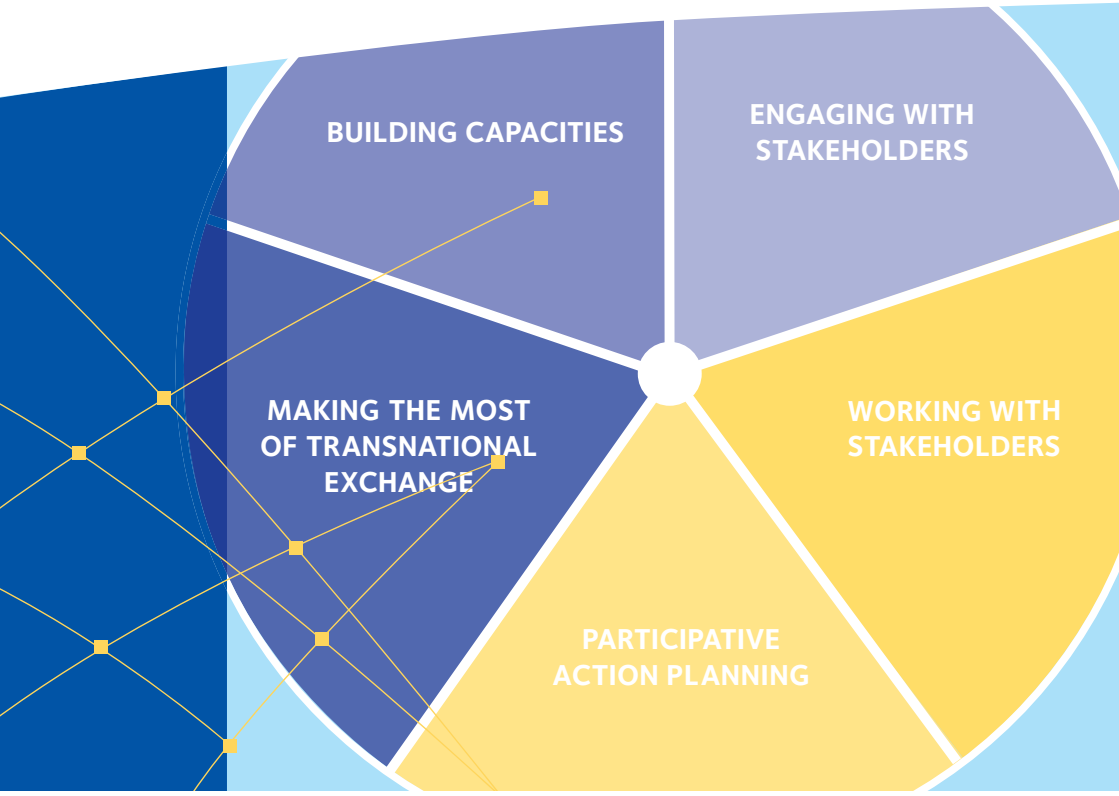
The URBACT II Local Support Group Toolkit

June 2013



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URBACT

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FOREWORD

"Above all, we must free ourselves from our tendency to see cities as their buildings, and remember that the real city is made of flesh, not concrete."

Edward Glaeser[1]

URBACT is about cities and people. Our mission is to promote sustainable urban development and a key element of this is to nurture the talent of city stakeholders across the EU. By building capacity we can make Europe's cities stronger, fairer and cleaner.

At the heart of URBACT activity are two main approaches: integrated urban development and participative action-planning. These dynamics have been supported by the European Commission since the 1990s, through programmes such as URBAN I and II, URBACT I and the Leipzig Charter. Integrated urban development promotes a holistic approach that takes into consideration the physical, economic and social dimensions of urban development, from a sustainable perspective. The participative approach - the development of strong partnerships between public bodies, the private sector and the civil society (including citizens and inhabitants) - is recognised as a cornerstone of efficient urban development policies.

URBACT Local Support Groups (ULSGs) translate these principles into concrete local dynamics that aim to foster ownership of the urban planning process and also strengthen capacities of local actors.

This URBACT Toolkit is designed for stakeholders involved in URBACT networks who will play an active role in delivering on this challenging task of participative policy-making and delivery. It has been updated with experience of previous networks to help city partners to run effective Local Support Groups (ULSGs) and develop Local Action Plans (LAPs). Alongside the National Training Scheme, the Summer University and the training for elected representatives, it is a key element in our repertoire to support the URBACT cities community.

In the following sections we introduce guidelines and tools that have proved

useful in bringing together city stakeholders, and facilitating collaboration in the analysis of urban challenges and the co-creation of solutions. The toolkit is intended to provide inspiration and guidance, and not to be too prescriptive or restrictive. We acknowledge that there are many working cultures and a variety of approaches to participation across Europe. Each ULSG faces different challenges and the tools and working methods will need to be adapted to each set of circumstances.

The URBACT Secretariat welcomes feedback on the toolkit, and new ideas and examples of co-production to continue the evolution of ULSGs and to inspire policymakers in cities. We wish all URBACT stakeholders 'Bon Courage' in their efforts to create sustainable and vibrant cities.

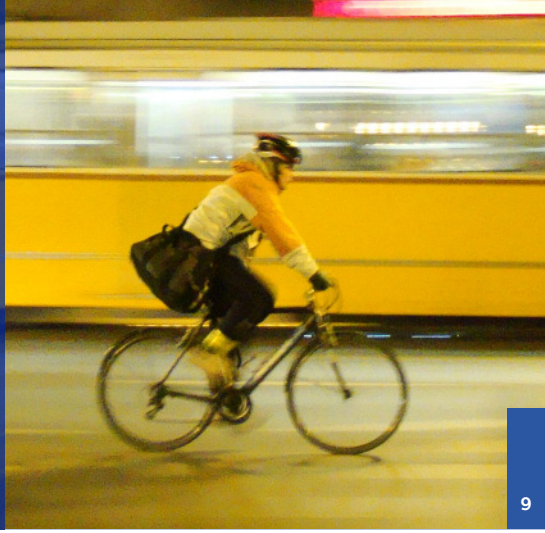
The URBACT Secretariat

1. Glaeser Edward, The Triumph of the city, Pan Books 2011, page 15

Introduction to the URBACT Programme

Following URBACT I (2002-2006), URBACT II (2007-2013) is the European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable and integrated urban development in line with the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy.

Jointly financed by the European Commission and the 27 Member and 2 Partner States (Norway and Switzerland), URBACT enables European cities to work together and to develop effective and sustainable solutions to major key urban challenges.



Specifically, URBACT aims to foster integrated and sustainable urban development through:

- **Facilitating the exchange of experiences and learning** among city policy-makers, decision-makers and practitioners;
- **Disseminating good practices and lessons drawn** from these exchanges and ensure the transfer of know-how;
- **Assist city policy-makers and practitioners** (including managing authorities of Operational Programmes) to define, and put into practice, Action Plans for sustainable urban development.

The Programme achieves this by helping to establish Thematic Networks on different urban issues. Approved through Calls for Proposals, each network involves 8/12 partners from at least 3 different Member or Partner States. The partners may be cities, regional authorities, national authorities or universities and research centres.

URBACT II Key facts
(Accurate as of June 2013)

- 3 Calls for Proposals
- 45 Thematic Networks
- 7 Working Groups

Project Partners:

- 445 Partner Cities
- 27 Equivalent Public Bodies
- 14 Regional Authorities
- 13 Universities and Research centres

Thematic networks have a budget of 800.000€

URBACT II Themes

Priority Axe 1 – Cities, Engines of Growth and Jobs

- Innovation and knowledge economy
- Social Innovation
- Employment and labour mobility
- Entrepreneurship

Priority Axe 2 – Attractive and Cohesive cities

- Integrated development of deprived areas and areas at risk
- Active inclusion
- Developing low carbon energy-efficient urban economies
- Enhancing urban planning

URBACT II Programme Timeline

Call for proposals

Submission of project proposals etc.

Development phase

Submission of final applications etc.

Implementation phase

Call for Proposals

Submission of project proposals, assessment by external panel and approval by URBACT Monitoring Committee to enter Development phase

Development Phase (6 Months)

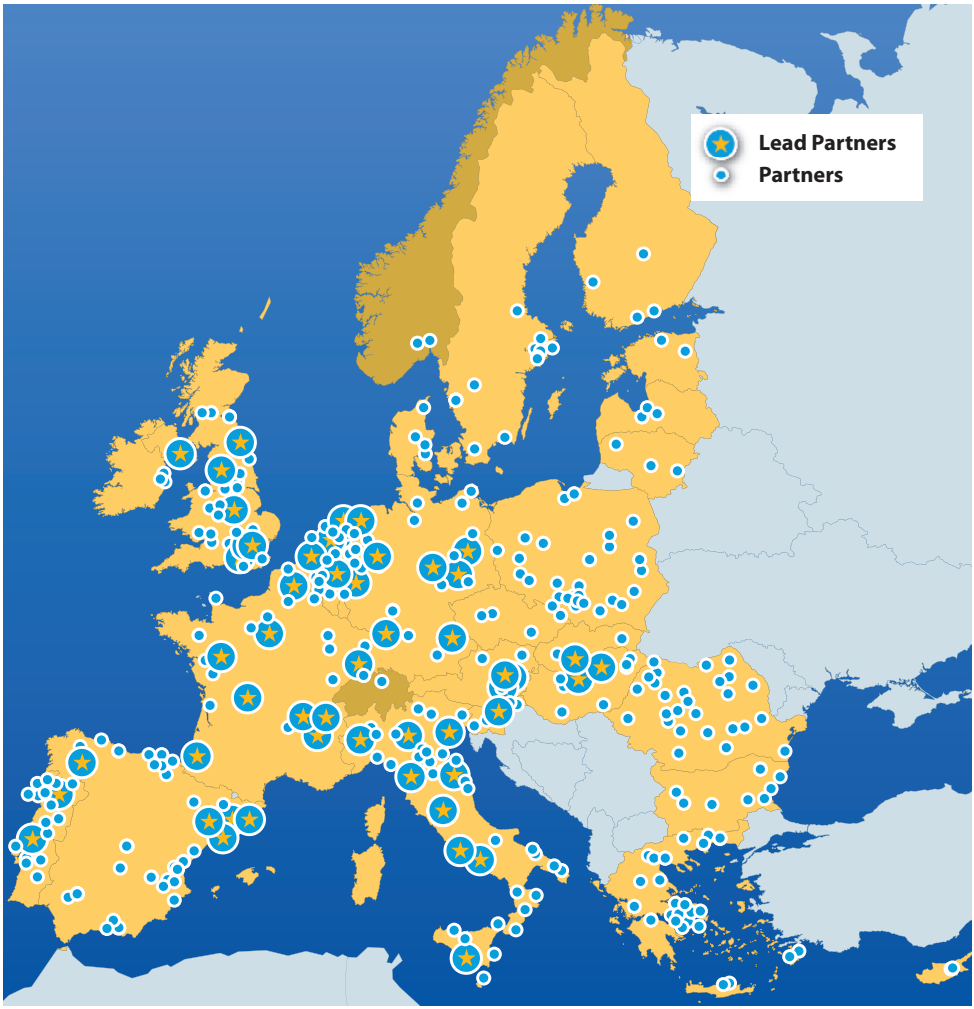
- Project Development
- Partnership finalised
- Production of Baseline studies
- Initiating Local Support Group
- Final Applications & contractual documents prepared
- All approved projects supported by URBACT Secretariat and Thematic Pole managers

Submission of final applications, assessment by external panel and approval by URBACT Monitoring Committee to enter Implementation phase

Implementation Phase (27 months)

- Transnational exchange and learning activities
- Local Support groups operating at local level
- Capacity-building activities
- Development and production of Local Action Plans
- Thematic Poles coordinate capitalisation of projects outputs

URBACT II Partners
(as of June 2013)



PART ONE

URBACT Local Support Groups and participative action-planning

1.1 Local Support Groups and Local Action Plans

What is an URBACT Local Support Group?

URBACT Local Support Groups (ULSGs) are a fundamental building block of the URBACT programme. Every city partner in an URBACT network is required to set up a ULSG to bring together all relevant local stakeholders related to the chosen policy challenge the city wants to tackle (such as youth unemployment or regeneration of a deprived area). These stakeholders are engaged in order to participate in the development and implementation of local urban development policies.

URBACT Local Support 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 Support Group guarantees a more rigorous and innovative result, leading to the co-production of a Local Action Plan.

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

What is a Local Action Plan?

A Local Action Plan (LAP) is a strategic document that addresses identified needs, analyses problems and opportunities and puts forward sustainable, feasible solutions. All URBACT network partner cities have to produce a LAP but we do not impose the use of a specific template. The Local Action Plan is first and foremost conceived as a concrete and useful tool for the city to solve a local problem and/or improve a local situation. In URBACT, the Local Action Plan is the output of the URBACT Local Support Group participative process. It contains a roadmap and detailed plan (including timeframe and funding information) for the city to deliver solutions to the urban challenge addressed in each URBACT network.

What do URBACT Local Support Groups do?

The main objectives of the URBACT Local Support Group are to use the URBACT framework and methods to design integrated Local Action Plans for sustainable urban development and to strengthen the capacity of local stakeholders to develop efficient policies.

