

The URBACT III Programme
Guide to URBACT Action Planning Networks

March 2015



FOREWORD

The present Guide aims to introduce potential partners into the world of URBACT Action Planning Networks. It will allow you to have a better understanding of what you can expect joining an URBACT Action Planning Network, in terms of resources, results and added value. It also clarifies the commitment and contributions expected from you.

Enriched with concrete examples from networks funded under URBACT II, this Guide will provide you with detailed information on how to design a proposal for Action Planning Networks, how to define a work plan, deliverables, budget, and how to manage an URBACT network. It outlines the main rules and procedures to be respected as well as references to good practices related to the implementation of network activities.

This Guide has been conceived to complement the Terms of Reference for the Call for Proposals for the creation of Action Planning Networks to assist you in preparing a quality project proposal.

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

This Guide is not only a tool for learning but also a tool for action!

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PART 1 – BEING A PARTNER OF AN URBACT ACTION PLANNING NETWORK

- 1.1. What you can expect joining an URBACT Action Planning Network**
- 1.2. What is requested from you?**
- 1.3. Expert support in URBACT networks**
- 1.4. Working with Managing Authorities of Operational Programmes**

Before moving on to the next chapters of this Guide, think about why you are interested in the URBACT Programme and why you would join an Action Planning Network. A good starting point is to check where you stand regarding the following statements:

- Your institution wishes to improve or change local policies through the development of an integrated strategy or action plan for sustainable urban development
- Your institution is willing to tackle an urban problem or address an urban policy challenge and develop solutions through the production of an integrated action plan
- Your institution wants to improve the capacities of local civil servants and stakeholders to design integrated strategies/ action plans for sustainable urban development
- Your institution is willing to share experiences and exchange knowledge with other European cities working on similar problems/ challenges
- Your institution wants to involve inhabitants and relevant key stakeholders in the design and delivery of local urban policies

If you agree with one or more of these objectives, we invite you to move on to the next chapters and learn more about what to expect as a partner (or Lead Partner), the requirements, commitments and the different phases in the life of an URBACT Action Planning Network.

1.1. WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT JOINING AN URBACT ACTION PLANNING NETWORK

Joining an URBACT Action Planning Network will allow you to benefit from a structured and organised process of exchange and learning with peers across Europe, with a view to improving your local policies through concrete action planning. Your institution will have the opportunity to work with other local authorities around a specific policy challenge/ problem, to design innovative solutions in the format of Integrated Action Plans.

You will benefit from the support of other urban practitioners, experts on urban issues, as well as from the URBACT Joint Secretariat. Last but not least, financial support for exchange and learning is also significant, with a co-financing rate of between 70% and 85% of ERDF depending on your location.

1.1.1. THE URBACT METHOD FOR ACTION PLANNING NETWORKS

▪ Transnational exchange and learning

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

The requirement that all partnerships shall be balanced with partners from Less Developed and More Developed Regions ¹breaks up the usual networking patterns and widens the scope of shared experiences and approaches. In URBACT II (2007-2013) more than 500 cities from 28 Member and Partners States have actively been involved.

Transnational exchange and learning seminars include site visits during which partner have the opportunity to learn how other cities are concretely dealing with their local challenges and problems. While exchanging with the host city and questioning their approach, partner cities are also led to reconsider their own approaches to similar issues they may be confronted with.

By participating in the transnational seminars organised by the networks, you will also have the opportunity to benefit from the thematic inputs provided by European urban experts, academics and researchers as well as policy and decision makers at different levels.

Through peer review and co-design activities with peers across Europe, with different experiences and backgrounds, you will generate new ideas for your own

¹ For a definition and a detailed map of More Developed, Transition and Less Developed Regions see the website of the European Commission DG for Regional and Urban Policies:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index_fr.cfm

city as well as support other local authorities in building better solutions to their local challenges.

- **Action-oriented**

In the framework of URBACT Action Planning Networks, exchange and learning activities are conceived as a tool for European cities to improve their local policies and capacities to design integrated strategies/ action plans for sustainable urban development.

Joining an URBACT Action Planning Network, you will have the opportunity to work on a specific challenge or problem and to build new solutions to improve urban development in your city.

As a partner you will have to commit to producing an Integrated Action Plan to tackle the specific policy challenge identified. Hence it is crucial to make sure there is strong political support in your institution to address this specific policy challenge. Exchange and learning activities at transnational level will provide you with practical knowledge, experience from peers and experts, which will feed into the co-production of the integrated strategy/ action plan involving different departments within your institution as well as relevant local stakeholders. This co-production process will be the main objective of the URBACT Local Group to be created in each partner city.

- **Capacity building**

Being an active partner in an Action Planning Network will allow you to strengthen your competence in the field of integrated and sustainable urban development. This exchange programme is also a learning programme for all civil servants and stakeholders involved.

Through the exchange you will develop a better understanding and knowledge of the topic addressed by the network. You will also build up professional skills in participatory action planning, while working with local stakeholders on your Integrated Action Plan.

In addition to the activities implemented by the networks themselves, the URBACT Programme offers regular training and capacity-building activities for partners and local stakeholders involved in approved Action Planning Networks. These include transnational URBACT Universities for key stakeholders, training schemes on participatory action planning organised at national level, targeted training schemes for elected representatives, Managing Authorities of Operational Programmes, etc.

Through these activities, URBACT intends to go beyond individual learning and to allow cities (and more generally local authorities) to improve the way they are working with their communities, in a sustainable way, beyond the life span of the URBACT network.

▪ Support of URBACT Experts

The Programme provides to each Action Planning Network a specific budget for the appointment of URBACT Experts. This additional allocation² will allow all partners involved in Action Planning Networks to benefit from three different but complementary types of expertise during the life cycle of the network:

- Expertise for the design and delivery of transnational exchange and learning activities
- Thematic expertise on content related to the urban policy challenges addressed by the network
- Expertise to support partners in designing integrated and participative policies

Each Action Planning Network will appoint a Lead Expert who will assist the partnership over the entire duration of the network with both methods and tools for exchange and learning activities and thematic expertise. Ad hoc URBACT Experts may also be recruited to provide support on specific needs identified by networks concerning the methodology for exchange and learning, thematic expertise or support to local partners.

More information on the general principles for expertise is provided in the URBACT Programme Manual (fact sheet 2B) and in section 1.3 of this guide. Details on the selection, appointment and contracting of Lead and ad hoc experts are also available in sections 2.3.4 (for Phase 1) and 2.4.5 (for Phase 2).

At Programme level, approved Action Planning Networks will receive additional support from Programme level experts. These Programme level experts will be appointed by the URBACT Programme and will work closely with the Joint Secretariat. They will be in charge of supporting networks and their partners to achieve quality results both at transnational and local level. They can, therefore, provide useful tools and resources in addition to the support provided by the Lead Expert and ad hoc experts working at network level.

▪ Support from the URBACT Joint Secretariat

The URBACT Joint Secretariat, in the name of the French Managing Authority, is in charge of implementing and managing the Programme on behalf of the Member and Partner States. The Joint Secretariat also plays an important role in monitoring and supporting networks as well as in setting the conditions for quality results. It produces guidelines for Lead Partners and partners on various dimensions of Action Planning Network activities, from methods for exchange and learning, production of outputs and communication to network management and finance.

Beyond guidance and templates, the Joint Secretariat also organises training sessions for Lead Partners and network experts, holds regular meetings with them in

² The additional envelope for expertise amounts to up to 127.500 € per network. It shall be used following a number of rules outlined in the URBACT Programme Manual in fact sheet 2A – Action Planning Networks: <http://urbact.eu/open-calls-networks>

order to review progress on implementation of planned activities, provides ongoing support, as well as facilitating exchange of experience and good practices across networks.

The Programme actively contributes to the communication on Action Planning Networks and to the dissemination of their findings. It provides a website (Programme website) on which each Action Planning Network has its own dedicated space (Network websites), publishes a newsletter, works in strong relation with the National URBACT Points in order to foster communication and dissemination on the networks' results in different languages. More generally all the capitalisation activities organised by the Programme (including events and thematic publications) provide networks and their partners with a unique opportunity for learning, communication and dissemination.

1.1.2. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The URBACT Programme provides significant financial resource to assist you in your project delivery. The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) will finance between 70% and 85% of your costs depending on your location.

The total eligible cost of an Action Planning Network shall be between 600.000 € and 750.000 € based on the justification provided (number of partners, volume of activity, local costs etc). This budget is split between Phases 1 and 2 (more details are available later in this guide as well as in Section 6 of the Terms of reference for the Call for Proposals for Action Planning Network).

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

All partners are asked to confirm the local contribution to the project by letter of commitment ensuring that all the necessary financial resources are available (letters of commitment to be provided with the applications for phase 1 and for phase 2).

URBACT also provides each network with an additional expertise budget of up to 127.500 €, that is 170 days of expertise, to support networks and their partners in implementing their activities as well as participating in programme level events. More information can be found in section 1.3 of the guide.

1.2. WHAT IS REQUESTED FROM YOU?

In return for providing European cities with a unique opportunity to exchange and learn from one another, to design more efficient urban policies and stronger partnership with local stakeholders, the URBACT Programme is also demanding in its expectations of partners.

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

- To actively take part in transnational exchange and learning activities
- To produce an Integrated Action Plan
- To set up and run an URBACT Local Group
- To ensure communication and dissemination of project results
- To manage the project and the partnership in a sound way

▪ To actively take part in transnational exchange and learning activities

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

This requires time. On average, an Action Planning Network organises 8-10 meetings over its 30 months duration (Phase 1 and 2). Transnational exchange and learning seminars usually last for 2-3 days and not all partners benefit from an easy access to international airports.

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

Officers in charge of European projects or International Affairs usually possess suitable language skills but may be less capable of bringing concrete experiences to the thematic discussions and peer reviews on the active inclusion of marginalized target groups, energy efficiency in building refurbishment, competitiveness of SMEs, or other policy issues addressed by the network.

It is also important to ensure some continuity in terms of participation to transnational meetings. These are conceived as a logical sequence of exchange and learning

moments that will feed into partner activities at local level, and more especially into the production of the Integrated Action Plan. While you may consider bringing in new delegates according to the themes being dealt with during each meeting, it is recommended that the officer in charge of the Action Planning Network at local level (“local coordinator”) is always on board.

