this guide will be of use for you and we wish you a lot of success,

The URBACT Team

1. BEFORE THE EVENT

Thinking through the event and well planning it is the key to success.

1.1. Why & for whom organise an event?

Think about the **purpose** of your event: it announces significant progress regarding your network and is bringing tangible results on the issue(s) you have been working on. It is also an integral part of your network's overall communication strategy. It is time to go back to basics and rethink/revise your specific objectives: who the event is for and what are the best formats to reach your target audience(s).

A. Define your objective(s): what do you want to achieve with this event?

Some options include:

- > Communicate about your network to a wider, non-specialist audience
- > Promote policy recommendations and interventions
- > Testify of your journey as a network of diverse European cities working together to tackle a common challenge
- > Share results with your target groups and stakeholders you wish to mobilise
- > Exchange formally and/or informally with participants

Fix some measurable objectives, such as number of participants, % of 'new' participants, % of elected representatives etc. depending on the event objectives. Keep these aims in mind as you plan the event, also as you will have to assess whether or not you reached your objectives after the event.

B. Define your target audience(s): who are they? Which institutions do they represent? Are they familiar or new to your work? Are they acquainted with or foreign to urban issues and more specifically integrated urban development? Which groups of people could help you achieve your objectives?

Your way(s) of approaching a topic depends on the recipients. You may identify several targets for a single event (e.g. decision makers/elected representatives who can support your Integrated Action Plan or Operational Framework for Implementation, citizens who can make your work known, cities dealing with similar challenges etc.) from different levels: the European one, the national one, the local one. You should as well identify their needs and match them with the messages you want to disseminate. One way to define your target audience is by doing [audience profiling](#). This means identifying key representatives for each audience group and their main features by personifying them.

The Action Planning network My Generation which worked on promoting the potential of the youth in cities always made sure they invited young people in meetings and involved them.

C. Define your key messages: do you have one or more? Are they about the method or the content?

Here are some options:

- > The added value of using the URBACT Method (transnational exchange and learning, URBACT Local Group, tools)
- > The main learnings of your network (so far)
- > The solutions developed for the policy challenge at local level
- > The concerns and potentials of the network's partners for the future.

Participants should be able to remember the main message of your event.

1.2. Designing the event

1.2.1. DEFINING THE TYPE OF EVENT

Define the type of event you want to organise according to your objectives and target audiences.

Possible types of events include:

- > **Back-to-back events:** linking your event with an international/bigger or similar one in terms of themes so as to have more visibility and potentially more participants. It can also save you money and human resources.

This is the case of the final event of the Action Planning network RetailLink, working on strategies to revitalise the retail sector in medium-sized cities, which will be an international conference. The APN CityMobilNet, working on the development of sustainable urban mobility plans, will hold its final event in the frame of the 5th European Conference on SUMP (Sustainable urban mobility plans).

- > **EU policy briefing (in Brussels).** If your event aims is to reach a very specific audience *ie.* policy makers related to your field working in the European institutions.

This is the case of the final event of the APN TechTown, working on digital economy.

- > **Local press conferences:** for elected representatives, journalists and a wider public
- > **Part open, part closed event:** where specific sessions are dedicated only to your partners and network members and other ones are open to external audiences. This is very often the case for the final network conference. One part involves the network partners for a final debriefing/sharing of experiences after 3 years of joint work. Another one is open to an external audience – other city representatives, local policy makers, elected people, representatives of regional/national governments – for sharing your key learnings, recommendations and spreading your outputs.

1.2.2. DEFINING THE DURATION AND FORMAT OF THE EVENT

Define the duration of the event. Shorter and longer formats both have advantages and drawbacks:

- > One-day events take up less time and makes travelling for participants and contributors easier
- > Two-day or longer events allow you to create an atmosphere and possibly reach a momentum and give people more time to network.

Be creative when drafting the **programme** and **sessions' formats**. It is important to have a balance between **information-giving** sessions (more passive) and **interactive** ones during which participants get to talk. Allow time for **networking** (formal: dedicated sessions and informal: meals and coffee breaks) between participants. You can also leave participants the possibility to choose between different parallel sessions. Do not forget icebreaking activities (such as distributing deck cards with questions to have people talk to each other, group dance or sports moves) which are a good way to start the day and for people to get to know each other.

