



## URBACT GUIDANCE

# SETTING UP AND RUNNING A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER GROUP

## URBACT TOOLBOX

- Analysing Problems
- Engaging Stakeholders**
- Planning Actions
- Sharing knowledge
- Implementing
- Resourcing
- Measuring results

October 2019



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# INTRODUCTION

URBACT enables European cities to work together and to develop effective and sustainable solutions to major urban challenges. Jointly financed by the European Commission and the Member and Partner states it is an exchange and learning programme for cities. At the heart of URBACT activities are two main features:

- An **Integrated Approach**, promoting a comprehensive process that takes into consideration the physical, economic and social dimensions of urban development, from a sustainable perspective.
- A **Participative Approach** aiming at the development of strong partnerships between public bodies, the private sector, knowledge institutions and civil society (including citizens) which is recognised as a cornerstone of efficient urban development policies.

[Visit our website to learn more about the URBACT Programme](#)

## Multi-stakeholder group: a powerful participatory tool

A multi-stakeholder group brings together all relevant local people and organisations, interested in or related to a chosen policy challenge. These stakeholders are engaged to collaborate and to participate in the design, development and implementation of local urban policies representing a variety of voices. They are the vehicle and a powerful tool to develop integrated and participative approaches to urban policies.

A multi-stakeholder group is ideally set up with members involved in the process right from the outset of a project. The development and validation of each step is then a collective undertaking, designed to strengthen partner commitment and to increase the prospect of sustainable delivery.

There are a whole range of conceptual models and actions under the term PARTICIPATION, implying different degrees of involvement. One example is illustrated in the diagram below.

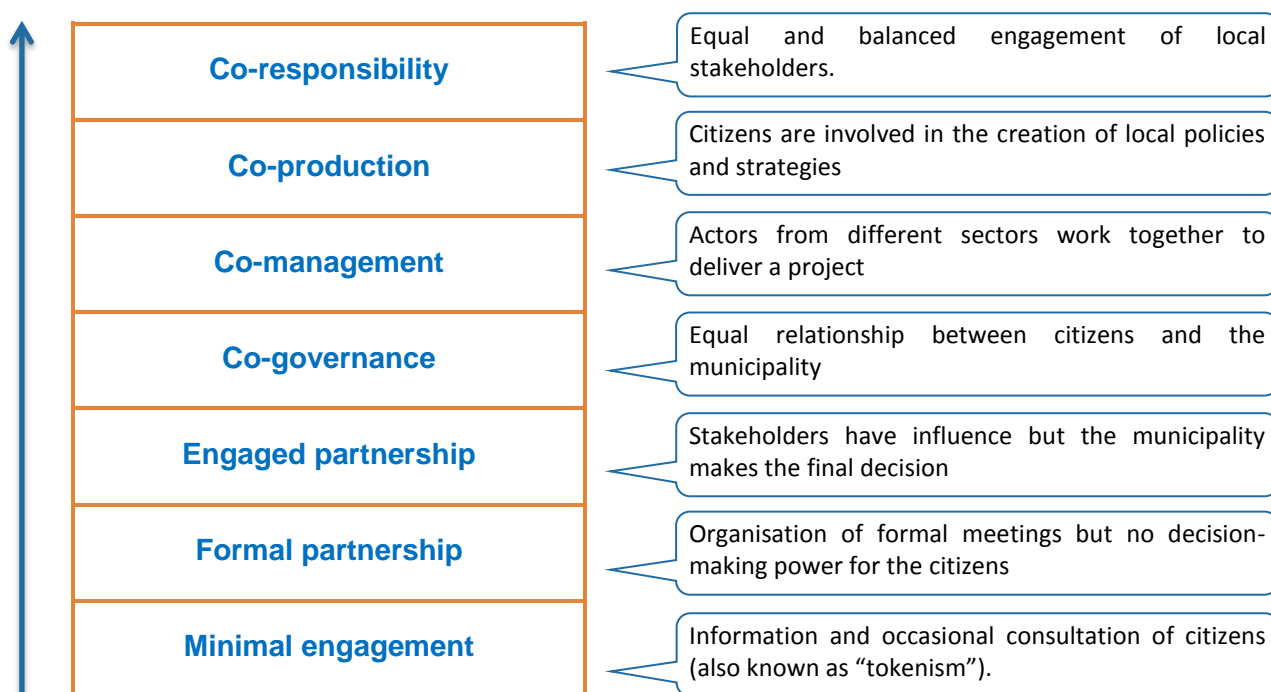


Figure based on the work of the URBACT Network [TOGETHER](#)



The principles of coproduction are based on evidence that it is better to actively involve and engage with people in the development of their city rather than just inform them once decisions have been made. Using a coproduction approach is the best guarantee for an integrated approach and increases the chances of successful implementation.

**Multi-stakeholder groups** translate these principles into concrete local dynamics that aim to foster ownership of the process whilst strengthening capacities of local actors.

## What you can expect from this guidance

This URBACT Guidance is designed for city practitioners - involved in URBACT networks or not - who will play an active role in delivering on the challenging task of participative policy-making and delivery. It is based on experience of the URBACT method which cities have been testing for years within the networks financed by the Programme. **This guidance is useful for setting-up and running an URBACT Local Group within an URBACT network but is equally relevant for cities organising and managing any group of stakeholders.**

In the following sections we may refer to guidelines and tools that have proved useful in identifying, bringing together and facilitating work with city stakeholders. This guidance is intended to provide inspiration and recommendations. It is not prescriptive or restrictive. We acknowledge that there are many working cultures and a variety of approaches to participation across Europe. Each group of stakeholders faces different challenges and the tools and working methods will need to be adapted to each set of circumstances.

The first chapter focuses on setting-up a multi-stakeholder group and how to determine and review its composition while the second chapter gives more information on the management of such a group to ensure a long-term engagement of members.



Throughout the guidance, you will find boxes that focus specifically on URBACT, take into consideration the transnational work of these partnerships and provide additional information to city practitioners involved in URBACT networks.



In these boxes, you will find some advice and recommendations to help you put the guidance into practice.



