

STUDY ON INTEGRATED ACTION PLANS (IAP STUDY)

URBACT ACTION PLANNING NETWORKS

Final Report
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This IAP Study report has been prepared by E40 Group EEIG, under the lead consultant Ed Thorpe.

Main author: Ed Thorpe (E40 Group)

Contributors: Edina Ocsko (E40 Group), Veneta Paneva (Independent).

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Abbreviations

APN – URBACT Action Planning Network

IAP – Integrated Action Plan

ULG – URBACT Local Group

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Introduction

This report marks the final output of the 'IAP Study' commissioned by the URBACT Programme and conducted by E40 Group, led by Ed Thorpe (Nov 2018 - Jul 2019). It highlights the main trends and observations from a review of the 205 Integrated Action Plans (IAPs) produced by cities that participated in the 20 URBACT Action Planning Networks 2016-2018. On this basis, the report draws a set of conclusions and makes a series of suggestions and recommendations for the next generation of URBACT Action Planning Networks starting in 2019.

Background

URBACT is the European Territorial Cooperation programme for cities. It was initially launched in 2002 to support exchange of experience between cities that had participated in the URBAN I and URBAN II Action Programmes – mostly focused on sustainable regeneration of urban neighbourhoods. In 2007, the scope of the URBACT Programme increased to cover sustainable urban development more broadly across a range of policy areas.

In this context, URBACT has been a key tool for supporting implementation of the EU Member States' 2007 'Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities' which called for more integrated approaches to urban development "in which the spatial, sectoral and temporal aspects of key areas of urban policy are co-ordinated" through a process which "involves actors outside the administration and enables citizens to play an active role".

URBACT has used its resources and know-how to provide participating cities with tools and methods to develop integrated solutions to their high-priority urban issues. Key aspects of the URBACT method developed since 2007 are the support of transnational exchange and learning through small networks of around ten cities working on a common theme, the establishment of local stakeholder groups in each participating city, and their elaboration of city-specific local action plans. This work is supported by guidance provided by the URBACT Secretariat and support on both themes and processes from a pool of URBACT experts.

Under the current programming cycle (2014-2020), URBACT III has evolved and further enhanced the tools and support it provides to cities. Thematic networks have become 'Action Planning Networks' to reinforce the need for what the Leipzig Charter refers to as "implementation-oriented planning tools".

The main objective of Action Planning Networks, as defined by the URBACT Programme Manual, is "to improve the capacity of cities to manage sustainable urban policies and more especially to strengthen the capacity to design integrated strategies for sustainable urban development. Action Planning Networks are expected to support an organised process of exchange and learning among peers across Europe... [cities] shall identify a policy challenge they want to address at local level. Then, they shall commit to develop an Integrated Action Plan that will address this challenge."

These 'Integrated Action Plans' replace the 'Local action plans' developed under URBACT II, whilst the URBACT local support groups became 'URBACT Local Groups'. The URBACT Secretariat also provided an updated set of guidance for APN cities, including:

- New 'Guidelines to Produce an Integrated Action Plan';
- A new guide to 'Applying the results framework to Integrated Actions Plans';
- An updated URBACT Summer University curriculum for APN cities;
- An updated framework of 'Lead' and 'Ad-hoc' Expert support; and
- The existing (URBACT II) 'URBACT Local Support Group Toolkit'.

In total, 205 city partners participated in the first round of URBACT III Action Planning Networks 2016-2018 (cities participating in two networks are counted twice). Each city partner (including lead partners) is expected to produce an Integrated Action Plan as its main final output. They are also expected to produce an English language summary.

Key Terms and Definitions

URBACT = the European Territorial Cooperation programme that supports cities through transnational exchange and learning, with the aim of fostering integrated sustainable urban development across Europe.

Integrated Sustainable Urban Development = an approach to urban development that addresses economic, environmental, and social challenges and objectives (sustainable) based on coherence and complementarity between the various policies, sectors, stakeholders and levels of decision-making (integrated)

URBACT Action Planning Networks (APNs) = small thematic networks of cities supported by URBACT. Each participating city works with local stakeholders to develop a local plan of action, while benefitting from a shared process of transnational exchange and learning.

Integrated Action Plan (IAP) = the main output of cities participating in Action Planning Networks, IAPs define the local actions to be carried out in response to the sustainable development challenges worked on in the thematic network.

URBACT Local Group (ULG) = the local body that is responsible for drafting the IAP, composed of all relevant stakeholders having a stake in the policy challenge addressed by the city.

Aims of the study

URBACT commissioned the 'IAP Study' in order to take stock and draw any lessons from the outputs of the first round of 20 Action Planning Networks (2016-2018) under URBACT III. The study comes at an important time for URBACT in allowing the programme to support the second generation of URBACT III Action Planning Networks (2019-2022) with lessons from the first.

The study was set the main objectives of providing useful intelligence on both the content and methods used to develop the IAPs, including trends, pitfalls and good examples, and making recommendations for the future APN Call. It was also set the objective of providing relevant insights, where possible, into the sustainability and impact of the IAPs.

This study also comes at an important time for the URBACT Programme more broadly, as the future of all the European Territorial Cooperation Programmes post-2020 are being discussed and debated at high-level. This study draws some conclusions on strengths and added value of URBACT; however, it must be noted that this study is focused solely on the Integrated Action Plans as an output and the information provided within them. It does not pretend or aspire to be a study of the URBACT method or the URBACT Programme more generally.

In the short-term, the results of the study are expected to be used already to inform updates and amendments in the support and guidance provided to the next round of approved Action Planning Networks starting in 2019. Beyond that, the study also provides some relevant information and reflections, which could form one part of a broader exercise in reviewing the URBACT Programme more generally.

Executive summary

URBACT commissioned the 'IAP Study' in order to take stock and draw lessons from the Integrated Action Plans (IAPs) produced by the first round of 20 Action Planning Networks (APNs) under URBACT III in 2018. The study aims to inform updates in the support and guidance provided to the next round of APNs starting in 2019 and provide relevant information and reflections to contribute to a broader understanding of the added value of the URBACT Programme moving forward.

Key findings of the study

The IAP documents clearly highlight the positive learning journey that cities have undertaken within URBACT Action Planning Networks and almost always define a set of chosen actions to be implemented. There is often significant buy-in from local stakeholders and decision-makers, giving the IAPs a strong potential to be implemented.

Nevertheless, the IAPs are characterised by the complexity of integrated action planning and their diversity in terms of their presentation, structure, style and content. This study identified at least fourteen aspects of integrated action planning to potentially consider (covering integrated planning processes, planning for integrated urban development and integrated plans) and at least six aspects of detailed action planning (covering timings, responsibilities, costings, funding, monitoring and risk assessment).

Assessing and comparing the overall level of integration and detail of the action plans is extremely difficult due to the fact that the performance of an IAP on any particular aspect is on a spectrum of 'more or less integrated' or 'more or less detailed'. General trends are that the IAPs set out more integrated approaches to urban development especially at local level, but are only able to get so far in defining all the possible action planning details. Cities seem to face a tension between providing a broader action plan (more integrated) and a deeper action plan (more detailed actions).

Furthermore, the clarity of many of the action plans is reduced by excessive reporting of the city context and the journey undertaken in the APN. Too many English summaries are executive summary 'descriptions' of an action plan or the thematic learning, rather than short versions of a plan. The clearest and most concise ways of presenting planned actions is through action planning tables, which were recommended to cities by URBACT and found by the study in various creative styles.

The network theme (rather than city size, country or level of development) seems to be the most important factor influencing legitimate differences in approach to integration, transnational learning and action planning. Nevertheless, the final IAP is a result of the interplay between the theme, each city's starting point and its individual journey in the APN.

Main conclusions

The IAPs are valuable tools in defining what a city plans to do next on a particular theme. But for many cities, the process of developing the IAP is even more valuable, in terms of transforming cross-departmental cooperation, local stakeholder involvement, understanding of thematic challenges and possible integrated solutions.

The IAPs have strong implementation potential, often enjoying ongoing stakeholder engagement and political buy-in. But they are not best understood as 'investment-ready' project plans, but rather 'living' documents whose implementation will come from ongoing stakeholder and city-authority engagement, including feeding into new funding applications. The full value of the IAPs will only be revealed by the impact they have over time, which could manifest in various ways.

The key impetus and main achievement of the URBACT Action Planning Networks is to drive more integrated approaches to sustainable urban development, rather than developing more detailed plans. It can already be challenging to bring in and consider so many new ideas, perspectives and interrelationships in sustainable urban development – particularly when the theme being worked on is a relatively new area of work for the city. Focusing down on action planning detail can only really start after the city has decided what it plans to do more generally.

The IAPs suggest that the APNs are directly and effectively meeting the objectives defined for them by the programme. The URBACT III Programme Manual clearly states that the main objectives of the APNs are around capacity building and that the action plans need to be understood not just as an output, but as a tool that drives exchange and learning.

Despite their existing value and the legitimacy of much of the variation and diversity seen in the IAPs, URBACT can still help cities to be more systematic about the way they address the complexity involved in integrated action planning and more structured in setting out their plans, including in terms of what needs to be in the action plan and where is the place for reporting on the rich URBACT journey that led to the plan.

Headline recommendations	Level of priority
<p>Continue to strengthen and improve integrated planning processes, for example by showcasing best ULG practice or undertaking specific work with Lead Experts on how transnational exchange can work differently on different themes.</p>	<p>*</p>
<p>Support cities to systematically address all aspects of Integrated Urban Development, for example by providing tools and guidance for cities to consider, prioritise and report against each aspect and creating a formal stage in the process to assess and improve the integrated nature of the emerging action plan..</p>	<p>***</p>
<p>Improve the guidance on detailed action planning, for example by separating more clearly the reporting from the action planning, further encouraging the use of action tables, offering training on weaker aspects, or defining an overall workflow for integrated action planning so that cities can track and justify where they have got to.</p>	<p>**</p>

Longer-term reflections

If, in the longer term, URBACT wants to achieve much more detailed action plans then it could consider selecting different types of networks/cities. This could involve selecting only cities which already have good local governance processes and a strong integrated strategy in place or already know what they want to do, but not how to do it. Then the work of the network could focus on the detailed action planning of those strategies and targeting particular funding sources.

However, such a change would risk abandoning cities who do not yet know what they need to do on a specific topic and avoiding complex, systemic, city-wide challenges and/or new areas of work for cities. It may be that some of these reflections are relevant for future discussion on the different types of network supported by URBACT.

A final consideration is that URBACT could usefully implement a more systemic follow-up on how IAPs have driven change in URBACT cities over time, including case studies of how cities have progressed from an URBACT APN to significant investment funding from other programmes.

Outline methodology

The methodology for the IAP Study was proposed by the contractor, E40, and agreed by a 'study steering group' made up of E40 and the URBACT Programme as represented by a senior member of the Secretariat and a Programme Expert. The methodology was regularly reviewed as the study was carried out to ensure any required modifications.

The methodology can be summarised under the following four sub-headings:

1. Quantitative and qualitative assessment of action planning elements

The study recorded whether, yes or no, each IAP set out a number of specific elements of action planning detail, identified from the URBACT IAP Guidance. It also pulled out important trends and differences in the way the IAPs present each element and good examples of the use of action planning tables. On this basis, the study was able to identify strengths and weaknesses in the level of detail in the action planning and possible trends according to city and network profiles, which were investigated through more detailed reading of representative IAPs.

2. Qualitative review of the 'integration' of the action plans

The study examined some of the clearer and more detailed action plans from each network in order to spot trends and areas of both strength and weakness in approaches to integration. An important aspect of the methodology was breaking down the concept of 'integrated action planning' into its diverse elements in order to assess the IAPs against each. The more detailed understanding of 'integration' provided by this breakdown itself comprises an important finding of the study.

3. Consultation of existing APN-related URBACT materials

The study consulted and used evidence contained within the findings of the survey of all APN cities that was conducted by the URBACT Secretariat at the closing of the networks ('APN Closure Survey'). It also considered the current guidance provided by URBACT to APN cities and took some inspiration from the recent publication of APN 'Cities in Action - Stories of Change'. Nevertheless, the main focus and basis of this study is the content of the Integrated Action Plans themselves and what can be learned from them specifically.

4. Drafting a set of case studies of interesting IAPs

A small sample of seven IAPs were selected and elaborated as case studies. To be considered for selection, all IAPs had to meet the minimum requirement of including at least six of the eight elements of a detailed action plan recognised by the IAP Study.¹ They were then selected to provide balance across network types, macro-regions of Europe, level of regional development and city size.

The case studies were conducted purely on the basis of an analytical reading of the final IAP documents. They are presented not as overall best practice, but rather as pertinent examples for examining and understanding some of the variation in prioritisation, approach, style and content in integrated action planning between cities and across themes. These are published alongside this IAP Study report.

¹ 1. Actions defined; 2. Actions set out in an action table; 3. Actions time defined; 4. Responsibilities allocated; 5. Actions costed; 6. Potential funding identified; 7. Monitoring indicators defined; 8. Risk assessment made

A. Integrated Action Plans – general observations

This section considers some of the most striking general observations that can be made of the IAPs as a whole. It does not consider the levels and types of integration or the level of detail achieved in the action planning, which are both covered in subsequent sections. Rather, it focuses on the general issues of presentation, structure, content and political buy-in.

i) IAPs generally have a clear action focus

The vast majority of IAPs demonstrate a clear focus on the planning of actions on the part of URBACT APN cities. Across all the IAPs, 172 (84%) set out actions to be implemented. The average number of actions presented was 17.7 ranging from 107 in one case to only 3 or 4 in others.²

Of the IAPs studied that did not set out actions to be implemented, the main explanations are that the IAP document does one or more of the following instead:

- Sets out future directions, pathways, political recommendations or priorities for the future, but has not yet turned these into specific actions.
- Sets out a process to develop an action plan in the future, having not been able to reach this stage during the lifetime of the project.
- Sets out actions that were implemented during the lifetime of the network (rather than to be implemented in the future).
- Limits itself to reporting on the work undertaken during the network and/or the thematic lessons learned.

ii) IAPs show the positive journey of cities in Action Planning Networks

Although this study is focused on the IAPs as outputs, it is notable that the IAPs are full of evidence of the positive and beneficial learning ‘journeys’ undertaken by cities within the Action Planning Networks. Some of the main ways that cities benefit are:

- Transformed approach to stakeholder engagement and local participation in decision-making
- Improved cross-departmental cooperation within the municipality
- Improved understanding of the local context and challenges
- Improved thematic knowledge and understanding
- Greater awareness of potential solutions
- More integrated approaches

Clearly the URBACT Local Groups and the network transnational exchange meetings are the central drivers of the positive learning journey reported by cities. But IAPs also mention different and specific aspects of the support they have received, notably training and guidance provided by URBACT (particularly the URBACT Summer University) and beneficial expertise (particularly the Lead Experts). The IAPs also show numerous examples where the cities have directly used tools and methods provided or suggested by URBACT (including the USLG toolkit, Problem Tree and OPERA).