Possible formats of sessions include:

- > Meet up corners: to trigger informal and in-depth discussions in small groups
- > Speed presentations: very brief (couple minutes tops) presentations one after the other
- > Marketplace: space where multiple people can present their work at the same and participants can freely move
- > World café: rounds of conversations in small groups repeated several times with different people
- > Walkshops: on-site visits relating to a theme you have been working on; a mixture of urban exploration and workshop session to discover a city's local initiatives. It should have an added value in the programme and should be followed by a debriefing session (discussion or else) to capture the main learnings of the visit
- > Keynotes, TED Talks: inspirational inputs, sharing experience



- > Panels: formal presentations by couple speakers followed by Q&A
- > Peer-reviews: for cities to have a policy document they drafted revised and commented by partners/experts
- > Gallery/exhibition: with posters
- > Stands: gathered to like in a fair, with visuals and presenters and possibly a guided tour of them all
- > Dedicated sessions for elected representatives

The APN BoostInno organised [the Mayor Summit](#), which goal was to get political support.

Foresee sessions of an hour to an hour and a half, have breaks that last between 15 and 30 minutes, and lunch of at least an hour. Remember that people tend to be more attentive in the morning so plan the longer, more passive sessions before lunch.

While bringing variety and dynamism to your agenda matters, the most important thing to have in mind when choosing a format is **relevance**. Each session's format should match with your objectives for that session and more generally of your objectives for the event. Make sure in your schedule the different parts follow each other in a logical sequence. For shorter events, it is good to diversify the types of sessions; for longer event, participants generally appreciate a rhythm they can identify and follow for several days in a row.

1.2.3. APPOINTING THE MODERATOR AND SPEAKERS

Identify, appoint and brief an appropriate moderator for the event.

Her/his roles during the event include:

- > leading/animating sessions
- > introducing speakers (which add weight to their contributions)
- > ensuring transitions between sessions and/or speeches
- > making comments and asking questions (that can be defined in advance) after presentations
- > involving the audience
- > keeping the schedule

It is thus important that the moderator is involved in the design process of the event and knows who the audience is and what the aim of your event is. She/he should be **familiar with the topic** and the content of your network. In general, the moderator **should be at ease when speaking in front of an audience**, have

good command of English, be familiar with facilitation and animation techniques. Journalists can sometimes make good moderators.

Same goes for the **selection of speakers**. Make sure you have a **balance** between speakers in terms of gender and countries of origin. Speakers should come to your event **prepared**: organise a meeting or a webinar with them all to talk about the content of their speeches/presentations. This is a good opportunity to share ideas and possible questions to be asked, feed one another's presentations, rehearse, see if they respect the time they each have, ensure consistency etc. A good practise is to provide speakers with a set of questions that you want them to answer in their presentations. If necessary, define a common central theme which will run through the various contributions. Speakers should **speak freely** (not read out of a paper) otherwise the audience will be less engaged. If applicable, have their presentations be sent to you enough in advance for comments/adjustments and put them in a single PowerPoint/Prezi presentation in the right running order to avoid losing time on spot. Ask them for permission to share their content after the event.

Discuss fees and travel expenses in advance.

1.2.4. INVITING HIGH-LEVEL REPRESENTATIVES

Special attention should be paid to **inviting high-level representatives** to your event, may it be local elected representatives, policy makers at national level or EU institutions' representatives. It would be great to have them at your event but keep in mind that they are sometimes hard to get. Therefore, to increase your chances of having them attending, here are some things you should pay attention to when inviting them:

- > Look at the names and profiles within an institution that are the most relevant for you; use LinkedIn or other business-oriented social networks to do so
- > Check as much as possible the agenda of their institution, make sure that the date(s) of your event do not overlap with those of an event on your topic
- > Use your personal contact book (people you met in other events, that you exchanged emails with etc). An invitation that comes from someone you know tends to be better received
- > Send a personalised, clear and concise invitation
- > Do not hesitate to send reminders and give follow-up phone-calls
- > If they confirm their participation, give them a role during your event: speaking during one panel, moderating a session, giving introductory or concluding remarks.
- > They are usually busy people and might cancel at the last minute so prepare a plan B in case they would not come.

In an event they organised with a EUROCITIES project, the APN sub-urban, working on fringe areas, invited two elected representatives from network partners to open and close the day. The vice mayors delivered policy recommendations to EU, national and regional authorities, stating the importance of transforming European city fringes.

1.2.5. DRAFTING THE PROGRAMME AND PRESENTATIONS

Readers should grasp what the event is about when reading the title (preferably short). Draft the **official programme** including URBACT and ERDF logos, your network's and if it is the case the one of the city hosting the event, with the dates, venue and publish it at least a month and a half before the event as it can be decisive in triggering interest from potential participants. Make sure the aim of the different sessions is clear in the agenda in order for the participants to know what to expect.