- **To produce an Integrated Action Plan**

Each partner involved in an Action Planning Network is required to produce an Integrated Action Plan as a result of taking part in the transnational exchange and learning activities as well as the main result of the co-production process with local stakeholders in the URBACT Local Group.

Beyond being a requirement for URBACT, this Integrated Action Plan should be conceived primarily as a concrete and useful tool for the city to solve a local problem and improve a local situation. As such, the content and the format of the Integrated Action Plans will vary from one city to the other, depending on the issues addressed by the network, on local situations and conditions, etc. Subsequently there is no formal template to be used. But the Programme provides guidelines in order to support partners in developing quality action plans, both in terms of process and in terms of output.

While Integrated Action Plans are required outputs to be delivered by each partner city, you should bear in mind that the process leading to the action plan is as important as the result. This process should be developed in order to design integrated and sustainable urban policies.

Building on the “URBAN Acquis”, URBACT supports an integrated approach to solving urban challenges, which combines the social, the economic and the environmental dimensions of urban development.

URBACT also fosters a participatory approach to policy-making requiring partner cities to involve local key stakeholders in co-designing urban policies. The Integrated Action Plans shall be the drivers to new ways of building policies and working with local communities.

Last but not least, it is important to bear in mind that URBACT finances exchange and learning activities. It does not finance the implementation of the Integrated Action Plans nor any concrete pilot project. As a consequence, you are also expected to work on identifying funding opportunities for the implementation of the Integrated Action Plans developed in the framework of Action Planning Networks

- **To set up and run an URBACT Local Group**

Each partner joining an URBACT Action Planning Network is requested to involve the relevant local stakeholders in the design of the Integrated Action Plan to be produced in the framework of the network.

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

As for all participatory processes, running an URBACT Local Group requires time and human resources. Your institution will have to identify a dedicated person who will be in charge of running the local partnership and supporting the involvement of local stakeholders in the production of the integrated action plan as well as in the network transnational activities.

Within the network budget, the URBACT Programme provides financial resources, tools and methods to support you in developing and delivering this participatory action-planning process. The financial resources provided are meant to cover the costs for URBACT Local Group Coordinator, to organise the different local activities for the co-design of the Integrated Action Plan as well as to cover the costs for the participation of local stakeholders to the transnational exchange and learning activities. In the framework of an Action Planning Network this involvement is particularly important because it allows local stakeholders to benefit from the learning that will take place at transnational level and to bring it back in order to feed in the co-production process of the Integrated Action Plan.

As local coordinator of the URBACT Action Planning Network, you should work in close cooperation with the URBACT Local Group coordinator to ensure that the Group is set up and performs on the co-production of the Integrated Action Plan (unless you are in charge of running the URBACT Local group yourself). The commitment of the local coordinator of the network and of the URBACT Local Group Coordinator is essential for a sustainable impact of the network on local practices and policies.

Guidance on how to set up and run a URBACT Local Group is available under section 2.3.2 and 2.4.3 of this guide.

- **To ensure communication and dissemination of project results**

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

Action Planning Networks and their partners are expected to draw lessons from their experience, to capture learning from transnational exchange activities, and to share these with a wider audience across Europe, with those who could not take part in the network. While exchanging, learning and working on their Integrated Action Plans, URBACT partners should foresee actions to communicate on their activities and disseminate their findings, practical knowledge, policy recommendations, good practices identified through the exchanges. This should be done during the life of the network through a number of communications tools and activities (regular update of the network website embedded in the URBACT website, Newsletters, social media campaigns, local dissemination events in partner cities, production and dissemination of thematic reports/ publications/ articles presenting the findings or learning from the different transnational exchange activities, etc.). At the end of the network life cycle, it is requested that specific dissemination activities be organised to share the network results and findings (production of a final report, local events in all partner cities, network final conference, etc.).

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

The URBACT Secretariat will also support the communication on network activities and the dissemination of network results on an ongoing basis, through programme level communications tools (website, newsletter, National URBACT points, social media, annual conferences and other programme level events). Guidance and training will also be provided to network Lead Partners and partners to foster efficient communication and dissemination of results. Capitalisation activities developed at programme level will largely draw on network activities and results. Network lead partners and partners will therefore be expected to contribute to this capitalisation activities on an ongoing basis.

- **To manage the project and the partnership in a sound way**

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

realistic – a half time post is required for all matters linked to financial management. More information on the levels of staffing required can be found in Factsheet 2E of the URBACT Programme Manual.

The role of the Lead partner is particularly important to ensure a successful project. The lead partner must be a strong leader with a relevant experience in the network theme. The lead partner staff should have sufficient experience of managing transnational projects to be aware of the skills required to manage and motivate a group of strangers and to transform this group into a network of individuals with the same goal. Strong communication skills are essential in the lead partner functions as well as an organized approach which is second to none. All the responsibilities and duties of Lead Partner and Project Partner can be found in Factsheet 2E of the URBACT Programme Manual.

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

1.3. EXPERT SUPPORT

▪ Resources and types of expertise available

The URBACT Programme provides each approved Action Planning Network with a specific budget for the appointment of URBACT experts to support the partnership in developing and implementing the network activities.

The allocation for network experts is additional to the network budget and it amounts to 127.500€ for the whole lifetime of the network (Phase 1 and Phase 2). As the daily fee for an URBACT expert is fixed at programme level as 750€ per day, the dedicated budget corresponds to an envelope of 170 days.

Even though managed by the Lead partner city, the expertise support is not a resource for the Lead partner only but should be made available to the whole partnership. More especially, the expertise envelope should provide you and your partners with a package of services including:

1. Expertise for the design and delivery of transnational exchange and learning activities:
 - Definition and delivery, in strong cooperation with the Lead Partner and partners, of the methodology for exchange activities at transnational level to ensure high level of sharing, mutual learning and transfer of knowledge. Experts will support the partnership with the definition of the main focus, design of the work plan, definition of the main expected outputs, and they play a key role in the delivery of networks transnational activities (including preparation of inputs, collecting information from partners, designing agendas with appropriate methodology, moderating sessions during meetings, drawing lessons and reporting after meetings, etc.)
2. Thematic expertise:
 - Definition and delivery of thematic inputs that will nourish the exchange and contribute to the learning process of all partners
 - Production of thematic documentation and outputs in English that will capture and disseminate lessons learnt, good practices, etc, both to network partners and to an external audience
3. Expertise support to local authorities and other stakeholders in designing and delivering integrated and participatory policies
 - Support to all partners in involving key stakeholders and in co-producing the main expected local outputs (especially Integrated Action Plans).
 - Support to partners in making use of tools and methods for participatory design and implementation of integrated urban policies/action plans

In order to improve the efficiency of the support provided by experts to URBACT Networks, two different profiles of experts have been defined:

- A Lead Expert will assist the partnership over the entire duration of the network (Phase 1 and 2) both with expertise for the design and delivery of transnational exchange and learning activities and thematic expertise

- Ad hoc experts may also be recruited to provide support on specific needs identified by the network concerning the methodology for exchange and learning activities, thematic expertise and local support to partners

Lead Partners, in agreement with partners, are the solely responsible for the selection and appointment of URBACT Experts (Lead and ad hoc). Only experts included in the pool of validated URBACT Experts can be appointed.

A Call for Applicants for the pool of URBACT Expert has been launched and will remain open on a permanent basis.

The profiles of validated URBACT Experts are available for consultation on the online database on the URBACT website³. The online database will be updated on an ongoing basis over the next months with new validated URBACT Experts.

When preparing the Phase 1 Application you must already select and propose a Lead Expert from the pool of validated URBACT Experts. Ad hoc experts can only be appointed during Phase 2.

Detailed information on the main tasks to be performed by Lead Experts and by Ad-hoc experts as well as on the procedure got their appointment are provided under sections 2.3.4 (for Phase 1) and 2.4.5 (for Phase 2) of this guide.

³ URBACT Experts Online Database: <http://urbact.eu/experts-list>

1.4. WORKING WITH MANAGING AUTHORITIES OF OPERATIONAL PROGRAMMES

▪ Why involve Managing Authorities of Operational Programmes

The URBACT programme finances the exchange and learning activity and the design of Integrated Action Plans. URBACT does not finance the implementation of these Integrated Action Plans nor any concrete pilot projects. Each partner involved is required to work on identifying funding opportunities for the implementation of the Integrated Action Plans.

The EU Cohesion Policy and the related Structural Funds (European Regional Development Fund –ERDF and European Social Fund – ESF) can provide partners of Action Planning Networks with financial and operational support for the implementation of integrated strategies/action plans developed in the framework of URBACT.

The programming period 2014-2020 emphasises the importance of urban areas in Cohesion policy and acknowledges the lead role of cities and towns for the future development of Europe. According to Article 7 of the ERDF Regulation No 1031/2013, Structural Funds will support sustainable urban development through integrated strategies that tackle the economic, environmental, climate, social and demographic challenges of urban areas. Member States have been required to allocate at least 5% of ERDF resources at national level to integrated actions for sustainable urban development. There are three programming options for financing integrated strategies for sustainable urban development:

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

According to initial estimates by the European Commission, for 2014-2020, more than 16 billions € have been ring-fenced by EU Member States to finance integrated strategies for sustainable urban development (out of a total budget of 315 billions € for the entire Cohesion Policy).

In addition to the ERDF funds ring-fenced for integrated strategies for sustainable urban development, significant Cohesion Policy investments will benefit urban areas through sectorial axes within the national and regional Operational Programmes (O.P.s) for ERDF and ESF. The sectorial axis, linked to specific Thematic Objectives⁴, can address issues such as waste management, energy efficiency, mobility, innovation, employment, social inclusion etc.

In this perspective, the URBACT Programme stresses the importance of developing cooperation between cities involved in Action Planning Networks with Managing

⁴ The list of the 11 Thematic Objectives for the EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 is available here:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index.cfm/en/policy/how/priorities

Authorities (MAs) of Operational Programmes (ERDF and ESF) that could support the implementation of the Integrated Action Plans.

At national and regional level depending on the Member States, Managing Authorities⁵ are administrative bodies responsible for the management of National and Regional Operational Programmes for ERDF and ESF.

