

	URBACT III Programme Manual	Fact Sheet 2D Network Creation
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1. Call for Proposals

URBACT Networks (Action Planning, Transfer and Implementation networks) shall be selected by means of call for proposals.

The nature of proposed tasks to be implemented by URBACT networks, and the administrative and financial framework within which the networks are to operate shall be outlined in the calls for proposals

Call for Proposals shall be approved by the URBACT Monitoring Committee.

Call for Proposals are published in the URBACT website and disseminated through different communication tools (dedicated webpage in the URBACT website, newsletters, news on partner websites, National Infodays, social media, etc.)

2. Staged application procedure

The URBACT Programme, in order to increase the quality of networks approved for funding, foresees a two phase process with a first 6-month phase for the consolidation of the project proposal and a second 24-month phase for the implementation of the exchange and transfer activities.

Cities willing to set up a URBACT network are requested to submit a 1st proposal to get funding for Phase 1, in the form of a Phase 1 Application.

If the proposal is approved for Phase 1, networks will have 6 months to prepare and submit a complete project proposal in the form of a Phase 2 Application.

Each phase is subject to eligibility check by the Secretariat, assessment by an external panel of experts (External Assessment Panel, see section 3 below), and approval by the Monitoring Committee. The decision of the Monitoring Committee is final.

The staged application procedure can be summarized as follows:

Call for Proposals	
Stage 1	Submission by the Lead Partner of the Phase 1 Application and additional requested documents to the Secretariat
Stage 2	Eligibility check of the Phase 1 Application by the Secretariat
Stage 3	Assessment of the Phase 1 Application by the External Assessment Panel (EAP)
Stage 4	Decision of the Monitoring Committee on the basis of the proposal for approval submitted by the URBACT Managing Authority. Best ranked networks are approved for the 6-month Phase 1.
Phase 1 (6 months)	
Stage 5	At the end of Phase 1, creation and submission of the Phase 2 Application and additional requested documents
Stage 6	Eligibility check of the Phase 2 Application by the Secretariat
Stage 7	Assessment of the Phase 2 Application by the External Assessment Panel (EAP). The EAP may seek clarification from the candidate Lead partners and Lead experts by means of interviews and provide recommendations for improvements if necessary.
Stage 8	Approval by the Monitoring Committee on the basis of the proposal submitted by the URBACT Managing Authority. Approved networks are fully operational and can start implementing the activities foreseen in the work plan for Phase 2. Networks not approved for phase 2 will be refunded for the costs incurred in phase 1.
Phase 2 (24 months)	

In the following pages, details are provided for each of the stages summarized above.

Stage 1 – Submission of the Phase 1 Applications

Potential Lead Partners wishing to apply in the framework of a Call for Proposals shall fill in in English and submit within the fixed deadline a Phase 1 Application.

Phase 1 Application shall include information related to the partnership, the network's focus, the general objectives, description of the main activities to be implemented during Phase 1. Detailed information on the content to be provided with the Phase 1 Application shall be available in the Call for Proposals.

Phase 1 Application shall be created online through the Synergie-CTE tool

Along with the Phase 1 Application, applicants shall submit the additional required documents. The list of additional required documents shall be précised in the Call for Proposals (these normally include Letters of Commitment from all cities involved in the initial partnership, the CV of the project coordinator at Lead Partner, the CV of the proposed URBACT expert).

Stage 2 – Eligibility check of Phase 1 Applications

Phase 1 Applications submitted within the fixed deadline shall be checked by the URBACT Secretariat against the eligibility criteria listed below. Eligibility criteria are minimum requirements, all of which must be fulfilled before a proposal can be declared eligible.

In table below the common set of eligibility criteria for the 3 types of URBACT Networks (Action Planning, Transfer and Implementation):

- The proposal is submitted respecting the procedure outlined in the call for proposals and within the deadline set in the call.
- The proposal is complete in terms of documents and includes the Phase 1 Application and the additional required documents listed in the Call for Proposals
- The proposal is complete in terms of information and data required (all sections of the Phase 1 Application have been properly filled in according to the guidance provided in the Call for Proposals)
- All the documents required are signed, dated and stamped by candidate partners
- The partnership respects the conditions fixed in the Call for Proposals in terms of type and number of partners, geographical coverage and geographical balance
- The candidate Lead Partner is candidate Lead Partner in one URBACT proposal only

Other eligibility criteria may apply depending on the focus and specificities of the Call for Proposals. These criteria will be included in the Terms of Reference of the Call for Proposals, to be approved by the Monitoring Committee.

Stage 3 – Assessment of Phase 1 Applications

The External Assessment Panel (EAP, see section 3 below) shall proceed to the assessment of eligible proposals.

The assessment criteria for project proposals for Phase 1 shall be provided in the Call for Proposals to be approved by the Monitoring Committee.

Assessment criteria for Phase 1 Applications will refer to the following:

- Relevance of the topic/theme/policy issue addressed in relation to the EU2020 strategy and the Thematic Objectives for EU Cohesion Policy 2014/2020
- Coherence of the general approach proposed and more especially coherence of the methodology proposed for exchange and learning activities (in terms of expected results, proposed activities and related outputs)
- Quality of partnership proposed for Phase 1 (in terms of relevance of the topic addressed for each partner, diversity of experiences and potential contribution, etc.)
- Quality of the leadership
- Budget for Phase 1

The EAP shall proceed to the assessment of each eligible proposal and elaborate recommendations for approval. Based on this input, the URBACT Managing Authority shall submit a proposal of networks to be approved to the Monitoring Committee.

Stage 4 – Decision of the Monitoring Committee for Phase 1

The Monitoring Committee is the policy-making, decision-making body of the URBACT Programme. It is composed of two representatives from each Member and Partner State and the European Commission.