For internal purposes, **write an operational programme** with several columns: time, duration of session and flow, session's name, session's content, technique(s) used, hand-outs to be given and follow-up materials to prepare, person(s) in charge and technical support needed. Each session (content- and format-wise) should correspond to a specific objective and an expected result. Build some flexibility in the programme.

When **drafting your presentations** (or when the speakers do theirs), ask yourself about the necessity of a PowerPoint/Prezi support. The latter is more dynamic than the former and if you decide to use one of them, go for key words and bullet points instead of long sentences to avoid indigestible presentations and the infamous "Death by PowerPoint". Insert visuals (photos, images, diagrams, films etc.) in your slides: they engage people emotionally and often convey more information than words. Visuals will also inject rhythm in your presentation. Use the same PowerPoint/Prezi master slides to have uniform presentations and ensure a coherent visual identity for the event. Perform a rehearsal onsite preferably in the room itself in order to fix potential technical issues, check the flow of presentations and if necessary, add finishing touches.

- Having all these elements in mind, **start thinking about how you will evaluate your event** to measure impact and learning (data collection, before and after the event questionnaire etc.).

1.3. Operational elements

Set up an event team/taskforce that will be in charge of designing and delivering the event. This team can be made of the Lead Partner, some well-chosen city partners of your network, the hosting city (local contact persons), the Lead Expert.

- > Involve people that will bring (innovative) ideas and contributions that complement each other
- > Schedule all necessary brainstorming and follow-up meetings (or webinars) well in advance

- > After each meeting, allocate tasks between the team members according to skills, experience and personal interests
- > You can also foresee one or more critical friends. While they do not participate to the taskforce, they can give feedback on the agenda, advise or suggest speakers/contacts. Programme Experts or URBACT Secretariat members can play such a role.

Set the date(s)

- > Decide on a couple of options between relevant stakeholders enough in advance (about 4 months before the event) to avoid agenda clashes
- > Avoid organising an event during public holidays (be thorough when checking for them)
- > Map when other (similar) events are taking place and make sure contributors you wish to have are available at the dates you chose. If you have a specific city in mind for your event, get information about relevant local public and/or private events in the selected city; you can contact the organisers to explore the possibility of back-to-back events. You can also incorporate your event into an existing structure.
- > If you have spotted a specific venue, find out when it is available as it will help you pin down a date.

Choose a suitable venue

- > The **correlation between your event and the city** is an important factor in terms of visibility of your work. It does not have to be a capital city or one of the network's partner cities. You should choose a (URBACT) European city based on what it has to say and show on your topic (possibility to organise onsite visits and sessions). It is often interesting and inspiring to have people running the place you are having your meeting in give a speech about the venue, its story etc.
- > When choosing your venue, don't forget that the place needs to "make sense" in the bigger picture of your event. On one hand it needs to be **coherent with your objective and key messages** for the event. On the other hand, it needs to **add value to your work**, it needs to say something about your network.

For instance, the APN [TechTown](#) working on digital economy organised a meeting in a tech start-up building in San Sebastian. The APN Refill, working on vacant spaces, used [empty or temporarily-used spaces](#) for their meeting in Helsinki. The APN AGRI-URBAN working on agrifood production in small- and medium-sized cities organised [a site visit](#) in a school for ecological farming during their meeting in Sodertalje.

- > You or your local partner should organise a **location scouting mission** about 4 months before the event to identify a venue which will match the event. Assess the accessibility of the city/place (public transport, accommodation, etc.), have a detailed planning of venues (public or private) you want to visit, contact the

owners to plan your coming, ask them questions (setting, budget etc.), take photos. *National URBACT Points* (NUP) may be able to help you in this task; you can contact them directly.

- > Favour a place with **daylight**, equipped with Wifi and where you can have a dedicated room for the organising team. Make sure transfer between rooms during the event is easy.
- > Pick, depending on your budget, a hotel close to the event venue for the organising team. If participants need to be accommodated, you can negotiate preferential rates with hotels of different categories.
- > Hired premises usually have one caterer or a list of several caterers they work with. Ask to organise a test lunch and do not forget vegetarian and vegan options (dietary requirements to be included into the registration form). Buffet is a good idea as it allows people to mix and talk but make sure there are enough tables and some places for the participants to sit down.

When you look for a venue, think *strategic, creative, relevant, practical*.

