



# **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS PILOT NETWORK PROJECT OUTLINE**

November 2020



## SECTION 1 – BACKGROUND

European cities are more and more interested in the 2030 agenda for sustainable urban development. In response to this increasing interest, URBACT and Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) have joined forces to propose a pilot network to support cities interested in the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals.

### 1.1. The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals

On 25 September 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted a new agenda for achieving global sustainable development by 2030, the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), which builds on the Rio+20 outcomes and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that the world committed to achieving by 2015.

The 2030 Agenda sets 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>1</sup>, which cover different dimensions of sustainability and provide 169 related targets with a total of 232 individual indicators<sup>2</sup> to assess progress in meeting the goals. While the MDGs focused on reducing extreme poverty in all its forms, the 17 SDGs are very comprehensive in their scope and are also strongly interconnected (meaning that progress in one area generates positive spillovers in other domains) and require both coherence in policy design and implementation, as well as multi-stakeholder engagement to reach standards, for shared responsibilities across multiple actors. The implementation of SDGs should therefore be considered in a systemic way and rely on a whole-of-society approach for citizens to fully reap expected benefits.



The 2030 Agenda calls on countries to begin efforts to achieve the 17 SDGs over the next 15 years. The goals address the needs of people in both developed and developing countries, emphasizing that no one should be left behind.

<sup>1</sup> The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the heart of the 2030 Agenda: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

<sup>2</sup> For the most updated information on SDG indicators and target, including the Tier Classification: see <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/tier-classification/>

The SDGs are universal, meaning they apply to every country in the world. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda is a global multi-stakeholder process and all levels of government are responsible for the achievement of the SDGs. However, national governments have the means and resources to plan, prioritize, finance and enforce how the SDGs can be achieved in their country. On an international level, national SDG achievement is being monitored, with data being published annually in the form of a global ranking.

Nevertheless, local and regional governments played an important role in influencing the definition of the SDGs, successfully campaigning for a stand-alone goal on Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements (SDG 11) and for international recognition of the pivotal role of local and regional government in sustainable development. SDG 11 marks a major step forward in the recognition of the transformative power of urbanization for development and of the role of city leaders in driving global change from the bottom up.

However, the role of local administrations in the achievement of the Agenda goes far beyond Goal 11. *“All of the SDGs have targets that are directly or indirectly related to the daily work of local and regional governments. Local governments should not be seen as mere implementers of the agenda. Local governments are policy makers, catalysts of change and the level of government best-placed to link the global goals with local communities”<sup>3</sup>.*

## 1.2. The localisation of the 2030 Agenda

The 2030 Agenda emphasizes the need for an inclusive and localized approach to the SDGs. Localization is described as the process of defining, implementing and monitoring strategies at the local level for achieving global, national and subnational sustainable development goals and targets. More specifically, it takes *“into account subnational contexts for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, from the setting of goals and targets to determining the means of implementation and using indicators to measure and monitor progress”<sup>4</sup>.*

*“Localization” of SDGs refers both to how local and regional governments and other local governance actors can critically contribute to the overall achievement of the SDGs through action from the bottom up and to how the SDGs can provide a framework for local development policies.*

The key steps to the successful start of the localization of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in municipalities are:

**Step 1 – Raising awareness for SDGs:** Awareness-raising means that all stakeholders must understand the SDGs and engage in a broad-based dialogue that is participatory and inclusive. A successful implementation needs public support and engagement as well as a long-term commitment.

**Step 2 – Establishing a local SDG agenda:** Local authorities along with representatives from the civil and private sector should prioritize the global goals and targets for their local context. The prioritized SDGs should then be integrated into existing local strategies and concrete next steps in the form of an action plan should be defined and communicated broadly.

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<sup>3</sup> United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), [The Sustainable Development Goals: What Local Governments Need to Know](#); this guide explains how the SDGs targets are relevant for the local level.