### GO FURTHER

These boxes will provide you with guides, tools and methods designed by the Programme.



## URBACT FOCUS

### What is an URBACT Local Group?

URBACT Local Groups (ULGs) are a fundamental building block of the URBACT programme. Every city partner in an URBACT network is required to set up a ULG to bring together all relevant local stakeholders related to the chosen policy challenge the city wants to tackle.

URBACT Local Groups are the vehicle to develop integrated and participative approaches to urban policies. By bringing together partners to collaborate on a specific issue, and to exchange their experiences at transnational level, the Local Group guarantees a more rigorous and innovative result, leading to the co-design and co-implementation of city strategies and action plans.

The experience also strengthens the capacities of local practitioners and stakeholders to design and deliver more sustainable solutions to challenges to be faced in the future.

#### WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?

The main **objectives** of the URBACT Local Group are:

- to use the URBACT framework and methods to design Integrated urban policies and strategies
- to strengthen the capacity of local stakeholders to develop and manage the delivery of efficient policies

#### WHAT DOES AN URBACT LOCAL GROUP DO?

URBACT Local Group **activities** include:

- analysing local challenges, seeking solutions and ultimately developing and implementing strategies to address these challenges
- embedding the learning from the transnational exchange (practical knowledge, good practices, peer review, etc. from other cities in their network and beyond) into the local policy-making process
- contributing to the transnational exchange and learning process taking place at network level
- communicating results at local level, and disseminating lessons learned to the wider community
- taking part in the URBACT training schemes organised at national and European levels by the URBACT programme, thereby building the capacity of local city stakeholders

#### WHAT IS THE TIMEFRAME?

URBACT Local Groups are set up and run within the lifetime of URBACT networks, normally over a period of two years. However, it is a major objective of the URBACT Programme to ensure that the impact of the URBACT Local Group on local practices and policies is sustainable. Developing participative approaches is challenging and requires time and energy. This investment should therefore be made sustainable for the city to benefit from it in the long term.

#### WHAT IF THERE IS AN EXISTING LOCAL GROUP?

In some cities involved in URBACT networks, there is an existing local group and a local policy on the chosen challenge. In these cases, there is no need to duplicate or set up an additional group but partners can review the existing body and possibly adjust if necessary. The URBACT Local Group could be a subgroup of the existing forum, or URBACT activity could become a part of that group's ongoing agenda.



# PART ONE



## SETTING UP A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER GROUP



**H**aving all the relevant stakeholders working together is the best way to provide a solid foundation for the design, planning, coproduction and implementation of local strategies. But getting the right people in a multi-stakeholder group can be a challenging task.

The structure of each multi-stakeholder group is tailored to suit the specific context and circumstances, and there is no “one size fits all” solution. Each multi-stakeholder group’s objectives, activities and composition will depend on the topic, the nature of project activities proposed and the local needs and experience in developing participative approaches. In all cases, both the group and its results should speak for the whole community of beneficiaries. It is essential that the right stakeholders are identified, selected and invited to join, and that the group is adapted to different stakeholders’ needs. A shared mapping process among project partners is a good way to establish who needs to be invited to join and why, what contribution is expected from each stakeholder and how that contribution will be sought.

This chapter will lead you through 4 different steps to **set up your multi-stakeholder group** by considering:

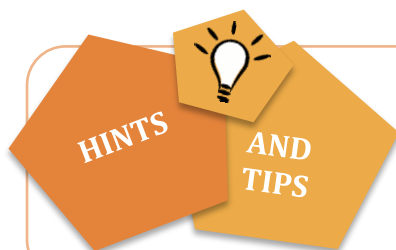
- How to identify who should be involved;
- How to engage stakeholders;
- How to structure the group to respond to specific needs;
- How to identify the right local coordinator;

### 1.1. Identify who should be involved

When starting the project, the city needs to identify the stakeholders who have an interest in the policy challenge. Each city, depending on the country, the policy and cultural context, is bound to have a different mix of local stakeholders involved in a multi-stakeholder group.

In general, a multi-stakeholder group should include representatives of:

- different departments within the local administration,
- elected people responsible for the different policy areas connected to the challenge being addressed,
- beneficiaries of the policies e.g. young people, the elderly, migrants, end-users, citizens, etc.
- third sector, NGOs, social enterprises, especially those that represent the interests of specific groups or deliver public services,
- different tiers of government in the relevant policy area (neighborhood, city, metropolitan area, region),
- the private sector, business community, employers, public service providers, unions,
- knowledge institutions, such as universities, research centres, education providers,
- potential funders.



**If your city already has a group dealing with a similar theme, it makes sense to check if it is appropriate to extend the existing group rather than start something from scratch. This avoids both duplication and a potentially negative reaction from stakeholders involved in existing structures.**



When considering which stakeholders to involve in a multi-stakeholder group the first step is to **draw up a map** of any similar relevant structures that already exist.

To map your stakeholders, you can use different tools:

- The [Stakeholders Ecosystem Map](#) will help you to identify and to prioritise the stakeholders who have an interest in the policy challenge, according to their field of action. This is a first step in reflecting on the best ways to engage with them.
- The [Stakeholders Analysis Table](#) can be used to identify the relevant stakeholders, their interests and motivations, as well as possible actions to address the various interests. This table is particularly useful in improving understanding of the difference between potential 'primary' (those affected, positively or negatively by the policy) and 'secondary' (those with an intermediary role including delivery agencies, policy makers, or supporting agencies) stakeholders. It can subsequently be used to shape individual roles and responsibilities within the multi-stakeholder group.
- And the [Stakeholders Importance/Influence Matrix](#) to examine and classify the stakeholders according to the importance they give to the challenge (how important it is for them to find a solution to the challenge according to their needs and interests) and the influence they have on the challenge (how much power the stakeholder has to facilitate or impede the project). The goal of this tool is to prioritise stakeholders, as well as to think about the right approach to take with each of them.