In terms of **layout** of the venue for the event, favour a **variety of formats**: there can be an amphitheatre one, but also round tables that will entice people to speak. Decide if you should have a stage or not; give some thought about your participants' comfort (chairs etc.). Check available electronic devices on site (laptop(s), beamer(s), handheld mikes, translation booth if applicable, photocopier), lighting equipment (especially important if you want to film the event) to determine all the necessary materials you will need to bring yourself (often stationary, flipcharts, post-its).

Define your budget. Your budget will determine where you can hold the event, the number of people you can invite and the quality of support material. It must always be defined **under your network's budget**. Costs must clearly be linked to your network and be essential for the effective delivery of the event. Costs related to your event can cover:

- > Renting the venue
- > Catering
- > Travel and accommodation for the organising team and speakers. Maximum daily rates for hotel and subsistence should be respected, in accordance with EU rules, national legislations and/ or internal policy of the partner organisation. The principle of sound financial management has to be applied.
- > External service providers
- > Speakers
- > Interpretation, if applicable
- > Materials (network/URBACT/ERDF branded) you wish to produce – materials for dressing the space, participants kits, publication design and printing etc.

If you have any doubt about the eligibility of a cost, do not hesitate to ask the Secretariat.

Start a budgeting spreadsheet as soon as the event is planned and make a team member responsible for tracking costs.

Decide on the materials you intend to produce/have produced.

You will need to have **signage** in the venue for your event to be well-identified (posters, logo blocks, roll-ups etc.). You will likely provide participants with a **pack** that can be made of a badge, a detailed programme, the participants list, specific hand-outs according to sessions, publications and promotional material but only if it adds something specific to your communication or has a direct link with the project.

Foresee time for their production. There are some things that you can do yourself such as nameplates for speakers if you want to have some, posters with Wifi code and hashtags of your event to be used on social media, evaluation forms etc.

Some participants may also ask you for a *certificate of presence* to show to their employers. Make sure you prepare a dedicated template which you can fill in with individual names after the event and send out. Create and harmonise all documents in accordance with your network visual identity and [URBACT graphic charter](#).

Prepare the registration process.

Ideally 3 months prior to your event, send a "**Save the date**" to your database made of all target groups with the name of the event, the date(s), the city, the objectives of the meeting and a contact person.

If ready, send along a link to the **registration platform** (such as Eventbrite, Google forms...) and let people know about the deadline for registrations.

Send frequent reminders for registration and confirmation emails.

As soon as the **programme** (with the locations, sessions and names of speakers) is ready (at least one month and half prior to the event), send it out along with information on travel and accommodation. Extract your registration list from the online platform to an Excel every week and contact participants if information is missing.

A list of participants can be sent to the registered beforehand for them to identify with whom they would like to exchange.

Determine how many calls for tenders you will need to launch in relation with your event.

Each partner organisation is responsible for ensuring that EU and national public procurement rules are respected and that all contracts comply with the basic principles of transparency, non-discrimination and equal treatment. We recommend that you have written-only proposals from at least three different providers for each service. Compare and negotiate rates with two of them. Anyhow make sure that minimum effective competition is ensured. A professional photographer may be of use for communication purposes; translators if applicable. Think *sustainability* and *amortisation*. National rules may apply depending on the thresholds and need to be checked before hiring any tender.

1.4. Give a shout-out to your event

Your event is nothing without an audience. Think how you will communicate about your event, build partnerships to promote it and entice participants to come. If you are planning for a final network event or an open event, drafting a **dedicated communication plan** can be helpful.

Your event shall be promoted to your audience and beyond using all existing tools:

- > **Your network page on the URBACT website:** create an event on your dedicated page as soon as you have your Save the date ready. Include the following information: the name of the event, the date(s), the

city, the objectives of the meeting, a link to the registration platform and a contact person. Update the event on the website as you define the specific venue and the programme. If you plan to have a part open, part closed event, make it clear on your event page.

- > Promote your event on **relevant websites and fora** such as [Futurium](#), [DG Regio's one stop shop for cities](#), and specialised groups on LinkedIn and on any other spaces that might be relevant for your theme.
- > **Your newsletter**: include a Save the date in your newsletter and in your different issues preceding the event, give more details about it and entice people to register.
- > **Social media**: relay the news about your event on your different social media accounts and regularly remind people of it.
- > Let the **National URBACT Point** of the country in which the event will take place know about it; the NUP can be of help in communicating your event.
- > To give more weight and visibility to your event, you can **partner** with relevant organisations, initiatives, cities etc. working on the same topics. If you do so, **plan your communication jointly** with your partners. Ask the other network partners to do the same outreach actions with their own dissemination channels.