² Sometimes the word ‘actions’ was used to refer to both headline actions and/or their distinct steps, making the generation of valuable and comparable data practically impossible. For more information see the section of the report on ‘level of action planning detail achieved’.

iii) IAPs provide a good basis to implement sustainable urban development

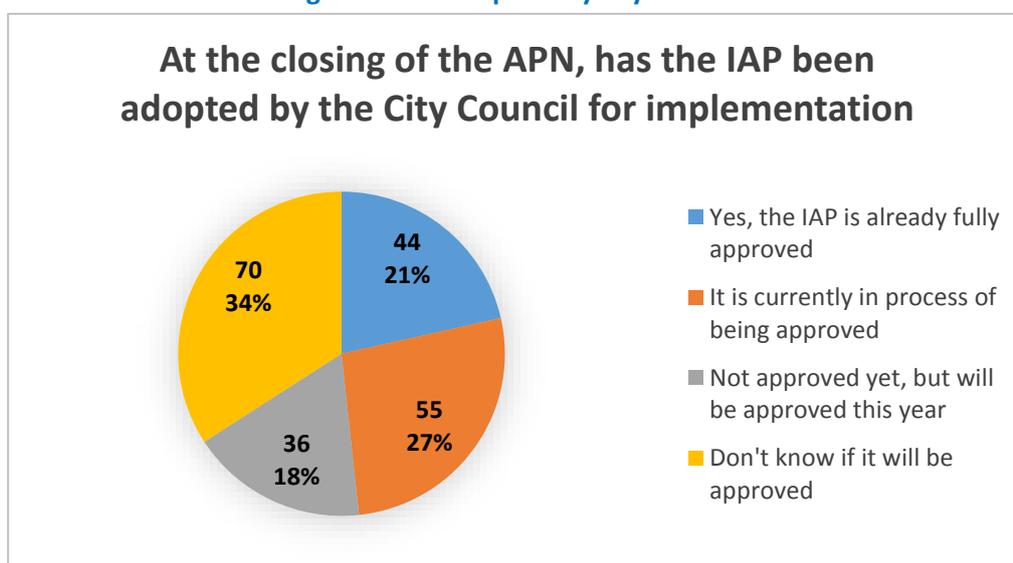
It may be that the apparently simple question of whether an IAP is implemented or not does not capture the real added value that the Integrated Action Plans developed under URBACT provide to cities. The plans may provide a much more solid and rigorous basis for cities planning their next steps, even when they are not ‘investment-ready’ plans in themselves. This conclusion is supported by a wealth of evidence which is not always visible within the IAPs themselves.

Political buy-in

A number of the IAPs are able to cite political support and/or likely official approval of the action plan at local level. In many cases this takes the form of a foreword to the IAP from the local mayor or other high-ranking politician.

This is backed up by evidence from the IAP Closure Survey conducted by URBACT, which found that as many as 66% of the IAPs were expected to be approved for implementation by the City Council within a year:

Figure 1: IAP adoption by city councils



Source: URBACT, IAP Closure Survey, 2018

Funding secured

Whilst there are some examples presented within the IAPs of funding already being secured for implementation of the IAP, the APN Closure Survey gives a more complete picture. According to the responses provided, as many as 48% of the 190 respondent cities had already at least partially secured funds for the implementation of the IAP. More than half of this funding comes from the city’s own or other local resources.

In 31 cases, funding had already been secured from the ERDF or ESF, with an average grant of nearly 620 000 EUR. Although it is not necessarily clear whether the funding was secured before or after the planning of the specific actions through the URBACT Action Planning Network, the strong implementation potential for the actions planned under URBACT remains the same.

Increased use of the results framework

Although the level of detail achieved (see section C of this report) varied significantly, most of the IAPs showed that URBACT cities had identified results they wanted to achieve and monitoring indicators and/or processes to track progress towards them. Even where actions are not yet defined in the greatest detail, these approaches will support cities in their medium to long-term processes of implementing their learning and desired actions from the URBACT networks.

ULG continuation

Many IAPs report that the URBACT Local Group will continue to function and support ongoing implementation and monitoring, as well as further development and elaboration of the IAP as a living document. Several set out explicit details on the ULG taking on an appropriate legal form or committing to meet at specific intervals to undertake this work.

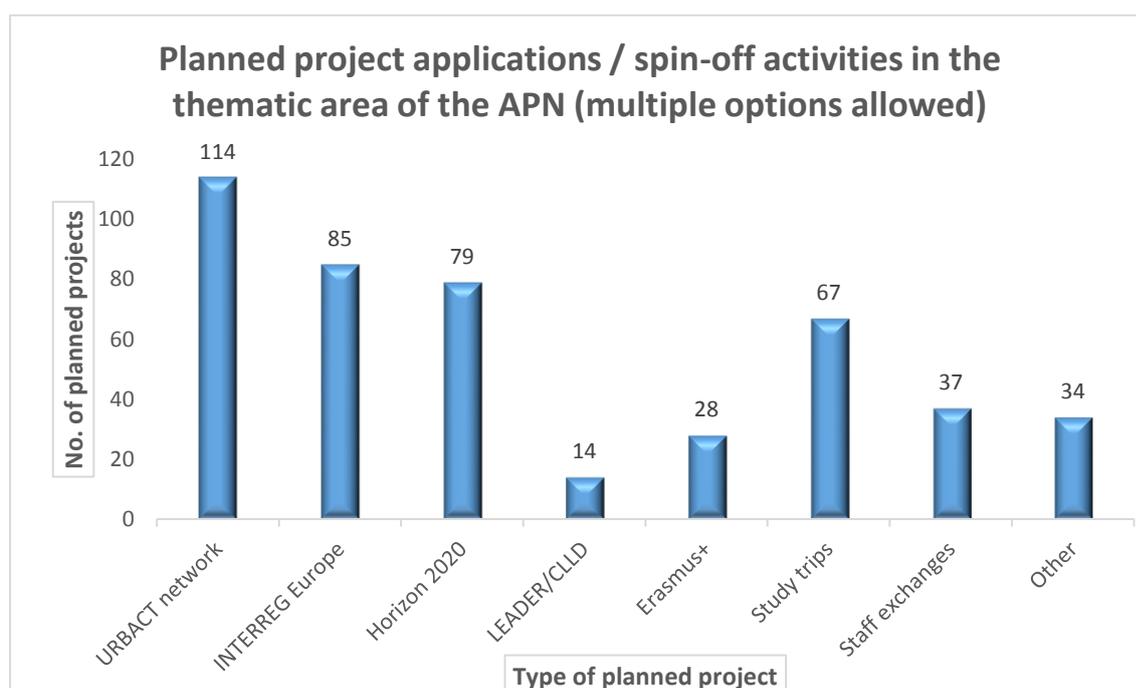
This is also backed up by evidence from the APN Closure Survey, with a large number of respondents stating that the ULG will continue to exist or function in one form or another. Furthermore, the survey finds that 79% of the cities created their ULG from scratch during the work of the APN, showing real added value from participation in URBACT.

Next steps already planned

Although next steps beyond the IAP are rarely able to be set out within the IAP itself, the findings of the APN Closure Survey highlight a large number of cities that are already planning to build on their work and experiences in URBACT to develop and submit future funding applications.

Confirmed plans for future project applications and/or spin-off activities in the thematic field of their APN include a significant number of potential additional URBACT networks, INTERREG projects and Horizon2020 applications.

Figure 2: Planned project applications following the URBACT APN



Source: URBACT, IAP Closure Survey, 2018

This evidence is supported by anecdotal evidence of cities reporting successful implementation of actions set out in or building on their IAP. This includes some recent examples reported on the URBACT website of cities developing H2020 project applications building on their URBACT experience, for instance: <https://urbact.eu/h2020-cities-citizen-projects-greener-communities>.

iv) IAPs are not the end of the planning process

Another observation of the IAP Study is that participating cities do not typically intend the IAPs as action plans that could be immediately implemented as a 'project' or presented directly to a funder to attract investment. Rather, the IAPs seek to capture the lessons and inspiration provided by participation in the APN to map out in more strategic terms what the city plans to do next and what it hopes to achieve on a particular theme.

Cities often recognise explicitly that further details will need to be elaborated for specific actions or funding applications and that ongoing lessons will need to be taken into account. This seems to fit with the definition of an IAP presented by the URBACT IAP Guidance: "An Integrated Action Plan (IAP) is a policy instrument that can be used to respond in a concrete way to a policy challenge."

Evidence from the IAPs highlights a number of different reasons for this approach by cities. The most prominent (and sometimes overlapping) reasons are that, in the time available to them in the APN:

- 1. Cities have focused on increasing their thematic understanding and identification of potential integrated solutions**

Many cities have not started their URBACT journey from a position of knowing what they want or need to do on their chosen theme. In some cases, they have chosen to work on a particularly new or challenging area where there is limited understanding of how to proceed. In such cases, the majority of the work in the network is spent on deepening understanding of the theme, how it relates to their specific local challenges and what potential solutions could be implemented. The impetus to strengthen the integration of the approaches only adds to the complexity of confirming even broadly defined actions to be implemented.

- 2. Cities have focused on transforming their approach to governance**

Many cities have developed and tested new forms of governance, both in terms of cross-department cooperation within the municipality and stakeholder involvement. It can then be more of a priority for the city to maintain or continue to evolve these processes and structures (so that new actions can be planned and implemented in the future), rather than developing more detailed action planning already at this stage. Some even define IAP actions in the area of governance processes.

- 3. Cities have focused on improving their use of existing resources**

Some cities are not focused on developing plans that would need external investment (from EU or other funds) for a 'new' set of actions because they are instead focused on improving existing ways of working within the city authority (for example, on how to manage procurement, how to run municipal digital communications or how to strategically support temporary use). Indeed, some IAPs specifically limit themselves to planning activities that can be implemented with the city's existing resources. In such cases, it may be that once they have worked out what they want to do in broad terms, there is little added value for them in elaborating a more detailed action plan.

- 4. Cities have focused on planning actions that were already implemented in the network**

There are also some examples of cities whose plans set out what actions the city intended to implement during its time within the URBACT network, covering aspects including work of the ULG and pilot actions. They are usually explicit that the lessons from this work will inform future activities, but the city is not always ready to draw these lessons by the time the IAP needs to be submitted.

v) The IAPs are extremely diverse in their presentation styles

One of the most striking overall observations about the IAPs presented for the study is their sheer diversity.

Obviously, it is expected that every IAP is unique in the actions it defines. However, each IAP also shows uniqueness in its approach to presenting its content in terms of the focus, style, structure, level of detail and length. This was often true even where cities in the same network were following the same basic template structure – they would still differ in the focus and detail provided. As a flavour of the diversity, national language versions of IAPs ranged from 9 pages to 791 pages.

Each IAP seemed to reveal new types and combinations of strength and weakness with different aspects of integrated action planning being made clear/explicit or hidden/absent. This made comparison and the generation of reliable data on the presence or absence of specific aspects very challenging. This was exacerbated by the number of aspects of integrated action planning being considered by the study (see sections B and C of this report that follow).

The heavy reliance of the IAP study on the English summary versions of the IAPs provided yet another difficulty in drawing reliable comparisons. Different interpretations of the most important content for the IAP as a whole were often exacerbated by different interpretations of what was required in the English-language summary.

Furthermore, in several cases, it was not clear whether what was being presented was the full IAP or a summary of a full IAP. The name of the document was often unhelpful in this regard. Several documents presented as 'Integrated Action Plans' imply or give the impression that they are not the actual action plan, but a description or presentation of an action plan which exists somewhere else. With regards to the English-language summaries, it is not always clear that cities have understood that they should present a summary version of the actual plan and not a summary description of the plan.

Whilst the national language IAPs provided to the study (123 IAPs) averaged around 55 pages³ and the English language summaries (201 IAPs) averaged around 29 pages, some English summaries were particularly short. As many as 32 (13.6%) of the IAPs had English summaries that were 5 pages or less, of which 17 (8.3% overall) were only 1 or 2 pages long. At the same time, as many as 78 IAPs had English versions that were at least 30 pages long and 39 of these were 50+ pages.

It is possible therefore that some positive aspects of performance in the original-language versions of the IAPs are missed by this study and reliable data and like-for-like comparisons on all aspects are impossible. Nevertheless, the English versions of the IAPs or IAP summaries still enable the study to draw important lessons and findings about the types and level of integrated action planning achieved by the URBACT III Action Planning Networks and the way this is reported. Furthermore, the study was able to refer to national language versions in several cases to check for the presence of specific details of action planning where required (see section C on level of action planning detail).

³ Including two that were longer than 400 pages.

vi) There are some frequent issues with the structure and content of the IAPs

A first observation under this heading is that many action plans forget to include a table of contents and therefore become relatively difficult to navigate for a new reader. This is particularly the case when action planning elements are not elaborated until relatively late in the overall IAP document.

A notable feature of the IAP documents is that they typically devote a considerable amount of their overall space to setting out the context of the city and the process followed during the network. The actions planned as a result of this work can become almost lost within the wealth of background information and reporting in the IAP document. This can make the IAPs read more like a report than a plan – even when the planning is there.

Many of the IAPs had sections with them called ‘action plan’ (or similar). This suggests a certain lack of clarity on the part of cities about whether the whole document is their action plan to be used and implemented locally or whether the whole document is in fact serving as a final report for URBACT (of which the action plan is part). This can have important implications when, for example, presenting the IAP to someone external to URBACT, including additional local stakeholders and potential funders.

Setting out some information on aspects such as the process followed in the ULG and the local needs identified is essential for understanding the planned actions. However, it is also important to get the balance right so that the IAP still reads like an action-focused plan. In order to set out the action plan, it is not necessary to report all the activities undertaken in the network or all the background data gathered – these aspects can be usefully summarised.

The reasons why so many cities have provided so much reporting detail may need further exploration with cities. However, one likely reason is that since the IAP is presented as the ‘main output’ of the APNs, and since so much of the work of the cities in the network is defined by the process they have undertaken, cities are keen to capture and report on the richness of their experience.

Another reason may be that this is how cities have been advised by their lead expert and/or how they have interpreted the IAP guidance provided by URBACT, which may seem to suggest that the actions are just one part out of seven in the IAP:

1. City context and definition of the initial problem/ policy challenge
2. Setting of focus and objectives
3. Actions and schedule
4. Funding scheme
5. Framework for delivery
6. Description of the process
7. Risk analysis

In fact, parts 3, 4, 5 and 7 are all aspects of action planning, whilst 1, 2 and 6 are focused on the process of arriving at the action plan. It may be that the Integrated Action Plans as specific outputs would benefit from a clearer separation of the presentation of the plan from the presentation of the process of arriving at the plan (potentially as a separate output).

vii) Action planning tables represent good IAP practice

The clearest and most concise way of presenting an action plan in the IAP documents was in the form of action planning tables. Such an approach was recommended to cities by the URBACT Programme in the guidance provided. During the URBACT Summer University 2016 in Rotterdam, cities were provided with a simple template which they could use to develop their action plan.

Figure 3: Roadmap / Action Table template suggested by URBACT

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE					
ACTION	Intended Result	Resources/ Assets	Lead Agency	Key Partners	Timescale

Source: URBACT Summer University 2016 handbook

As many as 128 IAPs (64.6%) did include some form of action planning table and several of these were more creative, detailed and complete than the simple template suggested by the Programme, covering varying aspects and levels of action planning (see section C of this report on ‘level of action planning detail achieved’).