These can be done as collaborative exercises with a first core of local actors, for example from within the local administration, then with an enlarged group of potential members of the multi-stakeholder group. Repeating the exercise in a workshop format helps to check the validity of the initial stakeholder landscape and the stakeholders' views can add depth and consistency to your group structure. **We recommend this exercise is repeated several times during your project cycle to adapt the group if needed.**

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#### Use the Network Transnational Meetings to map your stakeholders

Doing a Stakeholders mapping exercise with your network partners and deciding how URBACT Local Group members will be involved in, contribute to and benefit from network transnational activities, is a great exchange and learning opportunity on participative approaches whatever the experience of the different partners in this area.

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#### Look ahead to implementation

It is crucial for multi-stakeholder groups to consider how they can involve **local elected representatives** and **Managing Authorities** of Operational Programmes to ensure political support and future funding from early on.

The URBACT programme particularly encourages cities to build close cooperation with the Managing Authorities, which are the bodies in each region and Member State responsible for the delivery of the European Structural Funds, both European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF).

Involving these parties in the multi-stakeholder group will help in:

- aligning real needs and priorities of cities to potential sources of funding
- making sure that the issues being addressed and the strategy or action plan are on the radar of crucial decision makers and potential funders.

In this regard, the National URBACT Points are well placed to inform and assist you!



## 1.2. Engage potential stakeholders

Once stakeholders have been identified, engaging with them can be a challenging step, especially if there is no existing cooperation on which to build. The way in which the initial approaches are made is important to create interest and trust, and motivate longer term participation.

The **first approach** could be through individual invitations, phone calls and bilateral or smaller group meetings.

It is also worth considering **launching an open call** to attract interest and widen participation. This can be useful in attracting specific categories of stakeholders, such as civil society representatives, or hard-to-reach groups. Social media can be a useful channel.

**Making announcements** at conferences, press calls, and in the local media can also generate a buzz and bring in new stakeholders.

**Engaging stakeholders and maintaining their active commitment** in the long-term can be a daunting task. To get this right, try to think about the benefits from their perspective to participate and then communicate them clearly and persuasively. It is recommended to produce a brief presentation with the group's objectives, issues addressed, expected deliverables, in order to explain the incentives for stakeholders to join. This should be designed with each stakeholder in mind.

**Think about what is in it for them!**



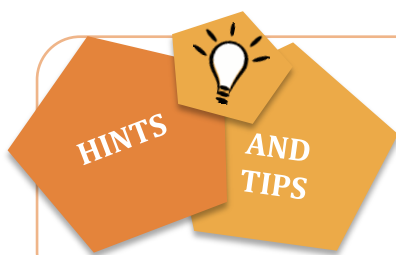


### Prepare a presentation of your network

It is recommended to produce a brief presentation with objectives, issues addressed, expected deliverables as a tool, in order to explain the incentives for stakeholders to join the URBACT Local Group. This could be translated into local languages and used by all partners when presenting the network and the URBACT Local Group process at local level and engaging with potential stakeholders.

Here you can find some of the main advantages of a participative approach that may appeal to different stakeholders:

- A strategy or action plan that has fully considered the real needs of the stakeholders
- Better local networks that can lead to sustained future cooperation
- Closer working relationships that give better insight into the long-term vision and objectives of local partners
- A higher degree of accountability to multiple stakeholders
- An efficient and cost-effective process to develop or assess a plan
- An enriching and rewarding professional experience
- A wider perspective on the theme tackled and on their own organisation's work
- Improved skills in participation, urban planning, integrated approaches and project management
- An opportunity to network and to learn from others on the theme selected
- Potential funding for the implementation of the co-produced urban policies



**While it is important to highlight the benefits for the stakeholders in participating in the multi-stakeholder group, it is also essential to be clear from the outset that there is an expectation that members attend group meetings regularly and actively input to the group activities. In this regard, it is important to allocate tasks and responsibilities to members.**

**Some stakeholders may be harder to reach**, yet valuable to your group. Make sure to adopt the right strategy to encourage these stakeholders to join your team considering the reasons of their unwillingness or inability to participate:

- The stakeholders' **level of authority** (e.g. elected representatives): these stakeholders often have high influence but can be difficult to access or to get in touch with. Using a variety of jargon free communication methods through different channels and reaching the right people is a way to make sure that these stakeholders get the message.
- The stakeholders' participation is limited by their **own barriers**: some local actors may show resistance to join a multi-stakeholder group because of barriers linked to their own context. These can be time limitations, financial resources, geographical restrictions, technology access...If their engagement has been made simple and their barriers have been understood and addressed, stakeholders will be more willing to participate. For example, this can be achieved through adapting the meetings time and place to the needs of these stakeholders.
- The stakeholder is **not interested** in the project's activities: it is important to run an analysis of the stakeholders' profiles to identify and meet their specific interests. Moreover, stakeholders will be more responsive if they feel that they will play an essential and active role. They need to be guaranteed that their feedback will be taken into consideration in order to relate to the project and get a sense of ownership.





**Remember that you don't have a second chance to make a good first impression! When approaching potential stakeholders, be convincing AND realistic. Do not focus only on the responsibilities, but also on the benefits of being involved.**

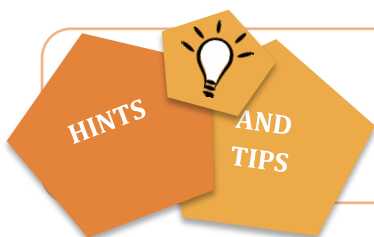
**Given that the aim of a multi-stakeholder group is to take part in the design and delivery of urban strategies, the actors involved should be in a position to actively contribute to the design and implementation. A top-down approach in selecting members and building the group may compromise its credibility and its outputs. Think laterally and widen participation.**

### 1.3. Structure the group to respond to specific needs

As with the membership composition there is no one shape for a successful multi-stakeholder group. It is important to find the best organisation depending on the local needs and objectives.