URBACT Local Support Group activities include:

- **analysing** local challenges, seeking solutions and ultimately developing a Local Action Plan 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 scheme organised at national and European levels by the URBACT programme thereby building the capacity of local city stakeholders

The scheme below provides a complete view of the main activities that URBACT Local Support Groups undertake during the project life cycle.

Each URBACT network defines its own terms of reference for URBACT Local Support Groups adapted to the issue it is addressing, for instance use of public space or job creation. These terms of reference are agreed at the beginning of the implementation phase and identify:

- the main categories of stakeholders to be involved across URBACT Local Support Groups in the network,
- the average number of meetings to take place at local level,
- the way ULSG members will take part in transnational activities,
- the way ULSG members will share the learning from transnational activities at local level,
- the contributions expected from the URBACT Local Support Group at network level,
- the core members who will benefit from the capacity-building schemes.

Once agreed by all partners, the terms of reference then form the basis on which each partner city defines their own URBACT Local Support Group road map, and sets up and runs their URBACT Local Support Group.

Who is involved in URBACT Local Support Groups?

In each city there is a different mix of local stakeholders involved in the URBACT Local Support Group. At the outset the city needs to identify the stakeholders who have an interest in the policy challenge.

Membership should include representatives of:

- Different departments within the local administration,
- Elected bodies responsible for the different policy areas connected to the challenge being addressed,
- Beneficiaries e.g. young people, the elderly, migrants, etc. 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 (neighbourhood, city, metropolitan area, region),
- The private sector, business community, employers, public service providers,
- Managing Authorities of Operational Programmes (whether ERDF or ESF).

The following chapters on engaging and working with stakeholders in a local support group give more information about how to determine and review its composition.

What if there is an existing Local Group or Plan?

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 Support Group could be a subgroup of the existing forum, or URBACT activity could become a part of that group's ongoing agenda.

Following the same rationale, participation in an URBACT network and transnational exchange can help to review, evaluate and enhance existing plans. If there is already an action plan at local level, then the city is expected to use the networking experience to revise the existing plan, to complete it if a dimension of the challenge has not been addressed (e.g. social, physical, economic, environmental). The URBACT Local Action Plan will then be a document that assesses progress of the existing plan, makes adjustments in line with lessons learnt from other URBACT cities and develops new or revised actions to better address the policy challenge identified.

What is the timeframe?

URBACT Local Support Groups are set up and run within the lifetime of URBACT networks, normally over a period of two years. The Local Action Plan is delivered within 12-14 months in order to allow time to communicate the results and start implementing first actions.

It is a major objective of the URBACT programme to ensure that the impact of the URBACT Local Support Group and Local Action Plan on local practices and policies are sustainable. Developing participative approaches is challenging and requires time and energy. This investment should be made sustainable for the city to benefit from it on the long term.

How can the activities included in Local Action Plans be funded?

While the URBACT programme supports transnational exchange and learning activities and the development of integrated action plans at local level with expert support, training, etc., it does not offer funding for the implementation of the Local Action Plans. However, the potential to secure funding for planned activities included in the Local Action Plan and / or design appropriate financial engineering is another benefit of URBACT networks and the partnership work carried out within them.

Managing Authorities are the agencies in each region and Member State responsible for delivery of European Structural Funds. The URBACT programme strongly encourages networks to build close cooperation with Managing Authorities of Operational Programmes, both for European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF). The aim is to increase a city's potential to secure funding for activities included in Local Action Plans. URBACT Local Support Groups are therefore encouraged to invite Managing Authorities to participate fully in both the local and transnational activities of a network. This helps to align the real needs and priorities of cities to potential sources of funding.

Some URBACT networks have successfully brought together the representatives of Managing Authorities from different regions in specially designed meetings to participate in transnational exchange on the project theme. These meetings lead to a better understanding of the challenges on the ground in cities for the agencies managing European funds and allow them to exchange and learn from one another.

URBACT cities have also made successful funding applications on the basis of their Local Action Plans to other European and national programmes, such as research or social inclusion programmes.

What support is available from the URBACT Programme?

URBACT provides partners with a number of resources to help them get the most out of their participation in networks and develop robust integrated Local Action Plans.

Finance

Each network has a budget of maximum of 800.000€. Some of this can be used directly for the URBACT Local Support Group activities, for logistics, hiring external facilitation services as well as for the travel of URBACT Local Support Group members to transnational meetings, to the capacity building schemes or to other programme events.

Expertise

Each network has an envelope of 166 expert days, in addition to its network budget, that can be split among the Lead Expert and a limited number of Thematic Experts. Their role is to accompany each network during the development and implementation of the roadmap and the production of outputs. While the Lead Expert is the main figure that will provide expertise, methodology and general support to the Lead partners and all project partners, thematic experts will provide assistance on an ad hoc basis on specific issues related to the theme of each network.

Local Support Group coordinators

At local level, each project partner is responsible for designating a URBACT Local Support Group coordinator[2], in charge of leading the URBACT Local Support Group and ensuring the group delivers according to plan. The URBACT Local Support Group coordinator also acts as a bridge between the transnational networking activities and the Local Support Group. Their task is to:

- organise URBACT Local Support Group meetings,
- oversee the production of the Local Action Plan,
- report on URBACT Local Support Group activities at local and network level,
- organise the URBACT Local Support Group's contribution to transnational activities,
- take part in transnational network meetings and capacity-building seminars, and
- report back to ULSG members.

2. The ULSG Coordinator can be from within the local authority administration, or an external consultant. There are also cases when the project partners takes acts as the ULSG Coordinator, thus allowing a stronger connection between project transnational activities and local activities. Taking into account the budget increase for 3rd call projects, partners are encouraged to hire specific animation and training expertise if they consider it necessary. Please do keep in mind that all budgetary aspects should be discussed and agreed among partners.

Tools

The URBACT Secretariat, responsible for general implementation of the Programme, provides networks with support in all aspects of the project life cycle. This toolkit, as well as other documents and guidelines, can provide you with examples and tools on how to best address certain subjects.

The five following sections will guide URBACT cities through the necessary steps to build an URBACT Local Support Group and coproduce a Local Action Plan. A series of useful tools, documents and other resources are provided in the second part of this toolkit.

1.2 Engaging with local stakeholders

Getting the right people in your URBACT Local Support Group is a challenging task. Having all the relevant stakeholders working together is the best way to provide a solid foundation for action planning and coproduction of the Local Action Plan.

This section will lead you through the different steps to setting up your URBACT Local Support Group:

Framing the URBACT Local Support Group – at network level

Setting up the URBACT Local Support Group – at local level

The structure of each URBACT Local Support Group is tailored to suit the specific context and circumstances, and there is no "one size fits all" solution. Each URBACT Local Support Group's objectives, activities and composition depend on the topic, the nature of project activities proposed, 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. 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. The guidance included here and the tools provided in Part 2 help you undertake an effective stakeholder analysis, identify the nature and interests of the stakeholders to be involved, and consider their potential influence and interest in URBACT Local Support Group activities.

1.2.1 Framing the URBACT Local Support Group - at network level

Each URBACT network agrees terms of reference setting out the main principles by which its URBACT Local Support Groups are set up and run. This takes place at the start of the project and provides 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 seminars at the beginning of the Implementation Phase. Mapping key stakeholders and deciding how URBACT Local Support Group members will be involved in, contribute to and benefit from network transnational activities, is agreed and programmed from the start. Exchange among partner cities on participative approaches is also a great learning opportunity whatever the experience of the different partners in this area.

Hints and tips

The terms of reference should include:

- Composition -Main categories of stakeholders to have in the URBACT Local Support Groups including identification of relevant departments within the local administration, elected representatives, end-users or final beneficiaries, private sector, Managing Authorities of Operational programmes or other potential funders.
- Initial approach - Possible ways to select, approach and motivate stakeholders to join the ULSG.
- Structure - Ideas for group organisation, such as approximate number of members, core and extended group, etc.
- Reporting – How project partners will report about their Local Support Group activities to the rest of the partners at network level.
- Role of the Local Support Group in the network activities – e.g. hosting seminars, producing case studies, etc.
- Calendar of activity - objectives for the first meetings, frequency of meetings and a rough calendar

Good Practice

OP-ACT network example:

The Lead Partner and Lead Expert provided the network with a general scheme of stakeholders to be approached based on the project's overall objectives. The scheme included some questions for stakeholders to explore their potential contribution and suggestions on how to mobilise different actors.

You can find more information about this in the second issue of the OP-ACT Newsletter.

It is important for all URBACT Local Support Groups to consider how they can involve local elected representatives and Managing Authorities of Operational Programmes from the outset in order to ensure that the URBACT Local Support Group, the issue being addressed and the future Local Action Plan are on the radar of strategic decision makers and potential funders.

URBACT networks could also produce a brief presentation of URBACT and of their network (objectives, issues addressed, expected deliverables) as a tool, to outline the incentives for stakeholders to join the URBACT Local Support Group. This could be translated into local languages and used by all partners when presenting the project and the URBACT Local Support Group process at local level and engaging with potential stakeholders.

1.2.2 Setting up the URBACT Local Support Group - at local level

When considering which stakeholders to involve in the URBACT Local Support Group the first step is to draw up a map of similar relevant structures that already exist. If your city already has a group dealing with a similar theme, it makes sense to "piggy-back", rather than start something from scratch. This avoids both duplication and a potentially negative reaction from stakeholders involved in existing structures. There are several examples of successful URBACT Local Support Groups that have worked this way, including the Liverpool case presented below.

Good Practice

HERO network example:

The URBACT Local Support Group was built on an existing structure the "Liverpool World Heritage Site Steering Group (WHS)" which was set up in 2001, when the city began its nomination process. After joining the HerO network, membership of the group was reviewed.

Firstly, all members re-affirmed their commitment to supporting and participating in the management and continuation of the World Heritage Site Steering group.

Secondly, City Council officers undertook a review of the suitability of members involved. The stakeholders were analysed, ranking them according to their level of interest and their level of influence. The objective was to avoid the inclusion of passive or negative stakeholders and to achieve a group of primary stakeholders who had a positive interest and significant influence. It was concluded that all of the current members were in fact primary stakeholders and so none of them was asked to leave the ULSG. However, it was recognised that some key voices were missing. After investigations, a representative of each of the two missing agencies joined the Group.

The process is described in the Local Action Plan of the city of Liverpool.

The following 3 step process is useful when considering stakeholder involvement in an URBACT Local Support Group:

a) Make an initial assessment of potential stakeholders

b) Engage potential stakeholders to become ULSG members

c) Structure the URBACT Local Support Group

a) Make an initial assessment of potential stakeholders

Using the network level terms of reference, each city conducts an initial collective review, together with colleagues in the municipality and other immediate partners, to identify local stakeholders. Then these first ideas about the composition of the group can be shared with the Lead Partner and Lead Expert who may well be able to advise on gaps or possible additions.

In the Tools section (Part 2) you will find two tools that can help you identify the relevant stakeholders to engage with, and that can be used at various points in the planning cycle - the stakeholder analysis grid and the interest / influence matrix.

These tools can be used to map local stakeholders with a first group of core local actors, for example from within the local administration, then with an enlarged group of potential members of the URBACT Local Support Group. Repeating the exercise in a workshop format helps to check the validity of the initial stakeholder landscape and the URBACT Local Support Group members' 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. The grid is particularly useful in improving understanding the difference between potential 'primary' and 'secondary' stakeholders and can subsequently be used to affect individual roles and responsibilities within the URBACT Local Support Group.

b) Engage potential stakeholders to become ULSG members

Once stakeholders have been identified, engaging with them can be a challenging step, especially when there is no existing cooperation on which to build. The way in which the initial approaches are done is important to create interest and motivate longer term participation. The first approach could be through individual invitations, phone calls, 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 harder to reach groups. Making announcements at conferences, press calls, and in the media can also generate a buzz and bring in new stakeholders.

Good Practice

Stakeholder engagement in Riga, partner in My Generation network:

The city had no previous contacts with youth associations before joining the URBACT network, so it used an open call to reach out to NGOs. This way the city got in touch with over 60 NGOs operating in the field, some of which engaged in the work of the ULSG.

This method proved successful. At the end of the URBACT project, the URBACT Local Support Group became a platform for developing a new format of communication and cooperation with NGOs based on open debate and joint initiatives. This type of multi-stakeholder approach has been applied to other upcoming projects. 8 out of 10 youth organisations represented in the URBACT Local Support Group have sustained their close cooperation with the municipality by becoming a part of INTERREG and Democracy projects.

For more information, refer to the Riga Final City Report.

Engaging stakeholders and maintaining their active commitment over a two-year period can be a daunting task. To get this right, try to think about the benefits to stakeholders of participating and then communicate them clearly and persuasively.

What is in it for them? Money? Influence? Inspiration? Learning? Professional reward? Networking? Better solutions to their problems? Fun?

Being part of the URBACT Local Support Group can, for sure, deliver:

- an action plan that has fully considered the real needs of their organisation,
- 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 partner agencies,
- 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 agencies' work,
- an opportunity to learn from other cities on the theme selected and to network internationally (see section 1.5),
- improved skills in participation, urban planning, integrated approaches and project management (see section 1.6),
- potential funding for the Local Action Plan

It is important to be clear from the outset that there is an expectation that members attend URBACT Local Support Group meetings regularly and actively input to the transnational exchange and the Local Action Plan.

Hints and tips

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

Given that the aim of the URBACT Local Support Group is also to participate in the co-production of the Local Action Plan, the actors involved should be in a position to actively contribute to its design and implementation.