It is impossible for this report to capture and showcase the full diversity of approaches, designs and formats of action planning and action planning tables across the IAPs. However, it is noteworthy that some IAPs were able to present their planned actions in ways that were particularly clear, detailed and yet succinct. There is value here in showing some of these approaches, which can be useful for cities in thinking about how they can use action tables both as a tool to help their planning and to help communicate their plan to others (notably in a way that is short and easy to translate).

In terms of overall approach, distinctions can be made between the following types:

- One table covering action planning elements for all actions
- Separate tables for each action/objective/area of work
- Separate tables for each element of action planning
- A series of clearly structured sections (i.e. not literally tables, but achieving a similar effect)

Beyond the specific examples presented below, an overall assessment of the levels and types of integration of the planned actions and the level of detail achieved in the action planning will be considered in sections B and C of this report.

a) Examples of all actions presented in one table

Liberec (Czech Republic) - RetailLink

Included: The table shows the link from each objective (in yellow) to actions, which are described in quite broad terms. For each action, the responsible body and some key partners are identified. There is an indication of the timing of each action (by quarter or season), its costs and a sense of where funding may come from. Output indicators are also defined.

Missing: There is no risk assessment for the actions (nor does this appear elsewhere in the plan).

Figure 4 Liberec (RetailLink) IAP overall action table (first 7 out of 24 action lines)

Specific Objective	Action	Action Leader	Resource	Timescale	Output Indicator
SO1: Improvement of the flexibility of processes and retail support by the city					
A1: Review of the city guidelines & the removal of barriers for the development of retail		Council/City Centre Manager	CZK 0.00	Q. III and IV. 2018	Number of revised guidelines of the City of Liberec on retail: 1
A2: Introduction of signposts for retail on City website		Council/City Centre Manager	CZK 100,000.00 Municipal budget	Q III. 2018 - Q I. 2019	Orientation signpost for retailers at www.liberec.cz: 1
A3: Preparation of brochure for retailers with basic binding information for retail.		Council/City Centre Manager	CZK 30,000.00 Municipal budget /Regional Chamber of Commerce	Q. III and IV. 2018	300 paper brochures distributed Addresses for distribution of e-flyer and newsletter: 60 items
A4: Establishment of the "City Centre Manager" position		Secretary's Office Department, personnel department	CZK 520,000.00 Pre-financing from municipal sources and co-financing from: 1) OPZ (see Invitation No. 58) 2) Labour Office - active employment policy	Q III. and IV. 2018	Number of established "City Centre Manager" jobs: 1 person.
A5: Founding association of retailers in the city centre		Retailers, members of ULG	CZK 0.00	Q III. and IV. 2018	1 Association created
SO2: Improvement of competitiveness, infrastructure and knowledge and experience in retail in the city centre					
B1: Set of seminars and training for retailers in the city centre		Regional Chamber of Commerce, Liberec	CZK 200,000.00 Grants or budget (Regional Chamber of Commerce)	Autumn 9/2018 Spring 2019	30 retailers trained 30 retailers experience higher competitiveness in their business
B2: Participation of TUL students in the preparation of marketing strategies for retailers in the city centre		Technical University Liberec: Marketing and Commerce Dpt.	CZK 0.00	Autumn term 2018 Spring term 2019	5 students per year participating in activities for the revitalisation of retail in the city centre

Caen (France) - 2nd Chance

Included: The table shows clearly the overall strategy, moving from left to right through objectives, desired results and actions and from top to bottom through short, medium and long-term actions. The defined actions to some extent constitute distinct steps towards a desired result.

Each individual action has a lead entity responsible for delivery and additional partners identified as appropriate, is costed where possible with potential funds identified, and has a specific timeframe which varies in detail according to the ability to plan in advance.

An attempt is made to identify indicators at the level of the desired results. For example, under the desired result of 'architectural enhancement and communication about the project', indicators include the number of events organised and the number of people attending.

Missing: There is no risk assessment for the actions (nor does this appear elsewhere in the plan).

Note: This summary one-page action table (see following page) was accompanied by seven further tables that provided more specific details of certain actions.

Figure 5: Caen (2nd Chance) IAP– overall summary action table

	Objectives	Desired Results	Indicators	Actions	Resources	Leader/Partners	Calendar
Short Term (within 2 years)	Preserve and enhance the traces of the industrial past of the Peninsula	Preservation of the selected buildings	Preservation of the buildings	Purchase of the CarboMétal building and lot by the City of Caen	Estimate: 100,000€ City of Caen Funds	The City of Caen	1 st six months of 2018
				Investigation and technical diagnostics (construction, network, pollution, asbestos...) and cost of the work	Estimate: 80,000€ Co-financing from CPIER 1.4	District of Caen la Mer	February - April 2018
				Preliminary work (security, weather proofing, decontamination, network building...)	Estimate: 400,000€ CPIER 1.4/ERDF Funds	Public Property Establishment of Normandy The City of Caen and District of Caen la Mer	September 2018 - June 2019
		Architectural enhancement and communication about the project	Number of events Number of people attending the events Number of news articles and amount of media coverage	Presentation of the Urbact 2 nd Chance project as part of Contemporary Architecture Month		Territoire Plannier (Architecture Promotion Company) Caen City Partners and the Caen city planning agency	March 2018
				Building take over and painting a mural in the tunnel as part of the Palma Festival	2,000€ for Palma Urbact Communication Budget	Palma Group In partnership with Le PawWou, The City of Caen	March - April 2018
				Final Urbact event: visit and conference as part of the Biannual Month of Architecture, with a short animated film	3,000€ (animated film) Urbact Communication Budget	The City of Caen In partnership with Le PawWou	October. 2018
		Organisation of temporary events (art competitions, flea markets...)	City Centre Neighbourhood Council Budget	City Centre Neighbourhood Council With support from the city of Caen	2019		
Mid Term (between 1 to 10 years)	Enhance the heart of the Peninsula during the transitional period and guide the changes	Transforming the buildings into cultural sites and as well as urban farms to education the public Increased foot traffic to the Peninsula centre Job creation Initiation of the sector's urbanisation	Annual visits of the sites Scholastic visits Number of on-site jobs Number of days open to the public Number of open to the public events	Preparation of the call for tenders (project pertinence verification, making contact with potential project managers, definition of the city's expectations, legal contract drafting, creation of a jury)	Internal	The City of Caen : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Culture Department of Environment Department of Urbanisation In Partnership with Urbact Local Group, The Chamber of Agriculture, City Centre Neighbourhood Council	September – December 2018
				Call for tenders and selection of the project manager		The City of Caen : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Culture Department of Environment Department of Urbanisation In Partnership with Urbact Local Group, The Chamber of Agriculture, City Centre Neighbourhood Council	January - June 2019
				School and participative construction zones for site planning		Project manager In partnership with the city of Caen	September 2019 - 2020
				Supervise project manager on site	Self-Financing Assistance from the city of Caen to be sought	Project manager	September 2019 - 2030
Long Term	Respond to the needs of the future users of the Peninsula	2900 new dwellings 600 new jobs New public equipment	Number of dwellings constructed Number of inhabitants Number of jobs	Planning the New Basin joint development zone Maintaining or changing the Urbact building functions to meet the needs of the neighbourhood	Joint development zone budget	Local Public Development Society: supervise project delegation for the city of Caen	Creation of the joint development zone 2018 First Development 2019 Block test 2022-2023 Completion of the joint development zone 2033

Poznan (Poland) - Gen-Y City

Included: The table shows the logic of the strategy working from top to bottom (over the course of ten pages) from the general aim at the top to specific aims (in blue) and then actions, which are described in quite broad terms (almost as objectives) and then broken down into a certain number of distinct activities, which are also called actions. The table covers (to varying degrees of detail and clarity) all the elements of action planning, including the who, the when, the costs, the potential funding, the output indicators and the risks (threats) associated with each action line.

Figure 6: Poznan (Gen-Y City) IAP – overall action table (first 3 out of 18 named actions)

PARTNER: CITY OF POZNAŃ, POLAND GENERAL AIM: RETAINING AND ATTRACTING YOUNG TALENTED AND CREATIVE PEOPLE FROM GENERATION Y						
SPECIFIC AIM 1: IMPROVING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE POZNAŃ CITY HALL AND GENERATION Y						
ACTION 1.1: Increasing intensity and effectiveness of PR communication channels						
Name of action	Potential entities	Possible starting date	Adopted assumption and possible risks	Activities	Output	Estimated cost and possible sources of funding
Use of modern channels to communicate with generation Y	Organisational Department of the Poznan City Hall Department of Economic Activity and Agriculture of the Poznan City Hall City Development and Foreign Relations Department of the Poznan City Hall Investor Service Office of the Poznan City Hall Department of Health and Social Affairs Mayor's Office of the Poznan City Hall Department of Education of the Poznan City Hall	Activity already implemented by the City of Poznan	Assumptions: Use of websites and social channels of the Poznan City Hall for communication with young people The use of social media of Poznan secondary schools and universities which are the basic communication channels used by young people Use of influencing in social media Threats: Lack of interest among schools and universities in initiating the cooperation with the Poznan City Hall	Regular publication of information concerning activities of the City addressed to generation Y representatives as a part of the official city website entitled: Multimedia City Guide and on the dedicated profiles on FB and Twitter Signing formal agreement with high schools and universities in Poznan to publicise in their social media the information prepared by the City concerning the activities of City directed at generation Y Development of a	Output: Reaching a larger target group with the information Output indicators: Number of users of social media of the Poznan City Hall Number of social media of Poznan secondary schools and universities that joined the action implementation	Estimated cost: PLN 500,000 p.a. Funding programmes for which partners can apply: City of Poznan budget
	Marshal Office of the Wielkopolska Region Universities in Poznan (24) Poznan Supercomputing and Networking Centre			mobile application about the city being a practical city life guide in cooperation with the academic groups		
ACTION 1.2: Creating conditions for a greater involvement of generation Y in the development of the city and co-deciding about its development						
Creation of a Think Tank for generation Y or other forms of social dialogue	City Development and Foreign Relations Department of the Poznan City Hall Department of Economic Activity and Agriculture of the Poznan City Hall Mayor's Office of the Poznan City Hall	Since 2018	Assumptions: Creation of a think tank from representatives of the City of Poznan, experts, NGOs and young people for direct communication and joint development of the best solutions to the problems and expectations of the Gen-Y'ers Threats: Lack of Gen-Y'ers interest to contribute to the work of the Think Tank	Inviting selected generation Y representatives (young businessmen, students and social activists), experts dealing with the youth and the NGOs representatives implementing the Y generation-related projects for cooperation under the Think Tank	Output: Effective information loops for city authorities on the situation and needs of the generation Y and for young people with real possibilities of solving existing problems and introducing new solutions Annual report issued by the Think Tank on the current trends and challenges related to Gen-Y'ers Output indicators: Number of Gen-Y'ers in the Think Tank Number of Think Tank meetings devoted to the situation of Gen-Y'ers	Estimated cost: PLN 20,000 p.a. Funding programmes for which partners can apply: City of Poznan budget
Implementation and development of the Poznan main projects: Open POZNAŃ; Entrepreneurial and creative POZNAŃ; Sustainable POZNAŃ; Distinctive POZNAŃ	Mayor's Office of the Poznan City Hall	Since 2018	Assumptions: Campaigns promoting open and entrepreneurial behaviours among young people Threats: Lack of interest of Gen-Y'ers in being involved in the campaign	Implementation of promotion and educational activities directed at young people Promotion of Poznan as a place open to new ideas, concepts and innovations	Output: Building the informed and socially involved civil society Output indicators: Number of Gen-Y'ers in social consultations Number of submitted initiatives in those projects	Estimated cost: PLN 400,000 p.a. Funding programmes for which partners can apply: City of Poznan budget

b) Examples of actions presented across multiple tables

Fundao (Portugal) - Agri-Urban

The action plan is separated into five distinct actions, each of which has its own table, itself presented in two parts:

Included: The first part of the table provides a detailed overview of the whole action (presented as an ‘idea’) including the need (background), objectives (main objective and vision), as well as the responsible entities, overall budget and timeframe. It also presents the specific links with the existing ‘focus areas’ of the city council and the current status of the activities. It even highlights the transnational example(s) from the URBACT network that have helped inspire the action, although not much detail is provided.

Figure 7: Fundao (Agri-Urban) IAP -action table for Action 1, Part 1

IDEA	MAPPING OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND
MAIN OBJECTIVE	Know the local supply and its potential Meet the needs of canteens (products, quantities, delivery regularities)
VISION	Obtaining a database of local horticultural / organic producers Obtaining a database of local entities providing school meals Determine the potential supply / need.
BACKGROUND	Lack of knowledge of state-of-the-art production in the municipality of Fundão.
LEAD ORGANISATION	Municipality of Fundão Rural / Agro-Food Development Office
KEY PARTNERS	BIOECO; Producers’ Club of Fundão; Producers of the Square and the Local Market
CITY COUNCIL FOCUS AREAS	Attractiveness of investment - Importance of local products in the economic and social dynamisation in Fundão
TIMESCALE / BUDGET	September 2017 to March 2020 € 21.000,00
STATUS	Elaboration and application of the questionnaires and interviews to the horticultural producers of the county of Fundão.
INSPIRATION	LAG Pays des Condruses (Belgium) - Ceinture Aliment-Terre - civic platform of citizens, economic and cultural agents for the transformation of the regional food system.

The second part of the table breaks down the overall action into several sub-actions, setting out the intended results, responsible entities, existing resources, budget and financing for each one. Although many of the elements of action planning are included in Part 1 of the action tables, it is this second part which really starts to resemble an action plan.

Missing: The action tables do not include monitoring details or risk assessment, but these are set out elsewhere in the IAP.