The involvement of Managing Authorities can provide you with valuable guidance in order to design an Integrated Action Plan in line with the strategies defined and the funds available in the Operational Programmes. The Managing Authorities will be in a position to advise the city about the possibilities offered in the different priorities of the Operational Programme and could considerably increase the quality and the effectiveness of the plans developed.

In addition, a close relation with cities can be seen as an opportunity for the Managing Authorities to improve the programming of integrated actions for all cities. A stronger partnership with the beneficiaries of the Operational Programmes is a crucial step contributing to the development of new forms of multi-level governance.

Finally, through an active involvement in the activities of Action Planning Networks, Managing Authorities have the opportunity to exchange experiences and information with other Managing Authorities from different countries. This process has proved to be helpful in past URBACT networks. It can be helpful especially for planning the programmes and fostering the implementation of sustainable urban development in the programming period that has just started.

- **How to involve Managing Authorities in Action Planning Networks**

Managing Authorities of Operational Programmes can be involved in the activities of URBACT Action Planning Networks at different levels at different times.

- **Before submitting a Phase 1 Application for Action Planning Network.** We invite you to establish an initial contact with a representative of the relevant Managing Authority when preparing your Phase 1 Application. The initial contact should aim to collect information regarding: which tool the Managing Authority has defined to support sustainable urban development (art.7 ERDF), how this will be implemented (beneficiaries, timeframe, selection criteria, levels of delegation, etc.), what are the thematic priorities for the sectoral axis of the O.P. and how these will be implemented, is there a specific axis/measure that corresponds to the topic addressed by your network. This information will help to better define the specific local challenge or policy issue that you could address within the URBACT network and to identify, from the beginning, potential funding opportunities for the Integrated Action Plan to be produced.
- **At transnational level.** Once the Action Planning Network is approved, representatives of Managing Authorities shall be invited to participate in dedicated sessions during the transnational exchange and learning seminars

⁵ A list of Managing Authorities of Operational Programmes (for ERDF and ESF) in the 28 EU Countries is available at the DG Regio website
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index.cfm/en/atlas/managing-authorities/

and/ or in specifically targeted seminars. Transnational exchange and learning seminars (see also section 5.2 of this guide) may represent an opportunity for Managing Authorities to better understand the process the cities are implementing but also to exchange knowledge and experiences with other Managing Authorities from different Countries. Travel and accommodation costs for representatives of Managing Authorities to attend transnational meetings can be covered by the budget of the Action Planning Network.

- **At local level.** Representatives of the Managing Authorities should be involved, as much as possible, in the process of co-production of the Integrated Action Plan to be elaborated by the URBACT Local Group in the framework of the network's activities. At local level, the contribution of the Managing Authority can be essential to ensure the coherence of the Integrated Plan with national/ regional strategies addressing the same policy issues and to identify the potential funding opportunities in the Operational Programmes.

In any case, you should make sure that representatives of the relevant Managing Authorities are regularly informed about the progress made at transnational and local level in the definition and production of the Integrated Action Plan.

→ For examples of URBACT II networks having successfully involved Managing Authorities in their activities, you can check out the following experiences:

- **Roma- Net Network⁶**
- **Building Healthy Communities Network⁷**
- **Reg Gov Network⁸**

The URBACT Joint Secretariat will make available to Action Planning Networks approved for Phase 1 detailed Guidelines with practical suggestions on how to involve Managing Authorities and more examples provided by previous URBACT networks.

⁶ Article on the experience of the city of Torrent: <http://urbact.eu/how-roma-net-has-helped-torrent-build-good-relations-our-managing-authority-and-make-bigger>

⁷ Third Thematic Report Building Healthy Communities: <http://urbact.eu/bhc-third-thematic-report>

⁸ Reg-Gov Report Seminar with Managing Authorities: http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/reg-gov-ma_semreport.pdf

PART 2 – BUILDING AN URBACT ACTION PLANNING NETWORK

2.1. Thematic coverage

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2.1. THEMATIC COVERAGE

▪ The URBACT III Thematic coverage

The thematic coverage of the URBACT III Programme covers the first ten Thematic Objectives (TOs) of the EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020⁹. The eleventh is for capacity building, which is the core objective of URBACT and does not need to be specified. The Programme covers a wide range of policy issues that European cities can address in the framework of an Action Planning Network.

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

Over the programming period 2014-2020, URBACT III shall concentrate 70% of resources for exchange and learning activities on Thematic Objectives 1 (Innovation), 4 (Low carbon economy), 6 (Environmental protection and resource efficiency), 8 (Employment) and 9 (Social inclusion). Nevertheless the 1st Call for Proposals for Action Planning Networks under URBACT III is open to all 10 Thematic Objectives.

▪ Defining the policy challenges to be addressed

The identification of the policy challenges to be addressed in an URBACT Action Planning Network is a key initial step when preparing a Phase 1 Application in the framework of the call for proposals.

The decision should be based on an honest assessment of local priorities and challenges discussed within the candidate institution, with colleagues of different departments, with elected representatives and other relevant stakeholders (including residents and final beneficiaries). You should make sure that there is a clear understanding of the policy challenges you intend to address, that they are considered as priorities in the local political agenda and shared by other departments, that there is a clear political willingness to support the design process of the Integrated Action Plan and its implementation. This preliminary assessment is essential for all partners involved in the network.

At the same time, you should reflect on the relevance of the policy challenges identified for other European cities and more especially on the contribution that the

⁹ The list of the 10 Thematic Objectives included in the URBACT Thematic Coverage is available in section 3 of the first Call for Proposals for Action Planning Network. A description of the urban dimension of the 10 TOs is available in the URBACT III Programme Manual – Fact Sheet 1.
<http://urbact.eu/open-calls-networks>

Action Planning Network will provide to other policy-makers and practitioners facing similar local challenges in Europe and beyond. Action Planning Networks are first of all conceived as tools to increase the capacity of partners in the design of integrated policies for sustainable urban development, but they are also expected to generate knowledge (in the form of case studies, thematic reports, policy recommendations, etc.) to feed into the debate at EU, national and regional level.

- **Describing the policy challenges in the Phase 1 Application**

When preparing the Phase 1 Application for Action Planning Network, you will be requested to:

- *Select the main Thematic Objective relevant for your network (Section 1.4):* At this stage you are requested to select only one Thematic Objective out of the 10 covered by URBACT III. This shall be considered the sole entry point into the network. In other sections of the Phase 1 Application you will be requested to describe the existing interconnections with other Thematic Objectives.
- *Define the policy issue/ challenge to be addressed (Section 2.1.1)* Here you are requested to describe in detail the policy challenge/ issue you and your initial partners intend to address through the Action Planning Network. You must demonstrate a clear understanding of the policy challenge, explain the integrated nature of the challenge, explain to what extent it is relevant in all cities involved (further details on this must be provided in the profiles for each partner) and provide initial information on the integrated solutions that could be explored.
- *Describe the link to EU 2020 strategy and to the relevant Thematic Objectives (Section 2.1.2).* In this section you have to explain the link between the policy challenge to be addressed and the main Thematic Objective selected above. You should also highlight the links with other Thematic Objectives (the integrated approach) and explain how the network activities will contribute to achieving the EU2020 goals for smart, inclusive and sustainable growth.
- *Demonstrate the Added-value compared to past URBACT projects on similar issues (Section 2.1.4).* Since 2007 the URBACT Programme has supported more than 500 cities in 52 different networks¹⁰. These networks have addressed a wide range of urban policy challenges producing valuable knowledge for the cities involved but also for other practitioners and policy makers at different levels. When relevant, here you shall demonstrate that your proposal builds on the knowledge produced on similar issues by previous URBACT networks and that your expected results (in terms of knowledge) bring concrete added value.

¹⁰ The full list of networks financed under URBACT II is available here: <http://urbact.eu/all-networks>
Each network has its own dedicated website where you can find all the outputs produced.

2.2. TRANSNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP FOR ACTION PLANNING NETWORKS

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

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

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

- Is the proposed partnership eligible in the framework of the present Call for Proposals?
- Are the local situations and experiences of partners involved relevant to the policy challenges to be addressed by the network?
- Do all partners demonstrate a clear commitment?

In relation to the **eligibility of the partnership**¹¹, you must consider that for Action Planning Networks:

- ✓ Only cities can be Lead Partners
- ✓ The partnership shall be composed in two steps (Phase 1 and Phase 2)
- ✓ The partnership for Phase 1:
 - Must be composed of a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 6 cities including the Lead Partner
 - Must be composed only of city partners (non-city partners can join a network only in Phase 2)
 - Must include cities from at least 3 different Member or Partner States
 - Must include at least 2 cities from Less Developed Regions
- ✓ The partnership for Phase 2 (building on Phase 1):
 - Must be composed of a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 12 partners including the Lead Partner
 - Can include a maximum of 3 non-city partners that conform to the status of Public Authorities or Equivalent Public Bodies
 - Must include partners from at least 3 different Member or Partner States
 - Must include at least 4 partners from Less Developed Regions

In the framework of the present Call for Proposals, a partner (city partner or non-city partner) can be involved in a maximum of 2 different approved Action Planning Networks. When establishing a contact with a potential partner, it will be important to ask the partner institution to declare if it is already committed in other project proposals.

¹¹ You can find detailed information on the requirements for the composition of the transnational partnership in Fact Sheet 2A of the URBACT Programme Manual. Here you will find also the criteria for Equivalent Public Bodies. <http://urbact.eu/open-calls-networks>

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

- *The policy challenge addressed is relevant for all partners.* As for your own institution, you should ensure that all partners are facing similar policy challenges at local level, that the local needs are clearly identified and documented and there is a commitment to address the policy challenges through an integrated action plan (political support, existing plans or strategies, funding opportunities, etc).
- *The experiences of all partners are relevant and will contribute to the learning process of the whole partnership.* Each partner institution will contribute to the transnational exchange and learning activities with its own experiences and knowledge. These will be different for each partner depending on the local context, previous experiences, etc. You must ensure that all experiences are relevant for the policy challenges addressed and that they will feed into the common learning process of all partners involved. Taking into account the differences in terms of needs and previous experiences, in your application you should highlight possible complementarities between different contributions.