An exclusively top-down approach in selecting members and building the URBACT Local Support Group may compromise the credibility of the group and its outputs. Think laterally and widen participation.

c) Structure the URBACT Local Support Group

As with the membership composition there is no one shape for a successful URBACT Local Support Group. From the experience of past URBACT projects, a number of different organisational structures can work:

Open structure: allows you to continuously adapt the URBACT Local Support Group structure as you go. On the basis of need, an open membership allows you to increase participation with relevant new stakeholders making ad hoc interventions on a specific topic or joining ULSG activities at any point in the project's lifetime.

Closed structure: a smaller group, of a maximum of 10 persons, 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 projects are built on a main topic and several sub-topics. This kind of structure can also be applied to the URBACT Local Support Group. If your project has for example 4 sub-themes, URBACT Local Support Group members 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 the groups are developed then mechanisms need to be built in to share results between them.

Multiple level structures: another possibility is a mixture of the open and closed structures. A core group of 6 to 8 partners with a high degree of knowledge about the project theme 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 on Local Action Plan development, whilst also realising the partnership and dissemination benefits of a broader local network.

Find out more

URBACT - Guide to URBACT Thematic Network 2012

Annie Augier "ULSG, a real challenge but... it is worth it!" The URBACT Tribune, August 2011

My Generation Project – Final City Report Riga

HerO Project – Liverpool Local Action Plan

OP-ACT Project – Newsletter, issue No 2

Engaging with stakeholders – Check list

Main steps:	Lead Expert/ Lead Partner	ULSG coordinator
Define terms of reference at network level regarding ULSG composition and activities	✓	
Discuss ULSG terms of reference in a network meeting	✓	✓
Check if a similar local group is already activating in your city		✓
Adapt proposed list of stakeholders to local context and identify contact persons		✓
Consult with your Lead expert / Lead partner on your local list of stakeholders		✓
Select way in which you approach potential members		✓
Contact potential ULSG members		✓
Discuss benefits and duties in participating to a ULSG		✓
Organise 1st meeting with initial members and run stakeholder analysis and importance/ influence grid		✓
Continue developing ULSG membership		✓
Choose group format		✓
Follow up on selection process and first results	✓	
Use tools periodically and adapt group in consequence		✓

1.3 Working with stakeholders in your Local Support Group

Building a cohesive and successful URBACT Local Support Group requires energy, commitment and engagement from all the actors involved for the duration of the project. This section offers guidance on the key aspects of working with stakeholders in the framework of an URBACT Local Support Group:

1.3.1 Supporting URBACT Local Support Group activities - at network level

1.3.2 Running URBACT Local Support Group activities - at local level

Running an URBACT Local Support Group can be a rewarding but also a challenging and time consuming task. A successful URBACT Local Support Group is one that manages to coproduce and agree a Local Action Plan while dealing with different agendas by creating cohesion and a 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, and well-managed meetings.

1.3.1 Supporting the URBACT Local Support Group - at network level

At network level the Lead Partner and Lead Expert supports each city to run its URBACT Local Support Group in line with the terms of reference agreed within the network as a whole. Each URBACT Local Support Group is asked to report on meetings and progress to the Lead Partner on a regular basis, 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 URBACT Local Support Group progress, for instance through surveys, reports and dedicated sessions in transnational meetings.

The Lead Partner and Lead Expert also help to facilitate mutual learning and exchange between URBACT Local Support Group and transnational activities. Different URBACT Local Support 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. When hosting a network activity the city's URBACT Local

Support Group is actively involved in welcoming guests, organising joint workshops, site visits, press conferences, informal networking in order to meet peers from other cities.

Support provided by the Lead Expert and Lead Partner includes:

- leading the development of terms of reference at network level
- offering guidance to URBACT Local Support Group Coordinators by phone or e-mail or through direct attendance at meetings when needed to ensure proper delivery on Local Action Plan related activities
- giving ideas about URBACT Local Support Group meetings and good meeting animation techniques
- reviewing reports of URBACT Local Support Group meetings
- providing opportunities in transnational meetings for partners to share their experience, problems and solutions or good practices related to URBACT Local Support Groups
- seeking and supporting ideas about URBACT Local Support Group inputs to transnational meetings (e.g. organising part of the network seminar, presenting a local case study, policy challenge, progress in Local Action Planning, etc.)

Good Practice

EVUE network - prizes galore!

From the beginning of the project the Lead Expert and Lead Partner decided to launch on-line surveys to gather better information about Local Support Group activities and Local Action Plan progress. These surveys coincided with the six monthly reporting period, in order to help the Lead Partner to complete the progress reports, and to avoid survey fatigue among partners. The surveys acted as a reminder to partners of what they were supposed to be doing, by asking them questions about these activities. During meetings the Lead Expert reported back on the survey as a way of sharing information, and helping partners better understand how other cities were tackling the Local Action Plans and the Local Support Groups.

Prizes were offered for the quickest and fullest survey responses!

1.3.2 Running the URBACT Local Support Group - at local level

a) The URBACT Local Support Group coordinator

The URBACT Local Support Group coordinator is a new key player in the Call 3 URBACT networks. Each partner designates a person in charge of running the URBACT Local Support Group. This person may be the local URBACT project coordinators themselves, someone from within the municipality or an ad hoc external expert recruited to perform this task.

The URBACT Local Support Group coordinator is the "reference person" for the group, at local level, at network level and for the URBACT Secretariat: each URBACT Local Support Group coordinator has a correspondent/ peer in the other partner cities. S/he is the person that the Lead Partner and Lead Expert refer to for all URBACT Local Support Group issues.

The Local Support Group coordinator is responsible for running the group at local level, managing the on-going process, ensuring the two-way bridge between the URBACT Local Support Group and the transnational network activities, and delivering the concrete output in the form of the Local Action Plan. They are responsible for creating a welcoming environment, and getting the URBACT Local Support Group on the right foot. Some stakeholders may not have had previous experience of participative processes, and the coordinator should make sure that all members feel at ease and that their opinions are valid and respected.

Keeping track of meetings and documenting them for reporting and auditing purposes is a key task for Local Support Group coordinators. The Lead Partner will support each partner to develop the appropriate systems for this.

- giving ideas about URBACT Local Support Group meetings and good meeting animation techniques
- reviewing reports of URBACT Local Support Group meetings
- providing opportunities in transnational meetings for partners to share their experience, problems and solutions or good practices related to URBACT Local Support Groups
- seeking and supporting ideas about URBACT Local Support Group inputs to transnational meetings (e.g. organising part of the network seminar, presenting a local case study, policy challenge, progress in Local Action Planning, etc.)

Hints and tips

Some questions to consider when thinking about Local Support Group coordinator:

- What are the skills that you consider essential for running an URBACT Local Support Group? Do you have them all? If not, how can you acquire them or how can you compensate for them?
- If you were an URBACT Local Support Group member, what would you expect from your ULSG coordinator?
- What do you think is the biggest opportunity for your URBACT Local Support Group and what is its biggest threat?

b)The URBACT Local Support Group roadmap

It is strongly recommended that each URBACT Local Support Group designs a local roadmap, based on the terms of reference agreed at network level. This is 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 roadmap should specify the objectives, the expected outcomes, the resources available, and plan for all the local and transnational network activities. It should contain a tentative agenda of all meetings and a time frame for the production of the different expected outputs. It should make explicit the benefits of participation throughout the project period for URBACT Local Support Group members and be validated by the whole group.

Hints and tips

A shared road map will allow URBACT Local Support 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 fulfill specific tasks.

A roadmap might, for example, include:

- Brief introduction to URBACT and to the network
- URBACT Local Support Group objectives and expected results/ outputs
- definition of the policy challenge to be addressed by the URBACT Local Support Group / in the Local Action Plan
- timetable for meeting dates
- transnational exchange dates and themes, and URBACT Local Support Group inputs
- outline workplan for development of the Local Action Plan
- consultation process on draft Local Action Plan and launch of Local Action Plan

c) Organising URBACT Local Support Group meetings

Well managed meetings with clear objectives and good facilitation will help keep your URBACT Local Support Group on track, and motivate stakeholders to return for the next meeting and participate fully. Circulate an agenda at least a week ahead of time. Allow space in the meeting agenda for information giving, but also plenty of time for stakeholders to speak and exchange views. Think about the venue, light, fresh air, breaks, refreshments, making sure that participants are comfortable. Consider holding the meeting in different places, so that stakeholder agencies can take a turn at hosting. Seek feedback from meeting participants, and make sure that future agendas are adjusted in the light of member comments.

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. URBACT also has tools and guidance for creative meeting management.

Hints and tips

Workshops 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 ideas and ownership of the outcome.

The success of the URBACT Local Support Group will depend on many factors but a critical aspect is how well the meetings are run. Get all members to explore and discuss the way meetings themselves will be organised.

Business as usual is, of course, an option but why not use participation in URBACT as an opportunity to try new approaches.

URBACT Local Support Group Meetings can take a number of formats depending on the purpose

Here are a few examples.

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 – A method 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.

Hints and tips

Take advantage of the experience and knowledge accumulated by the URBACT Programme:

- Read the URBACT paper on the animation techniques and think about the ones that best suit your purpose and try to apply them. Remember that one of the biggest opportunities that is given to you within the URBACT framework is that of trying new things. Make the most of it!
- Have a good look at the Newsletters produced by the SURE network. They are a repository of methods and tools for participative planning which can be applied in a city context to enhance social innovation and stakeholder participation. They offer tools for a wide array of situations, such as organising workshops, initiating participation, getting information from the public and so on.

d) Keeping the lines of communication open within the URBACT Local Support Group

Maintaining momentum in building the Local Action Plan 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. In most cases URBACT Local Support Group members will be based in the same partner city, but they can also take advantage of the potential offered by innovations in online and remote collaboration, to supplement face-to-face time.

While direct bilateral contacts help keep people informed, here is a non-exhaustive list of communications tools-both the old and the new- you can use.

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 of shared documents for people to access (e.g. Huddle, Google Groups or Yahoo Groups are free, easy-to-use versions).

Hints and tips

Hints and tips, when organising a teleconference:

- Appoint a moderator / facilitator.
- Shop around to find 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 websites or 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).

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

Skype / ooVoo and others: Free or cheap calls for teleconferencing by internet. The software needs to be installed on all computers, which is not always possible with organisational rules and firewalls, and may require some familiarisation.

Web 2.0 tools: 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
- Delicious for sharing bookmarks
- Doodle poll for scheduling meetings
- Crowdvine for bookings and agendas for meetings
- Twitter for sharing brief notes and latest news
- Flickr for photo sharing
- Slideshare for slide hosting
- Youtube for video hosting and sharing
- Blogs, digital platforms for publishing multimedia contents
- Wikis, websites for creating contents in a collaborative way by multiple users

e) Communicating to the outside world

URBACT cities have a lot of interesting learning to share with others, within their own localities, regions and across Europe. Communicating and disseminating results is an important part of URBACT networks, and URBACT Local Support Groups are encouraged to take every opportunity to make their work visible.

This can start from the launch of a URBACT Local Support Group and continue through the participation process to the final publication and launch of the Local Action Plan. Communicating externally can help build political and popular support around the Local Action Plan, especially drawing on the legitimacy a European programme can bring into the picture (in some countries). Involvement in and hosting of transnational events can also be communicated in the local media. Well-planned communication activity can add value by:

- Validating the involvement of stakeholders and promoting their work;
- Showcasing results to potential funders (Managing Authorities or other);
- 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:

URBACT project mini-website – make use of the customised space on the URBACT portal to showcase each project's activities and goals. URBACT Local Support Groups can add links to the municipal and other stakeholders' websites;

Newsletter – contribute articles and features about the URBACT network and URBACT Local Support Group in the newsletters distributed by stakeholder agencies;

Events – take part in community events with an information stand, or run URBACT Local Support Group events, such as open days, fairs, conferences.

Good Practice

MY GENERATION network uses video – and gets 9000 views!

Using videos as one of the main tools for communication and dissemination, the MY GENERATION network created a specific channel, My Generation TV on YouTube. Each URBACT Local Support Group created video inputs, mostly by young people in the city partner. In total there were 65 videos that had approximately 9000 views showing how URBACT Local Support Groups addressed the issue of promoting the potential of young people in the cities

Social Media – make use of Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin, blogs to raise the profile of the network, the theme and the ULSG.

Remember to use the URBACT communication guidelines and logos for all communication activities.

BarCamp format in Reggio Emilia, partner in Creative Clusters network:

The URBACT Local Support Group worked on two levels, one core group, closed, institutional and highly technical, and another one with open participants, following the BarCamp format. BarCamp is an international network of user-generated conferences. They are open, participatory workshop-events, the content of which is provided by participants. The format is used for a variety of other topics from software, public transit, health care, education, and political organizing.

While the core group acted as a steering committee, the BarCamps developed ideas and good practices. Being open events, the BarCamps attracted professionals from different backgrounds, students and researchers that shared their ideas. This also worked as a dissemination technique, opening the events and presenting project results to the wider public.

The city realized a video of one of the meetings organised following the BarCamp format.

Hints and tips

The SURE Newsletters provide useful tools for participative planning processes. More specifically, Number 5 gives you interesting suggestions on how to get information TO the public!