From the experience of past URBACT projects, a number of different organisational structures can work:

- **Open structure:** allows to continuously adapt the multi-stakeholder group structure as you go. On the basis of needs, an open membership allows you to increase participation with relevant new stakeholders making ad hoc interventions on a specific topic or joining the group's activities at any point in the project's lifetime.
- **Closed structure:** a smaller group, of a maximum of 10 people, which remains stable during the project life time, allows you to keep control of the group, to clearly allocate responsibilities and to better focus on completing tasks. Whilst this kind of structure does not automatically convey the critical mass that some processes may need, it has the advantage of allowing members to get to know each other well and build strong relationships.
- **Topic sub-groups:** many URBACT networks are built on a main topic and several sub-topics. This kind of structure can also be applied to a multi-stakeholder group. If your project has for example 4 sub-themes, stakeholders may choose to participate in 2 or 3 of the 4 groups. This organisation around topic sub-groups may result in higher level of interest from members and a better control of the evolution of each group. If a number of more focused groups are developed then mechanisms need to be built in to share results between them.
- **Multiple level structures:** another possibility is a mixture of open and closed structures. A core group of 6 to 8 partners with a high degree of involvement could be backed up by a wider local network which forms the target group for the programme of local activities that the core group develops. These could include dissemination events and local consultation events, for example. By creating a restricted core group and a wider local network, you can keep a focus, whilst also realising the partnership and dissemination benefits of a broader local network.



**The initial arrangements to structure the group do not have to be strictly definite. It is even recommended to adapt the structure depending on the needs of the project, the steps and the progress. If it doesn't work, change it!**





### Draft Terms of Reference for the URBACT Local Group

At network level, in order to ensure common understanding on roles and responsibilities, you can discuss and agree on some common terms of reference for URBACT Local Groups setting out the main principles by which the partners' URBACT Local Groups are set up and run, and to identify:

- the main categories of stakeholders to be involved across ULGs in the network
- the average number of meetings to take place at local level,
- how ULG members will take part in transnational activities,
- how ULG members will communicate the learning from transnational activities at local level
- the contributions expected from the URBACT Local Group at network level
- the core members who will benefit from the URBACT capacity-building activities

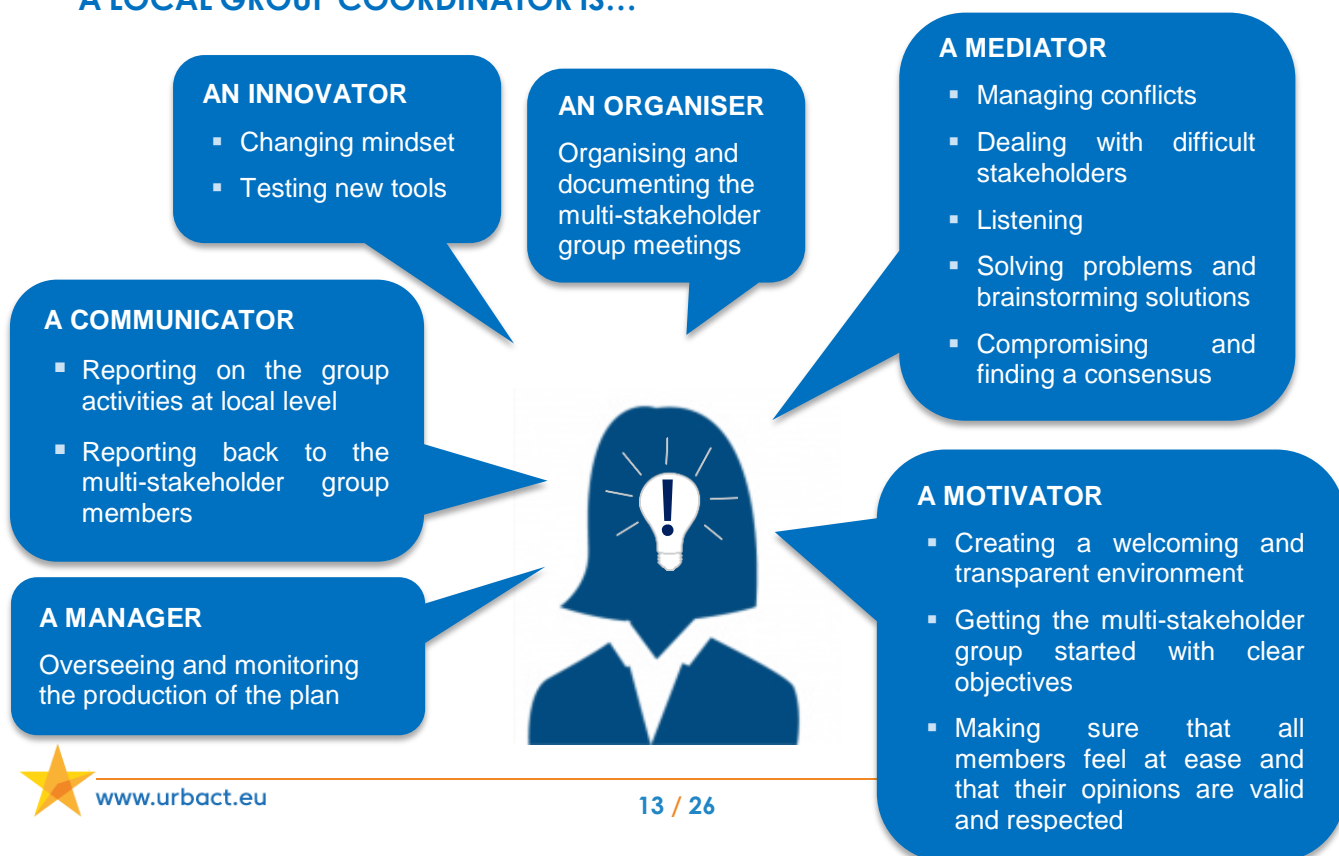
This discussion should take place at the start and provide a coherent framework for all the cities within the network. This exercise could be the focus of a dedicated working session during one of the first meetings. Once agreed by all partners, the terms of reference then form the basis on which each partner city defines their own URBACT Local Group roadmap.