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

- *Commitment to take part in the transnational exchange and learning activities.* The active contribution of all partners to the transnational activities is a key condition for a rich and effective exchange and learning process for all partners. When building the transnational partnership you should make sure that all candidate partners have a clear understanding of the tasks to be performed (preparation and contribution to the transnational seminars, hosting a transnational event, ensuring a proper administrative management at local level, etc.) as well as of the resources to be committed (in terms of human, time and financial resources). It is essential that all partners identify as soon as possible the “right” local coordinator for the network (see also section 1.2 of this guide).
- *Commitment to co-design the Integrated Action Plan with the local stakeholders involved in the URBACT Local Group.* The co-production of an Integrated Action Plan by the URBACT Local Group is a compulsory requirement for all partners involved in Action Planning Network. Beyond the contractual requirement, this is the main added-value that an Action Planning Network can bring to a partner involved. When building the transnational partnership, you should make sure that this final aim is understood by all partners and that all partners are committed to engaging with local stakeholders and to mobilizing the resources needed (in terms of human, time and financial resources). Clear political support for the participation of the city in the Action Planning Network should be demonstrated by all partners involved (see also section 1.2 of this guide).

2.3. PHASE 1 OF ACTION PLANNING NETWORKS

Phase 1 of an Action Planning Network aims to provide initial partners with time and resources to finalize their Phase 2 application form which shall set out a consolidated project. The Phase 2 application will develop the original idea and expand the Action Planning Network partnership. During this 6-month period, the initial partners will work with the Lead expert and their extended partnership to develop their project by refining the issues to be addressed, preparing a detailed work plan and defining the key project deliverables. All of these developments shall be presented in the Phase 2 application.

Phase 1 of Action Planning Networks shall be structured around 2 Work Packages:

- WP1 – Project Management and Coordination
- WP2 – Project Development

2.3.1. WORK PACKAGE 1 – PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION

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

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

▪ Main activities for Work Package 1

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

- a) To sign all the contractual documents at programme and project level
- b) To recruit appropriate staff to ensure efficient project management
- c) To hold regular management meetings to ensure strong communication between partners concerning project coordination
- d) To assist project partners in 6 monthly reporting review of documents before submission
- e) To attend organised training sessions and other programme level events
- f) To receive and transfer ERDF funds to partners
- g) To ensure proper management of the expertise resources (Lead expert) and monitoring of the Lead expert's work programme

Some examples and recommendations on how to undertake these activities are outlined below:

a) To sign all the contractual documents at Programme and project level

- The Lead Partner is responsible for signing the subsidy contract for the project. This document is in English and French and needs to be signed by an appropriate person (usually elected representative) in the municipality.
- Other contractual documents exist and need to be adapted for the specificities of the project. An example includes the Joint Convention, this document is the official agreement between the lead partner and project partners outlining the project roles and responsibilities and the specific points to note concerning the project. This document helps to resolve issues at a later stage if there are disagreements between partners.

b) To recruit appropriate staff to ensure efficient project management

- Each project partner should identify a qualified project coordinator who, wherever possible, shall remain the same person for the whole project duration. During Phase 1 the project coordinator should participate in activity at transnational level and set up the URBACT Local Group (see details in Work package 2 for Phase 1). The project coordinator must speak English to a very good level.
- For the Lead Partner, the staff required for the project will be significantly more than for a project partner. The Lead partner shall appoint a project coordinator, a finance officer and a communication officer – these activities will require the equivalent of 2 full time posts. For the project partners the equivalent of one full time post should be foreseen.

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

- It is important to allow time during your meetings to discuss common issues linked to the project management, reporting of activity and budget provisions. A session on administrative questions could be organised during the transnational meetings or better still specific physical or virtual meetings involving a wider participation can be organized on a monthly basis to coordinate the project management. Examples of how these meetings have been managed include a monthly management meeting via Skype or other on line tool, specific physical meetings before or after your transnational meetings to focus on management issue, one to one support for partners experiencing difficulties etc.
- It is important that all partners are involved and that the right people are present (often the local practitioner is not the person really carrying out the administrative tasks). Additional meetings should be scheduled before the reporting deadlines to ensure all partners are reactive and able to respect the deadlines.

The URBACT Secretariat has a large number of guidance notes at your disposal and can also participate in your meetings to assist if necessary.

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

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

e) To attend organised training sessions and other Programme level events

- For the Lead Partner's team, the URBACT Joint Secretariat organises several training sessions on subjects, which can help you to deliver your project successfully. Examples include general project management, reporting costs, setting up and running an URBACT Local Group, producing an integrated action plan, organizing efficient exchange and learning transnational activities, etc. Attendance at these sessions is compulsory and the Programme covers travel costs. Lead Partners should ensure that the most appropriate person attends these training sessions and that the key materials and messages are transferred to the project partners.

f) To receive and transfer ERDF funds to partners

- The Lead Partner is responsible for receiving the ERDF refunds for all partners. A single payment claim is prepared for the whole project based on the costs declared for each partner using their approved intervention rate.
- The Lead Partner must transfer the correct ERDF to the project partners in accordance with the Joint Convention as soon as possible after receipt. In order to fulfill this responsibility it is useful to set up an internal procedure in consultation with the financial services department of your municipality. All transfers should be made according to the agreed procedure in the Joint Convention and within a reasonable timeframe (normally no longer than 1 month).

g) To ensure proper management of the expertise resources (Lead expert) and monitoring of the Lead expert's work programme

- Each project has access to an additional budget for project expertise (see section 1.3 of this Guide as well as sections 2.3.4 and 2.4.5). The Lead Partner should manage this resource and ensure that suitable records are kept concerning the work of the expert. While contractual arrangements are established directly between the expert and the URBACT Managing Authority, the Lead partner is responsible for certification of the service provided and outputs delivered by the expert. This certification will be needed for the payment of the invoices issued by the expert.

- **Main deliverables for Work Package 1**

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

- Final reporting and closure documents at the end of the Phase 1 – See Factsheet 2E of the Programme Manual
- Approval documents for the First Level Controllers of project partners – See Factsheet 2E of the Programme Manual
- Lead expert request form at the beginning of Phase 1 – see details in section 2.3.4 of this guide

2.3.2. WORK PACKAGE 2 – PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

- To complete the initial partnership
- To identify the policy challenges/ issues to be addressed by all partners through transnational exchange and learning activities and through the production of Integrated Action plans at local level (including partners' expectations and potential contribution, focus of the Integrated Action Plan, provisional composition of the URBACT Local Groups)
- To design the methodology for exchange activities both at transnational and local level

- **Main activities for Work Package 2**

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

- a) To proactively engage with additional partners to be involved in the final partnership for Phase 2
- b) To organize at least two transnational meetings gathering the initial partners and the additional partners that will join the network during Phase 1
- c) To complete the Baseline study describing the policy challenge, the local situation and the objectives of the Integrated Action Plan in each partner, the methodology for the exchange activities
- d) To identify the key local stakeholders to be involved in the URBACT Local Group
- e) To develop a project logo and provide information to feed URBACT communication activities
- f) To complete and submit the Phase 2 Application form

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

a) To proactively engage with additional partners to be involved in the final partnership

One of the main aims of the two-phase process for Action Planning Networks is to provide networks approved for Phase 1 with time and resources in order to consolidate the final partnership for Phase 2.

During Phase 1 the initial partnership (minimum 4 maximum 6 cities including the Lead Partner) must be enlarged in order to include in Phase 2 minimum 8 and maximum 12 partners including the Lead Partner.

The process of enlargement of the initial partnership should be led by the Lead Partner in close coordination with the initial partners and the Lead Expert. As described below, normally during the first transnational meeting of Phase 1, initial partners discuss the profiles of potential additional partners, identify the type of experiences and contributions that new partners would bring to the network and agree the criteria for the selection of the new partners. Some previous projects have used an application procedure with criteria and a fixed deadline to allow for a transparent process in enlarging the partnership.

It is important to identify the additional partners as soon as possible during Phase 1. Additional partners must be invited to attend (at least) the second transnational meeting of Phase 1 in order to contribute to the discussion concerning the definition of the network's detailed focus and methodology.

Information concerning the local situation, needs, expectations and potential contributions of additional partners must be included in the Baseline study (see below). Additional partners must therefore host the visit of the Lead Expert for the preparation of the Baseline study.

The URBACT Joint Secretariat will ensure visibility to all Action Planning Networks approved for Phase 1 and will facilitate, as much as possible, connections with partners interested in joining for Phase 2. Approved networks are also invited to use the dedicated project's website as well as their own communication channels to identify potential additional partners for Phase 2.

b) To organize 2 transnational meetings

During the 6-month Phase 1, approved Action Planning Networks must organize 2 transnational meetings: the kick off meeting and the final project meeting.

- Kick off meeting:
 - The kick off meeting should be organized as soon as possible after the official approval for Phase 1 and after the training session organized by the URBACT Secretariat for Lead Partners and Lead Experts of approved networks (Paris, from 30th of September to 2nd of October 2015). The kick off meeting is a key moment that will allow the initial partners to meet physically for the first time and start the discussion on a common set of challenges and issues to be addressed by the network in Phase 2.

- The discussion among initial partners should also facilitate the definition of common criteria for the selection of additional partners for the final partnership. Previous networks have developed during the kick off meeting a questionnaire to be submitted to institutions that will express their interest to join the partnership
- During the kick off meeting, partners should agree on the dates for the visit of the Lead Expert for the production of the Baseline Study (at least for the initial partners. The dates for the visit to additional partners may be defined later during Phase 1)
- The kick off meeting will be the moment to introduce the URBACT contractual and administrative requirements and should include a presentation of the online accounting and management tool SYNERGIE-CTE. Members of the URBACT Secretariat will attend the kick off meeting to present the general framework of the URBACT Programme and to assist the Lead Partner with the presentation of the administrative and financial framework
- Final project meeting:
 - All partners to be included in the final partnership should attend the final meeting
 - The additional partners joining the network in Phase 1 should have the opportunity to introduce themselves, highlighting their expectations and introducing the main contributions they can bring to the exchange and learning activities
 - The whole partnership should agree on the final details related to the network's focus, methodology and work plan for Phase 2. The final discussion should build on the main findings and conclusions of the Baseline study
 - The Lead Partners should verify that each partner is finalizing the required contractual documents for the submission of the Phase 2 Application (letter of commitment, Audit trail, etc.) and in position to provide the necessary support
 - The final project meeting of Phase 1 should be organized once the Lead Expert has completed the visits to all partners for the Baseline. In the mean time, the meeting should be fixed sufficiently in advance of the date of submission of the Phase 2 application to allow the Lead Partner to include the final decisions concerning the focus, methodology and work plan in the documents to be submitted.
 - Be aware that additional partners will be considered as legally involved in the network only after the official approval for Phase 2. Their costs to attend the final meeting of Phase 1 can be considered eligible in Phase 2 but there remains a risk that the project will not be approved in Phase 2 and in this case these costs cannot be claimed by the partner. In case of difficulties, additional partners should be able to contribute to the final project meeting through online tools (Skype, GoToMeeting, etc.)

c) To complete the Baseline study

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

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

The Lead Expert should visit all partners involved in the final partnership (including additional partners joining the network during Phase 1) in order to present the URBACT framework and the specific objectives and focus of the network, to review the local situation and experiences in relation to the policy challenge to be addressed, to identify the challenges/issues the partners intend to address through the Integrated Action Plan.