Find out more

EVUE Project – Online survey for ULSG and Results of the survey

URBACT - Getting Results through Animated Meetings: Seven Top Tips, 2012

SURE project – Newsletters

My Generation project - Youtube channel - MyGenerationTV

Creative Clusters project - Reggio Emilia BarCamp – video

Working with stakeholders – Check list

Main steps:	Lead Expert/ Lead Partner	ULSG coordinator
Provide ULSG coordinators with terms of references for the main ULSG local activities	✓	
Support ULSG coordinators to adapt terms of reference and conceive ULSG road map	✓	
Monitor frequency and quality of ULSG activities	✓	
Provide ongoing support to ULSG coordinators with ULSG activities	✓	
Communicate on partners' Local Support Group activities at network level (e.g. in the network Newsletter, on the URBACT project mini-site, etc.)	✓	✓
Complete ULSG road map with local activities (meetings, dissemination events etc.) and discuss it with members		✓
Involve ULSG core group members in completing tasks and producing outputs		✓
Keep reporting brief and interesting		✓
Choose meeting format in accordance with the objectives you want to attain		✓
Plan carefully all the moments of your meeting and choose adapted animation techniques		✓
Try to organise and be part of memorable events that allow exchanges and the development of new, useful ideas		✓
Discuss quality issues at the end of each meeting (on contents, format, method)		✓
Adapt internal communication tools to each ULSG member		✓
Develop a communication and dissemination plan to be implemented at local level		✓
Validate your progress through open events for the wider group of stakeholders		✓
Discuss with ULSG members the possibility of continuing group activities once the project is over		✓

1.4 Action Planning

Every URBACT partner commits to producing a Local Action Plan during the lifetime of the project, as a result of the exchange and learning activities that take place at both transnational and at local level. Each Local Action Plan is unique, in terms of local context, theme and coverage. There is no set template. The URBACT method emphasises that the process itself is as important as the result.

In order to achieve this your URBACT Local Action Plan should be developed following some key principles:

- your Local Action Plan is a policy instrument: the Local Action Plan is not an administrative exercise you have to complete for the sake of URBACT. It is a concrete and useful tool for you as a local authority, to provide an answer to the policy challenge you decided to address when joining the URBACT network
- your Local Action Plan is an integrated action plan: it should address the different dimensions of the problem, i.e. social, economic, physical and environ mental dimensions, and consider the various territorial levels relevant to the solutions to be implemented
- your Local Action Plan is developed in the framework of an URBACT transnational network: it should build on and embed the learning generated through the transnational exchange activities that will take place in your network.
- your Local Action Plan is the result of a participative process: it is developed with the stakeholders involved in your URBACT Local Support Group.
- your Local Action Plan is not an end point per se and not a final output: it should be developed within 12-14 months after the start of the implementation phase so as to allow you to work within your partnership on how to make it happen.

This section will guide you through the main elements, in terms of content and process, for developing a good Local Action Plan:

1.4.1 Starting point

1.4.2 Co-producing an action plan

1.4.3 Main components of a Local Action Plan

1.4.4 Support for the development of Local Action Plans

1.4.5 Consulting and launching a Local Action Plan

1.4.1 Starting point

The Local Action Plan is primarily a document to be used by the city to outline a plan of action, which can then be used to attract funding to support the activities included within it. The target audience and focus for Local Action Plans varies from city to city.

Whilst known as a Local Action Plan, the term 'local' here refers to various territorial levels, depending on the policy challenge and starting situation faced by the partner city. The target area can be a district, the whole city, the metropolitan area, the city and its surroundings, etc.

In cities where a strategic plan is already in place a Local Action Plan could deal with some more specific actions or small scale projects within the broader strategic plan. If a strategy and an action plan are already in place then participation in an URBACT network and transnational exchange can help to review, evaluate and enhance it. URBACT also provides a new opportunity to complete an existing plan if, for example, a dimension of the problem has not been sufficiently well addressed (social, physical, economic, environmental), etc. The action plan will then be a document that assesses progress of the existing plan, makes adjustments in line with lessons learnt from other URBACT cities and leads to new or revised actions to better address the policy challenge identified.

URBACT Local Support Groups are advised to start working on their Local Action Plans as soon as the Implementation Phase gets underway, making use of the analysis of the theme, the EU policy framework and the city context documented in the Baseline Study.

Local Action Plans should be produced with the explicit objective of attracting funding for the implementation of actions. Some cities may choose to produce the plan according to a specific template required by a Managing Authority or another funding body. URBACT Local Support Groups that have involved Managing Authorities and other potential funders in the participative process of developing the plan should be in a better position to secure funding for implementation.

Given this wide variety of target audiences, it may be necessary to have several versions of Local Action Plan. For example, it can be a good idea to have an Executive Summary for secondary targets, that can be circulated on a wider basis. These Local Action Plan summaries should be translated into English so that they are accessible to other URBACT project partners and to potential international funding sources.

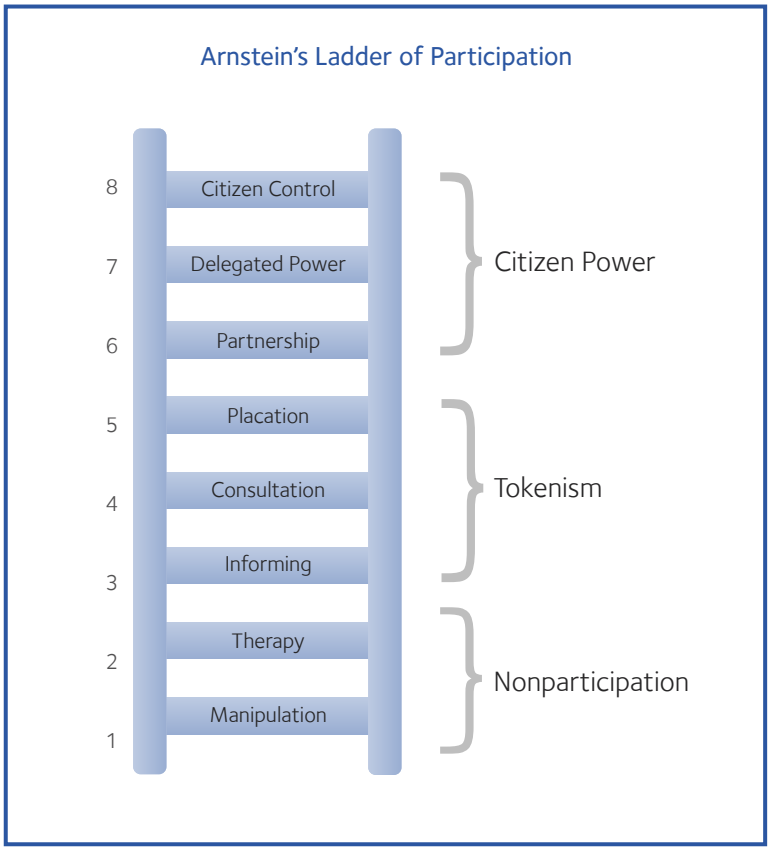
The format of the Local Action Plan varies depending on the different target audiences. When the Local Action Plan is to be presented to particular stakeholders, such as politicians, citizens, businesses, it is possible to be more creative, for example using audiovisual presentations or booklets. Local Action Plan summaries can also take the form of well-designed leaflets, and even video. The URBACT Local Support Group coordinator normally leads the process of physical production and in some cases URBACT Local Support Group members takes responsibility for drafting and revising all or parts of the document.

The best Local Action Plans reflect and integrate all URBACT Local Support Group members' knowledge and perspectives and learning from transnational exchange with other URBACT cities. Local Action Plans from previous networks are available on the URBACT website and can provide models for content, structure and format.

1.4.2 Co-producing an action plan

The URBACT Local Action Plan is the result of an integrated, co-production journey. URBACT Local Support Group members are involved in this process right from the beginning and the final document should be the coherent expression of a plurality of voices. The development and validation of each plan should be a collective undertaking, designed to strengthen partner commitment and to increase the prospect of sustainable delivery. Using a coproduction approach is the best guarantee for an integrated approach and increases the chances of successful implementation.

Some cities may be familiar with Arnstein's Ladder of participation[3] below. This shows that there is a whole range of actions under the term participation, implying different degrees of participation from information to consultation to co-production. URBACT partners should aim for the highest level. This is a challenging task and partners should 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.)



3. Arnstein Sherry 1969, A Ladder of Participation

The 7 Point Scale of Citizen Engagement developed by the TOGETHER project

The TOGETHER network has focussed on new ways by which public authorities can engage with ordinary people and citizens. At its root lies a simple principle: it is better to involve and engage with people in the development of their town or city rather than just inform them once decisions have been made. This is a concept of active citizenship, or as it is termed in the project, co-responsibility. In this framework, the network has developed a 7 point scale of Citizen Involvement.

1. Minimal engagement

The Municipality consults citizens or voluntary organisations on a few topics or in an occasional survey, but appears to take little notice of the results. This is pejoratively known as tokenism.

2. Formal partnership

A formal relationship with a number of organisations outside of the municipality is established. These partners sit around the table but the local authority or the government agency chairs the meeting and takes all the key decisions

3. An engaged partnership

This has the feel of a much more equal arrangement with the partners/voluntary organisations having some real influence on agenda and decision-making. However, ultimately the Municipality retains the decisive influence

4. Co-governance

Here there is the strategic planning of a service or a project or a programme. Actors from different organisations and sectors determine shared policy priorities and may translate these into strategic plans.

5. Co-management

This refers to a situation where different organisations work alongside each other to coordinate the delivery of a service or project. Actors from different sectors and organisations use their respective resources to contribute directly in practical ways to the delivery of a specific project or service.

6. Co-production.

This refers to an arrangement where citizens produce, at least in part, the services they use themselves.

7. Co-responsibility

This is where the elements outlined in points 4-6 are combined across a whole sector, for example within the education system in a city, or its economic regeneration. The ultimate goal would be to achieve this across an entire territory, in other words across all the services within a neighbourhood or district.

1.4.3 Main components of a Local Action Plan

The main key components in an URBACT Local Action Plan are set out below. This is not an exhaustive list, but an indication of what should be included:

a) City Context and definition of the initial problem/ policy challenge

b) Setting of focus and objectives

c) Actions / schedule

d) Funding scheme

e) Framework for delivery

f) Description of the process

g) Risk analysis

a) City Context and definition of the initial problem/ policy challenge

Possible content:

- Statistical and referenced evidence to demonstrate and define city context and challenges e.g.
  - Population statistics and demography
  - Location of the city
  - Unemployment and employment statistics
  - Industrial / employment composition
  - Summary of relevant Operational Programmes (ERDF and ESF) covering the City
- Current state of play with regard to the theme tackled by the Local Action Plan e.g.
  - Summary of institutional context – roles and responsibilities of different agencies
  - Summary of existing strategies and policies relevant to this field (local, regional and national)
- Information from baseline research / expanded SWOT analysis
- Presentation and analysis of problems and options for solutions

b) Setting of focus and objectives

Possible content:

- Description of focus of Local Action Plan and analysis of why this has been selected
- Summary of other options considered and why they were rejected
- Information on why this is a key priority, where possible making reference to input from URBACT Local Support Group members / external stakeholders in this process
- Summary of main aspirations for the Local Action Plan
- Summary of how it links to the network as a whole and if / how learning from transnational exchange has informed the choice of focus
- Information on any other learning which has been used from elsewhere to inform the choice of focus
- Presentation of strategic goal or vision
- List of overall priorities of the Action Plan
- List of key objectives – what do you want to achieve – make sure these are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound (SMART)

c) Actions / schedule

Possible content:

- Breakdown of planned activities / actions / projects which will be developed and delivered to help you meet these objectives and achieve your goal (you may choose to present this by putting different activities "under" the various objectives
- Information on when these activities will be delivered
- Gantt chart showing actions and timetable

d) Funding scheme

Possible content:

- Summary of resources which will be required to make this happen
- Summary of potential sources of funding (including but not limited to ERDF and ESF)
- Presentation of how these activities relate to the (emerging) priorities of ERDF and ESF OPs for 2014 to 2020 (and maybe Horizon 2020)

e) Framework for delivery

Possible content:

- Information on who will deliver them – roles and responsibilities of stakeholders
- information on governance during and after URBACT support
- Summary of indicators which will be used to monitor progress

f) Description of the process

Possible content:

- composition and role of URBACT Local Support Group
- role / impact of transnational exchange and learning (e.g. peer-review, possible transfer of "good practice" etc.)

g) Risk analysis

Possible content:

- description of type of risk (e.g. operational, financial, legal, staffing, technical, behavioural)
- categorisation into low, medium or high risk
- outline of steps which could be taken to mitigate probability and impact

Depending on local situations and needs, these components may be packaged in many different ways. You should also consider having different formats to present your Local Action Plan, in order to adapt to different target audiences. This relates to how you package your Local Action Plan in general, both in the perspective of applying for funding, discussing with decision-makers and elected representatives, sharing with the external world, citizens, the media, etc.