Figure 8: Fundao (Agri-Urban) IAP - action table for Action 1, Part 2

1. MAPPING OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND					
Action Title & Short Description	Intend Result	Resources & Assets	Lead organization	Key partners	Timescale / Budget
<p>1. SURVEY OF SUPPLY Elaborate and apply questionnaires and interviews to the producers of the county of Fundão and bordering counties.</p>	DATA with real knowledge of horticultural and organic agricultural production in the municipality of Fundão	<p>Logistics Platform: Fundão market square / MACB / Eco Market</p> <p>Horticultural products: Quality Local Products Certified Biological Products</p>	<p>Municipality of Fundão</p> <p>Rural / Agro-Food Development Office</p>	<p>Organized local producers: BIOECO Producers' Club Producers of the Market Square and the Local Market CBP-BI (Elaboration of the questionnaire)</p>	<p>September 2017 Duration 6 months</p> <p>CMF RESOURCES: € 0.00</p>
<p>2. SURVEY OF DEMAND Elaborate and apply questionnaires and interviews to providers of school meals in the municipality of Fundão.</p>	Obtaining a database of the needs of local entities providing school meals	29 Primary School Canteens	<p>Municipality of Fundão</p> <p>Education Office</p>	<p>2 Groupings of Schools IPSS SCMF</p>	<p>December 2017 Duration 8 months</p> <p>CMF RESOURCES: € 0.00</p>
<p>3. MAPPING OF SUPPLY Creation of a standardized mapping approach. 3.1: Map the agricultural and horticultural areas of the county of Fundão 3.2: Mapping the agricultural and horticultural areas of the bordering county of municipality of Fundão according to the increase in DEMAND</p> <p>This mapping will allow the evaluation of the levels of supply of a service based on the distance to which the beneficiary areas are from the areas that produce it. Without this practice, it is not possible to balance supply and demand.</p>	This mapping will serve as a basis for decision-making, as support for planning and management.	<p>Geo-referenced information (SIG) - Municipality of Fundão</p> <p>Financing: Action application PDR2020 20.2 RRN-AlimenTAÇÃO: Short circuits Agrifood for the realization of the Human Right to Adequate Food..</p>	<p>Municipality of Fundão</p> <p>Division of Planning and quality of life</p>	<p>DRAP Centro Regional Direction of Agriculture and fisheries</p> <p>PINUS VERDE</p> <p>APPIZÉZERE</p>	<p>September 2018 Duration 1 year</p> <p>EXTERNAL SERVICE BUDGET: €15,000.00</p>
<p>4. BALANCE BETWEEN SUPPLY AND DEMAND Identification of the needs to be met by the available local supply. Promote and value the establishment of partnerships with local farmers / suppliers (vegetables and fruit)</p>	New contracts between producers and schools: logistics / supply / planning of orders (products, quantities, characteristics, periodicity) BETTER organization of production)	Project submitted: PDR 2020 Operation 10.2.1.4. - Short chains and local markets	<p>Municipality of Fundão</p> <p>Rural / Agro-Food Development Office</p>	<p>RUDE / ADERES BIOECO Producers of the Market Square 2 Groupings of Schools IPSS SCMF</p>	<p>March 2018 Duration 2 year</p> <p>EXTERNAL SERVICE BUDGET: € 6,000.00</p>

Espinho (Portugal) - MAPS

A completely different approach is taken by Espinho in the MAPS network, which sets out its plan across a number of very clear but separate tables covering different dimensions of action planning.

Included: Espinho's IAP has an overview table of all actions and specific tables for each action (setting out key responsibilities and partners, outputs, resources, timescale and expected results). But it also has specific tables (regrouping all action lines) for: timings; costs and financing; and outputs and results. Finally it has tables setting out the overall monitoring framework of the IAP linking objectives to indicators (via the actions) and the respective monitoring systems.

Missing: The only missing element overall is the risk assessment.

Figure 10: Espinho (MAPS) IAP - basic action table overviewing all actions

Action Nr.	Action Title	Periodic Events (E)/ Rehab (RE)	Readiness Short Term (ST)/ Medium Term (MT)
1	Paramos Community Gardens	RE	ST
2	Running event	E	ST
3	Event - Paramos School 'Go-To'	E	ST
4	Re-Connect with Paramos Castrum	RE	MT
5	Rehabilitation of 'Praia de Paramos' military houses	RE	MT
6	Rehabilitation of the aero club restaurant	RE	ST
7	Rehabilitation of the 'Formal' military barracks for the University premises	RE	MT
8	Rehabilitation of the airfield runway	RE	MT
9	Marketing campaign for the 'Atlantic Park'	RE	ST

Figure 11: Espinho (MAPS) IAP - example action table for one specific action

Card of the action / Action 1- "Paramos" Community Garden

IAP:	Espinho	Action name:			"Paramos" Community Gardens
Lead actor	Key partners	Outputs	Resources	Timescale	
Two Local Associations: 'Águias de Paramos' + 'Paramos em Movimento'	ULG; Parish council; Other local associations; People of the village	Nr. of people involved in the initiative; New 'green' areas created.	Municipal Budget; + Sponsors	6 month	
Context: (brief description of the context in which the action is located)		The recent final approval of the Municipal Master Plan (in Portuguese PDM - Plano Diretor Municipal) has defined several 'green' areas' around the village and airfield. The ULG is promoting its use as communal gardens for the people of village 'Praia de Paramos'. This is in fact recovering an old Portuguese tradition that has fallen in disuse in recent years.			
Key activities:		Support the creation of community gardens in the village 'Praia de Paramos' by working with the local association of the people of the village with the support of the president of the parish council (also in the ULG).			
Expected Results:		Stronger community sense; Send a strong environmental message to citizens; Better quality of life.			

Figure 12: Espinho (MAPS) IAP - action table for timeframe of all actions

Timeframe Timeline/ Actions	2018		2019	
	1 st Semester	2 nd Semester	1 st Semester	2 nd Semester
1 - Paramos Community Gardens	X	X		
2 - Running event	X (annually)		X (annually)	
3 - Event - Paramos School 'Go-To'	X (annually)		X (annually)	
4 - Re-Connect with Paramos Castrum			X	X
5 - Rehabilitation of 'Praia de Paramos' military houses			X	X
6 - Rehabilitation of the former aero club restaurant		X	X	X
7 - Rehabilitation of the 'Formal' military barracks for the University premises			X	X
8 - Rehabilitation of the airfield runway		X	X	X
9 - Marketing campaign	X	X	X	X

Figure 13: Espinho (MAPS) IAP - action table for costs and financing of all actions

Actions	budget estimate	Financing program
1 - Paramos Community Gardens	25.000,00 €	POSEUR
2 - Running event	10.000,00 €	
3 - Event - Paramos School 'Go-To'	10.000,00 €	
4 - Re-Connect with Paramos Castrum	720.000,00€	NORTE 2020
5 - Rehabilitation of 'Praia de Paramos' military houses	708.000,00	NORTE 2020
6 - Rehabilitation of the former aero club restaurant	671.000,00 €	NORTE 2020
7 - Rehabilitation of the 'Formal' military barracks for the University premises	3.800.000,00 €	NORTE 2020/ POEUR
8 – Rehabilitation of the airfield runway (phase 1 – certified ANAC)	350.000,00 €	
9 - Marketing campaign	50.000,00 €	NORTE 2020 /POSEUR

Figure 14: Espinho (MAPS) IAP -part of the action table for outputs and results of all actions

Actions	Outputs	Results
1 - Paramos Community Gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area of community gardens created; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People involved in the project. Social inclusion
2- Running event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event realized; Participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measures submitted to public participation.
3 - Event - Paramos School 'Go-To'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event realized; Students involved Teachers involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness raising to the environmental concerns of area
4 - Re-Connect with Paramos Castrum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of cycling routes; Creation of events Creation of a web site Signposting on the site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness raising of citizens to their patrimony Better visit conditions Integrate the site on the visit route of the city
5 - Rehabilitation of 'Praia de Paramos' military houses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nr. of buildings rehabilitated; Area rehabilitated; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better touristic offer; Increase stays in the city; Better urban beach environment.

Figure 15: Espinho (MAPS) IAP -part of a longer table presenting the IAP's monitoring system

Objetives	Actions	Results	Results outputs Indicators	Monitoring System																	
<p>Challenge 1:</p> <p>Rehabilitation of the abandoned military buildings.</p> <p>The integrated rehabilitation and refunctionalization of military buildings, even if temporary, is fundamental:</p>  <p>To improve the attractiveness of the "Parque Atlántico" area and increase the number of visitors.</p>	<p>Action 5</p> <p>Rehabilitation of 'Praia de Paramos' three military houses, and "Shooting Career"</p> <p>Action 7</p> <p>Rehabilitation of the 'Formal' military barracks for the University premises</p>	<p>To improve the attractiveness of the Atlántic Park area and increase the number of visitors.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Rate of occupancy of new housing</td> <td>Three houses rehabilitated</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Increase of visitors.</td> <td>Shooting Range rehabilitated</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Increase the degree of satisfaction of the residents</td> <td>One University Created</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Education courses fully operational</td> <td>University setup</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Nº of Students</td> <td>University fully operational</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Businesses developed and Job</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Rate of occupancy of new housing	Three houses rehabilitated	Increase of visitors.	Shooting Range rehabilitated	Increase the degree of satisfaction of the residents	One University Created	Education courses fully operational	University setup	Nº of Students	University fully operational	Businesses developed and Job		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Licensing process;</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number of visitors in the interactive tourism</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Survey - evaluation of the degree of satisfaction before and after the intervention</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Espinho Municipality Annual Report</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Espinho University Annual Report</td> </tr> </table>	Licensing process;	Number of visitors in the interactive tourism	Survey - evaluation of the degree of satisfaction before and after the intervention	Espinho Municipality Annual Report	Espinho University Annual Report
Rate of occupancy of new housing	Three houses rehabilitated																				
Increase of visitors.	Shooting Range rehabilitated																				
Increase the degree of satisfaction of the residents	One University Created																				
Education courses fully operational	University setup																				
Nº of Students	University fully operational																				
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Number of visitors in the interactive tourism																					
Survey - evaluation of the degree of satisfaction before and after the intervention																					
Espinho Municipality Annual Report																					
Espinho University Annual Report																					

B. How ‘integrated’ are the Integrated Action Plans?

This section sets out the findings of the qualitative review of the level of integration found in the Integrated Action Plans (IAPs) produced by URBACT APN cities.

The initial observations made by the study confirmed that it would not be possible to conduct a quantitative assessment of the number of IAPs showing certain types of integration. Firstly, the level of integration is so nuanced as to preclude a valuable assessment from a quick scan of every text. Secondly, the study found that the initial attempts to define the different types of integration according to the terms commonly used by URBACT did not easily capture the full complexity of integration being dealt with by cities.

Before considering the actual performance of the IAPs in terms of integration, an important outcome of the study was its work on defining criteria against which to assess the IAPs.

i) Defining criteria to assess integration

There is lots of discourse around integration and its definitions within the field of urban development. This study does not propose an academic review of these. Nevertheless, in attempting to provide a framework within which to review the IAPs – and in responding to forms of integration demonstrated by IAPs - this study has led to a formulation of the complexity of integrated action planning in terms of its various aspects. This serves the immediate needs of this study in terms of understanding and reporting on how integrated the Integrated Action Plans are, and potentially provides a structure for cities to work with in the future.

The study attempted to build criteria for assessing integration based on the concepts presented in the definition of four types of integration set out on the URBACT website (<https://urbact.eu/urbact-opportunity-action-and-change>):

- **Vertical integration**, meaning “cooperation between all levels of government and local players”;
- **Horizontal integration**, meaning “cooperation across different policy areas and departments of a municipality”;
- **Territorial integration**, meaning “cooperation between neighbouring municipalities”; and
- **Maintaining a balance between ‘hard’ (physical) investments and ‘soft’ (social) investments.**

However, the study found that the concepts of horizontal and vertical integration were not sufficiently detailed and defined to enable clear assessment. In practice, ‘horizontal’ seems to include at least the need to cover economic, social and environmental concerns, also the need to cover different policy areas/sectors, the need to intervene at different spatial levels and the need to involve different stakeholder groups. Vertical seems to include at least the need to align and ensure complementarity between strategies at different levels, the need to involve decision-makers (and stakeholders) at different levels and also to accessing funding from different levels.

It was impossible to clearly and reliably compare or draw conclusions based on criteria that contained so many different aspects – each of which could be included and addressed to a greater or lesser extent. Separating this complexity out into its component parts was considered essential by the study in order to enable a clearer understanding of how well cities were doing in developing integrated strategies.

As the study evolved, more aspects of integrated action planning were separated out. The latest thinking captured by this study is that the overall quality of integrated action planning within the IAPs produced by URBACT cities embraces at least 14 separate elements, which can be usefully categorised into three broad types of integration:

Table 1: The 14 identified elements of integrated action planning

a) Elements of an integrated planning process	
i.	Actions are needs-based – actions respond to real needs based on a sound understanding of the local context, challenges and opportunities
ii.	Stakeholder involvement in planning – the full range of stakeholders (considered horizontally and vertically) are engaged in identifying priorities and potential solutions
iii.	Transnational exchange and learning – actions have been demonstrably informed or inspired by practices from other cities
b) Elements of planning for integrated urban development	
i.	Sustainable urban development - - actions address all three pillars of sustainable development in terms of economic, social and environmental objectives
ii.	Sectoral integration – addressing the full range of policies/sectors of activity, including infrastructure, transport, employment, education, green spaces, housing, culture...
iii.	Spatial integration – coherence of actions at different spatial levels from site-specific, through neighbourhoods, city-wide and regional
iv.	Territorial integration – coherence and complementarity of actions and policies implemented by neighbouring municipalities
v.	Multi-level governance – actions are planned coherently at different levels of governance, covering local (district, city), regional and national levels
vi.	Stakeholder involvement in implementation - the full range of relevant stakeholders (horizontally and vertically) are engaged in the implementation of planned actions
c) Elements of integrated plans	
i.	Internal strategic logic – actions are designed to meet overall and specific objectives defined by the city
ii.	Coherence with existing strategies – actions and objectives are aligned and complementary to existing strategies in place at city, regional, national or European levels
iii.	Complementary types of investment – the plan effectively balances the need for both ‘hard’ (physical/infrastructure) and ‘soft’ (human capital) investments
iv.	Planning over time – planning of relevant actions in the short, medium and longer-terms and consideration of any necessary order in the implementation of actions
v.	Mobilising all available funding - –seeking to use the full range of funds available to support implementation of planned actions, from EU Funds to private local sources.

All of the above forms and aspects of integrated action planning are already found in URBACT and appear to a greater or lesser extent in different IAPs. The aim here is not to claim a new understanding of integrated action planning or to add complexity to existing concepts. Rather, the aim is to break down, capture and categorise the complexity that URBACT cities are already trying to work with into more manageable ‘bite-size chunks’.

Whilst a theoretical ‘perfect’ IAP would show full integration for all aspects, in practice the reality will always be that any city will have areas where it could improve the integration of its planning. This may be by incorporating a new form of integration or strengthening one aspect of integration already addressed to some extent.

Whilst all URBACT cities should demonstrate and prioritise the three aspects of an integrated planning process, the other forms of integrated action planning may be more or less of a priority according to their starting position, theme or other local factors.

The complexity involved therefore means that each IAP does not have to be fully integrated for each element and there is no clear threshold above which an action plan suddenly becomes 'integrated' and below which it is not integrated. Rather than a list of requirements, it is likely to be more useful to see this list as a framework for identifying priority areas for improving integration of any city's action plan.

Other categorisations are surely possible and URBACT may feel that a different categorisation is more useful to informing the Programme's methods of engaging and working with cities. However, this study suggests this categorisation and the analysis below (and the IAP Case Studies) are conducted following this logic.

ii) Assessing the IAPs for all the forms of integrated action planning

On the basis of the above classification, the study conducted an overview assessment of each aspect of integrated action planning within the IAPs. As stated before, it is not possible to produce quantifiable data on the performance of the IAPs against each of these aspects of integrated action planning because of the many nuances involved.