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

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

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

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

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

- Each partner should appoint as soon as possible an URBACT Local Group Coordinator.
- The local stakeholders identified as potential members of the URBACT Local Group should be informed, through the Local Group Coordinator, about the objectives of the Action Planning Network, the added value for partners as well as requirements from them when taking part in an URBACT Network

- The 1st meeting of the initial members of the URBACT Local Group could be organized back to back with the visit of the Lead Expert to the partner (in the framework of the production of partner profiles for the baseline study).

Detailed information on the roles and responsibilities of the URBACT Local Group Coordinator as well as on how to set up and successfully run the URBACT Local Group is available in the URBACT Toolkit¹² and under section 2.4.3 of this guide. The URBACT Toolkit has been developed in the framework of URBACT II to support previous Thematic Networks. Yet information and guidance concerning the main activities (and related tools) for URBACT Local Group remain relevant.

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

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

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

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

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

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

f) To complete and submit Phase 2 Application

Following the 2-step process for the creation of Action Planning Networks, projects approved for Phase 1 shall complete and submit, at the end of the 6-month period, their complete proposal in the form of a Phase 2 Application. The document, to be submitted through the online platform SYNERGIE-CTE, will include detailed information of the network's focus and methodology, on the final partnership as well as on the work plan and budget for Phase 2. During Phase 1, the URBACT Joint Secretariat will provide Lead Partners of approved networks detailed guidance on the Phase 2 Application to be submitted.

¹² The URBACT Toolkit: http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/urbact_toolkit_online_4.pdf

- **Main deliverables for Work Package 2**

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

- 2 project meetings (one with initial partners and one with all partners involved in the final partnership)
- Baseline study
- Phase 2 Application

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

- I. **The “State of the art”** of the existing knowledge, tools, programmes, etc. related to the project focus, to be delivered by the Lead Expert as soon as possible during Phase 1.
 - The “State of the art” (about 20 pages) should ideally be ready for the kick off meeting of Phase 1, at least in draft version, to inform thinking among partners about the nature of the policy challenges to be addressed and to ensure that the network builds on and takes into account already existing knowledge
 - The “State of the art” should be illustrated with some examples of good practice in the topic from beyond the network
 - The “State of the art” should help the partners to focus discussions about future actions beyond Phase 1 and provide a shared vocabulary on the topic / Policy challenge
 - The “State of the Art” is dedicated to partners. But it can be very useful and interesting for an external audience of policy-makers and practitioners, so it is important that it is edited and produced in a stand-alone format and uploaded as soon as possible on the network’s website
- II. **Partner profiles**, presenting the local situation, challenges/problems, existing policies, expectations vis-à-vis the network, etc. of all partners involved in the final partnership.
 - Partner profiles (5-6 pages each) shall be completed for all partners involved in the final partnership, including additional partners joining the network during Phase 1
 - Partner profiles should be mostly aimed at an internal audience, particularly useful for URBACT Local Group members as a starting point for the Integrated Action Plan but also useful for partners and others to act as a briefing when they visit the city
 - Partner profiles should help the Lead Expert to develop some comparative analysis of local situations in order to identify complementarities in terms of experiences and potential contribution to the network

III. The Synthesis of the issues to be addressed by the Action Planning Networks in Phase 2, resulting from confrontation of the state of art and the partners' challenges and expectations (to feed into the Phase 2 Application and more especially into the design of the network's focus and methodology for Phase 2)

- The synthesis (5-10 pages) should be conceived for an internal audience in order to support partners in making decisions about the organization of the work plan for Phase 2
- The synthesis should be discussed with all partners during the final project meeting of Phase 1

→ See examples of Baseline studies produced by previous URBACT Networks:

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

Please note, all project communication materials must respect the URBACT Graphic Charter as well as the EU regulations concerning publicity and the use of logos¹³.

2.3.3. EXPERTISE FOR PHASE 1

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

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

During Phase 1, approved Action Planning Network shall appoint a Lead Expert. Only Lead Experts can be appointed at this stage. Ad-hoc experts can be appointed only during Phase 2.

For Phase 1, Lead Experts will support network partners with the following tasks:

- Helping initial partners in defining the profiles of additional partners to be involved during Phase 1. Engaging with additional partners identified

¹³ EU Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 on publicity and use of logos.

- Producing the Baseline study to be used as a key input for the Phase 2 Application
- Supporting Lead Partner and partners in defining the project methodology, thematic focus, work plan and deliverables
- Supporting partners in identifying the key stakeholders to be involved in the URBACT Local Group
- Supporting Lead Partner and project partners in organizing and delivering the 2 transnational meetings to be held during Phase 1

The Lead Expert will be person responsible for the production of the Baseline study. In this perspective Lead Experts shall visit all partners (including the additional partners joining the network in Phase 1), meet the local coordinators, elected representatives, civil servants, potential members of the URBACT Local Groups, etc. to present the objectives of the network, to identify local challenges and expectations as well as potential contributions to the exchange and learning activities.

- **Allocation of days for Lead Expert in Phase 1**

Each approved Action Planning Network will have an additional allocation of 127.500€ to cover the costs of expertise over the lifetime of the network (Phase 1 and Phase 2). As the daily expertise fee for URBACT Experts is set at 750€ (all taxes included), this budget corresponds to an envelope of 170 days of expertise to be made available to the whole partnership.

For phase 1, the expertise allocation available for each network shall be limited to 30.000€ (40 days of expertise, including participation at information and training sessions organized by the URBACT Joint Secretariat).

For phase 1, the Lead Expert's work plan and expected deliverables will be standard for all approved networks. The standard work plan will build on the following tasks:

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

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

- **Appointing and contracting the Lead Expert for Phase 1**

When submitting the Phase 1 Application, you are requested to propose a Lead Expert.

Lead Experts shall be selected only from the pool of validated URBACT experts. A Call for Applicants for the pool of URBACT Experts has been launched and will remain open on a permanent basis.

The information on validated experts included in the pool of URBACT Experts (type of expertise, skills, past experiences, detailed CV) is available in the online database¹⁴ on the URBACT website.

The online database of URBACT Experts will be updated on an ongoing basis over the next months with new validated experts.

In the weeks following the publication of this Guide to Action Planning Networks, we recommend you to check regularly the online database of URBACT Experts.

In any case, before selecting the Lead Expert, you should establish a short-list of potential candidates and organize a phone/ skype call to discuss and verify the interest for the topic addressed by the networks, the potential contribution and the availability of the expert.

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

In cases where network Lead partners and partners do not find the relevant expertise in the pool of validated URBACT experts, they may invite experts they know and have worked with to apply for validation following the procedure defined in the open Call for Experts. The process of assessment of Application Form for URBACT experts normally takes 2 weeks.

The CV of the expert identified as Lead Expert shall be attached to the Phase 1 Application.

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

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

¹⁴ URBACT III Pool of validated Experts: <http://urbact.eu/experts-list>

Ideally, the Lead Expert for Phase 1 should continue supporting the network as Lead expert if the project is approved for Phase 2. Yet the appointment for Phase 1 does not imply any contractual commitment for Phase 2. At the end of Phase 1, the Lead Partner, in agreement with all partners, will review the performance of the Lead Expert and may propose a different Lead Expert for Phase 2. Phase 1 shall therefore be considered as an opportunity to test working relationships and quality of the expert's work before envisaging further commitment for phase 2.

2.3.4. BUDGET FOR PHASE 1

The total eligible cost for the Phase 1 of an Action Planning Network is set at a maximum of 100.000€. All partners will need to confirm their commitment to engaging the funds needed to co-finance ERDF by letter (see information on submission of the Phase 1 Applications in Section 8.2 of the call for proposals for Action Planning Network). The ERDF co-financing rate for an Action Planning Network is calculated at network level on the basis of the different co-financing rates for each partner (more details are available in Section 6.1 of the Terms of reference for the Call for Proposals for Action Planning Network).

An Action Planning Network budget must be presented in line with the 5 budget categories outlined in the SYNERGIE-CTE system. An example of the kinds of costs, which can be funded in each budget category, can be found in the summary table below:

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

	experts) should be recorded under this budget category. This category also includes all costs linked to the organisation of meetings.
5) Equipment	Expenditure for equipment purchased, rented or leased by a partner, necessary to achieve objectives of the project.

A detailed explanation of these costs including how to report can be found in Fact Sheet 2F of the URBACT programme Manual. Below you will find some useful hints and tips for budgeting your Phase 1 application.

Staff costs

Staff costs are specifically for staff employed by the partner. External employees must be reported in the budget category External expertise. Staff costs should not usually represent more than 30-35% of the total budget as a general rule.

For Phase 1 it is strongly encouraged that only Lead Partner personnel costs be budgeted. Should other partners budget staff costs consideration should be given to the varying salary levels across Europe to ensure the most accurate budget estimation possible

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

Office and Administration Costs

Office and administration costs are calculated as a flat rate of 3% of staff costs.

The flat rate covers all office and administration costs, i.e. there is no distinction between direct and indirect costs. By applying the 3% flat rate option, partners do not need to document that the expenditure has been incurred and paid, or that the flat rate corresponds to the reality.

Travel and Accommodation

This category is, not surprisingly, one of the highest representing about a third of the network total costs. As a general rule the most economic way of travel must be used. On average a trip to a transnational seminar consisting of transport and 2-3 night accommodation costs around 650€ on average per person.