1.4.4 Support for development of Local Action Plans

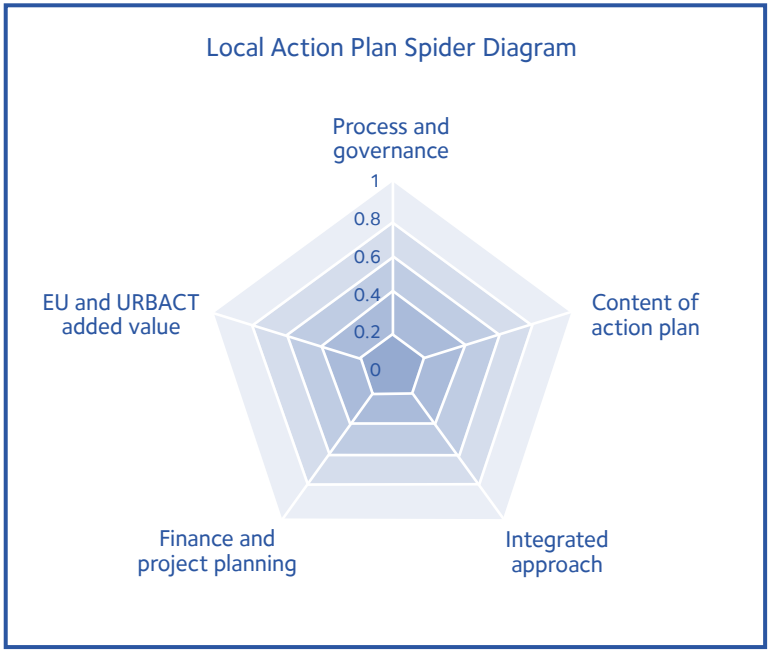
The main added-value of developing an action-plan In the framework of an URBACT transnational network is that you can easily benefit from the support provided by the programme on the one hand, and by peers involved in your network on the other hand.

URBACT has a set of tools which can be used to help with the development of the Local Action Plan including:

- A problem tree that can enable stakeholders to work together on defining and agreeing problems, their causes and effects.
- An action table that can be used to develop an overview of expected results, actions, outputs, indicators and resources.
- A problems and solutions table that can be used to analyse and brainstorm issues and possible solutions.

These are included in Part 2 – Useful tools, along with some summary information on the Cyclical Planning, which is also useful in this context.

Among these tools, the "Local Action Plan self-assessment tool" will help the Local Support Group to evaluate their Local Action Plan in terms of content, governance, integrated approaches, finance, planning and added value. The tool can be used to check for consistency in the Local Action Plan and effectiveness of the URBACT Local Support Group. It is an Excel spreadsheet that, when completed, provides a spider diagram that identifies strengths and weaknesses. Building on this result, the group can adjust the action plan and methods. It is a good exercise for all Local Support Groups in a network to undertake this self-assessment at a determined point in time, compare results and share experiences from the local level with other partners at network level.



Good Practice

"Implementation labs" as deployed in the REDIS network

During transnational meetings the REDIS-project adopted a specific type of peer-review method, called "implementation labs".

In REDIS, an Implementation Lab was a 2½-day workshop in which local stakeholders (Local Support Group members) project partners and experts designed recommendations for the host city. The method could be applied to any type of urban development or policy areas.

The intention of the session is that visiting participants and hosts share experiences and obtain new insights. By the end, the "peers" have provided the host city with useful and practical suggestions and recommendations for dealing with its science quarter (the key topic of REDIS).

In REDIS, this type of workshop was set up as follows:

1. Preparation: Lead Partner, host city (including the Local Support Group) and Lead Expert prepared the session. The host city leads and acts within the framework of the application form. The Lead Expert has an advisory role. Visitors receive relevant information (including the baseline chapter on the host city) before the meeting.

2. First day: The first day is dedicated to analyzing the local situation of the host city. The first part is typically dedicated to site visits and general presentations (preferably by members of the Local Support Group), and to learning about the progress of the Local Action Plan. At this stage 1-2 keynote presentation from experts are given on the specific theme covered to learn from 'best practice' examples in Europe that are not in the partnership.

3. Second day: The participants analyze (in 2 or more subgroups, max. 15 people each) a selected set of thematic aspects of the science quarter: Branding/marketing, triple helix co-operation, integration in urban fabric, dealing with the 'long term', creating interaction in science quarters, dealing with unwilling stakeholders, management models and wider regional impacts. The baseline case study is used as the reference document. The subgroups consider the analysis and develop 'strategic policy recommendations' for the host city.

4. Third day: The moderator(s) prepare a presentation of visions, suggestions and concrete steps. This is presented in a public press conference to local policymakers and the regional press. The outcomes steer the direction of the host city's Local Action Plan.

5. After the meeting: A report is distributed to all partners to be discussed for inspiration in each Local

The URBACT programme also requests that a Mid-Term Review is completed 12-14 months after the start of the implementation phase. It includes a review of draft Local Action Plans and identifies actions to be undertaken to ensure good quality of all Local Action Plans (e.g. additional support to some partners). Thematic Pole Managers will also be able to provide guidance on Local Action Plans, examples of previous LAPS in other networks, and connections to similar initiatives and policy frameworks in Europe.

At network level, the Lead Partner and Lead Expert provide guidance, tools and expertise, both on the content and the methodology. In most previous networks, guidance and templates for Local Action Plans were designed by the Lead Partner and Lead Expert (in cooperation with and agreed by all partners). Dedicated sessions in transnational network meetings to discuss Local Action Plan development, exchange ideas between partners, and find joint solutions are really important.

Within each project, partners can support each other in the development of Local Action Plans, by sharing progress and undertaking peer reviews. URBACT projects have used the transnational meetings as opportunities to gather feedback from partners on their plans. There are creative ways of doing this – such as through posters, storytelling and the use of techniques like the fishbowl. It is a main task of the Lead Expert to ensure that the programme of the transnational seminars allows enough space for this to happen, using appropriate methodology, ensuring that partners benefit from their peers' experience and expertise.

Find out more

Together project - The 7 Point Scale of Citizen Engagement

REDIS project – Reports of the Implementation Labs

URBACT - Third Call for Proposals for the creation of Thematic Networks, December 2011;

URBACT – Programme Manual, 2008;

CASH project – LAP tools, Template;

URBACT - LAP Self Assessment Tool (under the item "Assess your Local Action Plan")

1.4.5 Consulting and launching a Local Action Plan

Once your Local Action Plan is in draft form a consultation process ensures that stakeholders fully support its content and have the opportunity to make final amendments before it goes public. A wide range of methods can be used for this, such as Open Days, circulation of the draft document followed by a Roundtable, participative editing , opportunities for people to respond online.

Although the development of the Local Action Plan will have involved the input of local groups, the URBACT Local Support Group should double check the final draft of the plan with them before wrapping up and/or going public. This can help to ensure that the plan is not dominated by particular interests and will flag up potential problems from hidden voices that could upset the launch and implementation.

Where possible, throughout the development process, the Action Plan should be kept flexible to allow for updates and amendments.

Once the Local Action Plan is ready, a public launch signals to the outside world that the plan has been agreed at high level and by its stakeholders. Often, the final step is a formal sign off of the Local Action Plan by an appropriate representative, Ideally, a high-ranking elected representative or official, whose support can be used to fully endorse the contents. And don't forget to celebrate your achievement – and to fully mobilise the media so that everyone can share in your success. The URBACT Communications team can offer guidance on URBACT branding, dissemination techniques and effective communication strategies.

Some Action Plans may not benefit from being publicised. Mostly it will be important that the completed plan is signed off at the highest level by the partners involved, with an event to acknowledge both this agreement and the plan itself.

It may be helpful to link a launch with some other activities or political initiatives. An URBACT project could launch several partner LAPs simultaneously for instance, or organise a launch during the transnational visit.

Encourage all stakeholders to take part in the launch and activating their networks to get the word out. Produce a press release, invite TV and radio. Be sure to use the URBACT Communications guidelines and branding.

Planning a launch event for an action plan is also a good opportunity to firm up details of implementation, indicators for measuring progress, monitoring and evaluation.

The production of a well thought out plan that has stakeholder buy-in and political and financial support is a significant achievement. Congratulations!

Action planning – Check list

Main steps:	Lead Expert/ Lead Partner	Project Partner/ ULSG coordinator
Provide project partners with sound guidelines and tools for developing the LAP	✓	
Provide advice on structure and format to harmonise LAPs at network level	✓	
Take into consideration the State of Play and the Baseline Study when focusing the LAP		✓
Discuss LAP territorial coverage at network level	✓	✓
Discuss LAP territorial coverage at local level		
Decide LAP format		
Decide early who does what in drafting the LAP		✓
Involve Managing Authorities and senior decision makers in the process		✓
Build and take part in a co-creation process where all voices are expressed		✓
Ensure that the LAP is seen as part of a cyclical / iterative process rather than an end in itself	✓	✓
Keep Managing Authorities and senior decision makers updated on the process		
Periodically review LAP progress with partners	✓	
Take advantage of transnational meetings to review LAP progress	✓	
Organise peer review of the LAP among project partners	✓	✓
Produce a LAP that is adapted to its target in content and format		✓
Consult the wider community and present them the LAP advancement when you consider it necessary		✓
Communicate your LAP's key messages		✓
Use the last 12 months of the Implementation Period to find financing sources for the LAP		✓
Consider a public launch event		✓

1.5 Making the most of transnational exchange

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. This section will provide you with useful material on URBACT Local Support Group participation in transnational meetings, such as:

1.5.1 Framing the transnational activity - at network level

1.5.2 Ensuring high-quality exchange between local and transnational levels

Exchange within URBACT networks provides a two way bridge between local and transnational levels. Each URBACT Local Support 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 of better Local Action Plans.

The programme of transnational events is planned at the beginning of each URBACT network. Most, if not all, city partners will have the opportunity to host a transnational activity. This could take the shape of seminar, conference, bilateral visit, peer review, masterclass or study visit. Hosting a group of experts from partner cities allows the URBACT Local Support Group to show and share their local experience and progress made so far on the theme addressed by the project. URBACT Local Support 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.

ULSG members also have the chance to participate in events 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.

Hints and tips

There is a video presenting the URBACT method that is available in all URBACT languages. Show this video at one of the first ULSG meeting for a more thorough understanding of the purpose of transnational exchange meetings and the role that ULSG representatives can play. It gives a complete view on URBACT transnational working and how the levels interact. The video is available at: http://www.dailymotion.com/urbact

1.5.1 Framing transnational events – at network level

The programme of transnational events at network level is planned and approved in the Final Application Form. URBACT Local Support Group members are the key participants of this activity and the meeting programme needs to be designed in a way that supports exchange and learning, tailored to the needs and context in each city.

From the outset the bigger picture should be presented to URBACT Local Support Group members. They are part of a transnational network, tackling a similar urban challenge across a number of European cities. In turn, this network is part of the URBACT community of many more networks and cities, addressing different issues related to integrated urban planning to achieve Europe 2020 targets. Make sure that all URBACT Local Support Group members have signed up to the URBACT newsletter, and are aware of all the opportunities available to them through URBACT, such as transnational meetings and capacity building activities that are organised by the programme for its beneficiaries (see section 1.6).

Good design and animation of each transnational meeting is key in maximising active participation of URBACT Local Support Group members, and in ensuring each city gains the knowledge it needs to improve capacity for integrated policy and the Local Action Plan. The Lead Partner and Lead Expert work with each URBACT Local Support Group coordinator to prepare meetings in advance. A number of URBACT transnational hosting guidelines are available that help with this process.

Hints and tips for transnational events

Create an agenda for each meeting that has a good mix of activity including, for instance, site visits, interactive discussions, expert presentations, political or civic hosting.

Be clear about the objectives and focus of each meeting, so that the right ULSG members attend.

Consider the thematic focus in site visits carefully.

Make sure that ULSG members are well briefed before the meeting, understand what is expected of them, including the need to report back about lessons learned.

Consider holding a 'virtual' preparatory meeting for ULSG coordinators 4-6 weeks prior to the meeting to brief them on planned content and discuss potential participants from each ULSG.

Try and achieve a degree of balance and turnover in terms of ULSG members participating in transnational events.

Involve local ULSG members in organising, preparing and delivering the meeting.

Assign roles and responsibilities to transnational meeting participants e.g. give them 'homework' in advance of the meeting.

Give written and verbal briefings to any experts presenting to the meeting, so that their inputs are concise and relevant.

Give space in the agenda for all participants to be active, to speak, to contribute, whether in small groups, bilaterally or in plenary.

Think about support needs of ULSG members, especially if this is their first experience of an international meeting. If there are language needs translation can be provided

Organise a meeting for all ULSG members within the transnational event. In a workshop format, all ULSG members could tackle a cross-cutting subject related to the project theme and present their results in the plenary. This kind of event could help ULSG members feel part of a wider dynamic, as well as allowing them to exchange useful ideas and advice.

Remember, language can be a significant barrier to meaningful interaction between other partners and URBACT Local Support Group members. While some events have simultaneous translations, 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.

Good Practice

Using the Future City Game in Gheorgheni, partner in SURE network:

The URBACT Local Support Group was engaged in a structured scenario building process based on the Future City Game methodology, in parallel with a transnational meeting of the SURE network in Gheorgheni, Romania, in October 2010. This approach enabled URBACT Local Support Group members from the host and visiting city to participate in a joint discussion of the strategic proposals local residents had developed. The workshop generated a number of benefits for both the URBACT Local Support Group and the municipality. For example it raised the profile of the USLG's work drew attention to the opportunities offered by EU funding. Overall undertaking the Future City Game methodology was considered to have been a huge success. Through it, local actors came up with a wide range of concepts and practical ideas that went on to become an integral part of the Local Action Plan.

