



**URBACT III OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME
(2014-2020)**

**CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR 7 EXPERTS FOR THE URBACT III
EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT PANEL (EAP)**

Open 22 April 2015 – 20 May 2015

TABLE OF CONTENT

Section 1 - Call for Applicants	3
Section 2 – The External Assessment Panel in the framework of the URBACT III Programme	3
Section 3: Application and selection procedure	10
Section 4 – Contractual Details	12
Annex 1 - Reference Documents	17
Annex 2 - Application process for the creation of projects in URBACT III	18

SECTION 1 - CALL FOR APPLICANTS

The “Commissariat Général à l’Egalité des Territoires” (CGET), Managing Authority of the URBACT III Operational programme, issues a Call for Applicants for the constitution of the External Assessment Panel (EAP).

As stated in the URBACT III Programme Manual, the External Assessment Panel shall be in charge of assessing all the eligible applications submitted in the framework of Calls for Proposals launched for the creation of URBACT Networks. The members of the External Assessment Panel shall be recruited through a Call for Applicants. More detail on the tasks of the EAP and the recruitment process are provided in section 2 of the present Call.

The present Call for Applicants for the constitution of the External Assessment Panel will remain open until 20 May 2015.

SECTION 2 – THE EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT PANEL IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE URBACT III PROGRAMME

2.1. The URBACT Programme

URBACT is a European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) programme promoting exchange and learning amongst cities, in relation to integrated sustainable urban development. URBACT enables European cities to work together to develop effective and sustainable responses to major urban challenges. The Programme affirms the key role cities play in tackling increasingly complex societal changes by encouraging cooperation through transnational exchange networks.

More especially, the URBACT III Operational Programme defines 4 specific objectives for the programming period 2014-2020:

1. To improve the capacity of cities to manage sustainable urban policies and practices in an integrated and participative way.
2. To improve the design of sustainable urban strategies and action plans in cities.
3. To improve the implementation of Integrated Plans for sustainable urban development.
4. To ensure that practitioners and decision-makers at all levels (EU, national, regional and local) have increased access to URBACT thematic knowledge and share know-how on all aspects of sustainable urban development in order to improve urban policies

The thematic coverage of the URBACT III Programme covers the ten first Thematic Objectives (TOs) of the EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020¹:

- Strengthening research, technological development and innovation (TO1)
- Enhancing access to and use and quality of ICT (TO2)

¹ The detailed list of the Thematic Objectives of the EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 is available here : http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index.cfm/en/information/legislation/guidance/

- Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs (TO3)
- Supporting the shift towards a low carbon economy in all sectors (TO4)
- Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management (TO5)
- Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency (TO6)
- Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures (TO7)
- Promoting employment and supporting labour mobility (TO8)
- Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty (TO9)
- Investing in education, skills and lifelong learning by developing education and training infrastructure (TO10)

The main mechanism that URBACT uses to achieve its objectives is through co-financing exchange and learning networks. More details on URBACT networks are provided in the following section.

The URBACT III Operational Programme (CCI 2014TC16RFIR003) was officially adopted on 12th December 2014 by Commission Implementing Decision C(2014) 9857². In addition to the Operational Programme, a series of detailed operational Fact Sheets are to be included in the official Programme Manual³. These Fact Sheets lay down the principles and regulations for the implementation of the activities in the framework of the URBACT III Programme.

2.2. URBACT III Networks

In 2014-2020, URBACT will support European cities through 3 different types of transnational networks:

- **Action Planning Networks**, to improve the capacities of cities to design integrated strategies for sustainable urban development.
- **Implementation Networks**, to improve the capacities of cities to implement integrated strategies/ action plan for sustainable urban development
- **Transfer Networks**, to improve the capacities of cities to implement integrated urban strategies/ action plan by adapting and re-using, at local level, good practices identified in the field of integrated sustainable urban development

The main **beneficiaries** of the transnational exchange activities are cities from the 28 EU Member States, plus Norway & Switzerland. In addition, other beneficiaries may include local agencies, provincial, regional and national authorities; universities and research centers. All beneficiaries are public or public equivalent bodies.