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

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

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

External expertise and services

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

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

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

Costs in this category also include costs linked to the organisation of meetings (room and equipment hire, interpretation and catering). It is often possible to minimize room hire costs by using venues in project partner’s premises. Costs for interpretation can also vary based on the country and the languages needed. On average a 2 day transnational meeting with between 30 and 40 people present costs approx. 12.000€.

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

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

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

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

Equipment

In Phase 1 normally no equipment costs should be presented.

2.4. PHASE 2 OF ACTION PLANNING NETWORKS

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

The duration of Phase 2 is 24 months, starting from the official notification of approval, following the final decision of the Monitoring Committee.

Phase 2 of an Action Planning Network is structured around 4 Work Packages:

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

2.4.1. WORK PACKAGE 1 – PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION

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

- **Main activities for Work Package 1**

In addition to those activities outlined previously under WP1 of Phase 1, those projects approved in Phase 2 shall:

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

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

b) Complete a single reprogramming of the Phase 2 application

- Following the mid-term review exercise, a thorough review of the project application shall be carried out. All aspects of the project shall undergo a reality check and any necessary changes shall be requested according to the established procedure.

- This reprogramming session is the only possibility you will have to review your project budget, outputs, key milestones so it must be well managed and be undertaken in an open and transparent way including all partners in the consultation.

- **Main Deliverables for Work Package 1**

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

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

2.4.2. WORK PACKAGE 2 – TRANSNATIONAL EXCHANGE AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

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

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

- Sharing: To foster the exchange of experiences among project partners and identify good practices
- Learning: To strengthen the practical knowledge and skills of partners in the policy area related to the issues addressed by the network
- Mainstreaming: To draw lessons from the exchange on an ongoing basis and to apply them at local level, especially through the production of the Integrated Action Plans
- Supporting: To support partners in improving their local policies and producing their Integrated Action Plans

- **Main activities for Work Package 2**

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

- a) To organise transnational exchange seminars. Transnational seminars should be a combination of different components including learning sessions, field visits, peer review sessions, local dissemination activities, etc
- b) To produce thematic outputs (interim and final) capturing the knowledge generated during the transnational seminars and the main findings of the exchange activities

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

a) To organise transnational exchange seminars

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

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

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

Given the range and diversity of URBACT networks, there is no single preferred methodological approach to the transnational element. We have seen a number of effective ones, and some examples are set out below. However the proposed methodology should allow the network to address the overarching policy issues identified in a manageable way. The methodological framework should also help networks to achieve their results. Here are some ways in which previous URBACT networks have addressed this:

- The Sustainable Food in Urban Communities¹⁵ project, led by Brussels Capital Region, divided its focus into three aspects of food – producing, delivering and enjoying. Following a sequential approach, transnational exchange and learning activities were structured around each of these, with host cities taking the lead in sharing relevant lessons and structuring activities
- The Roma-Net¹⁶ project, led by the city of Budapest, had an overall focus on improved integration of Roma communities. However, for practical purposes they introduced a set of sub-themes (Housing, Health and Education). Each sub-theme was addressed within a smaller working group of partners having

¹⁵ Sustainable Food in Urban Communities: <http://urbact.eu/sustainable-food>

¹⁶ Roma-Net: <http://urbact.eu/roma-net>

expressed their interest. Different working group meetings were organised simultaneously in different cities as the participation of all partners was not requested. The series of working group meetings was always followed by a common transnational meeting in order to ensure coherence among the different working groups and provide a general overview to all partners.

- The My Generation at work¹⁷ project, led by the city of Rotterdam, focused on youth entrepreneurship and innovation. As for other networks, the overarching theme was split into three sub-themes (career guidance, space for innovation and system planning). But instead of having separate working group meetings, all partners attended common transnational meetings where, after the initial plenary, they engaged in parallel workshops in smaller groups, allowing for more detailed investigation of the sub-theme. Transnational meetings were normally closed by common session where partner could ‘unpack’ the knowledge gained and explore connections and externalities with other sub-topics.
- The EUnerCities¹⁸ project, led by the city of Delft, worked on improving relationships between universities, businesses and the public sector. Following the so-called Implementation Lab methodology, host cities invited partners to advise on ways to improve their local approach, creating a de-facto micro-consultancy method with partners. With this approach the focus of each transnational seminar is determined by the specific needs of the hosting partner.
- In URBACT II, several networks, in order to complement the transnational seminars gathering all partners, have organised bilateral/trilateral meetings. These are normally organised when partners are already in an advanced stage of the production of the Integrated Action Plans and when they have clearly identified common interests and complementarities with specific partners. Bilateral/trilateral meetings can allow partners to deepen the exchange on specific dimensions of the policy issue addressed by the network. It will be important that knowledge produced during these meetings is properly captured¹⁹ and shared with other partners during the general transnational meetings. Lead Partners and Lead Experts are responsible to ensure the coherence of the bilateral/ trilateral activities with the overarching focus of the network. Bilateral/ trilateral meetings cannot replace transnational seminars gathering all partners.

These methods are not presented as an exhaustive list and URBACT does not adopt a prescriptive approach. URBACT welcomes innovative models and also, where appropriate, hybrid proposals. The most important thing is that the methodology proposed is realistic, clearly explained and has a logical rationale, taking into account the policy issues addressed as well as the needs and the experiences of all

¹⁷ My Generation at Work: <http://urbact.eu/mygeneration-at-work>

¹⁸ EUnerCities: <http://urbact.eu/eunivercities>

¹⁹ See the report of the Trilateral meeting organised by USE-Act:

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

partners. Action Planning Network partners should also pay special attention to defining a methodological approach that will generate a continuous flow of knowledge between the transnational and the local level to feed in the co-production process of the Integrated Action Plan within the URBACT Local Group.

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

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

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

The thematic focus defined by the network will have an impact on the types of stakeholders that will be involved in the transnational meetings and thus on the type of activities that can be proposed during the seminars. For example, a network focusing on youth inclusion will have a high proportion of youth participants in the transnational meetings and it is likely to adopt different activities to one that involve transport planners.

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

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

URBACT has produced a Guide to effective animation of transnational meetings²⁰. This covers practical points – such as venue selection, pacing of activities, etc – as well as providing examples of the repertoire of activities in use. During Phase 1, approved Action Planning Networks will receive a revised version of this Guide and

²⁰ "Getting results through animated meetings. Seven top tips" : http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/animation_techniques.pdf

training, building also on the experiences of the latest networks approved under URBACT II and which are still ongoing at the time of writing.

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

It is also worth noting that some networks have designed, within the transnational seminars, specific activities for particular target groups. These have included specific activities for representatives of Managing Authorities of Operational Programmes (see section 1.4 of this Guide). Another group which has had parallel activities organized during a transnational seminar is composed by elected officials from the partner institutions, who can also find it particularly useful to liaise with their peers. However, although special activities may be organized for such groups, there should be ample opportunity for them to participate in the overall programme with all stakeholders.

- **Practical points**

- Typically, during the course of an Action Planning Network, there will be between eight and ten transnational seminars, in addition to the final conference. Each seminar is likely to take place over a period of two to three days
- From experience, networks have found that involving different partners to host – or even co-host – transnational seminars is a good way to gain their active participation in the project. At the planning stage, partners should identify the aims and focus of each of the proposed transnational seminars, reflecting the overall shape of the projects but also the specific experiences, needs and potential contributions of the host city.
- During the transnational seminar itself, it is a good idea to ensure that participants get a feeling of the host cities. This can be ensured through site visits²¹ where the local stakeholders of the hosting city should play a key role in presenting their local challenges, needs and experiences. Certainly all partners should receive some orientation material in advance, so they arrive with some understanding of the local context (several networks have used the updated partner profiles of the Baseline study for this purpose)
- Detailed advance planning is an important part of effective transnational seminars. At the very least, this means collaboration between the Lead Expert, Lead Partner and host partner around the agenda, contributors and the logistics. In some cases, Lead Experts have visited the host city in advance to see venues and meet the hosts. In other cases they have

²¹ See the URBACT Blogpost “Six URBACT ‘Golden Nuggets’ For Successful Partner Visits”: <http://www.blog.urbact.eu/2014/03/six-urbact-golden-nuggets-for-successful-partner-visits/>

organized planning meetings via virtual meeting tools (skype, Webex, GoToMeeting, etc.) in advance of the transnational seminars

- Virtual meeting tools are becoming an increasingly important complement to physical transnational seminars. As well as their use in pre-planning, networks are also increasingly relying on them to maintain project momentum between transnational seminars. The ability to convene virtual meetings between transnational cycles provides an additional dimension to networks and Lead Partners should show awareness of this in their proposals.
- Another issue to consider is the 'housekeeping' dimension of the network – which includes finance, administration and communication issues. As much as possible, it is advisable to manage these aspects of the network outside the main business of the transnational seminars. This might mean via virtual online meetings, separate to the transnational seminars. However there will be points when face to face time is required, and in such cases it is best to bolt these meetings on either before or after the main programme, as not all participants will be involved
- Finally, a few points about social media, linking into the wider guidance on communication. Increasingly, networks are using social media (in particular Twitter, Facebook and Flickr) to complement their transnational activities. All networks are encouraged to establish a social media profile and these tools can be very effective to enhance the internal communication among partners as well as to promote transnational events and to engage with a wider audience in proceedings.

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

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

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

The Integrated Action Plans should be the result of the co-production process within the URBACT Local Group, building on the contributions of the local key stakeholders involved, but they should also be inspired and enriched by the knowledge generated through the exchange and learning activities. Good practices identified in partner cities, suggestions and advice given by other partners through peer review exercises, contributions from external experts are all key inputs that will help the URBACT Local Group in producing a better Integrated Action Plan.