1.5.2 Ensuring high-quality exchange between local and transnational levels

In each partner city, it is the responsibility of the URBACT Local Support Group coordinator to link the transnational level of the project with the local level, with a strong and continuous flow of knowledge and information. This is the key to the URBACT Local Support Group being able to take advantage of the experience gained by other European cities and to use it to inform and add value to local implementation. Lead partners, experts and ULSG coordinators are encouraged to take action before, during and after the transnational activities for this to happen.

Before, in the preparation of transnational exchange activities, one should go through the following:

- Share the transnational exchange programme and objectives with URBACT Local Support Group members as early in the Implementation Phase as possible.
- Start to identify who could contribute to and attend each event.
- Once each meeting agenda is available circulate it and ask URBACT Local Support Group members for feedback on their possible input.
- Brief the ULSG members on the transnational meeting's scope and objectives.
- Explain to them what their general role will be and decide together who does what, on the basis of their skills and capacity.
- Most transnational meetings have a thematic focus. Take this into account when selecting members who participate in the meetings.
- Agree on URBACT Local Support Group participation in advance as far as possible, in order to make travel reservations at reasonable prices.
- When organisations have travel bans or freezes try to make sure that those stakeholders do not miss out on learning from transnational events, by giving a full presentation of meeting results to all URBACT Local Support Group members after each event.
- Consider the possibilities of virtual presentations, webinars and meetings to compensate for people unable to participate in person.

During transnational seminars, all activities should be structured around exchange and learning on the network topics. It is crucial that some sessions be dedicated to the action plans being produced by partners so as to allow peer review and ensure partners benefit from the knowledge and experience in the group when developing their plans (also see reference to Implementation Labs in section XXX)

Good Practice

Peer group work in the ESIMEC network:

ESIMeC's overarching project theme was "An adaptable workforce for local economic growth and resilience", but this subject had a different entry point for each city, such as business support services, development of an industrial park or changing attitudes to education, to give just a few examples. Each ESIMeC transnational meeting included a meeting of the host city's URBACT Local Support Group. During this meeting members of the Local Support Group introduced the city's specific challenges and the focus of their Local Action Plan. They went on to pose some key questions relating to particular challenges or barriers to progress. The visiting cities (including URBACT Local Support Group members) then worked in small groups to discuss these key questions and come up with possible solutions, based on their own experiences. These were then fed back to the host city to help them to break down the barriers to progress and develop a better Local Action Plan.

After each transnational event it is a good idea to hold a debrief with all the URBACT Local Support Group members, to transfer the knowledge gained from the meeting, to reflect together on the process and out-comes, and to identify which specific points can be integrated and used in the Local Action Plan. Ask URBACT Local Support Group members who participated in the meeting to present their impressions and findings. Make sure that the key messages are well understood and absorbed.

Find out more

URBACT - Guide to URBACT Thematic Network 2012;

EU – Europe 2020 Strategy – Targets

URBACT- Subscribe to the Newsletter

URBACT – The URBACT Method video, 2011;

SURE Project - Sure case study on participative planning (Future Dialogue Methodology, 2010;

Making the most of transnational exchange - Check list

Main steps:	Lead Expert/ Lead Partner	Project Partner/ ULSG coordinator
Try organising one network event in as many project cities as possible	✓	✓
When organising an event, keep the URBACT Method in mind. Use it as an example and objective	✓	✓
Decide from the beginning the type of role the ULSGs will have in the transnational dynamic	✓	✓
Make sure that the ULSGs have an appropriate space within the event agenda	✓	✓
Ensure that all partners bring an appropriate number of ULSG members to events & their experience is relevant	✓	
Organise meetings, events, visits that will make use of your ULSG members' experience	✓	✓
Get the maximum out of the good practices experiences exchanged	✓	✓
Prepare your ULSG by bringing together available inputs		✓

1.6 Building Capacity

URBACT has a number of actions aimed at building the capacity of urban professionals to meet the challenges of Europe 2020 in cities. The aim is to improve skills in participative action planning and to deepen understanding of integrated approaches to urban development.

Feedback from previous URBACT networks confirms that a specific set of skills are required to manage the activities related to URBACT Local Support Groups, such as animating participative processes or building integrated urban development plans. Past network participants have appreciated the opportunities to develop these skills, and have seen the added value they bring in creating better partnership working andLAPs. The URBACT capitalisation Workstreams 2012 which looked at some of the best practice in tackling urban challenges across Europe, concluded that one of the key success factors for cities is a talent pool of local stakeholders able and willing to work together across silos, be open to new ideas, to innovate, communicate and deliver effectively.

Reinforcing these capacities is in line with URBACT principles of encouraging bottom up, community led initiatives. A more skilled urban workforce can ensure higher quality outputs, and lead to more sustainable results in terms of the URBACT Local Support Group and the Local Action Plan once URBACT project funding is over.

URBACT 3rd Round projects benefit from a number of training schemes including national level seminars delivered in national languages for URBACT Local Support members. The training will be focused on the effective development of Local Action Plans and running URBACT Local Support Groups and complements the guidance and tools presented here.

The 2nd URBACT Summer University (2013) brings together representatives from all city partners in the 3rd round projects to work together on concrete challenges related to the themes of Europe 2020, using the URBACT method and tools.

A capacity building scheme for elected representatives on integrated urban planning is also underway.

PART TWO

Useful tools and references

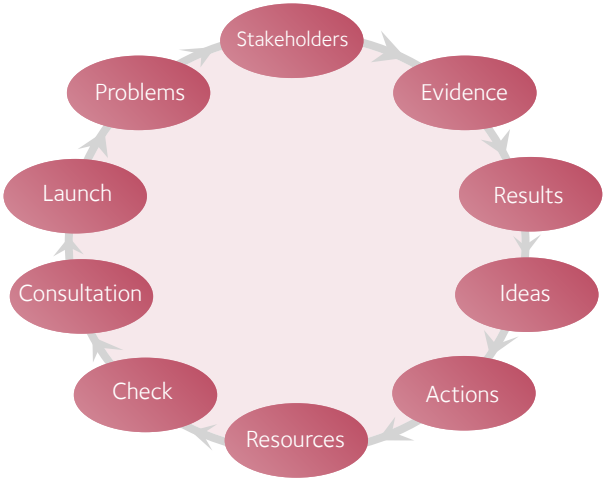
Useful tools

2.1 The cyclical planning model

The second part of this toolkit provides some tools that you may want to use in developing and running your URBACT Local Support Group and producing your Local Action Plan, particularly if you are starting from zero and developing a fully-fledged plan. If there is already an advanced plan in place in your city, you should evaluate and propose adjustments to the existing plan instead.

It can be useful to think of the process as cyclical or circular so that learning along the way and from other plans can be continually integrated. Here below an example of the "Cyclical Planning Model":

The cyclical planning model



The cyclical planning model is a representation of planning as a cyclical process which does not start or end. Such a cycle brings together all aspects of planning into a coherent, unified process, helping to ensure that the plan is fully considered, well focused, resilient, practical and cost-effective. It can also help to ensure that learning from mistakes feed back into future planning and decision-making.

Several of the tools proposed in this section have been adapted from a Project Cycle Management approach. This is a tried and tested method of designing and delivery projects used by the European Commission and other international agencies. There are many other equally valid tools. But regardless of the exact methods chosen to co-produce the Local Action Plan, it is crucial to explore and clarify in detail the key factors that provide a framework for any good project— relevant stakeholders to be engaged, definition of problems, review of evidence, definition of actions, responsibilities, timeline, funding, and so on.

In addition, it can be very valuable to test the internal logic of the plan itself, for instance to check that proposed activities are likely to achieve the desired outputs. This will avoid producing a plan that is just a 'wish list' and will ensure that the scale of the solution measures up to the problem and that there are ways to measure progress.

The following tools are included here:

- Stakeholder Analysis Table
- Stakeholders Importance / Influence Matrix
- Self Assessment Tool for Local Support Group performance
- Problem Tree
- Action Table
- Self assessment tool for Local Action Plan

2.2 Stakeholder analysis

The stakeholder analysis table can be used to identify the interests and motivations of stakeholders, as well as possible actions to address these various interests.

The first column on the left lists all the categories of stakeholders that may have an interest (or 'stake') in the Local Action Plan. This includes beneficiaries, intermediaries, winners and losers and those involved in or excluded from the decision-making process. They can be divided into two groups:

1. Primary stakeholders – those affected directly by the policy, either positively or negatively, and

2. Secondary stakeholders – those with an intermediary role including delivery agencies, policy makers, or supporting agencies such as social workers.

The following three columns in the table[4] describe the stakeholders' involvement and role. The first column should summarise the actual situation and how each stakeholder is affected by the problem to be addressed. The second one should note their potential role and desire to bring about change, while the third one should focus on how the project can meet their demands.

Once this table is completed carefully reflect on what can be done in order to best meet or counteract stakeholder interests. In particular, think about what can be done to maximise the engagement of those who are likely to support the plan, and to minimise / understand the resistance of those who may be more likely to block it. In addition it is important to assess and if necessary develop or adapt the capacity of different stakeholders to fully engage in the process. (see Importance/ Influence matrix in 2.3. to deepen this aspect)

Stakeholder analysis is a simple process that ensures that the right stakeholders are involved in the Local Support Group and in the action-planning process. As documented in Part 1, most cities will conduct some stakeholder analysis work during the setting up of the Local Support Group. Yet further analysis is always helpful during action-planning development, as the focus of the plan evolves, to bring in any missing stakeholders, and check on the relevance of the membership.

4. The blank version can be downloaded from the URBACT website at

http://urbact.eu/en/get-involved/local-support-groups/

Stakeholder interest analysis
For understanding the various interested parties

Issue:	City Logo: Place branding as a tool for economic growth		
Stakeholders	**Interests and how affected by the issue**	**Capacity and motivation to bring about change**	**Possible actions to address stakeholder interests**
Primary stakeholders			
1 Local authority key departments: Economic development, Communincations, Tourism	Economic growth Attract investment, tourists, students Support local businesses	Control budget Create a city people want to live and work in, visit Reduce poverty	Partnership approach Engage stakeholders Network to find the right people
2 Universities	Economic growth Student talent attraction /retention Attract partners for funding, eg EU	Need for students Need for funding Need for profile	Branding for right audience Develop profile for their reputation
3. Local business by sector: games, tourism, life sciences	Profile raising Talent attraction Talent retention Attract visitors	Support awareness Business growth Appropriate workforce Economies of scale	Get them to buy into/ use the brand Giving them access to brand resources, not reinventing toolkit, images etc.
Secondary stakeholders			
4 Local Community	Civic pride Growing confidence Attract jobs and investment	Pride in city Desire for jobs Reduce poverty	Consultation and engagement Opportunities to participate in civic pride Sell key message
6 Creative community	Attract talent Build economy of scale Improve cultural reputation	Retain/attract talent Raise profile as a cultural city Pride in city's achievements	Networking Use creativity to input to and support and brand
6 Local media	Growing circulation Need for news Growing the city	Often limited/blinkered motivation to change Need to stop them holding us back	Work in partnership Usee as a resource to get to a win win for all
7 New National Art Gallery	Raise profile to opening Engage with the brand Integrate with the brand	Create new venue Raise profile of new gallery	Partnership Brand discussions and intergration

2.3 Stakeholders Importance / influence matrix

Together with the stakeholder analysis, another tool that you might want to use is the Importance/ Influence matrix[5]. Its main scope is to prioritize stakeholders, as well as to think about the right approach to take with each of them. This matrix can be used in a workshop format, as a role play exercise or as a simple tool to be filled in by participants.

Once the stakeholders have been defined (in the analysis table) they can to be placed in the grid below following two criteria:

Influence - how much power the stakeholder has two facilitate or impede achievement of the LAP and its objectives?

Importance - how much priority should the ULSG give to satisfying the needs and interests of the stakeholder?

A) High importance, low influence

These are stakeholders of high importance in relation to the problems, but with low influence in the process. Nonetheless, if upset they may gain influence and try to resist to change. They require special attention if their interests are to be protected.

B) High importance, high influence

These stakeholders can be both significantly affected by the change and most able to do something about it, either supporting or opposing actions proposed. It is particularly important to engage these people, ensuring both that they understand what is going on and also creating a sense of ownership of what is being done. The project team will have to develop good working relationships with these stakeholders to ensure effective support for the activity.

C) Low importance, low influence

These are low priority stakeholders who may nevertheless require limited monitoring or at least be kept informed throughout the process as it can be that their status evolves over time.