Following the assessment and ranking of project proposals by the EAP, and considering the proposal of the Managing Authority, the Monitoring Committee shall decide on the approval of networks to enter Phase 1. The decision of the Monitoring Committee shall be final.

Project applicants can appeal the decision of the Monitoring Committee in accordance with Article 74 (3) EU Regulation 1303/2013. The procedure for appeal will be outlined in the Call for Proposals.

Stage 5 - Creation and submission of the Phase 2 Applications

At the end of Phase 1, the Lead Partner and partners, with the support of the Lead expert, shall complete and submit the Phase 2 Application for the project to go to Phase 2.

Phase 2 Application shall include, amongst other things, a detailed definition of the project objectives and expected outputs, a detailed presentation of the partnership, a description of the main actions to be implemented under the 4 work packages for Phase 2 and a budget.

At the beginning of Phase 1, the URBACT Secretariat shall organize a Training Session in order to provide Lead Partners and Experts with an intensive support and advice on how to define and build effective work packages for Phase 2.

Phase 2 Application shall be created through the online tool Synergie-CTE.

Along with the Phase 2 Application, applicants shall submit the additional required documents. The list of additional required documents shall be specified in the Call for Proposals (these normally include Letters of Commitment from all cities involved in the full partnership).

Stage 6 – Eligibility check of Phase 2 Applications

The URBACT Secretariat shall check the Phase 2 Application submitted within the deadline, for compliance with eligibility criteria for Phase 2 Application defined in the Call for Proposals.

The Secretariat shall transfer eligible Phase 2 Applications to the External Assessment Panel.

Stage 7 – Assessment of Final Applications

The External Assessment Panel shall assess the eligible Phase 2 Applications.. The assessment criteria for Phase 2 Applications shall be provided in the Call for Proposals to be approved by the Monitoring Committee.

Assessment criteria for Phase 2 Applications will refer to the following:

- Relevance of the topic/theme/policy issue addressed in relation to the EU2020 strategy and the Thematic Objectives for EU Cohesion Policy 2014/2020
- Coherence of the general approach proposed and more especially coherence of the methodology proposed for exchange and learning activities (in terms of expected results, proposed activities and related outputs)
- Quality of partnership proposed for Phase 2 (in terms of relevance of the topic addressed for each partner, diversity of experiences and potential contribution, etc.)
- Quality of the leadership
- Budget for Phase 2

In the perspective of ensuring good proposals get funded for implementation, the EAP may seek clarification from the candidate Lead partners and proposed Lead experts by means of interviews and provide recommendations for improvements if necessary.

The EAP shall proceed to the assessment of each eligible proposal and elaborate recommendations for approval. Based on this input, the URBACT Managing Authority shall submit a proposal of networks to be approved to the Monitoring Committee

Stage 8 – Decision of the Monitoring Committee for Phase 2

Following the assessment of Final Application by the EAP, and considering the proposal of the Managing Authority, the Monitoring Committee shall decide on the approval of networks to enter Phase 1. The decision of the Monitoring Committee shall be final.

Project applicants can appeal the decision of the Monitoring Committee in accordance with Article 74 (3) EU Regulation 1303/2013. The procedure for appeal will be outlined in the Call for Proposals.

Lead partners of approved projects shall receive and sign a subsidy contract, which marks the final stage of approval of the project. Additional information on the subsidy contract is available in the fact sheet 2E. The project shall then be fully operational and start working on Phase 2.

3. External Assessment Panel (EAP)

The External Assessment Panel (EAP) shall be composed normally of 7 members in charge of assessing the eligible projects received by the URBACT Secretariat after each call for proposals. The members shall be recruited through a call for applicants. An external consultancy, recruited through a call for tender, will be in charge of selecting the candidates according to following criteria:

- Proven track record in similar work (i.e. of assessing applications for transnational cooperation projects)
- Good knowledge of issues related to sustainable urban development.
- Understanding and experience of exchange and transfer of experience at European level
- Independence from cities, national authorities, and National or European networks involving local authorities

The EAP chair shall be appointed among the 7 selected members.

A representative of the European Commission shall also be invited to attend the meetings of the EAP as observer.

The EAP shall review eligible applications against the assessment criteria outlined in the Calls for Proposals

Members of the EAP will proceed to the assessment and scoring of projects. Normally the methodology of the EAP will be developed along the following principles:

- Each project will be assessed by 2 different assessors (in case of divergent assessment and scoring a third assessor will review the proposal)
- The EAP shall seek consensus among assessors and produce single assessment and scoring sheet for each project
- The allocation of project proposals will be done by the URBACT Secretariat considering the thematic expertise of assessors as well as their nationalities (assessors will not assess project proposals with candidate Lead Partners from their own Country).
- Members of the EAP will meet physically to share the results of their individual assessment and elaborate the final assessment report and recommendations
- The assessors shall seek clarification from the candidate Lead Partners as necessary.

The assessment procedure shall involve the EAP at two different stages:

- a) The EAP shall assess the Phase 1 Applications once they have been declared eligible by the URBACT Secretariat. Along with the ranking of projects, the assessors shall be asked to provide recommendations for the improvements of networks
- b) The EAP shall also be asked to assess the Phase 2 Applications elaborated by the partners at the end of Phase 1, and to provide recommendations for the improvements of networks, before they are submitted to the Monitoring Committee for approval

The URBACT Programme shall finance the costs related to the External Assessment Panel creation and functioning. The Secretariat shall coordinate the activities and provide secretarial backing for the EAP (e.g. allocation of project proposals for assessment, set up of an online tool to facilitate the work of the EAP, regular meetings with assessors, etc).