<sup>4</sup> Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments, UNDP, UN-Habitat (2016), [Roadmap for Localizing the SDGs: Implementation and Monitoring at Subnational Level](#)

**Step 3 – Planning the implementation of SDGs:** A goal based planning which takes a long-term perspective is needed. Policies must balance social, economic and environmental considerations and manage potential conflicts.

**Step 4 – Monitoring and evaluation:** Finally, to be able to track progress and ensure accountability, monitoring and evaluation frameworks should be in place. Only by reviewing programs and policies one can determine their impact and efficiency and adapt policies if needed.

In spite of the efforts that cities, regions and their associations have made to raise and foster ownership for the localization of the SDGs, subnational governments are at different stages throughout the localization process.

That is why this project proposal seeks to support interested cities in “localising” the SDGs. This means: tailoring them to place-based contexts, understanding how they translate in their territorial specificities and realities, measuring distance from the national average and peer cities and providing tailored guidance to mainstream the SDG lens into territorial planning, strategy setting and policy making.

### 1.3. The European and international contribution and approach to localising the SDGs

Since 2015, substantial efforts have been devoted to developing and sharing policy and best practices on localizing SDGs, accompanied by a plethora of guides and roadmaps. This SDG Pilot Network proposal will build upon and complement national, European and international projects focusing on the localization of the SDGs.

In particular, the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments (which brings together the major international networks of local governments including CEMR and PLATFORMA) is partnering with UNDP ART Initiative and UN HABITAT and contributing to the related [Toolbox on the localization of the SDGs](#) comprising a knowledge platform, a roadmap, case studies, practical tools and other resources<sup>5</sup>. Moreover, the OECD has recently developed a Programme on “A Territorial Approach to the SDGs” counting nine pilot cities and regions<sup>6</sup>. Launched at the 2020 World Urban Forum, the report *A Territorial Approach to the SDGs* analyses how cities and regions are increasingly using the SDGs to design, shape and implement their development strategies, policies and plans; innovate and experiment; promote synergies, manage trade-offs; and engage public, private and non-profit stakeholders – in particular the private sector and the civil society – in the policy making process. The report also proposes an OECD Localised Indicator Framework for the SDGs that measures distance to SDG targets of 601 regions and 649 cities in OECD and partner countries, comparing them to national average and their peers. The report concludes with a Checklist for Public Action.

The European Commission (EC) has also put the delivery of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs on top of its political agenda for the years to come.

In January 2019, the EC published a Reflection Paper *Towards a sustainable Europe by 2030*<sup>7</sup> for long-term inclusion of SDGs on the European political agenda and priorities post 2019.

In 2016, one year after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the importance of the urban context was highlighted in the policy debate. In late 2016 the United Nations adopted a specific agenda for cities,

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<sup>5</sup> The [Local2030: Localizing the SDGs](#) online platform provides tools, experiences, new solutions and guides to support SDG localization.

<sup>6</sup> OECD Programme on a Territorial Approach to the SDGs: <https://www.oecd.org/cfe/territorial-approach-sdgs.htm>

<sup>7</sup> European Commission [Reflection Paper ‘Towards a Sustainable Europe by 2030’](#)

the New Urban Agenda (NUA). In parallel to the process of negotiation for the NUA, EU Member States reached consensus on the adaptation of the NUA to the European context through the Pact of Amsterdam, establishing the “Urban Agenda for the EU”. This sets priorities and areas of action for European cities, in order to improve the consideration of the urban dimension in all policies, multi-level dialogues and partnerships.

Regions, cities and even communities are more and more called on to act as their local scale on the required transformative actions. Things are moving quickly at the local level. Sustainable development cannot be achieved without the active involvement of local governments; the COVID-19 pandemic, its aftermath and the uncertain future have made this very clear.

Yet, despite the increasing targeted action taken at the local level, how cities and regions should contribute to the SDGs and how their contribution can be measured and assessed is still challenging.