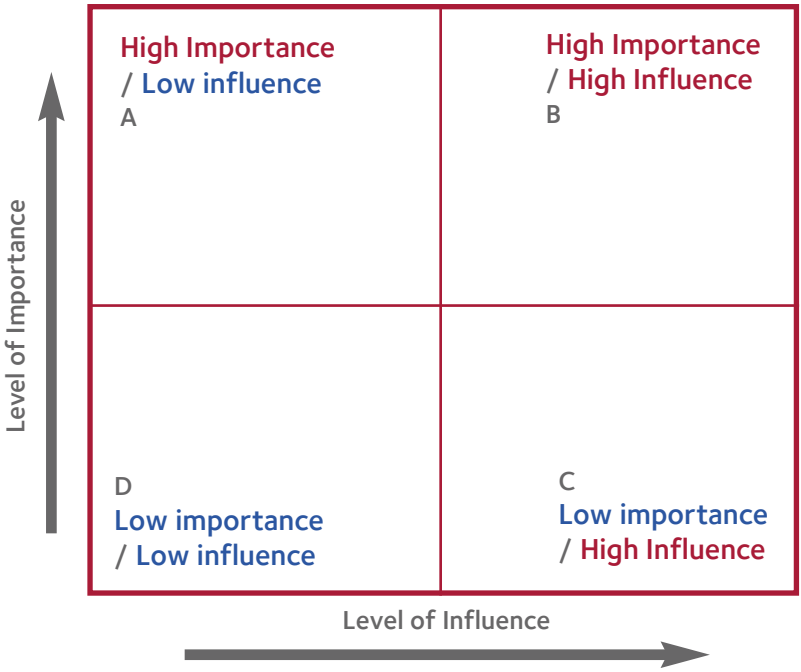
D) Low importance, high influence

These are stakeholders with high influence, who can affect the outcome of the actions proposed but whose interests are not the target of the actions. These stakeholders may be "deal breakers" and constitute a serious risk if not handled properly.

5. A blank version of the matrix can be downloaded from the URBACT website at:

http://urbact.eu/en/get-involved/local-support-groups/

Importance/ Influence matrix



NB: The position of stakeholders on the matrix may evolve over time, due to different factors more or less directly connected to the challenge/ actions that are being developed (elections, social unrest, etc.). So it is important to bear in mind that it provides a picture at some point in time.

2.4 Self-assessment tool for Local Support Group Performance

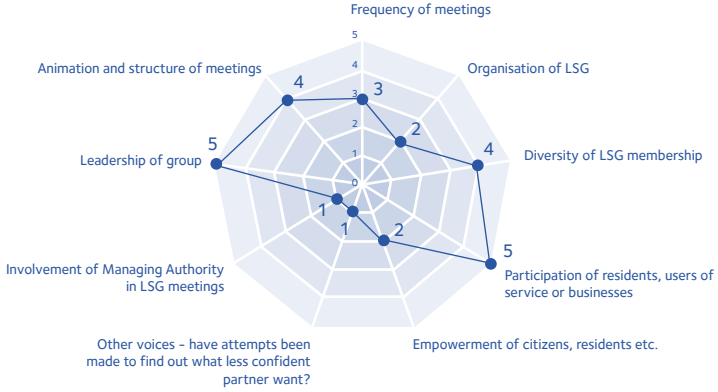
Using this self-assessment tool[6], the Local Support group can score its performance on a number of dimensions:

- Frequency of meetings
- Organisation of ULSG
- Diversity of the membership
- Participation of residents, users of services or businesses
- Empowerment of citizens, residents etc
- Other voices – have attempts been made to find out what less confident partners want?
- Involvement of Managing Authorities in ULSG meetings
- Leadership of group
- Animation and structure of meetings

This can be a very useful exercise to undertake together with Local Support Group core members. Try to get their honest opinion on the issues stated above, and most importantly how they can be addressed. Repeat this exercise a couple of times during the ULSG project cycle, while you still have time to change the things that are not going as well as they could.

The self-assessment tool comes as an Excel spreadsheet. Once it has been filled in, it provides a spider diagram outlining strengths and weaknesses of your Local Support Group performance along the different dimensions listed above. Building on this visual, the group can then explore ways to improve on the weak points and further build on the strong ones.

Spider diagram resulting of the self-assessment



6. The template of the self –assessment tool can be downloaded from the URBACT website at http://urbact.eu/en/get-involved/local-support-groups/

Local Action Plan	*put name of your city here*
Network	*put network name here*
Completed by	*put your name here*
Instructions	For each indicator (row) complete the score column by entering a score between 1 and 5 where 1 is weak and 5 is strong. You can use the score criteria on the right to see what score to give.Complete the evidence column for each indicator.

GOVERNANCE & DECISION MAKING			
Indicators	Score awarded out of 5	Evidence for score - why was the score given -	Indications for scoring
Frequency of meetings	*0*		score 1: LSG has few meetings (e.g. One per year) score 3: Regular meetings, no info on participation score 5: Regular and frequent meetings with high level of participation, links to meeting notes
Organisation of LSG	*0*		score 1: not enough time, part of another meeting score 3: More time, but not well organised score 5: Enough time, well organised
Diversity of LSG membership	*0*		score 1: ULSG dominated by public officials from municpality score 3: ULSG mostly public officials but other agencies involved score 5: Involvement of all three sectors, (public, private, civil society)
Participation of residents, users of service or businesses	*0*		score 1: No effort made to consult with users or residents (or businesses) score 3: Some efforts are made to consult score 5: Either full involvement of users/residents/businesses in LSG meetings or specific meetings held to engage them
Empowerment of citizens, residents etc	*0*		score 1: No efforts made on empowerment score 3: Few efforts made on empowerment score 5: Capacity building measures, delegation of expenditure to local , microprojects
Other voices - have attempts been made to find out what less confident partner want?	*0*		score 1: Other voices have not been addressed score 3: A few efforts are made to involve other actors score 5: Serious efforts are made to ensure that hidden and oppositional voices are heard and engaged e.g. Young people, Roma, businesses (depending on theme)
Involvement of Managing Authority in LSG meetings	*0*		score 1: Managing Authority is not involved score 3: MA has token or occasional involvement score 5: MA regularly attends meetings
Leadership of group	*0*		score 1: Chair appointed by municipality score 3: Chair selected by group score 5: Moderator is appointed by members of group, or a rotating chair (people take turns)
Animation and structure of meetings	*0*		score 1: All meetings are organised in traditional 'committee' formats score 3: some efforts to introduce new formats score 5: Innovative techniques have been deployed for meeting animation and shared decision making
Total Score	***0***		

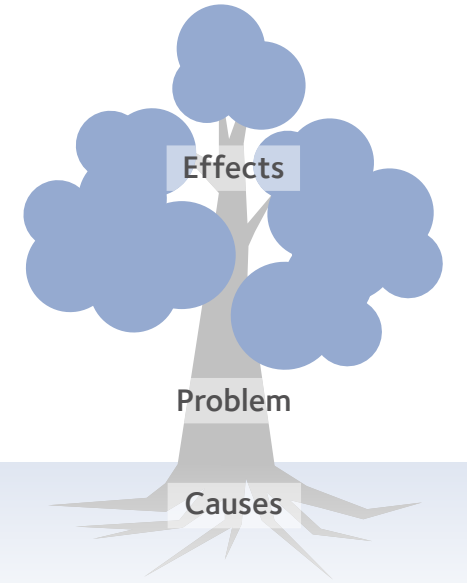
2.5 Problem Tree

Problem analysis is needed to make sure that Local Support Group is tackling the right problem- one that has been discussed and agreed with all stakeholders. People often tend to "jump to solutions" while the experience of previous URBACT projects suggests that there is real value in conducting detailed problem analysis, allowing time for discussion and reflection. What seems at the beginning to be the core issue might become, after thorough analysis, a secondary issue.

The local action plan should include a clear outline of the nature and scale of the problems. A fresh and comprehensive understanding of the existing situation and the problems that exist is essential to enabling the right solutions to be found. Stakeholder involvement in this stage will enrich the way the problem is perceived and ensure that problems are not merely 'agency' views. It is particularly important to involve the users or beneficiaries (the primary stakeholders) in problems analysis.

The local action plan needs to recognize that problems facing cities are complex, intractable and inter-connected. No simple solutions are likely to work and 'business as usual' approaches by existing agencies need to be challenged. Evidence helps people to understand the problems. This can be provided from statistics and studies already available, through specially commissioned research and through discussion at Local Support Group meetings.

There are many different ways of viewing the same problem and, depending on the perspective, different solutions will be deployed. The idea is to outline and elaborate possible choices between different options. One well established technique for working with problems in a group setting is to make a problem tree[7]. This is a simple graphical representation of the problems, their causes and effects.



The Problem Tree

7. A blank version of the Problem Tree can be downloaded from the URBACT website at:
http://urbact.eu/en/get-involved/local-support-groups/

Here is how you can use it:

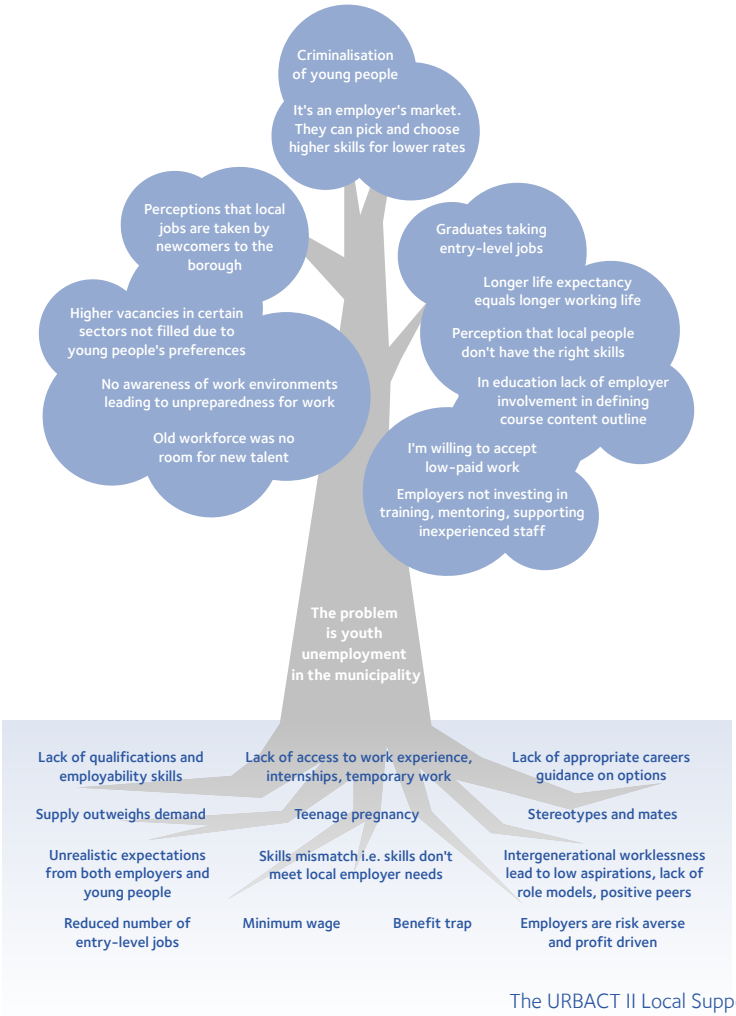
1. List all problems that come to mind related to the main theme. (eg youth unemployment or lack of public funding) Problems need to be carefully identified: they should be existing problems, not possible, imagined or future ones. The problem is an existing negative situation, not the absence of a solution.The problems and solutions table presented below can help with this.

2. Identify a 'Core Problem' (which will be written on the trunk of the tree). This may involve some trial and error before settling on one.

3. Determine which problems are 'Causes' (write them at the level of the roots of the tree) and which are 'Effects' (the branches).

4. Arrange in hierarchy both Causes and Effects, i.e., how do the causes relate to each other - which leads to the other, etc.

Illustration - Problem tree for youth unemployment



5. Once your 'Problem tree' is completed, you may use another blank drawing of a tree to shift from problems to solutions. Following the same principle, re-formulate all elements into positive statements, turning problem into solution (the trunk), effects into expected change/ results (the branches), and causes into actions (the roots). If you have been working with a poster and sticky notes listing effects on the branches, it can be effective to flip these over and turn them into expected results.

Some partners have gone through this process by using a "Problems to Solutions table", as shown in the example opposite.

Problems and solutions table
For analysing issues and brainstorming possible solutions.

Example used:	Youth unemployment	
Problems	**Solutions**	**Resources**
Lack of access to work experience placements, internships or temporary work opportunities leading to limited awareness of world of work and unpreparedness for work.	Increase exposure of young people to world of work: - Engage with local employers to promote value and benefits of work placements - Increase interaction between education and business through school visits joint events (eg. careers fair) - Use role models (young person or employer) with positive experience of work placement/internship to promote benefits of work placements	Partnership working between LA, education providers, business community, education and business intermediaries No specific resources required other than partner staff time.
Lack of employability skills amongst young people	Raise level of employability skills of young people: - identify employability skills required by employers through surveys and direct interaction - map existing provision in employability skills training and idenitify gaps in provision - Explore possibility of developing tailor-made employability skills training programmes based on findings of survey with employers/provision mapping - engage employers in delivery of employability training - increase "real" world of work experiences (company visits, school challenges (i.e. create own business project) - Support young people in identifying and harnessing the skills they have (gained through school/college activities or out of school activities)	Budget allocation for employer survey Budget allocation for skills provision mapping Partnership funding to support employability training. Existing resources could be re-direceted Staff time (partner organisations)
Longer life expectancy leads to longer working life and limits opportunities for new talent entering the labour market	Promote engagement of older workers with young people: - Develop mentoring schemes whereby older worker mentor students or young workers - Support employers in developing succession planning	Budget allocation to develop training sessions for employers (succession planning) Staff time (partner organisations)
Mismatch between supply and demand in the labour market.	- Build robust evidence-based and shared data to gain comprehensive information on current state of labour market - Identify current and future skills needs (skills forecasting) - Map existing education and training provision - Identify gaps between skills needs and provision - Develop demand-led training provision where employers are at the heart of development of training content	Budget allocation to populate skills forecasting tool (purchase of data sets) Partnership funding to support development of tailor-made training Staff time (partner organisations)
Vacancies not filled as do not meet young people's preferences linked to lack of a ppropriate careers guidance	Develop effective careers guidance programme - Raise awareness amongst young people of which career opportunities are available to influence choices - Map training and progression routes reflecting gaps in labour market	Partnership funding (redirection of existing resources allocated to careers guidance) or new budget allocation to support careers guidance schemes. Possible use of volunteers to provide careers guidance.