Your event's **visual identity** should be coherent and in line with your network's one. It also has to respect **URBACT's rules in terms of visibility** (URBACT and ERDF logos to always be visible alongside your own). Beyond the fact that would not be refunded if it was not the case, with the URBACT and ERDF logos on your event promotional materials, you benefit from the URBACT brand and visibility and your event is associated with a bigger family of projects. Make sure you use standard presentation templates for PowerPoints especially, to ensure compliance with publicity rules.

As your event unfolds, **capturing** it is important: you can do so by *filming* it and *taking photos*. Think about the intended use of photos (publications, press articles, thank you emails/letters, social media, website etc.) and the message you want to send through them. Professionals may be worth investing in for quality products, especially to later promote the work done to existing and potentially new partners. Using *social media* during the event is also a good way to report it, also to those who could not attend. Live tweeting, Facebook lives, Flickr albums, Instagram photos are amongst the many possibilities; mix and match the different channels according to your analysis of the most relevant ones to reach your event goals. Encourage your participants to be active on those platforms as well, using a hashtag you would have chosen in advance for your event and promoted before and during the event.

1.5. Making sure publicity rules are respected

As outlined before, **ERDF and URBACT logos need to be visible on all communication materials**, be they printed or digital (posters, roll-ups, PowerPoint/Prezi presentations, videos etc.) that you will use during the event. **The funders logos** (URBACT, EU-ERDF and any other contributors) **should be of equal size** since no logo should be bigger than the ERDF one (height or width). Wherever possible, the URBACT logo should appear in full colour to maximise recognition and should never be deformed.

The visual identity helps participants identify the programme and acts as a guarantee of seriousness and quality. Ensuring the URBACT and EU-ERDF logos on all communication material will reinforce branding, and keep your costs from being ineligible.

It needs to be stated explicitly in the opening plenary or in introduction to sessions **that your event** (and URBACT network) **is co-financed by URBACT and ERDF**.

Refer to the [URBACT graphic charter for networks](#) in case you have any doubt on how to use the URBACT graphic identity.

FOCUS ON... LOCAL DISSEMINATION EVENTS

Main objectives:

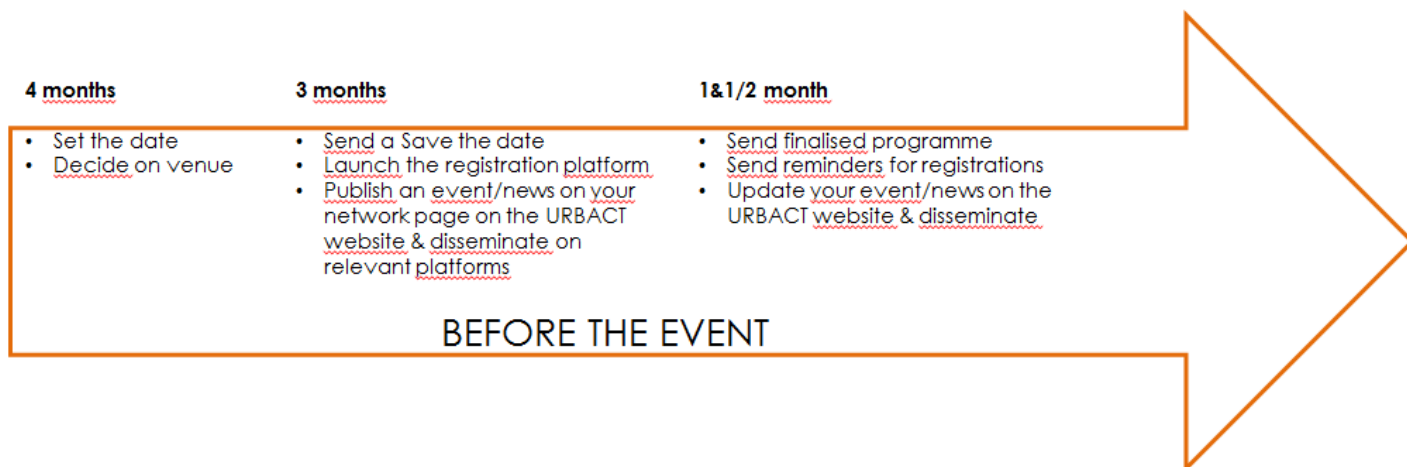
- ensure stakeholders' buy-in of your Integrated Action Plan
- political engagement
- financial support

Local aspect can be made relevant through using national language and having a local audience but the **European added value still needs to be highlighted** through:

- demonstrating the exchange and learning process between European cities
- showing the final results of 2 years of cooperation
- correctly using URBACT and ERDF logos
- inviting NUP to represent the programme.