A survey sent out in early 2018 to the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) members and PLATFORMA – the pan-European coalition of Local and Regional Governments (LRGs) working for decentralised cooperation – partners highlighted how the technical tools and guidance for local governments have been lacking<sup>8</sup>.

Developed by the European Commission’s Directorates-General Joint Research Centre (JRC) plus Regional and Urban Policy (DG-REGIO), the *European Handbook for SDG Voluntary Local Reviews*<sup>9</sup> aims to fill these knowledge and capacity gaps and to support European cities in preparing their SDG Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs), a subnational equivalent to Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) that governments present on a voluntary basis to the annual UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) to report on actions and policy solutions to achieve the Goals. Indeed, VLRs are a great opportunity to foster the localization of the SDGs and to boost their implementation, while at the same time, capitalising on the SDGs inherent potential to induce change.

Recently, reports have been issued to support the growing number of local and regional governments conducting VLRs. Published in April 2020 by the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), the *State of the Voluntary Local Reviews 2020: Local Action for Global Impact in Achieving the SDGs*<sup>10</sup> report reviews all the VLR Reports identified by the authors (as of February 2020) carried out by local governments in their determination to localise the SDGs. Speaking of which, in March 2019 IGES launched their [online VLR Lab](#), an online platform showcasing and offering comprehensive information about local government actions on the SDGs.

United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) decided to join forces to devise a VLR Series to provide guidance, definitions and technical support to any local and regional government aiming to engage in the VLR process. The first volume of the *Guidelines for Voluntary Local Reviews*<sup>11</sup> was launched on 8 July 2020 during a virtual event on the sidelines of the 2020 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). UN-Habitat announced that, in collaboration with Madrid City Council, UN-Habitat will organise an Expert Group Meeting on strengthening the VLR process by the end of 2020.

<sup>8</sup> The CEMR and PLATFORMA joint study *Sustainable Development Goals- How Europe’s towns and regions are taking the lead*: <https://platforma-dev.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/PLATFORMA-CEMR-SDG-localisation-EN.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Siragusa, A., Vizcaino, M., Proietti, P. and Lavallo, C., *European Handbook for SDG Voluntary Local Reviews*, EUR 30067 EN, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2020, ISBN 978-92-76-15403-7, doi:10.2760/670387, JRC118682. The report is linked to an interactive on line platform: <https://urban.jrc.ec.europa.eu/#/sdgs>. The Handbook is the main output of the URBAN2030 project developed by the JRC in partnership with DG REGIO.

<sup>10</sup> IGES, *State of the Voluntary Local Reviews 2020* publication

<sup>11</sup> UCLG and UN-Habitat, *Guidelines for Voluntary Local Reviews, Volume 1 - A Comparative Analysis of Existing VLRs*

In doing this analysis, these reports aim to become reference guides for other cities seeking to carry out their own VLR process.

The various non-exhaustive reports cited above provide a useful policy context on SDG localization. The aim of this pilot city network is to complement the work that contributes to supporting cities in effectively localizing the SDGs in the European context through the application of the URBACT Method. With a focus on integrated and participatory approach, capacity-building, peer-to-peer exchange, experience sharing, and co-creation at local level this network will also draw on learning from international experience and produce concrete results in the form of an Integrated Action Plan.

#### 1.4. Why small and medium sized European cities matter to SDGs

In July 2020, EUROCITIES – the network of major European cities – published a new report on the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals at local level<sup>12</sup>, based on a mapping exercise and a survey, with city actions validated by members of the EUROCITIES taskforce on SDGs that explicitly use the SDG framework in their local strategic orientation and planning.

Larger, better-known cities can act as major focal points for urban economic development and innovation. And with the potential for agglomeration and significant infrastructure investment, they can have distinct advantages over small and medium cities.

However, a quarter of Europe's population lives in small and medium-sized towns and cities (less than 500 000 inhabitants). Small and medium-sized cities are facing challenges as bigger cities, with the decisive difference that they are different, not only in terms of dimension and population, but diverge from large cities in terms of local challenges, financial and human resources available and linkages with the surrounding peri-urban and rural areas.