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

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

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

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

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

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

- **Main outputs for Work Package 2**

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

- Transnational seminars
- Thematic outputs

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

Concerning the thematic outputs, hereafter some examples from previous URBACT Networks:

- Thematic Outputs targeting mainly an internal audience (local coordinators, members of the URBACT Local Group, etc.):
 - **Seminar reports** produced after each transnational event providing a summary of the main topic/issues addressed, highlighting the main contributions, learning points and conclusions. These documents should be more than simple minutes of proceedings and should not consist of a compilation of PowerPoints (such documents are useful for internal purpose only, to be shared among partners). Seminar reports shall be conceived so as to share thematic content, findings, policy recommendations. The Thematic Seminar Report of USE-Act²² is a good example. More innovative ways of producing seminar report can also be tested as the case of My Generation at Work with the Digital Memory Aid²³. Designed primarily as an online product that captures and organizes the contributions of all partners during the event (these are easily accessible via hyperlinks embedded in the document).
 - **Peer review reports** capturing the main conclusions of the exercise with the partners in the transnational seminar, their conclusions, ideas and concrete suggestions to be taken into account when designing the Integrated Action Plan. The results of the peer reviews can be conceived as a stand-alone document or as part of the seminar report if the peer review is part of a wider transnational event. For inspiration, you can look at the EUniverCities Peer Review Report²⁴.
 - **Site visits reports.** Site visits are a key component of transnational seminars. They can be documented as part of the seminar report or as stand-alone document. In some cases networks can decide to organize site visits to cities not involved in the network but with interesting experiences and good practices related to the policy issue addressed. This was the case for the CityLogo project that organized site visits to Barcelona and Zurich.²⁵
 - **Videos and animations.** URBACT networks can also make good use of videos and animations to complement other thematic outputs. The Sustainable Food in Urban Communities network has used short simple animation to capture key points from transnational seminars²⁶. The videos have been used by

²² USE-Act Thematic Seminar Report:

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

²³ My Generation at Work Digital Memory Aid:

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

²⁴ EUniverCities Peer Review Report:

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

²⁵ Citylogo Study visit in Zurich: <http://urbact.eu/city-branding-zurich-work-progress-0>

²⁶ Sustainable Food in Urban Communities video animations: <https://vimeo.com/67285763>

coordinators of URBACT Local Group to report back to local stakeholders the key findings of each transnational seminar.

- Thematic outputs targeting both an internal and external audience:
 - **Collection of case studies and/or good practices** focusing on specific good practices and experiences successfully implemented in partner cities. Case studies should be designed following a common template, clearly presenting the local context, the practices, the key enabling factors and actors. Examples of Collection of case studies are provided by the Roma-Net network²⁷, the ESIMEC network²⁸, the CSI Europe network²⁹, PREVENT³⁰.
 - **Interim thematic reports** presenting interim results (lessons learnt, policy recommendations, tools, good practices, etc.) relating to a specific sub-topic addressed by the network. Interesting examples are the Interim Thematic Reports of Sustainable Food in Urban Communities³¹ (one for each of the three network's sub-topics Growing, Delivering and Enjoying), the JOBTOWN Learning Modules³² and the 4D Cities Intermediary Reports.³³
 - **Final thematic reports** gathering all lessons learnt throughout the project life cycle, both from the transnational exchange and learning activities on the policy issues addressed and from the local level in relation to the co-production of the Integrated Action Plan. For some examples you can refer to the final reports of the HerO³⁴ network, the EVUE network³⁵, the Enter.Hub network³⁶ or the Sustainable Food in Urban Communities network.³⁷

²⁷ Roma-net Case Study on “Promoting Self-Employment” in Hungary:

http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/media/case_study_kiut_20140918_ah.pdf

²⁸ Esimec Case Study on “Developing an innovation plan in Sabadell”:

http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/general_library/Sabadell.pdf

²⁹ CSI Europe Case study:

http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/08_csi_europe_state_aid_case_study_northwest_urban_development_fund_.pdf

³⁰ PREVENT Good Practice Sourcebook:

http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/PREVENT/outputs_media/Prevent_good_practice_B_D_01.pdf

³¹ Sustainable Food in Urban Communities Interim Report ‘Delivering’:

http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/Sustainable_food_in_urban_communities/documents_media/SustainableFood-Thematic-Interim-Report-DELIVERING-Nov13_02.pdf

³² Jobtown Laerning Modules:

http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/en_1_jobtown_thematic_publication.pdf

³³ 4D Cities Intermediary Report ‘Business opportunity for local health innovation’:

http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/4D_CITIES/documents_media/4D_Cities_I_Output_Report_Business.pdf

³⁴ HerO Final Report – Guidebook – The Road to Sucess – Integrated Management of Historic Towns:

http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/HERO/projects_media/hero_guidebook_FINAL_01.pdf

³⁵ EVUE Final report:

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

- **Videos and animations** can complement the interim and final thematic outputs. They can be a good tool to vehicle to an external audience the main messages and lessons learnt through the involvement in an Action Planning Network. The CSI Europe network³⁸ produced a video animation to present the main lessons learnt concerning the use of financial instruments for urban development and that complements the final report and the collection of case studies.
- Thematic outputs targeting specific audiences (mainly decision and policy makers at EU, national, regional and local level):
 - **Policy recommendations.** Networks can produce suggestions for the improvement of legal or regulatory frameworks building on the main lessons learnt and on the common discussions among partners. These can be produced a stand-alone documents or as part of the final report. In URBACT II examples of policy recommendations are provided by the CASH network³⁹ and the HerO network.⁴⁰
 - **Political declarations.** These are normally agreed and produced as result of specific transnational meetings with the participation of elected representatives from partner cities. Political declarations can be particularly helpful in reinforcing the main messages and recommendations coming from the network and demonstrate a strong political support for the key findings. This type of output has been produced (in different formats) by networks like Enter.Hub⁴¹, CASH⁴², Sustainable Food in Urban Communities⁴³.
 - **Position papers.** Networks can produce position or policy papers in order to contribute to specific consultation or debates at EU, national or regional level. For example, the HerO network (approved between 2009 and 2011) contributed to the public consultation on the definition of the thematic priorities for the

³⁶ Enter.Hub Final Report: <http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/finalreport.pdf>

³⁷ Sustainable food in urban communities Final Handbook :
http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/sustainable_food_handbook_2015-02-25.pdf

³⁸ CSI Europe video animation – How to build a rocket :
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c5HX7IrVWRU&feature=youtu.be>

³⁹ CASH Policy recommendations : <http://urbact.eu/%E2%80%9C9-cash-policy-recommendations-make-best-use-new-structural-funds-sustainable-housing-%E2%80%93-guide-eu>

⁴⁰ HerO Policy Recommendations:
http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/HERO/projects_media/HerO_Policy_Recommendations.pdf

⁴¹ Enter.Hub Protocol of Intents: <http://urbact.eu/enterhub-policy-makers-sign-protocol-intents-development-mobility-hubs>

⁴² CASH Mayors Declaration of Intents : <http://urbact.eu/cash-mayors-declaration-intent-signed-brussels-november-292012>

⁴³ Sustainable Food in Urban Communities – Commitments of elected officials:
<http://www.sustainable-everyday-project.net/urbact-sustainable-food/2015/03/17/the-partners-cities-elected-officials-commit-to-sustainable-food-in-2015-and-beyond/>

Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 with the Strategy Paper ‘The untapped potential of cultural heritage’⁴⁴.

2.4.3 WORK PACKAGE 3 – IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND PRACTICES

In order to foster the impact of the transnational activities on the local policies and governance, each partner joining an URBACT Action Planning network is requested to involve relevant local stakeholders in the design of the Integrated Action Plan to be produced by the network.

You and your partners will commit to setting up and running a URBACT Local Group (ULG) that will gather civil servants of different departments, elected representatives as well as relevant stakeholders (representatives of other tiers of government, local agencies, NGOs, associations, etc.) linked to the policy area concerned by the Integrated Action Plan to be developed.

URBACT Local Groups are responsible for analysing local challenges, designing solutions and ultimately co-producing the Integrated Action Plans. Local stakeholders involved in the ULG shall also contribute to the exchange and learning process at transnational level and be responsible for embedding the learning from the transnational exchange (practical knowledge, good practices, ideas, etc.) into the local policy-making process.

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

- To support transnational exchange activities through the preparation of input for the project meetings (e.g. case studies, site visits, etc.)
- To foster the impact of transnational exchange activities on local policies
- To strengthen the capacity of local stakeholders in integrated urban policies and participative action-planning
- To develop participative action planning processes for the production of Integrated Action Plans
- To ensure dissemination of lessons learnt (good practices, policy recommendations, etc.) to local stakeholders involved in urban development

- **Main activities for Work Package 3**

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

- a) To set up and run an URBACT Local Group in each partner city for the co-production of a Integrated Action Plan
- b) To take part in the exchange activities at transnational level and contribute to these activities (participation to seminars, organisation of study visits, production of inputs, etc.)
- c) To take part in the capacity-building schemes organised by URBACT for core URBACT Local Group members
- d) To cooperate with the Managing Authorities of Operational Programme

⁴⁴ HerO – Strategy Paper ‘The untapped potential of cultural heritage’: http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/hero_strategy_paper.pdf

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

- At project level for partners to appoint an URBACT Local Group Coordinator and to run their ULG (e.g. using local experts if required for animation, facilitation, co-production of the Integrated Action Plan, and for meeting spaces, tools, design, local communication activities, etc.)
- At Programme level, with capacity-building activities dedicated to core ULG members and organized in the different Member and Partner States. These include transnational URBACT Summer Universities for local stakeholders, training schemes on participative action planning organised at national level, targeted training schemes for elected representatives, Managing Authorities of Operational Programmes, etc.

The URBACT Toolkit is available in several EU languages, providing guidance and support to partners in setting up their URBACT Local Group (e.g. stakeholder analysis) and work on the co-production of the Integrated Action Plan (e.g. problem tree, activity table, etc.). More guidance will be provided to approved Action Planning Networks at the beginning of Phase 1 and during the training sessions organized by the Secretariat.