Local dissemination events are compulsory as part of your obligations under Work Package 4.

Indicative timeline



2. ON THE DAY OF THE EVENT

There are a certain number of things you need to be attentive to just before your event starts and when it unfolds.

2.1. Final check at location, with the organising team

Make sure you - and the whole organising team - **arrive early enough at the venue** (at least two hours before the start of the event or even the day before if possible) to check all that needs to be done with the hosts:

- > Signage
- > Welcoming of participants: staff, registration list, participants' pack, office supplies etc.
- > Preparation of the rooms: layout, lighting, sound: other technicalities (computer(s), beamer, translation if applicable etc.) office supplies, name tags, printed documents etc.
- > PowerPoint/Prezi presentations: make sure you have them all in their latest version and in the right order and that they are on the computer you will use during the session
- > Coffee breaks and meals (you can foresee background music)
- > Security (if needs be according to national legislation, depending on the number of participants)

Take some time before the event starts to **gather all the people involved in organising the event** to go through the operational agenda and check that everyone is aware of what they have to do: assisting in case of technical issues during sessions, in charge of time keeping, guiding participants, reference person for speakers, responsible for social media activity, media contact point etc.

Tour the place so that everyone can locate themselves in the venue. **Anticipate FAQ** (location of rooms and toilets, access to the Internet, adjusting light and air conditioning etc.) and make sure everybody in the team can answer them.

Have a list of all necessary contact people: organising team, local people managing the venue (in case something stops functioning during the event, if you have additional questions etc.), that you distribute to those in charge of the event. To ease communication between organisers during the event, you can create a group on a mobile application which allows you to chat with people, like WhatsApp or Telegram.

Meet with the moderator and all the presenters early enough (half an hour to an hour before the session starts) to go through the unfolding session(s) they intervene in, remind them of the time they have to present and decide on a discreet way to inform them on their remaining time during the session(s).

Have one person responsible for ensuring all presentations are pre-loaded onto the presenting computer. Put all presentations in one slide deck, in the right order, to avoid looking for presentations as the speaker is

about to start. Add intermediate slides with indications of breaks, lunch, title of sessions etc so that the audience can always follow where they are in the programme.

2.2. Welcoming participants

Welcoming participants is important to kick-start your event.

Depending on the number of participants, make sure you have one or more welcome desks with an alphabetic division to facilitate the flow of participants signing in and the distribution of participants' pack. You can welcome participants yourself or have people from the venue do it or ask a hostess agency to perform the task. If your event is aimed at an international target, make sure people welcoming participants speak English.

Participants must be given their badge and the agenda of the event, indicated where the cloakroom is if applicable, where the welcome coffee takes place and when and where the first session(s) start(s). Positive energy and a smile are appreciated to greet participants and make them feel invited!

If you are gathering feedback from participants on the event through a printed questionnaire [we will further talk about evaluating the event in section 3. of this guide], reserve a dedicated box or somewhere they can be returned.

In terms of quota, 1 hostess for 30 participants is recommended to ensure your event goes smoothly (to welcome late comers and during the day).

2.3. Introducing and delivering the event

In the opening session, there should be **information both on logistics and content**.

Remind people of why they are here: the objectives of the meeting, the agenda, **entice them to be active** by asking questions during sessions but also through social media (with a dedicated # or account to tag/mention in their online publications, which should be indicated in the PowerPoint/Prezi presentations during the event or printed on posters to be found in the different rooms, along with the Wifi code(s)). Tell people whom to go to if they have any questions, where the breaks and meals will take place. Before going into the sessions, foresee an *icebreaker*, in pairs or in groups for few minutes.

Keep track of time throughout the day (during the sessions and the breaks) and make sure your moderator does too. Make announcement when sessions are starting again.

Be ready to change the dynamics if the audience is not as receptive as expected. Do not hesitate to use various animation techniques [see document mentioned in the Useful resources section], ask participants for their opinion on the matter being discussed and ask questions. *Adaptability is a key word.*

2.4. Capturing and communicating the event

In your communication strategy, you should have defined communication actions to be undertaken during your event. “Who does what” among the organising team needs to be well defined when planning the event. Within the organising team, **someone must be in charge of coordinating the different activities**: social media presence (with live tweets, Facebook lives, photos of your event to be shared on Instagram etc), relations with the media, photo and video reports etc. to guarantee the overall coherence of communication actions during the event. **The knowledge captured needs to feed in the follow-up elements** (articles, reports, visuals etc.) you planned to produce after the event.