As the European Territorial Cooperation programme aiming to foster sustainable integrated urban development in cities across Europe, URBACT is a unique exchange and learning programme open to all European cities, irrespective of size or geography.

But smaller cities often lack the resources of their larger neighbours. With this pilot network, through networking, learning from one another's experiences, identifying good practices, taking a participatory approach to policy-making, planning integrated actions and applying a result framework<sup>13</sup>, URBACT aims to bring cities together, build their capacities and better equip them to work on the localisation of the SDGs and contribute to the delivery of the 2030 Agenda. A specific focus will be on attracting small and medium sized cities to this network.

#### 1.5. The Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities (RFSC)

The Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities (RFSC)<sup>14</sup>, promoted by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) with the support of the French government, is an open online tool that aims to help European local and regional governments that are involved in or are willing to start a process of integrated and sustainable urban development when designing, implementing and monitoring strategies and projects at city level.

The added value and contribution of the RFSC to deliver the principles of integrated sustainable urban development, which include the localisation of the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable

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<sup>12</sup> EUROCITIES report on the implementation of SDGs at local level: [Paving the way for sustainable cities](#)

<sup>13</sup> [URBACT, an opportunity for action and change](#): URBACT has come up with its own methodology to ensure a more integrated, inclusive and sustainable urban development. Learn all about the URBACT Method [here](#)

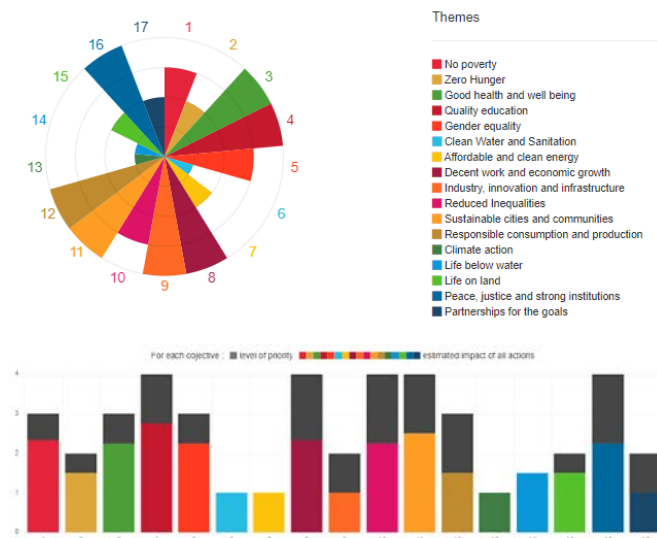
<sup>14</sup> CEMR, Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities (RFSC): [www.rfsc.eu](http://www.rfsc.eu) or <http://app.rfsc.eu/>

Development Goals, has been recognised not only in the Pact of Amsterdam as well as more recently in the Committee of the Regions Opinion on European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund<sup>15</sup> and in the European Parliament legislative resolution of 27 March 2019 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Regional Development Fund and on the Cohesion Fund<sup>16</sup>.

The tool offers possibility of assessing the alignment and performance of local strategies and plans using different sustainability frameworks is also provided, including the 17 SDGs, constituting an added value of the tool. With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, a new and updated version of the RFSC was launched in 2016 offering a specific framework to help local authorities in the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs. Key issues of sustainable urban development strategies are explicitly addressed, e.g. citizen involvement, capacity-building and monitoring and evaluation.

When using the RFSC tool, local authorities and other partners involved are guided through a step by step process helping them to:

- Translate the SDGs to local context;
- Identify priorities among the SDGs and visualise it by means of a spider-web diagram that shows the thematic focus of local strategies and plans;
- Map local actions contributing to each SDG and assess which SDGs are best addressed or conversely what to strengthen in order to achieve a holistic approach and what can be done to pursue an integrated approach;
- Implement a SDG monitoring system based on a portfolio of local indicators



The toolkit can be applied to urban strategies, plans or projects at various scales, nevertheless it works better for small and medium size city strategies by offering a simple, structured and informative self-evaluation tool highly valuable not only in the design of integrated strategies as well as to support processes of peer to peer review and communication purposes.