However, interesting lessons, trends and important variations can be identified through consideration of each aspect in turn. These observations do not attempt to capture the full diversity of approaches found in the IAPs, but provide the headline findings. The methodology used was to focus on a reading of a few IAPs per network, focusing initially on those that showed the most detailed action plans (see following section C of this report). The study also scanned many of the least detailed action plans to see if any particular headline observations stood out.

a) Elements of an integrated planning process

i) Actions are needs-based – actions respond to real needs based on a sound shared understanding of the local context, challenges and opportunities

This is an area of strength of the IAPs. The work that URBACT requires around the conducting of a baseline study and encouraging the ULG to work through a SWOT analysis and problem-identification exercise(s) seems to be effectively ensuring that all IAPs are based on a good understanding of the local context, challenges, opportunities and needs.

The IAPs generally start with an outline of this local context and, if anything, a criticism is that these sections can be longer than is needed within the IAP itself. Some of the best examples provide a clear synthesis of the findings of this work rather than the full details of all the data gathered.

ii) Stakeholder involvement in planning – the full range of stakeholders (considered horizontally and vertically) are engaged in identifying priorities and potential solutions

The URBACT Local Groups (ULGs) have done a lot to strengthen stakeholder integration in URBACT cities. For many cities, this has represented a major change of approach and working philosophy that promises to deliver important, long-term improvements in local governance. It can be considered one of the strengths of the URBACT method. There are many examples of IAPs reporting that ULGs will continue to exist and even take on a legal form 'post-URBACT'.

Nevertheless, the reporting in the IAPs suggests that good stakeholder mapping and ensuring that the full range of stakeholder perspectives is represented on the ULG remains a challenge. Some ULGs were relatively limited in focusing on representatives of different municipal departments or agencies. In other cases, ULGs seemed to benefit from having a relatively small 'core group' which then used creative ways to reach wider audiences of local stakeholders at specific times e.g. through site visits, targeted workshops/events or through representative associations.

Many ULGs clearly benefited from the work of the URBACT summer university, the ULSG toolkit and other tools provided by URBACT (such as the problem tree and OPERA). It will always be the case that some ULGs are better than others. There is an ongoing need to continue to build local capacity in creating, mobilising and animating ULGs and sharing some of the best practice examples from across URBACT cities.

iii) Transnational exchange and learning – actions have been demonstrably informed or inspired by practices from other cities

It seems clear that all the cities and networks benefitted from transnational exchange and learning provided for by URBACT. But, what is also clear is that both the way they benefit and the extent to which this is presented and visible in the final IAP vary significantly.

Some interesting distinctions between cities/networks around transnational exchange emerge from this study:

- a) Some cities/networks are interested and able to start planning the transfer of specific projects/initiatives from one city to another (notably in relatively broad but action-focused networks such as Agri-Urban and Vital Cities). In such contexts, transnational meetings/visits offer an opportunity to learn about specific practices in addition to general inspiration and peer review.
- b) For some cities/networks, transnational exchange seems to be focused mainly on improving their understanding of the topic in question and learning about improved ways of working on that theme at city level. (e.g. BoostINNO looking at how to support social innovation; Interactive Cities looking at how to make best use of digital, social media and user generated content; REFILL looking at improved frameworks for enabling temporary use)
- c) Some other cities/networks are focused on developing an action plan where the local specificities make it difficult to transfer specific practice, but the transnational meetings are useful staging posts to share inspiration and good practice in ways of working and give peer feedback on the plans being developed (e.g. site-specific networks such as 2nd Chance and MAPS).

Within the IAPs, it is obviously easiest to flag transnational exchange of a specific initiative/practice and some IAPs were able to reference specific practices they had learnt from in their action planning tables.

However, many of the other (and 'softer') benefits of transnational exchange (inspiration, ways of working etc.) are implied or referred to briefly without necessarily being made very explicit.

b) Elements of planning for integrated urban development

i) Sustainable urban development - actions address all three pillars of sustainable development in terms of economic, social and environmental objectives

The IAPs address many important aspects of sustainable urban development in their cities and, generally, there is good awareness and acceptance that approaches need to consider economic, social and environmental aspects. Nevertheless, the sustainability challenges are very specific to each theme and it is not always clear if the action plans are seeking to make a specific contribution to a broader strategy for sustainability or cover all aspects of sustainability themselves.

IAPs could go further in systematically addressing ways to add economic, social and environmental value beyond the immediate responses to the challenge/topic identified. If the challenge/need is not identified in specific social or environmental terms then solutions are often not focused on these aspects. For example, gender dimensions or questions such as “What could be added to this action plan to mitigate climate change?” are not systematically addressed. Unless it is a particular focus of the network (e.g. Arrival Cities) social considerations rarely go as far as to consider the particular needs of socially marginalised and at-risk groups, often limiting themselves to issues around mainstream education, culture or employment.

Furthermore, many of the IAPs do not explicitly demonstrate or highlight their approach to achieving more sustainable urban development, even when evidence of actions with a social or environmental focus are found. There are also issues about definitions, with ‘environment’ sometimes being misunderstood for the ‘physical environment’.

ii) Sectoral integration – addressing the full range of policies/sectors of activity

The IAPs almost always show some degree of sectoral integration with actions planned across a number of sectors. What is not always so clear is whether this sectoral integration is comprehensive and if there are reasons why actions are planned in some sectors but not others.

The work URBACT has done to require and support the creation of URBACT Local Groups (ULGs) has done a lot to enhance the sectoral integration of action planning in URBACT cities by creating a new impetus and structure for different municipal departments to work together on a shared challenge. Nevertheless, challenges remain around ensuring that best ULG practice is identified and shared. This could also usefully look to include ways to consult and involve departments that may not be considered central to the policy challenge at the beginning.

It is also important to note that there is often a tension between the thematic focus of URBACT networks and some (or fuller) forms of sectoral integration. Whilst sustainable urban development as a whole benefits from full sectoral integration, many networks and cities are focusing down on the specifics of the thematic problem they are addressing (both in their ULG and transnational exchanges). The issue for the city may then be more about how to integrate the thematic IAP with their plans/actions in other sectors rather than integrating all sectors into the IAP.

IAP of Klaipeda (Lithuania) – Gen-Y City: *“Klaipeda had always wanted to cover and solve a very wide field of problems. The ability of partners from Bologna, Genoa to identify their direction clearly (e.g. Digital City, Music City, etc.) inspired Klaipeda to narrow the scope of its action plan and to define a specific area and the existing problem, which can be solved...”*

For networks with a strong spatial dimension (e.g. CityCentreDoctor), broad sectoral integration is a more obvious priority as each sector affects the target area. However, for networks such as FreightTails, it is understandable that they focus on specific details of freight movement/deliveries.

These approaches should be integrated with policies around housing and green spaces etc, but it is not so obvious that this sectoral integration should be the priority with the 2.5 years' of the network.

iii) Spatial integration – coherence of actions at different spatial levels from site-specific, through neighbourhoods, city-wide and regional

Spatial integration is not always an area that comes through strongly in the cities' IAPs. Often this appears to be because of the type of theme being worked on in the URBACT Action Planning Network. For example, several networks worked on city-wide issues without a strong spatial dimension (such as those looking at digital communications, procurement and social innovation).

At the other end of the scale, some networks focused on very site-specific actions (notably those looking to regenerate and/or reactive disused buildings and old military sites). Some IAPs gave more consideration than others to surrounding and wider spatial areas, but often the attention was very much focused on the building/site in question – in many cases, this was already enough of a challenge for the ULG to think about. Without seeking to overwhelm or overcomplicate the work of such networks in the future, they could nevertheless be encouraged to think more explicitly about any relevant spatial dimensions.

Another variation is where planned actions are limited to a very specific area (neighbourhood), but where the ultimate value to sustainable urban development will be in their replicability to other sites across the city. This was the case, for example, in several cities in the FreightTails, Resilient Europe and Suburban networks where plans focused on specific neighbourhoods as test cases for wider approaches to sustainable urban development.

iv) Territorial integration – coherence and complementarity of actions and policies implemented by neighbouring municipalities

There is clearly much more focus in URBACT cities on increasing integration within municipal authorities and with local stakeholders than there is on improving coordination and coherence with neighbouring municipalities.

A notable exception was the Suburban network where several cities thought specifically about developing cooperation with neighbouring municipalities and strategies for achieving such coordination.

For most cities and networks, this seems appropriate given the ongoing challenges of improving these key types of integration. Nevertheless, it could be beneficial for ULGs to at least ask themselves the question as to whether discussions with neighbouring municipalities could be relevant and add value to the achievement of their ultimate objective.

v) Multi-level governance – actions are planned coherently at different levels of governance, covering local (district, city), regional and national levels

The Integrated Action Plans are local in nature, so it is perhaps not entirely surprising that issues of multi-level governance do not generally come through very strongly within the plans. Many cities are clearly focused on strengthening their local governance processes. Also, it will possibly always be difficult within a two-and-a-half year project at city level to influence regional or national policy-making – which will have their own policy and decision-making cycles.

Nevertheless, it is important for cities to be thinking about multi-level governance and it could be the case that cities would benefit from more information and understanding on how effective multi-level governance can work in practice – including through the identification and raising awareness of success stories.

Some URBACT Local Groups involved regional-level decision-makers. Some networks also had clear links with national or regional policy/decision-making – notably InFocus, which linked regional smart specialisation strategies with city planning and PROCURE which sought to improve the local economic, social and environmental contribution of municipal procurement contracts within the rules defined by national procurement laws. Generally, the sense from the IAPs was that they were seeking to respond to the national or regional policy context in which they found themselves and were not able to reach the stage of influencing decision-making at higher levels.

vi) Stakeholder involvement in implementation - the full range of relevant stakeholders (considered horizontally and vertically) are engaged in the implementation of planned actions

Another relevant part of integrated approaches is to clearly involve and engage stakeholders in the implementation of the planned actions (and not only in their conception). The IAPs differed quite a lot in this regard.

On the one hand, there are examples where the ULG seemed to serve only (or mainly) a consultative function during the problem identification and action planning stages. Implementation is then seen as an issue for the city authorities (and maybe limited key partners) alone.

However, there are also many examples where specific stakeholders were given implementation roles for specific actions (either as the responsible body or a key partner) and/or where the ULG is given a key role as a group in implementing and overseeing implementation of actions. In several cases, the ULG was constituted formally in order to facilitate an ongoing role in developing and implementing the city's plans.

c) Elements of integrated plans

i) Internal strategic logic – actions are designed to meet overall and specific objectives defined by the city

The internal strategic logic of the IAPs was generally strong. It was usually possible to see a clear rationale in the way the IAP had been constructed from the baseline study, through problem identification, the defining of general and specific objectives and actions linked to these objectives. Many IAPs included the links between objectives and actions in their action tables, or found other visual ways to show the overall strategy informing the plan.

If anything, although the strategic logic of what was planned was often strong, many IAPs were not able to get further than this and their actions remained relatively loosely defined.

ii) Coherence with existing strategies – actions and objectives are aligned and complementary to existing strategies in place at city, regional, national or European levels

It is relatively common for IAPs to say “This IAP is in line with X city strategy” or “This IAP fits with Y regional strategy”. However, there is limited attention and detail given to how this alignment works in practice and what synergies are being exploited. Providing greater clarity here could help in demonstrating an overall integrated approach at the same time as enabling more specific action planning for specific action lines.

One of the tensions identified by this study was the apparent conflict between providing a clearly integrated approach (breadth) and providing the specific details of action planning (depth). The broader action plans went, the more difficulty they seemed to face in providing specific action planning details for each area of intervention. On the other hand, plans that focused on specific action planning details in certain areas risked being accused of a lack of overall integration.

There is a good argument that strategies need to be integrated, but that action plans can be more specific – applying to only one part of the overall strategy. In this way, the action plan may not need to cover all the sectoral and spatial dimensions, so long as the overall strategy does. Making the relationship between the action plan and existing strategies clearer may help cities to show where this is the case and improve the detail in their action planning whilst demonstrating overall integration.

Alternatively, greater clarity could be used to highlight that the IAP itself is in fact seen as more of a strategic document which will itself need to be broken down into more specific actions in due course. Much depends on where the city/region is at in terms of its overall sustainable development strategy and how it intends to implement that.

iii) Complementary types of investment – the plan effectively balances the need for both ‘hard’ (physical/infrastructure) and ‘soft’ (human capital) investments

This is another area of relative strength amongst the IAPs. There seems to be a good level of understanding and awareness that physical infrastructure investments alone will not be enough to deliver sustainable urban development. The IAPs typically consider and plan ‘soft’ aspects such as human capital investments, local events, awareness-raising and communication activities alongside any physical investments required.

Another observation here is that in many action plans, some or all of the actions defined remain at quite a high-level and are not broken down into detailed steps. In this way, some of the ‘actions’ as they are defined may themselves be made up of, or lead to, a mix of hard and soft investments which are not yet defined in the IAP.

iv) Planning over time – planning of relevant actions in the short, medium and longer-terms and consideration of any necessary order in the implementation of actions

Most IAPs provide an indication of the timings/timetable of actions to be implemented and this forms part of the process of thinking through the integration of actions over time. Some IAPs have given specific dates for different actions, whilst others have broken actions down more broadly into short-term, medium-term and long-term activities. Ensuring that all IAPs are as clear and specific as possible about the timing of their actions will improve this aspect further and encourage strategic thinking about how actions are planned over time. The inclusion of Gantt charts was helpful in providing this overall picture in several IAPs.

Another observation here is that two types of action planning can be identified: a) planning that requires a sequence of steps to be completed in a particular order (e.g. ownership, then restoration, then temporary use, then permanent use of a particular site); and b) planning that sees complementary activities taking place in parallel (e.g. physical infrastructure investment alongside organisation of events and awareness-raising). IAPs may also combine both, by having a clear sequence of steps under one heading and other complementary actions in parallel.

Consideration of the need and added value of specific actions at different times can add richness to action planning. Another observation is that it is likely that short-term planned actions can be planned in more detail - several IAPs give specific details on short-term activities and then set out more general ongoing processes for the more detailed definition of future actions.

v) Mobilising all available funding - seeking to use the full range of funds available to support implementation of planned actions, from EU Funds to private local sources.

The elaboration of details on specific funding available to implement the planned actions is not commonly a strength of the IAPs. Although some IAPs are able to link each activity to specific (potential or secured) funding, many IAPs set out only very generic ideas of where funding will come from for the planned activities taken as a whole.

Integrating funding is one of the major challenges/potential opportunities for local development in Europe – as highlighted in a number of attempts by European policy-makers to simplify the process of accessing multiple strands of EU funding through tools such as Integrated Territorial Investments and multi-funded Community-Led Local Development. Coming up with clearer and more detailed funding strategies for the planned actions could therefore help to increase the chances and impact of implementation.

However, an important observation here is that financing implementation is not always the major challenge for IAPs. Sometimes, all the planned actions can already be implemented using existing municipality (or key partner) budgets - for example where the URBACT network is focused on improving existing ways of working rather than seeking new investment e.g. PROCURE. In some other cases, the main added value of developing the IAP was about raising awareness and starting a process to realise the potential of action in a particular area - e.g. REFILL around temporary use and BoostINNO around promoting social innovation - rather than seeking specific funding for specific actions. Such approaches are not a criticism of those networks/IAPs, but rather reflect the diversity of the URBACT Programme and the multiple ways in which it can support and benefit cities.

iii) Overall assessment of how integrated the IAPs are

The first headline finding of the assessment of the integration of the IAPs is that ***the word ‘integrated’ contains so much complexity that it defies any simplistic ‘yes or no’ assessment of whether a specific action plan is integrated.*** Every IAP is integrated to different extents in different ways that defy clear categorisation. Every city will be able to further improve any aspect of its integrated action planning, no matter how strong it is.