Photos of the event can be used for promotional purposes afterwards and to reach wider communication goals. Decide on what kind of photographs you are interested in (action shots, close ups, general pictures of crowd, pictures of speakers, interesting buildings etc.) and brief the photographer in advance.

The same goes for videos: identify interesting people to interview, where and when to interview them, prepare your questions and communicate them to the interviewees in advance.

If people from the media participate in your event, have someone act as a contact point: explaining your event to them (and its context, your URBACT network), guiding them to right people to be interviewed, indicating them the most interesting sessions according to the focus of their output etc. It can be useful to send journalists supporting information before the event in the form of a press pack.

3. AFTER THE EVENT

Everyone has gone home happy (hopefully!) but your job is not over! There are some important actions that shouldn't be forgotten to ensure your event has a lasting impact – so plan them beforehand and make sure someone has some energy left to deal with them.

3.1. Following up with participants and speakers

Once the event is over, it is important to follow-up with participants, within the week after the event while it is still fresh in their memory and in yours as well!

Share all relevant documents (presentations, reports, contact details if they previously agreed to it, photos etc.) with the participants. You can use an online platform and let people know via email they can download the documents. In the email you send, don't forget to **thank participants for coming** and that you hope the event matched their expectations. In your message, **include a link to an evaluation questionnaire** [see 3.2. regarding its content]. Add links to your URBACT network page and social networks accounts where people will be able to find news about your work, your results and outputs etc.

Answer questions or requests for specific documents (certificate of attendance for instance). To entice people to answer the evaluation form, you can tell them they will receive their certificate of attendance once they have answered the survey.

Shortly after the event, **send personalised 'thank you' emails to the moderator and speakers**. Ask them for their opinion on how the event and their specific session went. Debrief the meeting with them in the following hours, days or week. Gather all thoughts and sum them up in a single document you can refer to when organising your next event.

3.2. Evaluating your event

It is essential to incorporate some kind of evaluation into your event, to gauge its impact. You can do this either by distributing a satisfaction questionnaire during the event or by sending a link to participants to answer an online survey. Free tools such as Google Forms can be used.

Make sure the questionnaire is not too long for participants to answer so that the time spent will not discourage them from answering and so that you can get as many answers as possible. In the evaluation form, **carefully design the questions so as to get qualitative feedback. Favour multiple-choice questions** rather than open ones which are less likely to be filled in and harder to analyse comparatively.

Ask questions both on the event in general and on specific sessions:

- > You can use a scale from 1 to 5 for participants to globally assess the event (general satisfaction). Ask them to evaluate the focus of the event, its length and the time allotted to the different sessions.
- > For each individual session, have participants assess the moderator, speakers and their inputs, the format of the session, the quality and usefulness of the content, the opportunity for interactive discussion

and exchanges and the knowledge gained on the subject. The questions asked should be adapted, depending on the type of session, if different animation techniques were used etc.

- > Ask participants what they took back home and **leave room for comments**.

Logistics also have to be evaluated. Ask participants questions about the information available prior to the event (its quality), the registration process, the programme (its clarity), participants pack, staff support (prior and during the event), the venue (suitability for the event, accessibility, meals).

Analyse the results of the evaluation form, summarise them (use statistics, charts on Excel) and share them with the organising team. Most importantly, **take them into account for your next events**.

While asking participants for their opinion matters, you should **also assess internally within the organising team what went well and what could have been done better** (how the preparations went, the event unfolded, what should be changed for next time, what good practices should be kept etc.). Thank the organising team for their involvement.

Assess how publications and other **materials have been taken by participants** to adjust for next times. Think about ways of reusing extra goodies (other events that you will organise, partners' events etc.).

3.3. Assessing your event's outputs/results

There are some questions you should ask yourself to **determine how successful your event was**.