### 1.6. Learning and Scaling Up: the international dimension of SDG localisation

Collaboration with and between cities and regions across the globe is showcasing positive results in the development of urban and territorial policies.

This pilot network will thus seek to look outward, encourage EU partner cities to reach out to peers beyond European borders and conduct peer-to-peer international activities. Working on the 2030 Agenda opens up a door, inviting cities and their national associations to showcase success stories and share experiences at the global level, notably at EU or UN high-level events. Furthermore,

<sup>15</sup> Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions – European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund <https://cor.europa.eu/en/our-work/Pages/OpinionTimeline.aspx?oplId=CDR-3594-2018>

<sup>16</sup> European Parliament proposal for a regulation on the European Regional Development Fund and on the Cohesion Fund [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2019-0303\\_EN.html?redirect](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2019-0303_EN.html?redirect)



cooperating at international level leads to more opportunities to connect across continents to share good practices and inspiration as well as to effectively manage trade-offs and undesirable spill-over effects.

As highlighted by the PLATFORMA and CEMR latest publication [THE 2030 AGENDA Through the eyes of local and regional governments' associations](#)<sup>17</sup> launched on 15 July 2020 “Capacity building, support, peer-reviewing and co-planning are all essential elements of international partnerships that, in the end, strengthen the impact achieved at local level. By using the SDG framework as a guiding blueprint, peers across the globe can launch co-evaluations, better identify common priorities and work together to overcome their shared concerns. Together, they can support each other in the implementation of their jointly created strategies and review each other’s progress”.

It is therefore proposed to integrate the international outward looking as part of the network activities with the aim to help partners find inspiration on how to localise SDGs from their peers in partner countries, and vice-versa. As the publication’s analysis is based on a survey’s responses of CEMR and PLATFORMA participating associations and partners from 28 countries, including from 12 non-EU countries (Albania, Georgia, Iceland, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway<sup>18</sup>, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine and South-East of Europe), international activities would primarily rely on cities from these non-EU countries.

Thus, this pilot network seeks to support interested cities in “localising” the SDGs, in particular: tailoring them to place-based contexts; understanding how they translate in their territorial specificities and realities; measuring from the national average and peer cities or regions; and providing tailored guidance to mainstream SDG lens into territorial planning, strategy setting and approach to sustainability and well-being at the scale that matters the most.

SDG monitoring and reporting remains a challenge. The pilot network will address another explicit objective of the pilot – to strengthen synergies between URBACT, CEMR and the Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities (RFSC) as well as the EU and international institutions.

## SECTION 2 – OBJECTIVES, PARTNERSHIP, SCHEDULING AND OUTPUTS

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With this pilot network, from March 2021, URBACT, CEMR as the Europe’s most senior organisation of towns and regions and the European section of the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and PLATFORMA as the pan-European coalition of towns and regions – and their associations – active in city-to-city and region-to-region development cooperation with its Secretariat hosted by CEMR will collaborate on adapting and applying the key lessons learned from the URBACT method to the localisation of the SDGs and its related policy challenges.

### 2.1 Main Objectives

Over a period of 18 months, between March 2021 and September 2022 URBACT will fund one SDG Pilot Network with a core fixed group of up to 15 European cities. The network will help cities to design an Integrated Action Plan on the localisation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

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<sup>17</sup> More information: <https://platforma-dev.eu/just-new-study-reveals-municipalities-regions-associations-embracing-sdgs/>

<sup>18</sup> The URBACT III Programme area consists of the 28 EU Member States as well as Norway and Switzerland as Partner States. The URBACT III Operational Programme is available [here](#)

Partners will be committed for a long-term and intensive experimentation for localising the SDGs, integrating the 2030 Agenda in their territory and translating the SDGs locally into policy planning supporting the design, implementation, monitoring and review of locally-appropriate SDG actions.