² The adopted version of the Operational Programme is here : http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/u_iii_op_adopted_12_december_2014.pdf

³ The Programme Manual fact sheets related to networking activities are available here: <http://urbact.eu/open-calls-networks>

Cities funded through the programme work together in networks, each of which has a Lead partner city.

In all 3 types of networks, beneficiaries exchange and share experiences, problems and possible solutions. They also generate new ideas to address local challenges related to the design and the implementation of integrated strategies for sustainable urban development. Exchange and learning activities at transnational level provide partners with practical knowledge, as well as experience from peers and experts that will feed into the local design and/or implementation of integrated strategies/plans for sustainable urban development⁴.

All URBACT Networks are approved by the means of Calls for Proposals (each type of URBACT Network is approved by the means of a specific Call for Proposals)

More especially, the Programme foresees a two-phase process for the approval URBACT Networks. The process includes:

- ✓ **First phase:** a 6-month phase for the definition of the final partnership and the development of a complete project proposal in the form of a **Phase 2 Application**
- ✓ **Second phase:** a 24-month phase for the implementation of the activities foreseen by the network

Candidate Lead Partners submit a Phase 1 Application in the framework of a Call for Proposals. Applications are checked against eligibility criteria by the Joint Secretariat. All eligible applications are assessed by an External Assessment Panel (EAP) against a set of assessment criteria defined in the Call for Proposals concerned⁵.

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

URBACT Networks approved by the URBACT Monitoring Committee enter the 6-month Phase 1 project. The main aim of Phase 1 is to provide partners of approved networks with time and resources to ensure the development of a common vision of the policy challenges/issues to be addressed, the definition of a coherent final partnership, the elaboration of a shared methodology for the exchange activities and the submission of a Phase 2 Application.

Phase 2 Applications are subject to an eligibility check performed by the URBACT Secretariat. Eligible applications are transferred to the EAP for assessment. Following the assessment and ranking of project proposals by the EAP, and considering the proposal of the URBACT Managing Authority, the URBACT Monitoring Committee shall decide on the approval of networks to enter Phase 2. Phase 2 will be devoted to the implementation of transnational exchange and learning activities as well as to activities at partner level in order to ensure impact on the local policies and local governance of partners involved.

⁴ Applicants may refer to the 1st call for the creation of Action Planning networks open until 16 June 2015, for more details on this type of networks. <http://urbact.eu/open-calls-networks>

⁵ Refer to the 1st call for proposals for the creation of Action-Planning Networks for an example of assessment criteria <http://urbact.eu/open-calls-networks>

Each call for proposals shall outline a complaints procedure. In the 1st call launched for the creation of Action Planning Networks, the procedure is defined as follows:

Lead partners of rejected project proposals are informed in writing about the reasons why an application was not eligible or not approved. Questions in relation to the assessments will be examined and answered by the Managing Authority/ Joint Secretariat. Projects that have not been selected for funding have the right to file a formal complaint on the decision of the Monitoring Committee.

In principle, complaints can only be lodged against the following criteria: (1) the assessment does not take into consideration information supplied in the application and (2) the project assessment and selection process failed to comply with the specific procedures laid down in the call publication and programme manual, which as a consequence may have affected the decision.

Only the project's lead partner can file a complaint. Potential partner complaints have to be passed through the lead partner. Complaints should be submitted electronically to the joint secretariat within 3 weeks after the official notification of the non-selection of the project by the Managing Authority. This deadline shall not prejudice the start of the other projects approved by the Monitoring Committee.

The complaints will be examined and answered by a complaint panel involving the chair of the URBACT Monitoring Committee, the URBACT Managing Authority/ Joint Secretariat and the chair of the External Assessment Panel. If deemed necessary, the complaint panel may decide to submit a complaint to the Monitoring Committee of the programme for review.

2.3. The External Assessment Panel

2.3.1. Role and tasks of the External Assessment Panel

The URBACT III Programme Manual states that all applications submitted by candidates Lead Partners in the framework of a Call for Proposals and declared eligible by the Joint Secretariat shall be assessed by an independent External Assessment Panel (EAP).