The types and level of integration demonstrated by any IAP will depend on aspects including the theme being addressed, the existing level of thematic knowledge, existing actions and processes in place, the existing local governance processes, the priorities identified by the ULG and so on.

At the same time, simply observing the diversity is not sufficient. Another important finding is that cities may miss some of the complexity of integrated action planning by focusing on a few particular aspects. Several cities attempted to define what ‘integrated’ meant to them, revealing that they often reduced it to just one or two of its facets. The understanding they present is not wrong as such, but it appears to be incomplete.

“[T]he main objective for this action plan is: ‘Revitalize the city hearth...’ understanding the revitalization as an integrated process. Integrated because it includes social, economic, environmental, cultural and institutional areas.”

“Integrated actions for us means that all stakeholders are recognised, that the communication is clear and constant and that we see the chances that we have to reuse the Fort, which are even better than in the last decades.”

This study identified 14 aspects of integrated action planning and it is likely to be useful for cities to consider each of these when developing their plan. This does not necessarily mean that each city needs to work on each aspect, but rather to consider its priorities for improving integration.

The study is able to draw some pertinent overall findings regarding the integration of the IAPs in general. It is useful to frame these findings and observations according to the three broad types of integration identified:

a) An integrated planning process

This is an area where all URBACT cities should be applying and demonstrating all of the identified forms of the integrated approach, building on URBACT's existing methods and tools. This study is able to confirm that the integration of the planning processes is an area of strength for URBACT cities in general. There is a lot of clear effort and progress around making sure the plans are based on identified needs, elaborated with key stakeholders and inspired by transnational learning.

URBACT needs to continue prioritising these aspects in the APNs, since they are central to achieving the APNs' main objective of improving the capacity of cities to manage sustainable urban policies. The process of strengthening this integration is never complete and can always be enhanced.

b) Planning for integrated urban development

This is an area of integration where different networks and cities will have different priorities that they need to focus on, depending on thematic and local factors. The study found that planning for integrated urban development shows most diversity in approach across the IAPs. It is also where cities were most likely to 'miss' aspects of integration – or at least not report on them in their IAPs.

URBACT needs to support and encourage cities to understand and navigate the complexity of planning for integrated urban development, without overwhelming them. This could be achieved by obliging them to consider and report against all six aspects of integrated urban development, even if this is to explain why a particular aspect is not relevant or not a priority.

c) Integrated plans

The study finds that there are clear trends across URBACT of cities being stronger at developing a clear internal strategic logic to their plan than they are at developing strong 'external' coherence with other strategies and external funding sources.

It is highly likely that improving the integration with relevant strategies and funding will increase their likelihood of achieving implementation, scale and impact. However, it also seems logical that URBACT cities need to start with improving their integrated process and then develop their solutions for integrated urban development before they can develop integration of the plan itself.

The URBACT Programme could usefully increase its support for the detailed practice of preparing internally and externally integrated plans. However, it also needs to consider its priorities for the Action Planning Networks and what is realistic given the time and resources made available.

d) Local integration

Cutting across the above observations, it is also clear that IAPs are stronger at forms of integration limited to the local level (sectors, stakeholders and spatial dimensions within the municipality). Whilst this is to be expected in the context of the local processes supported by URBACT, there are potential opportunities to further enhance aspects of vertical and territorial integration.

Without diluting the work on improving local forms of integration, URBACT could usefully support cities to consider additional forms of integration beyond the local and how they might go about achieving these.

C. Level of action planning detail achieved

This section examines the level of action planning detail achieved by the URBACT APN cities in their Integrated Action Plans. This does not refer to the level and types of integration achieved, but specifically the depth of the action planning details set out.

This part of the study was possible through a quantitative assessment of the presence or absence of different aspects of strong action planning practice, supported by qualitative assessment of different approaches and areas of relative strength and weakness in terms of action planning detail.

Seven criteria of detailed action planning were defined based on the existing URBACT guidance for APN cities. In addition to the simple definition of actions to be implemented, these covered the planned timings, implementation responsibilities, costings, funding sources, monitoring indicators and risk assessment of the actions.

Table 2: The 7 identified aspects of detailed action planning

	Aspect	Description
1.	Defined actions	Does the IAP define a set of actions to be implemented?
2.	Time-defined?	Does the IAP set out when the actions should be implemented?
3.	Responsibilities allocated?	Does the IAP define which body or bodies are responsible for implementing the IAP's actions?
4.	Costed?	Does the IAP estimate the costs of implementing the actions?
5.	Potential funding identified?	Does the IAP set out the potential funding sources for the planned actions?
6.	Monitoring indicators?	Does the IAP identify a set of indicators which can be used to monitor progress?
7.	Risk assessment?	Does the IAP set out a risk assessment for the planned actions?

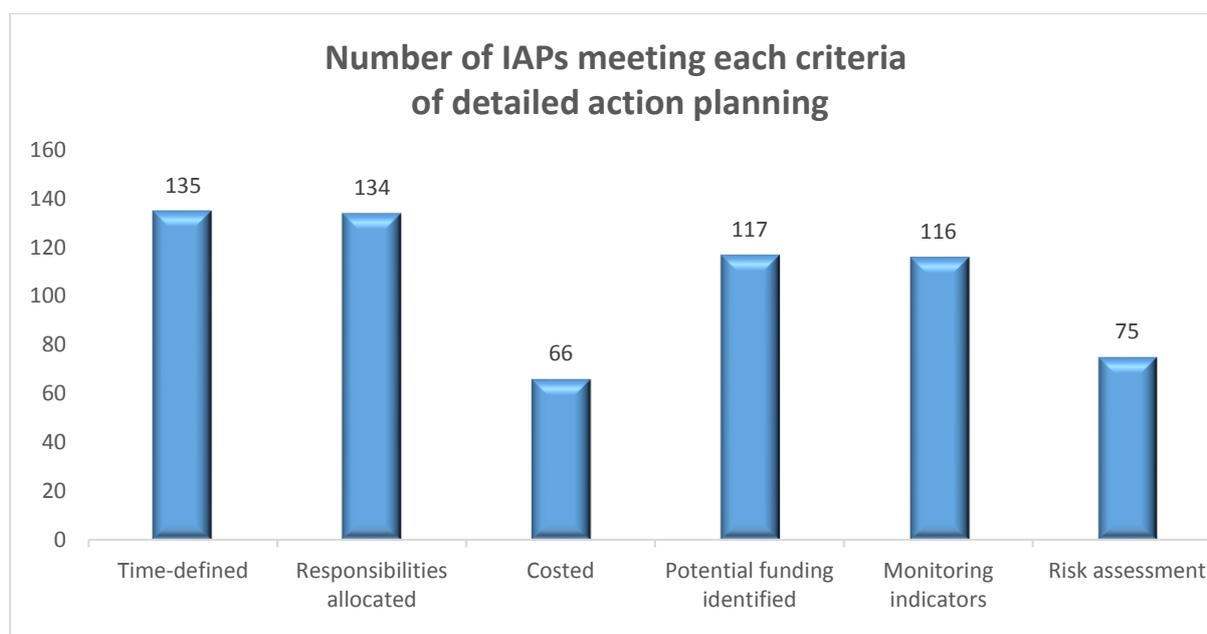
i) Initial quantitative assessment

The study made a binary yes/no assessment of whether each IAP contained each of the seven defined elements of detailed action planning. For the purposes of this part of the study, if it was not possible to confirm whether the IAP contained an element or not (for example, because the English summary was not clear), it was assumed that it did not.⁴

As set out in the 'general observations' part of this report, the vast majority of IAPs clearly set out actions to be implemented. The following bar chart gives an overall picture of the extent to which the IAPs as a whole covered the six additional elements of detailed action planning identified. It is particularly notable that the main areas of strength are in providing some sense of the timings and responsibilities for implementation of the action. However, relatively few IAPs had included costings (66 – 32%) and relatively few outlined a risk assessment (75 – 37%).

⁴ Equally, in several cases where the English summary provided no action planning detail, the quantitative assessment of the elements of action planning was conducted on the basis of online translation of parts of the national language version. However, when English versions showed some but not all elements of action planning, the study did not review the national language versions to check for missing elements.

Figure 16: Action planning detail in the IAPs



ii) Assessment by action planning element

Behind the raw data collected from the quick quantitative assessment, the study was able to identify a number of qualitative elements that further reflect the level of action planning detail achieved.

1. Defined actions

Of the IAPs, 172 (84%) defined actions to be implemented. The average number of actions presented was 17.7 ranging from 107 in one case to only 3 or 4 in others. However, there was tremendous diversity in what was considered an 'action' across IAPs. In different contexts, the word 'actions' was used to refer to:

- Areas of work
- Objectives
- Projects
- Processes
- Activities and sub-activities
- Tasks

This makes comparison of numbers across plans difficult and somewhat unreliable. Furthermore, many plans used the same word 'action' to refer to different levels of planning within the same IAP.

The guidance provided by URBACT seems to allow for some of this diversity. The IAP Guidance states that an 'Actions and schedule' section could contain a: "Breakdown of planned activities / actions / projects which will be developed and delivered".

In many cases, planned 'actions' were quite high level (broad) and had not been broken down into concrete implementable steps. Such planned 'actions' show what the city wants and plans to do, but often in a more strategic sense and not to the level of detail one might expect to directly mobilise funding for implementation. The line between strategic planning and action planning was often extremely blurred for cities. This fundamental issue is reflected in many of the strengths and weaknesses of all of the elements of detailed action planning (see following sub-headings).

Some of the underlying reasons for why certain action plans are maybe not defining concrete actions to be implemented were already explored in the earlier 'general observations' sections of this study under the heading 'IAPs generally have a clear action focus'.

2. Time-defined?

135 IAPs (66%) set out the planned timing of the actions to be carried out. There was a wide diversity in the level of detail provided, with approaches including the following:

- Specific start and end dates
- Deadline for completion
- Year in which the action will be undertaken
- Window of time in which the action will be carried out (e.g. 2018-2019)
- Duration of the action (e.g. 6 months)
- Categorising the action as short-term, medium-term or long-term
- Defining regular/ongoing activities

Some plans were only able to give an overall timeframe for the plan as a whole – or repeat the same overall timeframe for each action. However, many plans were able to provide an indication (in one of the above forms) of the different timings of each specific action.

Whilst all of the approaches to setting out the planned timings are potentially valid, some of the better examples were able to present a Gantt chart (or similar) showing a clear overall picture of how the timing of the different actions relate to each other across the whole plan.

3. Responsibilities allocated?

134 IAPs (65%) set out who would be responsible for implementing the planned actions.

There were many good examples of plans that were able to define both the body with overall responsibility for implementation along with the relevant implementation partners. Furthermore, many plans were able to break down and set out the responsibilities for each individual action.

Less detailed plans set out the actor, body or bodies responsible for implementing the plan as a whole. Some plans only defined the lead actor responsible; others only set out the 'involved partners' (often when the city authority had overall responsibility).

4. Costed?

A relatively low 66 (32%) of the IAPs defined the estimated cost of the planned actions. Again, that figure hides a range of approaches and levels of detail provided by cities, including:

- Financial amount for each action
- Financial amount for some actions
- Level of costs for each action (e.g. 0, 1 or 2 stars)
- Estimated cost of the plan as a whole

Several of the IAPs that presented less detail in this area sought to fulfil the need to define costs by setting out the type of costs or resources needed. For example, stating that an action would 'cost' the time of one full-time worker.

5. Potential funding identified

117 IAPs (57%) described potential funding for their action plan.

There were some detailed examples of IAPs that gave specific consideration to the funding of each individual action and some that were able to be specific about particular funding that was specifically to be targeted or was actually already designated/allocated to pay for the action(s).

However, in the majority of cases, the potential funding was described in general terms and not specifically for each action. Many IAPs had a separate section within the plan on potential funding where they outlined potentially relevant funding sources – particularly with reference to EU funding programmes - for the IAP as a whole.

6. Monitoring indicators?

As many as 116 of IAPs (57%) can be seen to have attempted to address the need for monitoring indicators to check and assess progress towards the achievement of results.

However, the study noticed five main types of important difference in the way monitoring was conceived and presented in the IAPs, often combined in various ways within the same IAP:

1. Presenting indicators to monitor outputs/implementation and/or presenting indicators to monitor impact
2. Presenting indicators for each action or presenting indicators for the actions as a whole (typically at the level of objectives, rather than actions)
3. Describing an aspect to be monitored or an expected outcome (not necessarily measurable) or clearly defining an indicator that can be recorded and tracked over time
4. Defining or not particular targets to be achieved (and monitored against)
5. Describing or not the process by which monitoring will take place (potentially including frequency, responsibility etc.)

Some of the more detailed plans in terms of monitoring also set out the monitoring process to be followed. Beyond the identification of indicators, these set out which body would be responsible for actually monitoring these indicators and over which timeframe.

The evidence from the IAPs suggests that many cities recognised the need for effective monitoring of their IAP as part of implementing the results framework, which was supported by URBACT through specific guidance. However, it is also the case that reaching the point of effective monitoring indicators is a level of detail that some cities were possibly simply unable to reach in the time available.

7. Risk assessment?

Only 75 (37%) of the IAPs provided a risk assessment for their action plan. Furthermore, many of these risk assessments were weak and did not reach the stage of specifying what actions they would take to mitigate the identified risks. Several of the risk assessments were only very short sections at the end of the IAP and were not convincing in terms of showing that the city had fully thought through and sought to reduce the risks of failure.

In general, the study found three main types of difference in the way risk assessment was done:

- Setting out risks per action **or** risks for the IAP as a whole
- Simple identification of risk **or** identification also of mitigation measures
- Presentation of implementation risks **or** impact risks

It was interesting that some cities understood the risk assessment to be about the possible negative consequences or knock-on effects of planned actions. This might be a useful exercise, but does not seem to be the intended purpose and main added value of a risk assessment in action planning, which seeks to consider and overcome potential risks to successful implementation.

Nonetheless, some good examples were seen in the IAPs where cities were able to identify detailed risks and outline specific mitigation actions for individual actions. A few IAPs integrated the risk

assessment into the action planning tables. Several cities created additional risk assessment tables that were just as creative and diverse as the main action planning tables.

It is not possible to show all of the diversity of approaches, but one clear example that can be shown here is from Petrinja (Croatia) – Agri-Urban. It identifies specific risks, which it categorises by type and intensity, before outlining the mitigation plan(s) for each risk.