The main objective of the network will be for the pilot cities to exchange, learn from European and International peers, build capacities towards the localisation process of the SDGs in their territories and with their peers and develop tools and policy recommendations for localising the SDGs.

## 2.2 The SDG Pilot Network Partnership

The main beneficiaries of the URBACT programme are cities from EU 28 Member States, Norway and Switzerland. Under URBACT III, the beneficiary “city partner” refers to the public local authority representing:

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

Provincial, regional and national authorities as well as universities and research centers are not considered as eligible partners<sup>19</sup>.

The partnership for this SDG Pilot Network shall be open to all cities as defined above. The partnership shall be made up of up to 15 cities all from different countries. As a pilot network this will allow for a very broad geographical coverage. A balance between more and less developed regions of Europe will be sought as is the tradition of all URBACT networks.

The selection of cities shall be facilitated by CEMR and the URBACT Monitoring Committee members. URBACT MC members should inform the Joint Secretariat (JS) of a maximum of two cities. The proposed cities will be asked to complete an expression of interest to share their motivation (see Annex 1). The final candidates will be selected based on independent assessment by URBACT Programme Experts and CEMR in consultation with the MC members. Candidate cities can also express their interest to be Lead Partner of the network.

## 2.3 The SDG Pilot Network Schedule

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<sup>19</sup> These organisations can be involved in the SDG Pilot Network as members of the URBACT Local Group (ULG) that each partner of the network will have to build.

The SDG Pilot Network will kick off in March 2021 and complete in September 2022. Some main details about the proposed activities and schedule are presented below but these will be refined with partners and experts in a final proposal in March 2021.

It is envisaged that the entire process will start with a meeting involving all participant cities. Ideally, this will be a physical event, taking place over two days<sup>20</sup>. In the current climate, this meeting may have to take place online, a plan for both options will be necessary.

The network kick-off meeting, foreseen in March 2021, will be the opportunity for the partners to share and refine the rationale and working methods of this pilot network. This first meeting will also be the time to fix milestones for the network and define a common workplan. A final event will be scheduled for September 2022, which will be used to draw out the main findings and results of the pilot.

The 18 month schedule will be split into two main stages:

#### **Stage 1 – Diagnosis and Visioning (approx. 8 months)**

This stage will start with some work to set out a baseline for each city partner. It will then focus on mapping and aligning the SDGs to the local context with the support of the network Lead Expert. This stage should also help the city partners to start looking ahead to fixing priorities and targets for the future.

Several different tools and methods will be used including workshops and visits to lighthouse cities, peer review, self assessment using the RFSC tool, local awareness raising actions can also be designed to engage with local stakeholders and set up a strong URBACT local group.

#### **Stage 2 – Planning Actions and Fixing Indicators (approx. 10 months)**

This stage will focus on supporting partner cities to co-design an Integrated Action Plan. It will use the knowledge and experience of some lighthouse cities to help identify suitable actions. The Lead expert will support the cities to ensure that the actions are well defined using the URBACT tools. This stage will also provide cities with the skills necessary to fix suitable indicators and establish monitoring systems for these.

Both stages of activity will be accompanied by the URBACT programme and CEMR through dedicated capacity building actions including training on RFSC, tools for peer review, training on setting up multi-stakeholder groups etc.

Over the lifetime of the network it is estimated that around 10 transnational meetings will take place (approx. one meeting every 2 months). These meetings will include all project partners and will vary in format.

The SDG Pilot project will use the experience of Lighthouse Cities that already have experience in implementing and reporting on the localisation of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs in their city and that are frontrunners in making the SDGs work locally. Some peer review or exchange activities could take

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<sup>20</sup> At the time of writing it is not possible to anticipate the COVID19 situation in terms of physical meetings. For this entire process, we should assume that a hybrid approach, mixing physical and online meetings, will be the pattern.

place in these cities if considered appropriate. These cities may be from outside the European Union as described in Section 1.6 above.