The External Assessment Panel shall be composed by 7 members (including a Chair) and they shall be recruited through a Call for Applicants. The Chair shall be appointed by the URBACT Managing Authority among the 7 EAP members, building on recommendations of the service provider in charge of assessing EAP applications.

The External Assessment Panel is in charge of assessing, scoring and ranking all eligible applications against a set of assessment criteria approved by the URBACT Monitoring Committee and available to all applicants in the framework of the Call for Proposals. Although assessment criteria are adapted to each Call for Proposals, the following principles are common:

- Relevance of the topic/theme/policy issue addressed in relation to the EU2020 strategy and the Thematic Objectives of 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 (in terms of relevance of the topic addressed for each partner, diversity of experiences and potential contribution, etc.)
- Quality of the leadership
- Budget

According to the two-phase process for the creation of URBACT Networks, described in the previous section, the EAP is responsible for the assessment, scoring and ranking of both Phase 1 and Phase 2 Applications for each Call for Proposals.

More especially, for each Call for Proposals, the work of the External Assessment Panel is structured around two main steps:

1. Assessment of Phase 1 Applications. This includes the following activities:

- **Kick off meeting with the Joint Technical Secretariat** to define the methodology for the assessment process, develop a shared understanding of the assessment criteria and define a detailed calendar for the delivery of the expected outputs
- **Assessment and scoring of eligible applications by individual members of the EAP.** Each application shall be assessed by 2 different assessors, allowing for a cross-analysis and co-scoring of each project. The assessment shall result in the production, by each assessor, of an assessment sheet including detailed scoring and comments/ recommendations.
- **Consensus meeting with all members of the EAP and the Joint Secretariat** to share the individual assessment and consolidate a final assessment and scoring for all eligible applications (this meeting should be prepared by the EAP sharing individual assessment sheets, identifying project proposals for which assessment and scoring are divergent, etc.)
- **Delivery by the EAP Chair of a the final report** which includes a description of the assessment process, the results of the assessment (scoring and ranking), the recommendations to the Monitoring Committee and the consolidated assessment sheets for each eligible application

2. Assessment of Phase 2 Applications. This includes the following activities:

- **Kick off meeting with the Joint Technical Secretariat** to define the methodology for the assessment process, develop a shared understanding of the assessment criteria and define a detailed calendar for the delivery of the expected outputs
- **Initial Assessment and scoring of eligible applications by individual members of the EAP.** Each application shall be assessed by 2 different assessors, allowing for a cross-analysis and co-scoring of each project. The assessment by individual member of the EAP shall result in the production of a assessment sheet including detailed scoring and comments.
- **Interview with Lead Partners and Lead Experts** to ask clarifications and provide recommendations for improvement. Following the interview, applicants will have 2 weeks to submit a revised version of the Phase 2 Application if requested.

- Final assessment and scoring of revised Phase 2 Applications by individual members of the EAP.
- **Consensus meeting all members of the EAP and the Joint Secretariat** to share the individual assessment and consolidate a final assessment and scoring for all eligible applications (this meeting should be prepared by the EAP sharing individual assessment sheets, identifying project proposals for which assessment and scoring are divergent, etc.)
- **Delivery by the EAP chair of a final report** which includes a description of the assessment process, the results of the assessment (scoring and ranking), the recommendations to the Monitoring Committee and the consolidated assessment sheets for each eligible application
- **The EAP Chair may be asked to present the assessment results to the MC meeting**

2.3.2. Role and tasks of the chair of the External Assessment Panel

The Chair of the External Assessment Panel will play a specific role in the panel. He/ she will more especially be in charge of the following:

- To review all applications submitted to the EAP for assessment to develop a comprehensive overview of all applications;
- To ensure timely delivery of individual assessment sheets, review individual assessment sheets produced by assessors and ensure quality and consistency across assessment sheets;
- To prepare and chair the consensus meetings for each round of proposals assessment;
- To guide the panel for the production of consolidated project assessment sheets following the consensus meeting;
- To draft the assessment report and, upon request of the URBACT Secretariat, to present the result of the assessment campaign (process, lessons learnt, results and recommendations, etc.) to the URBACT Monitoring Committee;
- To take part in the "Complaint panel" if requested

2.4. Calendar for the activities of the External Assessment Panel

The External Assessment Panel to be composed through the present Call for Applicants will be responsible for the assessment of Phase 1 and Phase 2 Applications submitted in the framework of the first 3 Calls for Proposals for URBACT Networks in the 2014-2020 programming period.