Figure 17: Petrinja (Agri-Urban) IAP - Part of the implementation risk assessment

RISK #1	Risk Type	Intensity	Mitigation Plan
<p>Extension of planned construction dates - The key causes that may lead to the realization of this risk are the extension of deadlines related to the implementation of public procurement procedures, cancellation of public procurement procedures, complaints about public procurement procedures, unstable weather conditions, delays in delivery of materials needed for construction by material suppliers, extension of construction deadlines due to mistakes or the fault of the contractor.</p>	<p>Operational Financial Staffing Technical</p>	<p>Probability: medium</p>	<p>a) ex-ante evaluation and acceptance of ex-ante evaluation comments; b) Planning of outdoor works during the season with less precipitation and higher temperatures; c) a well-defined contract that concludes with the contractor; d) Planning of construction works within real time frames e) bank guarantees for the quality assurance of works and deadlines</p>
<p>RISK #2</p> <p>Significant increase in investment costs - The reasons that may lead to this risk include: Inadequate Estimation of Construction Costs, Supplier Requirements for Recognizing Additional Unforeseen Costs, and such situations would lead to increased project costs.</p>	<p>Financial Technical</p>	<p>Probability: medium</p>	<p>Creating quality project documentation</p>

Action planning tables

Whilst not, per se, one of the elements of action planning, the use of action tables is one of the clearest and most concise ways to present the plan. We saw in the ‘general observations’ section A of this report that as many as 128 IAPs (64.6%) presented their planned actions using some form of action planning tables, which differed in type and design.

In addition to the diversity in styles, the level of detail contained within the tables also differed substantially, including in the number of action planning elements included. For example, it was relatively common to see action tables that only set out the timing and responsible body for each action. Some elements of detailed action planning were included in the IAP, but not in the action plan – the most common being the risk assessment. This is not necessarily problematic so long as the extra details are provided clearly and linked to specific actions where appropriate.

Tables also differed significantly in the amount of information provided for each element that was included in the action table. These differences are in line with the information outlined under the preceding sub-headings.

A number of action planning tables also included details not included in our list of ‘action planning elements’. One area of good practice was tables that were able to clearly link the actions to the strategic and/or specific objectives defined (see several of the good examples presented in the ‘general observations’ section). Others included additional background information or elements linked to demonstrating forms of integration (including potential links between actions, relevant examples from transnational exchange and relevance to social or environmental sustainability).

iii) Overall assessment of the level of action planning detail achieved

We have seen that 172 of the IAPs (84%) clearly set out a set of actions to be implemented. Furthermore 90 (44%) of the IAPs set out – to some extent - at least five of the six additional elements of action planning detail identified (timings, responsibilities, costings, funding, monitoring and risk assessment).

Nevertheless, the headline assessment of the level of action planning detail achieved by the IAPs is that there is significant blurring between action planning and strategic planning.

Some relatively common strengths amongst many of the IAPS are that they:

- set out a defined set of actions to be implemented;
- allocate responsibilities for implementation;
- define timings for the different actions;
- present the planned actions in clear action planning tables;
- enjoy clear political buy-in; and/or
- enjoy a clear sense that involved authorities and stakeholders will take the plans forward.

However, if the intention is for URBACT cities to produce something more akin to a project plan with more specific details about each of the identified criteria, then the IAPs cannot be said to have reached that level of planning detail. In this regard, frequently occurring areas where planning detail has not yet been fully developed include:

- Poorly defined ‘actions’, in particular:
 - Actions defined in terms of objectives or areas of work
 - Insufficient detail of the specific individual steps required
- Missing elements of action planning, in particular in terms of:
 - Costing individual actions
 - Conducting an implementation risk assessment
- A lack of detail on action planning elements even when they are included, notably:
 - Vague timings
 - Generic identification of ‘potential’ funding
 - Action planning tables of variable quality and consistency
- Action planning elements presented for the plan as a whole rather than the individual actions, notably in terms of identifying:
 - Funding opportunities
 - Risk assessment
- Some confusion of what is required in strong action planning, for example:
 - Costs defined in terms of their type rather than a financial amount
 - Risk assessment of the impact of actions rather than of their implementation

What seems clear is that the IAPs are not best understood as ‘investment-ready’ project plans which have all their details defined and either get implemented or not as they are. In fact, they are typically ‘living’ documents which capture the thematic and integrated planning lessons from participating in the APN and whose implementation will come from ongoing stakeholder and city-authority engagement in feeding into new funding applications, new projects or guiding improved ways of working.

D. Trends across cities and networks

A task of the IAP Study was to consider whether any particular trends can be identified in the level of integrated action planning according to the type and profile of city. An important finding of the study is that whilst the diversity of the IAPs and the amount of nuance in the levels of integrated action planning almost defy categorisation, it is possible to identify some relevant trends based on the theme of the APN network.

The study used the quantitative data on the level of action planning achieved (see section C of this report) to test whether possible trends could be identified. It backed this up with qualitative assessment of any evidence within the IAPs to identify possible explanations behind any trends.

i) Trends by network

Action planning detail

Differences in the IAPs between networks was the most consistently observable trend found by the IAP Study. This was observed during the reading of the types of integration worked on and action planning detail attained and also backed up by the quantifiable data on the level of action planning detail achieved (see section C of this report)⁵.

Pertinent observations from this aspect of the study are that:

- Networks focused on topics that address the way that a city works on a particular issue overall tended to have less detailed action plans. This includes topics such as
 - how to boost social innovation (BoostINNO);
 - how to provide a framework to support temporary use (REFILL);
 - how to boost urban resilience (Resilient Europe);
 - how to co-design social public services with local stakeholders (CHANGE!);
 - governance structures and processes to deliver smart cities (SmartImpact)
 - how to develop more sustainable public procurement systems (PROCURE); and
 - cities' digital communication strategies (InteractiveCities)
- Networks or cities working on topics that are new or relatively new for them were particularly likely to achieve less specific details in the action planning. This was the case, for example, for many cities in BoostINNO and REFILL where many cities reported now being in a much stronger place to develop more detailed actions in the future based on their lessons learned.

As will be highlighted in the overall conclusions, these observations do not mean that these networks and their cities have not benefitted from the APN process or that the IAP is not a valuable tool that will be a key driver of change in their city. It is just that they have more work to do in understanding and defining the actions they want to implement and so are generally able to provide less specific action planning details when they do.

- In contrast to the above observations, networks focused on topics where they already have a strong history of experience or where they already broadly know what they want to do (just not how to do it) are able to develop much more detailed action plans.

⁵ Not too much should be read into the quantifiable data alone, since it does not capture the qualitative differences in action planning detail or the types of integration achieved in the action planning and so it is not presented here. Nevertheless, calculating average scores for each network allowed the study to look more closely for particular evidence of and reasons for trends which inform the findings of this section.

The following table outlines some of the networks that had generally more detailed action plans and outlines some of the potential reasons.

Table 3: Thematic aspects facilitating detailed action planning

Network	Potential factors facilitating detailed action planning
AGRI-URBAN	The municipalities already had longstanding policies and practices with regards food systems, so were able to focus on exchanging best practice and new ideas to be implemented.
MAPS	The cities already knew they wanted to reactivate site-specific disused military sites, so work focused on specific actions that could be implemented.
TechTown	The work of the cities enjoyed quite a specific and 'limited' focus on the digital economy and what actions medium-sized cities can implement to grow their digital sector and create new jobs.
In Focus	The network benefitted from having clarity from the beginning of the kind of approach wanted (urban smart specialisation strategies), so was able to focus on defining actions to implement that approach.
Gen-Y City	The theory of attracting and retaining young people is relatively well developed. It does not usually require systemic change, but specific new activities to promote opportunities in terms of employment, culture, housing etc. The city's job is then to make strategic choices in planning actions.

ii) Trends in types of integrated urban development promoted by networks

The theme of the network also had a clear and important influence on the aspects of integrated urban development worked on or prioritised by the APN cities. Some pertinent examples include:

- A relatively strong focus on addressing all three pillars of sustainable urban development in Resilient Europe with its broad focus on promoting urban resilience
- A strong focus on sectoral integration within CityCentreDoctor which was relatively tightly defined spatially but broadly defined sectorally
- A consideration of the extra territorial dimension of integration in the Sub>Urban network working at the fringes of municipalities

The diversity and complexity of the way that the network theme interacts with the particularities of any individual city are hard to capture. Again, there are exceptions and some cities took greater advantage of the potential to address certain aspects of integration than others within the same network. But the theme of the network is nevertheless an important factor for understanding some of the choices made and overall trends observed.

iii) Trends by country

Quite simply, the number of cases per country is insufficient to draw out reliable trends or conclusions. Furthermore, where the study noticed that IAPs from a particular country had achieved a high level of action planning detail, it was also true that their cities were in networks that tended to facilitate more detailed action planning.

iv) Trends by level of regional development

The study found no evidence of any overall difference in the level of action planning detail achieved by cities in less developed, more developed and transition regions. This appears not to be a factor in the level of action planning achieved.

v) Trends by city size

An initial review of the quantitative data for the level of action planning by city size suggested that city size could be a factor in the level of action planning achieved, with the highest average score (number of action planning elements included) achieved by small cities followed by very small cities then medium cities. Very large cities perform the worst overall in terms of action planning.

One interpretation could be that: 1) the scale of small and medium-size cities makes it easier to action plan and/or 2) the baseline position of small and medium-size cities is lower, and possibly their knowledge absorption capacity is better, so they make more progress in APNs...

However, it also seems to be true that more of the bigger cities participated in networks addressing systemic change which this study seems to indicate reduces the likely level of action planning detail. For example, there were four ‘very large’ cities in BoostINNO, five in REFILL and four in SmartImpact. Equally, there were no ‘very large’ cities at all in the Agri-Urban, MAPS and TechTown networks, which seemed to enjoy factors facilitating more detailed action planning.

Large cities in networks that tended to show more detailed action plans (such as Gen-Y City, 2nd Chance and Suburban) also scored well. This tends to suggest that it is still the theme of the network that is the most important factor affecting the level of action planning.

Table 4: Ranking of city size groups by level of action planning detail

Rank	City size (by population)
1.	Small (50 000-99 999)
2.	Very small (0-49 999)
3.	Medium (100 000-249 999)
4.	Large (250 000-499 999)
5.	Very large (500 000+)

vi) Concluding observations

Overall, then, there is much evidence to suggest that the theme of the network is one of the most important trend factors influencing both the level of action planning detail achieved and the aspects of integrated urban development worked on by a city.

This analysis does not pretend to capture all the variety of action planning performance by participating cities and there are many exceptions to the overall trends identified –influenced also by a number of locally specific factors including existing local governance procedures, thematic knowledge and experience, ULG composition and priorities.

It may also be that certain networks benefitted from particularly good and clear lead and ad-hoc expertise either in terms of delivering more detailed action plans or in promoting particular forms of integration. Although this study was not able to address this question specifically, URBACT itself may choose to dig into this further using the evidence of the APN Closure Survey.

Nevertheless, the study found that consideration of the network theme can be a valuable starting point for understanding potential differences in the journey of cities in their APN and their likely or potential final IAP output.

Conclusions and recommendations

This section of the report sets out the main messages emerging from the study of the 205 Integrated Action Plans produced by URBACT Action Planning Network cities in 2018. On the basis of the evidence, findings and observations set out in the four sections of this report on 'general observations' 'integrated action planning', 'detailed action planning' and 'trends by city and network', the study is able to draw out:

- A summary of the headline findings from the study
- The main overarching conclusions that can be drawn from these findings
- Key recommendations to support the next generation of APNs starting this year (2019).

Each IAP could be the subject of a detailed study in itself, revealing new combinations of strengths, weaknesses, priorities and approaches in terms of the planning process, the thematic and transnational learning, forms of integration addressed, the detail of the action planning and the way the plan is presented (see case study examples published separately to this report). Although counterexamples from within the pool of IAPs could contradict any assertions that 'The IAPs do this' or the 'IAPs are like that', this does not mean that it is impossible to draw out meaningful observations, trends and recommendations overall. When one steps back from the specific details of each IAP, some detailed pictures emerge.

Headline findings

- Cities almost always define a **clear set of actions in the IAPs** and there is often significant buy-in from local stakeholders and decision-makers giving them a **strong potential to be implemented**.
- The IAPs show the **positive learning journey that URBACT cities have undertaken** within Action Planning Networks and much evidence of how that journey has improved their local governance processes (including improved cross-departmental cooperation and stakeholder engagement) and understanding of their chosen theme and potential integrated solutions.
- The IAPs show significant **diversity** in terms of both the themes, challenges and local realities being addressed, and also the structure, style and content of the IAP document itself. This can make direct comparison extremely difficult.
- The clearest and most concise way of presenting planned actions is through **action planning tables** which can incorporate all the required aspects of detailed action planning. Various styles and formats can work well (including one overall table, individual tables per action or separate tables for timings, costs etc.).
- The clarity of many plans is reduced by **excessive reporting** of the city context and the journey undertaken in the APN (ULG meetings, transnational exchange meetings etc.) within the IAP document. Such material is rich and interesting, but can detract from the action focus of the IAP itself.
- Similarly, **too many English summaries are executive summaries**, which do not so much provide a short version of the plan itself, but rather a summary description of the plan and the process of developing it.
- URBACT cities are dealing with the significant **complexity of integrated action planning**, with at least 14 aspects of integrated action planning to potentially consider (covering integrated processes, planning for integrated urban development and integrated plans) and at least 6 aspects of detailed action planning.

- On any particular aspect, **the performance of the IAP is nuanced** and on a spectrum of more or less integrated or more or less detailed. It is sometimes possible to say that an IAP does not cover an aspect at all, but it may not mean anything to say that it covers an aspect ‘fully’. Perfection may not exist – there may always be more details that could be provided or more sectors, stakeholders or other aspects to be integrated.
- The IAPs show cities being able to develop more integrated approaches to sustainable urban development, particularly the **local forms of integration** (stakeholders, sectors, local spatial dimensions). There is less evidence of significant improvement in multi-level governance or integration between neighbouring municipalities.
- Whilst all IAPs should be based on all aspects of **integrated planning processes** (horizontal and vertical stakeholder engagement, needs-based planning and transnational exchange and learning), different cities will legitimately have different priorities when **planning for integrated urban development** according to their local context and chosen theme.
- The action plans are often clear at defining implementation responsibilities and general timeframes. Nevertheless, many are unable to achieve greater levels of **action planning detail** in terms of breaking down actions into their individual implementable steps and defining specific timings, costings, financing, monitoring indicators and risk assessment.
- Cities seem to face a **tension between providing a broader action plan (more integrated) and a deeper action plan (more detailed actions)**. It is clearly challenging to be both broad and deep at the same time.
- The **theme of the network** (rather than city size, country or level of development) seems to be the most important factor influencing the approach to integration, transnational learning and action planning. Nevertheless, the final IAP is a result of the interplay between the theme, the specific local starting point (in terms of local governance, existing thematic knowledge and practice and so on) and its individual journey within the APN.

Main conclusions

The IAPs are valuable tools in defining what a city plans to do next on a particular theme. But for many cities, the process of developing the IAP is even more valuable than the document itself in terms of driving change. In practice, this can mean transforming the way that cross-departmental cooperation works within the municipality, revolutionising the way the city works with local stakeholders, significantly advancing understanding of the thematic challenge worked on and potential solutions, and/or a step change in the strategic approach to integrated urban development.

The IAPs have strong implementation potential, often enjoying ongoing stakeholder engagement and political buy-in. But they are not best understood as ‘investment-ready’ project plans which get implemented or not as they are. In fact, they are typically ‘living’ documents which capture the thematic and integrated planning lessons from participating in the APN and whose implementation will come from ongoing stakeholder and city-authority engagement, including feeding into new funding applications, new projects or guiding improved ways of working. Much of the value of the IAPs will only be revealed by the impact they have over time, which could manifest in various ways.