### 1.4. Identify the right local coordinator

The coordinator is in charge of running the multi-stakeholder group and is therefore a key player within the group. This person may be someone from within the municipality or someone external recruited to perform this task. This could also be a particularly active member of the multi-stakeholder group. In principle, the coordinator should also know or be an actor in the policy issues/challenges to be addressed by the group.

The coordinator is responsible for getting the multi-stakeholder group started with clear objectives, creating a welcoming environment, running the group and managing the on-going process, Some stakeholders may not have had previous experience of participative processes so the coordinator should make sure that all members feel at ease and that their opinions are valid and respected.

### A LOCAL GROUP COORDINATOR IS...



To ensure the sustainability of the multi-stakeholder group, it is important that its organisation corresponds to the local context. Think about what makes most sense in your context.

<p>What are the skills that you consider essential for running a multi-stakeholder group? Do you have them all?</p>	<p>How can you identify and harness the skills of other stakeholders?</p>
<p>If you were member of a multi-stakeholder group, what would you expect from the coordinator?</p>	<p>What do you think is the biggest opportunity for the multi-stakeholder group and what is its biggest threat?</p>



**The group members all have skills which should be used in full so that everything is not on the coordinator’s shoulders. Do a skills audit on the group members – maybe there is someone who loves drawing cartoons or making videos in their spare time for example!**



### The specific role of the ULG coordinator

The URBACT Local Group coordinator acts as a bridge between the transnational networking activities and the URBACT Local Group. The ULG coordinator is the “reference person” for the group, at local level, at network level and for the URBACT Secretariat. S/he is the person that the Lead Partner and Lead Expert refer to for all URBACT Local Group issues and has a peer in the other partner cities. Therefore, it is important for this person to be able to express oneself in English.

The network budget allows you to employ someone in the municipality or hire an external person to be the ULG Coordinator whichever is most relevant to your local needs.

The specific tasks of the ULG coordinator is to:

- organise URBACT Local Group meetings
- oversee and monitor the local work of the ULG
- report on ULG activities at local and network level
- organise the ULG's contribution to transnational activities
- take part in transnational network meetings and capacity-building activities, and
- report back to ULG members.





## CHECKLIST

✓	Have you identified who could be the stakeholders?
✓	Are they aware of the project? Do they understand and support it?
✓	Have you carried out any active analysis of your stakeholders?
✓	Are there any stakeholders with conflicting views, expectations or requirements?
✓	Have you identified and taken actions to engage your stakeholders?
✓	Are your stakeholders all clear about their own roles and responsibilities and the roles of others?
✓	Do you have a governance structure that includes all the main stakeholders that should be involved?
✓	Has a local coordinator been appointed?
✓	Is there a formal mechanism for coordinating the activities of different members?
✓	Is there a clear vision, with objectives and defined results for the group?
✓	Do all stakeholders understand that vision and share it? Is there a common understanding of the objectives?
✓	Do you know how you will communicate progress to stakeholders and beyond?
✓	Are there any different requirements in terms of type and frequency of communication?



# PART TWO



## RUNNING A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER GROUP





**R**unning a group of stakeholders can be a rewarding but also a demanding and time-consuming task. Building a cohesive and successful multi-stakeholder group requires energy, commitment and engagement from all the actors involved.

A successful multi-stakeholder group is one that manages to co-produce, agree on and deliver a common strategy or action plan by creating cohesion and a good group dynamic amongst people with sometimes very different backgrounds and expectations. Important factors for success are leadership, trust, clear information, an agreed roadmap, regular communication, well-managed meetings and a shared feeling of freedom to test new approaches.

This chapter offers guidance on the key aspects of **running a multi-stakeholder group**.

## 2.1. Create a roadmap for the multi-stakeholder group

It is strongly recommended for a multi-stakeholder group to design a local roadmap as a useful vehicle to get everyone on the same page from the outset, motivate them to participate, and provide a clear vision of the process going forward.

The co-produced roadmap should specify the objectives, the expected outcomes, the resources available, and plan all the local activities. It should contain a tentative agenda of all meetings and a time frame for the production of the different expected outputs. The roadmap should be co-designed and approved by the whole group and make explicit the benefits of participation for stakeholders.

A shared roadmap will allow the group members to know what stage they are at in any given moment, enhancing their ownership of the project, and allowing them to plan the time they need to fulfil specific tasks.

A **roadmap** might, for example, include:

- objectives and expected results/outputs,
- definition of the policy challenge to be addressed by the group,
- timetable for meeting dates,
- a visual timeline highlighting the main steps,
- members responsibilities and/or tasks,
- outline of the workplan for the development of the activities,
- consultation process...



### GO FURTHER

The **Action Table** tool will help you define activities and outputs to achieve a given objective. It can be used as a brainstorming exercise with your stakeholders to co-produce the group's roadmap.

## 2.2. Organise successful and efficient multi-stakeholder meetings

The success of the multi-stakeholder group will depend on many factors but a critical aspect is how well the meetings are run. Well managed meetings with clear objectives and good facilitation will help keep the multi-stakeholder group on track, and motivate stakeholders to return for the next meeting and participate fully. Get all members to explore and discuss the way meetings themselves will be organised.

### ■ Adapt the format of your meetings

Multi-stakeholder group meetings can take a number of **formats** depending on the purpose. Here are a few examples of formats you may use to consult and involve the stakeholders on a broader scale:

- **Community planning events** - Carefully structured collaborative events in which all stakeholders, including the local community, work closely with specialists from all relevant disciplines to make plans for the future of that community or some aspects of it.
- **Hands-on planning** - Methods of community involvement where small groups make plans for the future using table top plans or flexible cardboard models.
- **Interactive displays** - Visual displays which allow people to participate by making additions or alterations to them.
- **Open house events** - Events designed to allow those promoting initiatives to present them to a wider public and secure reactions in an informal manner. This is halfway between an exhibition and a workshop.
- **Site visits** - Direct inspection of area under consideration by mixed team of locals and technical experts. On foot, by bike or by bus. Also known as field trips or walkshops.
- **Vision fair** - Where people vote on their favorite visions. Vision statements or images are exhibited. People use colored sticky dots to indicate which visions they would like to pursue. They may also make personal pledges to take action.