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

a) To set up and run an URBACT Local Group in each partner city for the co-production of a Integrated Action Plan

Each partner commits to setting up and running an URBACT Local Group in order to co-produce the Integrated Action Plan. Here below some of the key steps to be undertaken:

• Appointing an URBACT Local Group Coordinator:

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

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

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

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

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

- **Setting up an URBACT Local Group**

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

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

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

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

- **Running an URBACT Local Group**

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

This road map should build on the following components:

- **ULG meetings at local level:** Regular meetings should be organized to allow the group to work on the different tasks they are entrusted with, among which the production of the Integrated Action Plan, the contribution to the transnational network activities, feeding back to the group on lessons learnt from the transnational seminars, etc. Section 1.3 of the URBACT Toolkit provides examples on how to organize effective and productive meetings with local stakeholders.
- **Co-production of the Integrated Action Plan** using participatory action-planning methods and tools. The Integrated Action Plan should bring concrete answers and sustainable solutions to the issues addressed by the partner when joining the network. From the outset the Integrated Action Plan should be rooted in the city profiles described in the Baseline Study produced in Phase 1. ULG members should start developing Section 1.4 of the URBACT Toolkit which presents some of the tools the Programme has tested for the co-production of local policies. All tools presented are available also in Part 2 of the URBACT Toolkit
- **Participation in transnational network seminars:** it is important that ULG members take part in the network meetings and are directly involved in the learning process. Each partner will have to identify the most relevant stakeholders depending on the topic of each event. The number of ULG members travelling to network meetings will have to be agreed with the Lead partner and all project partners, in order to foresee the necessary budget for travel and accommodation expenses in the network budget.

ULG delegates taking part in transnational meetings will represent the whole ULG and be responsible for bringing input as well as providing feedback after the event. To ensure proper links between activities at local and transnational levels it is recommended to schedule ULG meetings before transnational events in order to prepare the contribution of the ULG, and afterwards to share lessons learnt and follow-up on activities.

- **Dissemination and communication of the network and ULG activities:** Partners should communicate about ULG and network activities, to highlight the URBACT added value, the participative approach, etc. This communication should be organised as an ongoing process, throughout the life of the network, while the Integrated Action Plan is being developed, once the Integrated Action Plan is completed and validated at political level, and hopefully, when the Integrated Action Plan is being implemented. Network level communication tools such as the dedicated website or the newsletter should also profile ULG progress and activity.

b) To take part in the exchange activities at transnational level and contribute to these activities (participation in seminars, organisation of study visits, production of inputs, etc.)

As stated above, members of the URBACT Local Groups are invited to take part in and contribute to the exchange and learning activities at transnational level. This

contribution should be considered as part of a two-way bridge between the local and the transnational level. URBACT Local Groups provide quality and relevant inputs for the transnational activities (in terms of local practices and experiences). In turn the knowledge produced during transnational exchange and learning activities feeds back in, enriching the discussion at local level, enhancing capacity among stakeholders and finally leading to the production of better Integrated Action Plans.

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

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

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

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

d) To cooperate with the Managing Authorities of Operational Programme

Representatives of the Managing Authorities should be involved, as much as possible, in the process of co-production of the Integrated Action Plan to be elaborated by the URBACT Local Group as result of the network activity. At local level the contribution of the Managing Authorities can be essential to ensure the coherence of the Integrated Action Plan with national/ regional strategies addressing the same policy issues and to identify the potential funding opportunities in the Operational Programmes.

▪ **Main deliverables for Work Package 3**

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

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

Regarding the Integrated Action Plan, this is to be conceived as an instrument for partner to improve local policies, taking into account the local context, challenges

and resources. As a consequence, the content, length, format of the Integrated Action Plan will differ according to the type of partner (city partner or non-city partner), the existing local situation and policies, the problems and challenges identified by each URBACT Local Group. Some Integrated Action Plans can be more strategic, others may be project-based, whilst others can be more akin to funding applications. Integrated Action Plans may also cover different territorial scales: it can be a plan for a neighborhood, for the whole city, for its functional urban area, etc.⁴⁵

Whatever the case, early in the network, the Lead Expert should be in position to propose a framework for the Integrated Action Plan, taking into account the different situations of different partners.

Section 1.4 of the URBACT Toolkit identifies some basic components for an Integrated Action Plan and proposes practical tools and methods for the action planning process at local level.

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

2.4.4. WORK PACKAGE 4 – COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

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

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

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

⁴⁵ For examples of Integrated Action Plans (called Local Action Plans in URBACT II) you can look at :Local Action Plan of city of Suceava (EVUE network):

http://www.urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/EVUE/outputs_media/PLActiune_Suceava-EN_final_01.pdf

Local Action Plan of city of Glasgow (Roma-Net network):

http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/Roma_Net/documents_media/The_Local_Action_Plan_of_Glasgow.pdf

Local Action Plan of Basingstoke and Dean council (ESIMEC network):

http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/basingstoke - lap_summary - 30.09.12.pdf

- **Main activities for Work Package 4**

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

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

Activities to be implemented under Work package 4 should lead to the implementation of the Communication activities defined as part of the Phase 2 Application. These activities should include the following:

- a) Produce a detailed communication plan at the beginning of Phase 2**

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

The plan should include at least the following:

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

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

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

- b) Regularly update the network page on the URBACT website**

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

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

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

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

→ **Network pages examples:**

- CSI Europe (<http://urbact.eu/csieurope>)
- Sustainable Food in Urban Communities (<http://urbact.eu/sustainable-food>)
- 4D Cities (<http://urbact.eu/4d-cities>)

c) Produce and share communication materials about network activities

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

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

→ **Examples of brochures⁴⁶:**

- 4D Cities brochure (http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/4D_CITIES/documents_media/4DCities_brochure.pdf)
- Esimec booklet (http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/ESIMEC/outputs_media/162_28_Esimec_booklet_screen_view.pdf)
- My generation at Work brochure (http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/My_Generation_at_Work/outputs_media/MGatW_Brochure_Nov2013_01.pdf)
- Social Media account (twitter, facebook, linkedin group etc). The URBACT II Programme has developed an integrated social media strategy that will be continued and improved during URBACT III. The main programme social media tools are: twitter, facebook, Linkedin, youtube and flickr. The URBACT blog is also an important tool with more than 3000 subscribers. Networks are

⁴⁶ Please note that the brochures here sampled have been produced respecting the URBACT II graphic charter that no longer applies for URBACT III

invited to develop at least one social media tool specific for the network that should promote network events, results, partners activities and any other news related to the projects life.

→ Examples of Social Media accounts:

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

→ Examples of Newsletters

- USEACT Newsletters
(http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/USE_ACT/outputs_media/USEAct_newsletter_1_HD.pdf)
- USER Newsletters
(http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/USER/documents_media/Newsletter1_USER.pdf)
- **Promotional materials:** You are encouraged to produce an exhibition stand to be displayed during meetings, conferences etc. and other promotional flyers and goodies⁴⁷ to be distributed during those events.
- **Press releases:** Generating positive editorial media coverage at local, national and European levels for the project is a challenge. The project Communication officer shall take every communication opportunity to promote the project and the partners as well as highlight the people involved (events, interviews, project results etc.). The project Communication officer has to identify the key media at the different levels, regularly inform the targeted media and create and disseminate the relevant messages at the right time. We encourage you to produce a press kit, with press releases, fact sheets, possibly photos, etc. in compliance with the URBACT graphic and editorial charter. Partners shall be involved in this process in particularly regarding the

⁴⁷ According to the EU Delegated Regulation (EU) No 481/2014, the cost for goodies should not be more than 50€ a head over lifetime. All goodies produced should serve the purpose of the project.

local media.

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

- The URBACT Graphic Charter and use of logos: all project communication materials must respect the URBACT Graphic Charter as well as the EU regulations concerning publicity and the use of logos⁴⁸. You must apply the graphic guidelines of the URBACT Graphic Charter Guide and to use the available templates for all your documents.
 - Furthermore Lead Partners shall inform the public about the support obtained from ERDF funding providing on their institutional websites a short description of the project (aims, results and ERDF financial support).
- d) Organise a final event open to all target groups and local communication events at partners' level**

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

Each partner shall also organise local communication events in their own city, in national language, to promote the results of the project (project conclusions, policy recommendations, tools, etc.) and to present the Integrated Action Plan.

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

e) Participate in external events to promote the network

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

▪ Main deliverables for Work Package 4

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

- Detailed communication plan
- Active network page, within URBACT website, update at least once a month
- Communication materials (digital and print)
- Final conference for the communication of project results to a wide audience

⁴⁸ EU Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 on publicity and use of logos

- Local communication events, to be organised in each partner city at the end of the project to share the results of the project (project conclusions, policy recommendations, tools, etc.) and to present the Integrated Action Plan.

2.4.5. EXPERTISE FOR PHASE 2

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

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

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

- Supporting the Lead Partner to ensure the coherence of the transnational exchange and learning activities with the focus and the methodology agreed by all partners
- Playing a key role in the design and delivery of transnational exchange and learning activities including preparation of inputs, collecting info from partners, designing agenda with appropriate methodology and animation techniques, moderating sessions during meeting, etc.
- Defining and delivering thematic inputs that will nourish the exchange and contribute to the learning process of partners involved
- Drawing lessons from the transnational exchange and learning activities, capturing the key findings and knowledge produced at transnational level to feed into the co-production process of the Integrated Action Plan (see section 2.4.2)
- Coordinating the production of thematic outputs (interim and final) for an external dissemination of the main lessons learnt, good practices, policy recommendations generated by the network (see section 2.4.2)
- Coordinating, in close cooperation with the Lead Partner, the contribution of ad hoc experts commissioned on the additional expertise envelope allocated by the programme

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

- Methodology for exchange and learning activities: Ad hoc experts can be appointed to support the Lead Expert and partners in designing and delivering specific transnational activities (e.g. bringing new techniques for peer review sessions)
- Thematic Expertise: Ad hoc experts can be appointed to provide the network with specific thematic input on particular sub-topic addressed by the project. Ad hoc expert can also be in charge of producing thematic outputs on a particular sub-topic
- Support to partners to design integrated and participatory policies: Ad hoc experts can be appointed to support partners concerning the main steps for the co-production of the Integrated Action Plans (identifying and engaging key

stakeholders, co-generating ideas and solutions, building effective monitoring systems, identifying sources of funding, etc.)

- **Allocation of days for Lead Expert and Adhoc experts in Phase 2**

For Phase 2, the allocation of days to the Lead Expert shall not exceed 80% of the days remaining in the expertise envelop after Phase 1.

The work plan for the Lead Expert and the ad hoc experts will be discussed and defined during Phase 1 in consultation with all partners.

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

- **Appointing and contracting Lead Expert and ad hoc experts in Phase 2**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.4.6. BUDGET FOR PHASE 2

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

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

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

CONCLUSION

The Call for Proposals for Action Planning Networks will be a competitive process to approve the best networks.

We hope that this Guide to Action Planning Networks has provided you with useful suggestions and ideas on how to build a successful proposal.

We wish you good luck!