Activities should be planned as both physical and online. Online exchange and learning activities can complement the face to face exchange which is crucial for such a network. The URBACT programme has recently designed new tools for online urban collaboration. As well as running the first URBACT e-University in autumn 2020, it has developed a suite of support tools around online working. This includes a [Hints and Tips](#) resource and a series of [visual](#) outputs providing guidance and support. The programme also has a new digital [Toolbox](#) to support network activity. All of these resources will be available to the SDG Pilot Network cities.

## 2.4 SDG Pilot Network outputs

### a) Local Outputs

Each SDG pilot city will set up an **URBACT Local Group**. URBACT experience has demonstrated the value of a **multi-stakeholder platform** to support project development. In the case of this SDG Pilot Network, as well as thematic civil servants, elected representatives, citizens, stakeholders including associations, academics, research and private sectors, SDG pilot cities will seek to involve representatives from local, regional and national governments and their associations in order to open a dialogue, enhance multi-level collaboration and create a strong and long-lasting tool for SDG localisation and implementation.

Each SDG pilot city will produce key local outputs:

- **an SDG Gap and Impact Analysis**
- **an SDG Roadmap**
- **an SDG Integrated Action Plan (IAP)** defining a number of priority SDG actions to localise and make the SDGs concrete

### b) Network Outputs

Two main outputs will be produced by the SDG Pilot Network:

The first will be a **Baseline Analysis** which will be produced **by the Lead Expert** early in the network journey. This Baseline Analysis will include:

- A state-of-play about localising the SDGs including review of existing material, guides, tools, resources and of practical and adaptable mechanisms and instruments available
- A proposed localisation framework process of change – including network methodology
- A detailed SDG Gap and Impact Analysis of each partner's baseline information, motivation, where they stand in terms of translation potential in their city to localise the SDGs and put the 2030 Agenda higher on their local agenda

The second output will be a **Network Result Product**, produced with support from the Lead Expert. The aim will be to share the approach, experiences and lessons learned from the network for localising the SDGs. These can include:

- SDG guidance
- Tools
- Compendium catalogue of practical case studies and examples (including international practices)

- Training curriculum
- Set of policy recommendations for all cities.

To successfully produce these key outputs support will be provided by the URBACT Programme in the form of capacity building. Guidance, webinars, peer reviews and dedicated training sessions will all help all the partner cities.

## SECTION 3 – BUDGET AND EXPERTISE

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### 3.1 The SDG Pilot Network Budget

The global budget for the entire SDG Pilot Network will be €900,000. A maximum average ERDF co-financing rate of 70% will apply. The Lead Partner will require a higher budget allocation to cover additional coordination costs.

Eligible expenditure items will include:

- Staff costs (+ overheads at a 3% fixed rate)
- Travel and Accommodation
- Expertise and Service
- Communication and Dissemination

Types of eligible activity include awareness raising events, studies, multi-stakeholder meetings, citizen participation or citywide participatory actions concerning the topic of this call. All types of activities necessary and useful for capacity building, including but not limited expertise services, organisation and participation in meetings, workshops, seminars and conferences, training, networking, peer-to-peer activities, network result publication, dissemination and communication activities.

### 3.2 The SDG Pilot Network Expert Support

The Network will have the support of a dedicated Lead Expert. In addition to the LE function the network will be able to appoint ad hoc experts with specialist skills and/or knowledge to support their work. The cost of the Lead Expert is covered by the URBACT programme 100%. It is estimated that this network will require up to 120 days. A detailed programme for the Lead Expert will be designed with the project partners. Additional ad hoc expert support can be used for specific needs.

**Nota bene:** The available budget shall cover days of expertise only. Travel and accommodation costs for URBACT validated Experts funded under this envelope shall be covered by the network budget.

The URBACT Programme with the Lead Partner will manage the expertise resources.