The table below provides an indicative calendar of the assessment periods for the 3 Calls for Proposals:

TYPE OF NETWORK	LAUNCH OF CALL	ASSESSMENT FOR PHASE 1	ASSESSMENT FOR PHASE 2
ACTION PLANNING NETWORKS	MARCH 2015	JUNE-JULY 2015	MARCH-APRIL 2016

IMPLEMENTATION NETWORKS ⁶	JAN 2016	APRIL-MAY 2016	NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2016
TRANSFER NETWORKS ⁷	JAN 2016	APRIL-MAY 2016	NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2016

At the time of publishing the present Call for the constitution of the External Assessment Panel, the first Call for Proposals for Action Planning Networks is opened and the milestones for the assessment process already defined as follows:

a) Assessment of Phase 1 Applications for Action Planning Networks:

- Kick off meeting with the URBACT Joint Secretariat: 25-26 June 2015
- Assessment and scoring of Phase 1 Applications by assessors: 27 June – 15 July 2015
- Consensus meeting: 22-23-24 July 2015
- Delivery of the final report: 31 July 2015

b) Assessment of Phase 2 Applications for Action Planning Networks:

- Kick off meeting with the URBACT Joint Secretariat: March 2016
- Initial assessment and scoring of Phase 2 Applications: March-April 2016
- Interviews with Lead Partners and Lead Experts: April 2016
- Final assessment and scoring of revised Phase 2 Applications: April 2016
- Consensus meeting: April 2016
- Delivery of the final report: end of April – early May 2016

Precise calendars for the 2 other calls to be launched early 2016 (implementation networks and transfer networks) will be defined in the last quarter of 2015.

⁶ Provisional calendar to be confirmed with the URBACT Monitoring Committee in the last quarter of 2015.

⁷ Provisional calendar to be confirmed with the URBACT Monitoring Committee in the last quarter of 2015.

SECTION 3: APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

3.1. Application

Applications shall include the following:

1. a detailed resume in English, using the Europass format⁸
2. a signed cover letter in English outlining:
 - why the candidate is suitable to join the URBACT External Assessment Panel,
 - main experience with regard to: a) working on the issues covered by the URBACT III programme and, b) working as an expert on such an assessment panel
 - whether the applicant would be interested in the position of Chair of the External Assessment Panel and his/ her motivation for the position

NOTA BENE: In order to avoid potential conflict of interest, the covering letter will include the following mention:

"I hereby certify that I do not have any professional relation with the actors potentially involved in URBACT III project proposals to be assessed nor any interest in the projects that could be developed by cities and other public authorities within the framework of the 1st series of Call for proposals under URBACT III. In case there should be any change in my personal situation with regard to the above mentioned elements, I commit to inform immediately the E.A.P. chair and the Director of the URBACT Secretariat of the new situation. The latter will submit the issue to the Monitoring Committee."

The deadline for receipt of applications is 20 May 2015 at midnight (GMT + 1).

Applications shall be sent by the deadline via e-mail to the URBACT Secretariat at the following address: t.picquart@urbact.eu

3.2. Selection procedure

As foreseen by the URBACT III Programme Manual, the selection of applications for the External Assessment Panel will be performed by an independent consultancy selected through an open call for tender.

The selection procedure will be undertaken in 2 stages:

- A short list of candidates will be elaborated on the basis of the assessment of received applications.
- Short listed candidates will be interviewed by the independent consultancy.