**Meetings where participants are engaged in a conversation, or involved in a hands-on activity, rather than overwhelmed by experts' presentations, are more likely to generate ownership of the outcome.**

**Business as usual is, of course, an option but why not try innovative approaches and experiment both with the format of the meeting and the way it is run? Try, for instance, to allocate tasks and responsibilities to people during the meeting and after. Also, you could think about a different chair for each meeting. Stay open to proposals from the stakeholders!**

### ■ Prepare your multi-stakeholder meetings

- **Select a suitable venue.** Think about lighting, fresh air, breaks, refreshments, access, Wi-Fi connexion and other equipment needs, making sure that participants will be comfortable. When relevant, consider holding the meeting in different places, having stakeholders hosting the meeting in their own premises.
- **Circulate an agenda** at least a week ahead of time. The agenda must include the context and objectives of the meeting. Make sure it has a good mix of activity including, for instance, site



visits, interactive discussions, expert presentations, political or civic hosting. The meeting agenda should allow space for information giving, but also plenty of time for participants to be active, to speak, to contribute and to exchange views, either in small groups, bilaterally or in plenary.

- **Define and communicate the meeting's objectives.** Be clear about the objectives and focus of each meeting, so that the right stakeholders attend.
- **Involve local stakeholders** in organising, preparing and delivering the meeting. Assign roles and responsibilities to participants e.g. give them 'homework' in advance of the meeting.



## GO FURTHER

Get more detailed instructions on meetings organisation in the [URBACT Events guide](#).

### ■ **Facilitate multi-stakeholder meetings**

Good facilitation of meetings and events helps to create the right conditions for effective participation and collaboration. Investing in specialist facilitation expertise can make the difference to the quality and outputs of the meetings. Here are some basic principles:

- **Break the ice** with a fun get-to-know-each-other activity.
- **Introduce the meeting** by reminding its objective(s) and setting ground rules (no phone,...).
- **Document, summarise and feedback** regularly (e.g.: by using flipcharts).
- Make sure to **keep to time** and to follow the agenda. Keep an eye on the objective of the meeting but be flexible if any unexpected change of plans arises.
- **Wrap-up the outcomes** of the meeting, steps to take as well as potential ideas/topics to be put on the agenda for the next meeting.
- **Check back on the expectations** at the end of the meeting and ask for feedback for future improvements (on-site orally or using a feedback questionnaire or an evaluation form).
- **Conclude with a hot debrief:** What worked well? What could be improved? What will I do with the learning?



## GO FURTHER

> Get more information on facilitation in the URBACT Guidance [Getting Results through animated meetings](#)

> Some tools are also useful to structure the exchange and engage the stakeholders. Try the [Fishbowl](#), the [World Café](#), the [OPERA](#) and [Thinking Hats](#) methods, for instance.



The **role of the facilitator** is crucial to run a meeting.

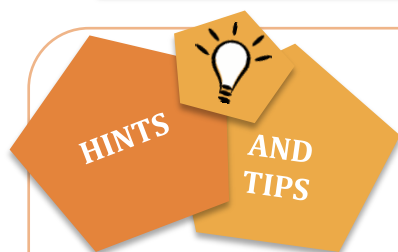


### Facilitating means being:

- > a speaker
- > an input moderator
- > a vibe watcher
- > a time keeper
- > a note taker

### The main skills of a facilitator are:

- > Listening
- > Respect for all
- > Remaining neutral
- > Communicating objectives
- > Assertiveness
- > Observation (content & process)
- > Expertise



### How to challenge negative behaviour?

- **Maintain the group energy** to make talkative, distracting or obstructive participants listen.
- **Discuss** with passive or resistant stakeholders to understand their unresponsiveness
- **Set rules** prior to the meeting
- **Involve** everyone in the discussion
- **Get help** from another facilitator/expert/participant if you don't feel confident about a topic

### ■ Report and capture knowledge from the multi-stakeholder meetings

It is important to keep track of the work of the multi-stakeholder group, capturing the lessons learned, as it will help to monitor and assess the progress made in relation to the roadmap.

- **Capture the learning.** Make sure to take enough pictures, videos and notes. These will be useful to draft a report or a website article for further follow-up of the meeting.
- **Provide feedback immediately** (max 2-3 days) and thank for active participation. Send separate emails to participants, providers and facilitators/presenters.
- **Share regular updates with the participants.** Providing a follow-up on the identified action points and feedback will keep the stakeholders motivated between two meetings and show that their inputs are taken into account.
- **Evaluate the meeting.** Take notes from the meeting's feedback session and hot debrief. Collect and analyse post event surveys.
- **Collect** pictures and videos from participants for potential future communication purpose.
- **Write** a report and/or an article for your website.



There are many ways to capture and share lessons learnt following a meeting. One example is the **Book of Ideas** which is interesting for your bigger gatherings (dissemination events, hackathons, events for a wider audience, with a greater impact, etc.), to capture the atmosphere of the event and record the learning.





### Facilitate mutual learning between ULG and network transnational activities

Transnational meetings are a core activity in URBACT projects. They are the space where added-value is created through the exchange of knowledge and practices that takes place between cities. Exchange within URBACT networks provides **a two way bridge between local and transnational levels**. Within each project, partners can support each other by **sharing progress** and undertaking **peer reviews**. URBACT projects have used the transnational meetings as opportunities to gather **feedback from partners** on their plans. Each URBACT Local Group provides quality and relevant input for the transnational events. In turn the knowledge produced during transnational meetings feeds back in, enriching the discussion at local level, enhancing capacity among stakeholders and finally leading to the production and implementation of better urban strategies.

The **Lead Partner** and **Lead Expert** also help to facilitate mutual learning and exchange between URBACT Local Group and transnational activities. Different URBACT Local Group members from each city attend transnational meetings, selected on the basis of potential contribution to or learning about the given project theme of transnational events.

ULG members have the chance to **participate in transnational meetings** organised in other partner cities, to see how they tackle similar problems and find specific solutions, to discuss in depth and reflect on their own practice. This can help ULG members to feel part of a wider dynamic and allows them to exchange useful ideas and advice.