The key impetus and main achievement of the URBACT Action Planning Networks is to drive more integrated approaches to sustainable urban development, rather than developing more detailed plans. Working on improving integration is a never-ending challenge that requires cities to continually open up (broaden) their thinking, bring in new perspectives and think about additional linkages and interrelationships. The transnational exchanges also encourage them to widen their

horizons often in terms of both the theory and the practice of a particular thematic area. This does not necessarily encourage cities to focus down on detailed action planning, which can only really start when a city has decided what it plans to do more generally.

Despite their existing value and the legitimacy of much of the variation and diversity seen in the Integrated Action Plans, URBACT can still help cities to produce stronger, clearer and more detailed action plans. This should not involve defining more rigid templates or obligations, which may not reflect local specificities and stifle creativity. But URBACT can help cities to be more systematic about the way they address the complexity involved in integrated action planning and more structured in setting out their plans, including in terms of what needs to be in the action plan and where is the place for reporting on the rich URBACT journey that led to the plan.

Added value of URBACT Action Planning Networks

The Integrated Action Plans provide valuable information and insights into **the added value of the APNs for participating cities:**

- 1. APNs are very strong at improving cities' integrated planning and local governance processes, incorporating:**
 - a. Increased cross-departmental planning within municipalities (ULG)
 - b. Increased local stakeholder involvement (ULG)
 - c. Lessons/ideas from transnational exchange (transnational meetings, study visits...)
 - d. Ensuring that plans are based on real needs (baseline study, ULG tools...)
- 2. APNs are strong at increasing cities' understanding of thematic challenges and potential solutions for integrated urban development, including:**
 - a. Increased thematic knowledge and understanding (experts, transnational exchange, cross-departmental coordination, stakeholder involvement...)
 - b. Learning lessons from experience (transnational exchange, pilot actions...)
 - c. Developing and sharing potential solutions (transnational exchange, ULG...)
- 3. APNs are also adding significant value by setting cities up to implement change:**
 - a. Supporting the creation of strengthened ongoing governance processes
 - b. Requiring that cities go beyond theoretical discussions and define an action plan
 - c. Encouraging cities to incorporate a results framework, with clear objectives, indicators and targets associated with their plans.

In the above ways, the IAPs suggest that the APNs are directly and effectively meeting their objectives as defined by the programme. The URBACT III Programme Manual (see box) clearly states that the main objectives of the APNs are around capacity building and that the action plans need to be understood not just as an output, but as a tool that drives exchange and learning.

URBACT III Programme Manual

Fact sheet 2: Exchange and Learning Activities

“The main objective of Action Planning Networks is to *improve the capacity of cities to manage sustainable urban policies* and more especially to *strengthen the capacity to design integrated strategies* for sustainable urban development.”

“As a starting point, cities willing to get involved in Action Planning Networks shall identify a policy challenge they want to address at local level. Then, they shall commit to develop an Integrated Action Plan that will address this challenge. *This Integrated Action Plan will thus be both a driver of the exchange and learning activities, and a key concrete output of their participation in the Action Planning network.*”

Recommendations

On the basis of the above findings and conclusions, this IAP Study report makes a series of specific recommendations for the next round of Action Planning Networks. These recommendations are grouped according to the categories of integrated action planning identified in this study. The headline recommendations and their level of priority is as follows:

Table 5: Headline recommendations

Recommendation	Level of attention required
Continue to strengthen and improve integrated planning processes	*
Support cities to systematically address all aspects of Integrated Urban Development	***
Improve the guidance on detailed action planning	**

Continue to strengthen and improve integrated planning processes

URBACT Action Planning Networks are already very strong at improving local governance and urban development planning processes. Nevertheless, URBACT should continue to explore and develop opportunities to strengthen this work, since it is the foundation of everything the APNs achieve. Recommendations and suggestions for achieving this include:

1. **Provide** specific examples of some of the best ULG practice in different national contexts - possible National URBACT Point (NUP) task in each country
2. **Consider** obliging or encouraging representation of particular perspectives within the ULG (e.g. environmentalists, socially marginalised groups, experts on gender etc.)
3. **Support** Lead Experts (and Lead Partners?) to investigate and consider how transnational exchange and learning can work differently in different network types
4. **Continue** to promote and update the existing guidance on planning processes (ULGs, baseline studies etc.) in light of the findings of this study and other feedback.
5. **Consider** encouraging or obliging additional national-level learning and exchange between APN cities focusing on challenges, opportunities and good practice in planning processes.

Support cities to systematically address all aspects of Integrated Urban Development

URBACT Action Planning Networks are already helping cities to develop more integrated strategies and solutions to achieve sustainable development objectives. However, the complexity of planning for integrated urban development is still challenging and cities can be supported to do this more systematically. Recommendations and suggestions for achieving this include:

1. **Provide** cities with a simple check-list / tool to ensure that they consider and report against all six aspects of 'planning for integrated urban development' in a systematic way
2. **Provide** guidance on what cities should be thinking about under each of the six aspects, including possible check lists for each aspect.
3. **Encourage** cities to think about and explain which aspects are the biggest priorities and which, if any, are not relevant/not a priority in their context.
4. **Consider** requiring the Lead Expert to provide an initial overview of planning for integrated urban development on their specific theme to guide cities in their task

5. **Oblige** each city to think about and demonstrate how the specific topic /plan contributes to broader sustainable development strategies of the city
6. **Provide** more information and support on integrated approaches that go beyond the local level (multi-level governance, territorial integration)
7. **Consider** a formal stage of the APN process for cities to compare, assess and improve the integrated nature of the emerging action plan

Improve the guidance on detailed action planning

Adding details to the action planning must necessarily come after work to improve the integration of planning processes and defining more integrated approaches has been completed. It is not recommended to prioritise the details of action planning over these earlier elements. Nevertheless, the aim should be to support cities to make their action plans as detailed as they can within the time available and there are areas where URBACT can clearly help cities to better understand and address the challenges of detailed action planning. Recommendations and suggestions for this include:

1. **Provide** clearer guidance that the details of the city context and APN process should only be summarised in the IAP itself, which should be focused on the action planning details.
2. **Consider** requiring cities to report their URBACT journey and thematic learning separately from their action plan to ensure that this latter document is more clearly action-focused
3. **Consider** defining a common nomenclature for different levels of 'action' to improve the clarity, detail and comparability of what is planned.
4. **Oblige** all cities to produce an overall summary action planning table covering each of the main planning elements for each 'headline action' in a structured and systematic way.
5. **Explain** that the English summary should be a version of the plan and not merely a description of the plan – the summary action planning table should be its heart.
6. **Provide** more guidance and/or training on each aspect of detailed action planning, particularly focused on the weakest areas (costings, risk assessment, defining indicators).
7. **Consider** defining some minimum standards/requirements for each, which could include:
 - Relative timings of different actions must be set out in a Gantt chart (or similar)
 - Financial costings and potential funding must be identified for each individual action
 - Monitoring plans must include measurable output and impact indicators
 - Implementation risk assessment must include planned risk mitigation measures.
8. **Encourage** cities to produce more detailed action planning tables in addition to the overall summary table.
9. **Avoid** the use of a common action planning or IAP templates, which may stifle creativity and local ownership.
10. **Encourage** cities to justify any strategic choices they have made in their IAP e.g. how a narrow action plan fits into a broader strategy or why a broad IAP is needed at this stage
11. **Consider** defining a work flow through the various stages of integrated action planning, which would allow cities to track, show and justify where they have got to.
12. **Consider** introducing a deadline for cities to have defined their strategy and/or headline actions so that the rest of the time can be focused on working on the action planning detail.

Longer-term reflections

This study assumes that, for the upcoming generation of APNs - for which applications have already been submitted at the time of writing - important strategic changes to the role and objectives of the APNs are not an option. Therefore, the above recommendations are made with a view to strengthening the work within the existing definition and objectives of Action Planning Networks according to the Programme Manual.

Nevertheless, the findings of this study could be used to inform longer-term strategic decision-making for the URBACT Programme more broadly. An important message from this study in this regard is to make sure that any modifications in the objectives and approach take full account of the risks of losing existing areas of strength and added value from APNs.

For example, *if* URBACT decides that it wants to achieve significantly stronger and more detailed action plans or a more direct link to mobilising future investments as outputs of the programme, then it could perhaps consider selecting different types of networks/cities. In theory, such an approach might involve trying to select only cities which already have in place good local governance processes and/or an integrated strategy or action plan that requires more detailed planning. It could focus on network topics that are narrower or most likely to lead to investment projects. For example, this could be the difference between supporting a network working on urban mobility as a whole and supporting one working specifically on implementing the car-free-city concept, or transforming its cycling infrastructure.

Focusing down on the topic addressed or on cities that have already progressed through the first steps of action planning would seem to be clear ways of achieving greater action planning detail. Such networks could engage in much more targeted work on identifying potential funding and preparing specific applications, including transnational exchange on positive and negative experiences in mobilising funding. Targets and links between the URBACT networks and any funding mobilised could then be realistically made.

However, there are risks associated with these approaches, particularly if they replace the existing types of network. It risks abandoning cities who do not yet know what they need to do on a specific topic or how to go about improving their way of working on it. It risks abandoning complex, systemic, city-wide challenges and/or new areas of work for cities, in favour of more discrete interventions where good practice has been more clearly established.

URBACT is already experimenting with 'Implementation Networks' and 'Transfer Networks' and it may be that some of these reflections are relevant for the broader overall discussions on the future types of network supported by URBACT.

A final consideration in this regard is that, in order to demonstrate the full added value of the Action Planning Networks as they are, URBACT may need to implement a more systemic way of following up with cities over time. This could be done through a survey, interviews and/or specific events to hear what changes were driven by URBACT, how the programme has contributed to achieving sustainable urban development and what specific role the Integrated Action Plan played in that.

Another valuable area for study could include case studies of cities which have successfully progressed from an URBACT Action Planning Network to an Urban Innovative Action, Horizon2020 project, ERDF/ESF funding or other significant investment in order to identify trends and success factors.

Annex: IAP Case Studies

The contractor conducted seven case studies of Integrated Action Plans (IAPs) developed by cities in the 2016-2018 URBACT Action Planning Networks. This number was larger than the four or five initially foreseen in order to better represent the diversity in approach, styles and content that the study identified in the IAPs. The seven IAP case studies carried out were on:

Network	City	City size	Country	Regional development
AGRI-URBAN	Södertälje	Small	Sweden	More developed
BoostINNO	Strasbourg	Large	France	More developed
City Centre Doctor	Medina del Campo	Very small	Spain	More developed
Gen-Y City	Klaipeda	Medium	Lithuania	Less developed
MAPS	Szombathely	Small	Hungary	Less developed
REFILL	Cluj-Napoca	Large	Romania	Less developed
sub>urban	Antwerp	Very large	Belgium	More developed

To be considered for selection, all IAPs had to include at least six of the eight elements of a detailed action plan recognised by the IAP Study.⁶ Key principles that then guided the final selection were:

- Ensuring geographic diversity in terms of western (France, Belgium), eastern (Romania, Lithuania), northern (Sweden), southern (Spain), and central (Hungary) Europe.
- Ensuring balance between more and less developed regions (four 'more'; three 'less').
- Ensuring balance between cities of different sizes: one very small; two small; one medium; two large; and one very large.
- Ensuring a balance between types of network: two looking at a specific site/area (city centre and former military barracks); two looking at city-wide systemic change (to enable temporary use and to boost social innovation); two focused on issues beyond the city centre (food and the urban fringe); and one looking at issues facing a particular target group (Generation-Y).

The seven case studies are made available alongside this report. They are not presented as 'good practice' as such, but rather as accessible reference documents for interested stakeholders to understand the diversity of results that are possible under the overall concept of integrated action planning and to take inspiration and learning from various specific elements.

Overview of the seven IAP case studies

The following short summaries highlight some of the main points of difference amongst the case studies and direct the reader to the most pertinent examples according to their interests.

Södertälje, Sweden (AGRI-URBAN)

The [IAP of Södertälje](#) is a useful example of how to structure and present an integrated action plan, including concise background information and detailed actions. It plans nine headline interventions, which it usefully breaks down into short-term implementable actions. The plan fits clearly into a longer-term strategic approach to using food as a tool for sustainable local development and demonstrates effective transnational exchange and learning on specific transferable practices.

⁶ 1. Actions defined; 2. Actions set out in an action table; 3. Actions time defined; 4. Responsibilities allocated; 5. Actions costed; 6. Potential funding identified; 7. Monitoring indicators defined; 8. Risk assessment made

Strasbourg, France (BoostINNO)

The [IAP of Strasbourg](#) is an interesting example of an IAP focused on governance processes to change the way a city works on a topic, rather than focusing on specific physical interventions. This city was able to prepare a reasonably concrete action plan on the relatively abstract topic of creating a more supportive ecosystem for social innovation – building on the Eurometropole structures to enable planning between municipalities and levels of government.

Medina del Campo, Spain (City Centre Doctor)

The [IAP of Medina del Campo](#) is a good example of a detailed action plan considering a broad range of policies and areas of intervention relevant to revitalising the city centre. The plan shows examples of effective coordination with existing local strategies and regional and national decision-making. The plan also demonstrates the benefits of a thorough, bottom-up process of needs assessment - though perhaps not all of the detail needs to be presented in the IAP itself.

Klaipeda, Lithuania (Gen-Y City)

The [IAP of Klaipeda](#) is notable for focusing down on a narrow set of actions where the URBACT Local Group felt it could have the most impact through realistic, short-term actions implementable with existing resources. A relatively high level of planning detail was thus achieved on actions to promote entrepreneurship and freelancing among young people as one specific part of a broader strategic approach to addressing the city's long-term sustainable development.

Szombathely, Hungary (MAPS)

The [IAP of Szombathely](#) is a good example of an action plan focused on the revitalisation and opening up of a specific site (a former military barracks). Szombathely was inspired by other cities in the network on how to approach such a 'white spot' in the city, engaged local citizens effectively and developed a clear and logical action plan with a relatively high amount of planning detail. The IAP shows good consideration of different objectives, spatial aspects and potential uses.

Cluj-Napoca, Romania (REFILL)

The [IAP of Cluj-Napoca](#) is another example of an IAP focused more on improving ways of working than on physical interventions – in this case, to create a more supportive framework for temporary-use projects. It makes particular use of a pilot site to test approaches which might be rolled out more widely. The action planning tables are clear and contain a useful amount of detail, whilst a permanent committee of ULG members has been created to manage and monitor implementation.

Antwerp, Belgium (sub>urban)

The [IAP of Antwerp](#) is an example of an IAP focused on engaging stakeholders to improve urban-planning processes in a specific context – the urban fringe. It includes use of a pilot site to test new ways of working and a strong focus on regional-level cooperation between municipalities. A strength of the IAP is that it fits clearly into a longer-term process of updating the city's Strategic Structural Plan, but it is relatively light on action planning detail, being more of a basis to guide future actions.