- > Did you reach the objectives you had set for the event? If not, why in your opinion?
- > Did you reach out to your identified target audience? What was the actual turnout rate? Were participants involved throughout the meeting?
- > Was the chosen format of the event well adapted? And the programme well balanced?
- > Was the duration of the event appropriate?
- > Were the moderator and speakers a good fit?
- > Did you manage to have high level representatives (local elected representatives, policy makers at national level, EU institutions' representatives)?
- > Were external partners (relevant organisations, initiatives, cities) well chosen? Did they add anything to your event (visibility, content)? How can partnerships be improved next time?
- > Was the venue a suitable location for your meeting?
- > Was your communication prior to and during the event effective (enough)?
- > What came out of the event? How will you use the knowledge harnessed during the event?

Answering these questions will help you assess how well you have reached your goals. If you have only partly reached your goals, try to determine why and think about other ways in which they can be met next time.

3.4. Reviewing the budget and other logistics

Collect or have service providers sent invoices for the venue, catering etc.

Collect or have the moderator and speakers etc. sent you any expenses claims if any reimbursement was foreseen. Relevant, applicable rules at EU, national and local level need to be respected.

Check the signing-in/participants' list for any reimbursement claims.

Set-up and apply specific refund conditions (thresholds, documents to be received in original, etc.). Set a deadline and ensure that all parties are respecting it for invoicing, claiming, paying.

Once the event is over, all invoices paid and all claims reimbursed, **review all budgetary expenditure**. Where are you in terms of budget? Have you underspent or overspent? Why is that?

Thank service providers for their help and debrief the event with them. If you have been particularly happy with their work, keep their names for possible future collaboration.

3.5. Pursuing communication after the event

Keeping the momentum after the event is over can be achieved through different actions:

> If the media were present during your event, do not forget to check how they covered it. Disseminate relevant, rewarding content through your own communication channels (URBACT webpage, social media, newsletter etc.) and share it with partners and NUP which can help in disseminating information.

Prepare specific communication materials (infographics, articles, videos etc.) as planned before the event; rely on the knowledge captured to design them. Having your moderator(s) write an article from their session can be good way to follow up with communication.

Communicate widely about them, also to those who could not attend the event but were interested in it through your network's page, social media, newsletter etc. **Allocate the content on the event over time** to keep the momentum.

> **Use the photos and videos taken during the event for further communication purposes** (general promotion, illustrating articles, links with other related content etc.).

CHECKLIST

ACTIONS	✓
Before	
Define your objective(s) for the event	
Define your target audience(s) (audience profiling)	
Define your key message(s) (method, content etc.)	
Define your type of event	
Define the duration of the event (one or more days)	
Draft the programme and decide on sessions' formats (creativity, relevance)	
Identify, appoint and brief moderator and speakers	
Invite high-level representatives	
Draft presentations (with or without supports)	
Prepare an operational programme (for internal purposes)	
Prepare the official programme (with logos)	
Start designing your event evaluation questionnaire	
Set up an event team	
Set the date(s)	
Choose a suitable venue (event-hosting city correlation)	
Define the venue's layout (with a variety of formats)	
Define your budget (under your network's one)	
Decide on the materials you intend to produce/have produced	
Prepare the registration process (Save the date, online platform)	
Determine how many calls for tenders you will need to launch	
Promote your event via the URBACT website, your newsletter, relevant websites and social media	
Communicate jointly with partners and NUP	
Define your event's visual identity (in accordance with URBACT rules)	
Plan how you will capture your event	

During	
Check location (with organising team and local people)	
Gather the organising team for a fine-tuning session	
Prepare a list of all necessary contact persons	
Meet with moderator and all presenters	
Make sure publicity rules are respected (logos)	
Welcome participants (staff, pack)	
Introduce the event (information on content and logistics)	
Encourage active participation	
Keep track of time	
Change the dynamics (if needed)	
Coordinate all communication activities	
Meet with photographer/cameraman	
Appoint contact person for media representatives	
After	
Finish designing your event evaluation questionnaire	
Send a thank-you email to the participants (with documents, link to the evaluation questionnaire)	
Send personalised thank-you email to the moderator and speakers	
Analyse, summarize and store the results of the evaluation questionnaire	
Assess with the organizing team how the event went	
Debrief with service providers	
Gather invoices and expenses claims	
Review all budgetary expenditures	
Check and relay media coverage of your event	
Design specific communication materials to follow-up	
Use photos and videos for further communication purposes	

USEFUL RESOURCES

On organising events

- > http://www.interact-eu.net/library?title=&field_fields_of_expertise_tid=19&=Filter%20-%20798-handbook-communication-toolkit-0#798-handbook-communication-toolkit-0 (pp.27-33)

On animation techniques

- > http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/animation_techniques.pdf

On events at local level

- > http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/urbact_toolkit_online_4_0.pdf