In return, when **hosting a network activity** the city's URBACT Local Group is actively involved in welcoming guests, organising joint workshops, site visits, press conferences, informal networking in order to meet peers from other cities. URBACT Local Group members have the opportunity to present themselves, their results and perspectives, the problems they encounter and the solutions they have found to peers from other cities.

Remember, **language** can be a significant barrier to meaningful interaction between participants. While some events may have simultaneous translation, some parts of the event, such as field trips, may only be in English (the official language of URBACT Programme). This needs to be taken into consideration in the selection of participants and the organisation of meetings.

#### Before any transnational meeting:

- Consider holding a 'virtual' preparatory meeting for ULG coordinators 4-6 weeks prior to the meeting to brief them on planned content and discuss potential participation. Try and achieve a degree of balance and turnover in terms of ULG members participating in transnational events.
- Think about support needs of ULG members, especially if this is their first experience of an international meeting. If there are language needs, translation can be provided.
- Make sure that stakeholders are well briefed before the meeting and understand what is expected of them, including the need to report back about lessons learned.

## 2.3. Organise your internal and external communication with stakeholders

### ■ Internal Communication

Maintaining momentum and sustaining engagement from all stakeholders along the way requires good communication, both when the group is meeting face-to-face and in between meetings. Keeping regular and open communication channels invites stakeholders to provide inputs in a formal and informal way. It is recommended to take advantage of the potential offered by innovations in online and remote collaboration, to supplement face-to-face time.

Here is a non-exhaustive list of communications tools - both the old and the new - you can use.

**Telephone:** Direct bilateral contacts with stakeholders can help keep people informed, seek their views, test out ideas, and keep stakeholders engaged.

**Teleconferencing:** This can be a cost-effective and time efficient way to keep a group in touch in between meetings, and make interim decisions.

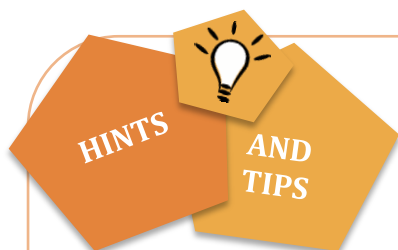
**Email:** It is good practice to send structured e-mails, gathering important information into one e-mail, for instance in a regular newsletter or update, rather than bombarding stakeholders with too many ad hoc e-mails.

**Online file storage:** Online library for people to access is interesting to share documents within a group.

**Project management software:** Can reduce email traffic, provide forum space, host documents in central location and manage tasks (e.g. Basecamp, Slack)

New online facilities for networking are constantly being developed. Partners should not be afraid to experiment but it may be wiser to rely on tried and tested approaches when deadlines approach:

- Online forums and networking sites, such as Facebook or LinkedIn, allow individuals to create groups, share information and messages
- Doodle poll for scheduling meetings
- Twitter for sharing brief notes and latest news
- Flickr for photo sharing
- Slideshare for slide hosting
- Youtube for video hosting and sharing
- Wikis, websites for creating contents in a collaborative way by multiple users



#### When organising a teleconference:

- **Appoint a moderator / facilitator.**
- **Shop around to find the best service (there are many on-line, most have free trials).**
- **Ensure participants have technical capability - if in doubt, test bilaterally in advance of group meetings.**
- **Schedule carefully to ensure people are free at the appointed time.**
- **Prepare and circulate agenda by email in advance, including any documents to be looked at beforehand.**
- **Send reminder text message and/or email 1 day and 1 hour before the event.**
- **Allow 5-10 minutes at the start for people to dial in and connect**
- **Avoid overly long sessions (1 hour max)**
- **Record session for future reference (often a service offered by the provider).**

#### ■ Communicating externally

Cities have a lot of interesting ideas and experience to share with others, within their own localities, regions and across Europe. Multi-stakeholder groups should be encouraged to take every opportunity to communicate, disseminate and make their work visible.



This can start from the launch of the multi-stakeholder group and continue through the participation process to the implementation of the designed actions. Communicating externally can help build political and popular support around the group's objectives and plans.

Well-planned communication activity can add value by:

- Validating the involvement of stakeholders and promoting their work;
- Showcasing results to potential funders;
- Publicising good examples for others that work on similar subjects;
- Building a sense of community by gaining the interest and trust of inhabitants.

Here are several instruments that you can use for doing this:

**A website (of the city or the project)** – make use of the space to showcase the project's activities and goals.

**Newsletter** – contribute articles and features about the multi-stakeholder group in the newsletters distributed by the city or stakeholder organisations.

**Events** - take part in community events with an information stand, or run multi-stakeholder group events, such as open days, fairs, conferences.

**Social Media**- make use of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, blogs, with visual entries (pictures, videos...) to raise the profile of your project, the theme and the multi-stakeholder group.



## GO FURTHER

- > Learn how to use Twitter efficiently with the [URBACT Guide to Twitter](#).
- > Get some tips on public presentation and on how to present your work to a larger audience with the ['Speak up, time for your presentation'](#) Guide.

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**Communicating and disseminating results** is an important part of URBACT networks, and URBACT Local Groups are encouraged to take every opportunity to make their work visible, especially highlighting that this is part of a European programme. For instance, at local level, involvement in and hosting of transnational events can be communicated in the local media.

Remember to use the [URBACT communication guidelines](#) and logos for all communication activities.

Make sure to always inform your [National URBACT Point](#) when you are organising an event. They are a very good relay to disseminate your activities!

## 2.4. Maintain commitment of stakeholders

Successful multi-stakeholder group management is not only about getting people engaged from the outset – it is also about keeping everyone motivated and involved throughout the process.

Maintain your stakeholders' interest by:

- **Building good relationships and trust** between and with all stakeholders
- **Developing a good communication strategy**. Using a motivational tone in your communication and meetings will increase their enthusiasm.
- **Sharing progress and showcasing results** on a regular basis.