NOTA BENE: Interviews will take place in Paris, on the following days: 08-09-10 June 2015

The 7 selected experts will be included in the pool of URBACT III validated experts.

⁸ The template for the Europass CV can be found at <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/europass/home/vernav/Europass+Documents/Europass+CV/navigate.action>.

3.3. Selection criteria

Selection of applicants will be done along the following criteria:

- Proven track record in similar work (i.e. of assessing project applications, and of applying scoring systems and making recommendations for selection);
- Good understanding of challenges for sustainable integrated urban development in Europe;
- In depth knowledge of a range of urban issues corresponding to the URBACT III thematic coverage (refer to the Thematic coverage presented under section 2 of the present Call for Applicants). The knowledge can be academic or/and based on practical experience;
- Understanding and experience of transnational networks for exchange and learning, and for the transfer of experience/ good practices;
- Independence from cities, national authorities, and National or European networks involving local authorities;
- Fluent in English (written and spoken);
- Working knowledge of French appreciated
- Where possible working knowledge of a third EU language
- IT Literate (Windows, Excel, Outlook)
- Excellent communication skills (written and verbal) and experience of committee work
- Ability to work in a team, under pressure and to tight deadline

In addition to the above, the Chair of the EAP shall present proven track record in chairing, managing groups of experts, especially in charge of assessing transnational cooperation project proposals.

The External Assessment Panel shall be balanced in terms of thematic expertise so as to ensure adequate coverage of all urban themes to be addressed by URBACT networks.

The panel shall also be balanced in terms of gender and geographical coverage. Regarding geographical coverage, and if made possible by the range of applications received, the 7 experts should be of different nationalities. Classification of candidates will be first and foremost based on skills and experience. In case the assessment process should lead to having 2 or more experts of the same nationality(ies) among the 7 selected candidates, then nationality will be taken into account on the basis of the following principle: among 2 or more experts from the same nationality, only the one coming first in terms of ranking will be selected. Expert candidates ranking from the 8th position on will then be considered and selected as long as they are not of a nationality already represented among the selected experts.

SECTION 4 – CONTRACTUAL DETAILS

4.1. Subject matter and duration

This call for applicants concerns the recruitment of 7 experts to fulfil the role of the External Assessment Panel in charge of assessing and scoring projects received within the frame of the URBACT III Calls for Proposals for the 3 types of networks (Action Planning Networks (APN), Implementation Networks (IN) and Transfer Networks (TN)).

The URBACT III External Assessment Panel set up under this first series of calls will be valid until 30 June 2017, unless decided otherwise by the Monitoring Committee if further needs arise.

A contract will be signed between the Managing Authority / URBACT Secretariat and each selected EAP member.

4.2. Financial terms of contract

4.2.1. *Payments*

The payment of the experts is fixed at 750€ per day, VAT included. These payments will be financed in the framework of the URBACT programme and will be made by the managing Authority of the URBACT III programme.

Travel and accommodation costs will be supported by the URBACT Secretariat following the URBACT III refund conditions rules and after reception by the Secretariat of the declaration of expenses form and justifications of payment within 3 months after each meeting.

4.2.2. *Value Added Tax (VAT)*

As part of a French National public body and according to Articles 4 and 5 of the 6th Community Directive and to Article 256B of the French Tax Code, the URBACT Secretariat is not subject to VAT.

The URBACT Secretariat is paying its providers VAT inclusive. It is therefore up to the providers of the URBACT Secretariat to collect and pay VAT in their own countries according to their national tax rates to their tax authorities.

The URBACT Secretariat provider which is exempt of VAT must provide the URBACT Secretariat with the reasons (specific status, law articles, ...) and proofs of this exemption when signing the contract and must refer to this in its invoices.

4.2.3. *Number of days and purchase order*

For each assessment campaign under each call (phase 1 applications and phase 2 applications), depending on the number of eligible applications, the number of days of expertise to be allocated will amount to:

- 22 days on average for the assessors
- 30 days on average for the Chair of the EAP

For each assessment campaign, and for both stages (phase 1 applications and phase 2 applications), purchase orders will be issued to define the service to be provided and the amount of days to be allocated to the different tasks. Purchase orders shall comprise at least:

- The reference of the call for applicants,
- The reference number and object of the purchase order,
- The time limit within which the services are to be provided,
- The number of days to be worked and the total amount to be paid to the expert,
- The payment procedures.