2.6 Action Table

Expected results/ change, objectives, actions, outputs and indicators are central elements of an action plan and establishing agreement on them is a crucial part of the action planning process. Three logical steps are usually necessary and the Action Table can be used to provide an overview. The first two steps can be populated by the results of the work done on defining problems, expected results and possible solutions as outlined in previous section (2.5 Problem tree).

a) Define expected results and objectives

Starting from problems, you will have to define expected results (change) that you are aiming for. A result is the initial impact of an intervention. From expected results, you can then work out objectives. These are clear, explicit and initial statements on the effects to be achieved by a public intervention. Each specific objective in a programme must have a corresponding result indicator and a baseline. Make your objectives SMART : Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time Bound.

b) Define actions

Set out what actions are needed to achieve the expected results. The table should also include timescale and resources required.

c) Define outputs

Outputs are the tangible, measurable products of an action (e.g. square metres of co-working space developed).

Action Table

Action table					
Expected result					
Action Title & Short Description	Lead Actor or Agency	Key Partners	Intended outputs	Timescale	Resources
1.1					
1.2					
1.3					
1.4					
1.5					
1.6					

This is the place where incoherence can easily creep into plans as stakeholders sometimes try to ensure that their projects are included as actions regardless of whether they contribute to critical expected results. What is needed is an iterative and at times negotiated process to bring appropriate activities into the action table while excluding those that do not make significant contributions to the objective.

8. The blank version can be downloaded from the URBACT website at:

http://urbact.eu/en/get-involved/local-support-groups/

Illustration - Extract of Suceava action plan - EVUE network

Action 7.2 Achieving and maintaining a monitoring system for the electricity sold / consumed by EVs and electricity produced from renewable resources in the City Suceava, to ensure an equilibrium favourable to clean energy

Action leader	Suceava Municipality		
Organization type	Local public authority		
Main Partners	Environmental Protection Agency of Suceava, Suceava Environmental Authority, local energy supplier - E.On Moldova Distributie SA Suceava, suppliers of the alternative energy transmitted in the National Energy System		
Expected results	Ensure a minimum 5% share clean energy source in the total energy consumption for EV operation		
	Continuous monitoring of the energy consumed in charging infrastructure		
		Period	Sources
Estimated Outputs	1 energy management system and a specific training team for recorded data operation	2019-2020	Grants from cohesion funds Local budget

The IT market has developed information systems for energy management by centralized recording of electricty consumption for a large number of consumers counted, spread geographically, by monitoring the quality of the power supplied to consumers, identifying defect network sections and automatic connection of the sound sections, making diagnosis, management of energy and clients

Total CO_2 emissions due to EVS must be seen globally, from "well-to-wheel energy" and not only as emissions from the tailpipe. If for producing the electricity for EVs, conventional fuels are used (oil, gas, coal) CO_2 emission reduction can be insignificant and therefore the investment in research and innovation inefficient. In the case, the only source of CO_2 is transferred from the vehicle to energy production technologies, and Europe will not be able to reach its targets to reduce the consumption of energy from the conventional sources and lower emissions.

To remove the danger of increasing CO_2 footprint due to an increasing demand for electricity to operate the EVs, we must keep in mind that the share of the renewable energy (mainly wind in this region) in total energy consumption should be significant. In the respect, we must seek intelligent solutions for monitoring and analyzing energy consumption in charging systems and renewable energy production facilities in the region.

ESTIMATED BUDGET: 25,000 euro

2.7 Self-assessment tool for Local action plans

URBACT has developed a further useful tool for Local Support Groups to check their own progress with the Local Action Plan. Once a draft framework for the action plan is in place, it can be useful to check the content and ongoing production process. It will help you add useful elements to your plan, and think about any gaps.

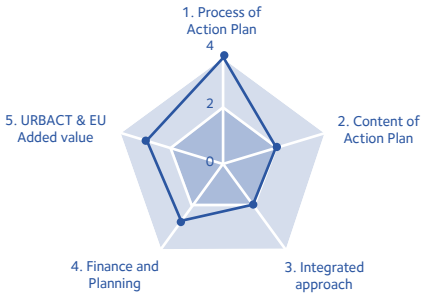
The Self-assessment tool for Local Action Plan is available as an Excel spreadsheet[9]. It will calculate your scores and show areas for improvement in the LAP. It is a similar tool to the "Local Support Group performance self-assessment tool presented in section 2.3.

The assessment asks each city to give a score against several indicators and also give evidence for the score. The indicators are grouped in the following main categories:

- Process of action plan (description of the method and of the consultation process)
- Content of action plan (document organisation, strategy, objectives, problem analysis, description of actions, indicators)
- Integrated approach (balance from economical, social and environmental point of view, vertical and horizontal partnerships)
- Finance and planning (use of financial instruments, relation with OP and other financial support)
- URBACT and EU added value (link to exchange and learning activities, use of good practices from other cities, use of peer review for LAP).

Once the table as been filled in, the tool produces a spider diagram outlining strengths and areas for improvement. Sharing the results of the self-assessment exercise with network partners in transnational meetings can provide useful learning and support other cities in developing action plans on similar themes.

Spider diagram resulting of the self-assessment



9. The Self Assessment tool for Local Action Plan can be downloaded from the URBACT website at:
http://urbact.eu/en/get-involved/local-support-groups/

Self-Assessment Tool for Local Action Plans

Local Action Plan	*put name of your city here*
Network	*put network name here*
Completed by	*put your name here*
Instructions	For each indicator (row) complete the score column by entering a score between 1 and 5 where 1 is weak and 5 is strong. You can use the score criteria on the right to see what score to give. Complete the evidence column for each indicator. The radar plot and summary scores at the bottom of the table will be calculated automatically.

1 - PROCESS OF ACTION PLAN			
Indicators	Score awarded out of 5	Evidence for score - why was the score given -	Indications for scoring
Description of how the action plan was developed with the partners	*0*		score 1: not addressed score 3: thin description score 5: clear outline of how the ULSG worked
Consultation meetings with stakeholders (who are not part of ULSG)	*0*		score 1: no meetings held with stakeholders score 3: small number of meetings score 5: meetings held with all stakeholders
1 Total Score	***0***		

2 - CONTENT OF ACTION PLAN			
Indicators	Score awarded out of 5	Evidence for score - why was the score given -	Indications for scoring
Organisation of document	*0*		score 1: no coherent structure score 3: some structure but no progression score 5: clear logical progression from description of situation to problem analysis to proposed actions
Coherence of objectives with actions and indicators	*0*		score 1: solutions do not have link to problems score 3: not much linkage score 5: solutions and indicators relate clearly to problems
Evidence to support definition of problem	*0*		score 1: no data presented on problem score 3: some data presented score 5: full and comprehensive data presented
Problem analysis	*0*		score 1: no problem analysis score 3: weak attempt at problem analysis score 5: clear problem analysis based on evidence from data, causes and effects identified
Option analysis - does the plan show that other options were examined?	*0*		score 1: no other options looked at score 3: options identified but no evaluation score 5: different options have been considered and evaluated
Strategic goal with clear objectives	*0*		score 1: lack of clear goal and objectives score 3: some objectives but lacking clarity score 5: clear strategic goal and sub objectives shown in logical format
How well are the actions described? Do they give a clear picture of what is intended?	*0*		score 1: barely described, just headings score 3: some description of what is intended score 5: full description including rationale, nature of intervention, anticipated results
Use of indicators to measure anticipated results	*0*		score 1: no indicators score 3:indicators are mentioned but targets are not quantified score 5: full set of quantified indicators with milestones in specific section of action plan
2 Total Score	***0***		

3 - INTEGRATED APPROACH			
Indicators	Score awarded out of 5	Evidence for score - why was the score given -	Indications for scoring
Economic, social and environmental factors are looked at together	*0*		score 1:no consideration of other aspects score 3: two out of three are addressed (e.g. Social and economic) score 5: full integration of sustainable development in both conception of plan and delivery actions proposed
Contributions from range of agencies within the area to the action plan (horizontal partnership)	*0*		score 1:No engagement by other bodies (i.e. Only local authority involved) score 3: some engagement by other bodies score 5: all relevant departments and agencies are engaged
Contributions from higher levels of government in the action plan (vertical partnership)	*0*		score 1:no involvement of higher levels score 3:limited involvement of higher levels score 5:higher levels of government have committed to the plan, including financially
Actions from both ERDF and ESF type are included			
3 Total score	***0***		

2.8 Useful references

URBACT Documents

From the Programme:

Guide to URBACT Thematic Network 2012;

The URBACT Tribune 2011;

URBACT Project Results, 2011;

Getting Results Through Animated Meetings: Seven Top Tips, 2012;

Third Call for Proposals for the creation of Thematic Networks 2011;

Programme Manual 2008;

The URBACT Method video, 2011;

Guidelines: Cities and Managing Authorities Working Together, 2013

Project outputs:

My Generation Project – Final City Report Riga;

HerO Project – Liverpool LAP

OP-ACT Project – Newsletter, issue No 2;

Creative Clusters project, Reggio Emilia BarCamp – video;

SURE project - Newsletters;

My Generation project, Youtube channel - MyGenerationTV;

CASH – LAP tools, Template;

SURE Project - Sure case study on participative planning, 2010;

On Project Planning and Project Cycle Management

International Association of Facilitators Organisation dedicated to growing facilitators and encouraging the use of group process methodologies world-wide www.iaf-world.org

Rachel Blackman, Project Cycle Management, Tearfund, 2003, available at: http://tilz.tearfund.org/webdocs/Tilz/Roots/English/PCM/ROOTS_5_E_Full.pdf

Freer Spreckley, A Project Cycle Management and Logical Framework Toolkit, 2005, available at: http://portals.wi.wur.nl/files/docs/ppme/gpg_pcm_toolkit%5B1%5D.pdf

European Commission, Project Cycle Management Guidelines, Volume 1 of Aid Delivery Methods, 2004, available at: http://soundplanning.esflive.eu/files/pcm_guidelines_2004_en_0.pdf

INTERACT, Territorial Cooperation Project Management Handbook, 2007, available at: http://www.interact-eu.net/downloads/135/INTERACT_Handbook___Territorial_Cooperation_Project_Management___03.2007.pdf

Department for International Development (DFID), Tools for Development, 2003, available at: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications/toolsfordevelopment.pdf

On Participation and Consultation

Glaeser Edward, The Triumph of the city, Pan Books 2011

Wates Nick, The Community Planning Handbook, Earthscan, 2006

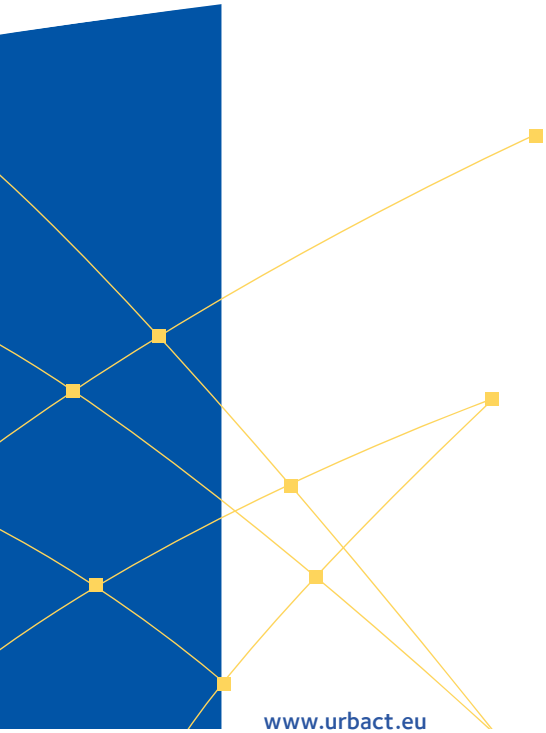
Forester John, The Deliberative Practitioner, Encouraging Participatory Planning Processes, MIT Press, 1999

Dobson Charles, The Citizen's Handbook, Vancouver Citizen's Committee,2006, available at: www.vcn.bc.ca/citizens-handbook

Wilcox, David, The Guide to Effective Participation, Partnership Books, 1994, also available at: http://www.partnerships.org.uk/guide/index.htm

The Community planning website (A global resource on ways that local people can be involved in planning and urban design. Details on many relevant methods) www.communityplanning.net

NOTES



www.urbact.eu

URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme promoting integrated sustainable urban development.

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It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, re-affirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal changes. URBACT helps cities to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. It enables cities to share good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe. URBACT II comprises 400 different-sized cities and their Local Support Groups, 52 projects, 29 countries, and 7,000 active stakeholders coming equally from Convergence and Competitiveness areas. URBACT is jointly financed by the ERDF and the Member States.

European Union
European Regional Development Fund

EUROPEAN PROGRAMME FOR SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

URBACT