- **Giving them a voice**, encouraging them to share ideas and asking them for feedback on a regular basis.
- **Adapting the group's composition**. As your stakeholders' interests may change through the lifetime of the project, the stakeholders mapping exercises should be repeated.
- **Formalising the group**. This particularly applies when a group has been set up specifically for a project. Encouraging stakeholders to participate in other projects and local initiatives will give them a sense of legitimacy.
- **Demonstrating results and impact**. Clear steps should be taken for the work of the group to be implemented. This shows that activities of the group are embedded in local urban policies and supported by the local decision-makers and shall lead up to concrete results.



The multi-stakeholder group should also be a space for experimentation in which members have the freedom to test solutions. In addition to motivating the multi-stakeholder group members by providing some concrete actions to implement, trying out small-scale, pilot actions will encourage them to think about implementation and challenges that arise.



#### Get support from your network!

Co-production and co-delivery is a challenging task! Partners should therefore make the most of the support they can get from their URBACT network, and from the programme as a whole (expertise, training, sharing experiences, peer reviewing, etc.).

**At network level** the Lead Partner and Lead Expert supports each city to run its ULG in line with the terms of reference agreed within the network. Each URBACT Local Group is asked to report on a regular basis on meetings and progress to the Lead Partner, for example by providing a one page summary in English after each meeting. This can be supplemented by phone calls and e-mail updates. The Lead Expert and Lead Partner facilitate exchange between partners about ULG, for instance through surveys, reports and dedicated sessions in transnational meetings.

#### Support provided by the Lead Expert and Lead Partner includes:

- leading the development of terms of reference at network level
- offering guidance to ULG Coordinators by phone or e-mail or through direct attendance at meetings
- giving ideas about ULG meetings and good meeting animation/facilitation techniques
- reviewing reports of ULG meetings (Lead Partner)
- following-up on the progress of and supporting each city (Lead Expert)
- providing opportunities in transnational meetings for partners to share their experience, problems and solutions or good practices related to ULG
- seeking and supporting ideas about ULG inputs to transnational meetings (e.g. organising part of the network seminar, presenting a local case study, policy challenge, etc.)





## Problem solving

Stakeholders are unresponsive

### Conduct an in-depth diagnosis of your stakeholders

To engage with your stakeholders, it is necessary to have a clear overview of the initial situation: objectives, motivation, needs, interest and roles from the parties involved. You may organise one-to-one meetings to analyse the causes of unresponsiveness.

### Communicate effectively

A good communication strategy will allow the potential stakeholders to be aware of your project activities and, thus, get involved.

- Avoid jargon and provide clear messages
- Choose the right communication channels
- Do not hesitate to use creative methods

### Motivate your stakeholders

Encourage their participation by presenting the benefits they can draw from it, as in a “win-win” situation

- Involve them in the decision-making process
- Invest more resources in understanding their motivation
- Show appreciation and incentivise their engagement

### Manage your stakeholders’ expectations

It is important that your stakeholders’ expectations are clearly set from the very beginning of your project. Share your vision and make sure everyone is on the same page. Check that the vision is shared all along the project. Let your stakeholders express their ideas, needs and problems and make sure to address them.

There are difficulties in maintaining stakeholders’ involvement

### Set up a positive atmosphere

To encourage engagement, trust and focus, it is important to set up a good and dynamic working atmosphere.

Make sure to prepare well the meetings:

- Stimulate participation by changing venues and formats
- Create positive emotions, for instance by using cultural heritage
- Organise site visits to places with connections to the project
- Don’t hesitate to plan for informal joint celebrations of progress

### Organise regular meetings and follow-up

To increase participation:

- Trust is essential, so be transparent when sharing the progress
- Arrange face-to-face or informal meetings, adapting the meeting time to the needs of stakeholders
- Monitor the stakeholders’ engagement on a regular basis
- Provide a complete follow-up on meetings and send regular, good quality memos to participants.

### Increase communication to engage the community

Good and increased local communication will improve your project’s visibility among citizens, raising their awareness and engaging them in the project activities.

- Make your project more accessible to the community by organising out-of-the-box events
- Give ownership of the project to the community.

### Adapt your group composition

To keep your stakeholders active and committed to the project, it is important to show some flexibility when it comes to changing the composition of the group and adapting it to the stage of the project.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage the involvement of new members whose experience could bring new energy to the team.</li> <li>- Spread the membership through the development of sub-groups.</li> <li>- Involve the right members for the specific faced issues (right scale and content).</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Formalise the group</b> Stakeholders will get more involved if they feel considered as part of a structure that will continue operating after the end of the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If appropriate give the group a legal existence to give it a sense of legitimacy.</li> <li>- Provide them with support</li> </ul>
<p><b>There is a lack of skills to manage the multi-stakeholder group and to facilitate meetings</b></p>	<p><b>Carefully designate the coordinator</b> It is important to provide strong leadership for the group of stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Find a local leader that can inspire and motivate other local actors and who understand the requirements of this role.</li> <li>- Give some members a stronger role.</li> <li>- Reflect and identify the best governance for your group</li> </ul>
<p><b>There is some resistance to change the existing tools and work methods</b></p>	<p><b>Demonstrate</b> The most effective way of convincing is through demonstration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Showcase the consequences and benefits that go with changes and the risks of not changing.</li> <li>- Build on scientific knowledge, evidence-base and use examples.</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>Challenge mindsets and build trust</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Constantly move the stakeholders out of their comfort zone; use role-play and other innovative animation techniques to challenge their mindset.</li> <li>- Change the perception of the public administration through Public Relations campaigns. Media communications should give credit to the partner contribution.</li> </ul>

## FINAL WORD

This guide is a comprehensive summary of all the activities and tasks that are needed to set up and run a multi-stakeholder group. It contains advice and recommendations that aim to provide city practitioners with a clear understanding and concrete ideas for establishing an efficient and high quality multi-stakeholder group and keeping it up.

It is, however, only a guide – you are encouraged to innovate and develop new ideas and tools whilst maintaining a coherent and logical mode of operation, most importantly adapted to the local context.

Building on the powerful participatory tool that is a multi-stakeholder group, we wish you good luck with participative policy-making and delivery!