The purchase order will be signed by the person responsible for the contract or, in his/her absence, by a person duly authorised and delegated to sign within the limits of the authorisation.

4.2.4. *Request for payment of the purchase orders*

The payment will be made after completion of each stage (See section 2), upon delivery by the expert of the individual project assessment sheets, the consolidated project assessment sheets, an invoice detailing the number of days and allocation of days to the different activities.

The expenditure will be chargeable to the URBACT Programme budget.

4.2.5. *Bank details*

The name and address of the bank, the bank account number and the bank's IBAN and SWIFT/BIC codes must be specified.

4.2.6. *Invoicing procedures*

Invoices for payment of each purchase order must be supplied in 1 original and 1 copy, and sent with all the documents required for payment to:

URBACT Secretariat
5, rue Pleyel
F – 93283 Saint-Denis Cedex

4.2.7. *Delays*

Payments shall take place no later than 30 days following the date of reception and validation of the complete set of documents by the URBACT Secretariat.

Should the Administration fail to issue an order to pay within the time stipulated in subsection above, default interest calculated in accordance with the regulations in force will accrue automatically and will be payable to the expert without further formality.

4.3. Administrative changes to the status of the expert or company

During the life of the contract, the expert must notify the URBACT Secretariat without delay in writing of any change affecting his status or the status of the company, and any change in the bank details. The expert is given notice that, should he fail to comply with this requirement, the URBACT Secretariat cannot under any circumstances be held liable for delays in the payment of invoices where irregularity is noticed as a result of changes occurring within the company, which the URBACT Secretariat has not been informed of.

4.4. Performance procedures

The URBACT Secretariat will issue expertise contract to each E.A.P. member. The URBACT Secretariat will be allowed to work with experts belonging to the EAP for the needs of the programme.

4.5. Review and acceptance procedures

4.5.1. Conditions for acceptance of the services

Each service provided will be checked separately by the authorized representative of the Lead partner and by the URBACT Secretariat, or only by URBACT Secretariat in case of a demand of this Secretariat.

4.5.2. Technical and administrative monitoring

Performance of the services will be monitored for the Administration by the URBACT Secretariat.

4.6. End of contract

The contract may be terminated by either party by the giving of one clear month's notice to the other contracting party. Such notice of termination shall be given by registered letter with acknowledgment of delivery.

In the event of termination by either party, and on the normal expiration of the contract term, the expert shall remain liable to fulfil any purchase order placed during the life of the contract, including after the contractual periods of notice as provided for in the contract, provided such purchase orders are operative within sixty days of the end of the time limit for completion.

4.7. Dispute settlement

It is expressly specified that under no circumstances and on no grounds whatever may the expert use any disputes that might occur between the Administration and the expert as a reason for stopping or halting, even temporarily, the services to be provided.

Such if any disputes as may arise during the performance of this contract may be referred to the monitoring committee for the amicable settlement of disputes.

Should the parties fail to reach agreement, the dispute may be referred to the Tribunal Administratif de Nanterre for a final decision.

ANNEX 1 - REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

The following documents can all be found on the URBACT website www.urbact.eu :

- URBACT III Operational programme:
http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/u_iii_op_adopted_12_december_2014.pdf
- URBACT III Programme manual Fact Sheets related to Action Planning Networks:
<http://urbact.eu/open-calls-networks>
- URBACT 1st call for Action Planning Networks Terms of reference and Guide:
http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/media/urbactiii_call_for_proposals_actionplanningnetworks.pdf
http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/media/urbactiii_guide_to_actionplanningnetworks.pdf

These documents provide background information on the URBACT Programme and the projects which are currently being developed.

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 section 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.

Guidelines to project applications shall be provided with the call for proposals.