## SECTION 4 – SDG PILOT NETWORK PARTNER APPLICATION PROCEDURE

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### 4.1 Overview of the Partner Application Procedure

The table below outlines the main steps in the procedure for selecting city partners. Each different stage will have fixed deadlines. The timeframe is quite tight but manageable.

<u>Stage 1</u>	CEMR and URBACT Monitoring Committee members shall identify potential city partners and inform the URBACT Joint Secretariat by <b>15 December 2020</b>
<u>Stage 2</u>	URBACT Joint Secretariat shares the Expression of Interest form with potential partners by <b>17<sup>th</sup> December 2020</b>
<u>Stage 3</u>	Candidate cities submit their Expression of Interest by <b>29<sup>th</sup> January 2021</b>
<u>Stage 3</u>	Independent Assessment Panel of URBACT Programme Experts and JS and CEMR carries out assessment of candidate cities in collaboration with MC members and proposes the pilot cities to participate in the SDG pilot network by <b>5<sup>th</sup> February 2021</b>
<u>Stage 4</u>	The URBACT Joint Secretariat will inform the proposed candidate cities. These cities shall submit a letter of commitment by <b>12<sup>th</sup> February 2021</b>
<u>Stage 5</u>	URBACT Joint Secretariat completes and submits an Application by <b>12<sup>th</sup> February 2021</b>
<u>Stage 6</u>	URBACT Managing Authority submits proposal for the approval of the SDG Pilot Network to the Monitoring Committee at the meeting <b>9<sup>th</sup> March 2021</b>

#### 4.2 Assessment criteria for partner selection

The independent assessment panel made up of URBACT Programme Experts and JS and CEMR shall proceed with the assessment of partner expressions of interest. Attention will be paid to geographical balance, more/less developed regions and city size as overarching considerations when making the final proposal.

The assessment criteria are outlined below:

<b>Criterion A – Relevance and Motivation</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The candidate city has been well described and its policy commitment to the SDGs has been demonstrated.</li> <li>2) The city demonstrates a clear motivation to localise the SDGs, join the SDG pilot network and learn from this process using the tools proposed by URBACT and CEMR.</li> </ol>
<b>Criterion B – SDG localisation potential</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Political commitment to the SDGs has been demonstrated.</li> <li>2) The city has appropriate resources in place to actively participate in the pilot network (e.g. having appropriate competence, sufficient staff available, financial resources and political support).</li> <li>3) The city has a clear understanding of the set-up and expectations of being a partner in the network.</li> </ol>

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**ANNEX 1 – EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORM**

<b>BASIC INFORMATION</b>			
CITY		COUNTRY	
FIRST NAME		LAST NAME	
TITLE			
POSTAL ADDRESS			
POSTAL CODE		TELEPHONE	
EMAIL		FAX	

<b>ABOUT THE CITY</b>
<b>Brief description of the city</b>
<b>Basic city data</b>
a. Population size
b. Surface area (km <sup>2</sup> )
c. Population density (people/km <sup>2</sup> )
d. Population growth rate (%)
e. Main source of prosperity (e.g. industry, trade, tourism, creative industry, etc.)
f. City URL/webpage
<b>BACKGROUND SDGs LEGISLATIVE OR POLICY INFORMATION</b>
Describe the SDGs legislative or policy framework (policy document, statement, agreement, etc.)
<b>STATEMENT OF INTEREST AND EXPERIENCE</b>
a. Why is the city interested in the project? Why does this project matter? Explain the motivation and expectations for the city to participate in this project
b. How is the city service(s) or practice(s) relevant to the project?
c. What is the city's experience working on a similar project (highlights of city's experience in EU and SDG projects)?
d. What other cities can learn from your experience and what your city is prepared to do to further that learning?
e. Is the city interested to become and act as a Lead Partner in this network?  Yes                      No
<b>NETWORK MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP</b>
a. Local management team (decision makers, project coordinator, local team, communication and financial officers)
b. Experience of proposed local project coordinator

