URBACT IV - Synergie Guidance Note No. 5

PROGRESS REPORT

This Guidance Note provides useful information about how to complete and submit an URBACT IV Progress Report. It is both a technical guide to SYNERGIE CTE and a practical guide on the content of the Progress Report.

Date JANUARY 2024







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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. What is a progress report?

A Progress Report is one of the **mandatory documents** that must be submitted for each reporting period. According to the Subsidy Contract and the Programme Manual, the **Lead Partner is responsible** for completing and submitting the Progress Report on behalf of the project.

Information should be **gathered from all partners** and the document should be signed by the Lead Partner and the Lead Partner First Level Controller.

The information contained in the report should cover both an update on network activities as well as a budget review.

The overall structure of a Progress Report is as follows:

- > Section 1 General Introduction. Main highlights of the reporting period.
- > <u>Section 2 Progress by work package</u>. A focus on activities in each work package, a table to list the key milestones and an update on progress towards achieving programmed outputs should be provided.
- > <u>Section 3 Report on expertise</u>. An update on the work of the Lead Expert and details of other experts used at project level should be provided.
- > <u>Section 4 Update on general project information</u>. The section allows for changes in contact details or bank details to be reported as well as providing information on any issues which have been encountered during the reporting period.
- Section 5 Financial update. A detailed review of financial progress is presented here in the summary table automatically generated. The report should highlight any potential changes in budget categories or partner budget which are more than the 20% flexibility allowed by the Programme.
- > <u>Section 6 Signatures.</u> The Progress Report shall be signed by the representative of the Lead Partner and by the First Level Controller of the Lead Partner.

1.2. Preparation of the Progress Report

The Progress Report is a compulsory document for project reporting, but it is also a useful monitoring tool for the Lead Partner to review partner involvement and local activity.

In order to facilitate the completion of the Progress Report, it is a good idea to establish a project level procedure. A short questionnaire at the end of each reporting period which is circulated to each partner with a very short list of questions like those in the Progress Report would help the Lead Partner to gather the useful information required. An earlier internal deadline should be fixed.

2. COMPLETING THE PROGRESS REPORT IN SYNERGIE-CTE

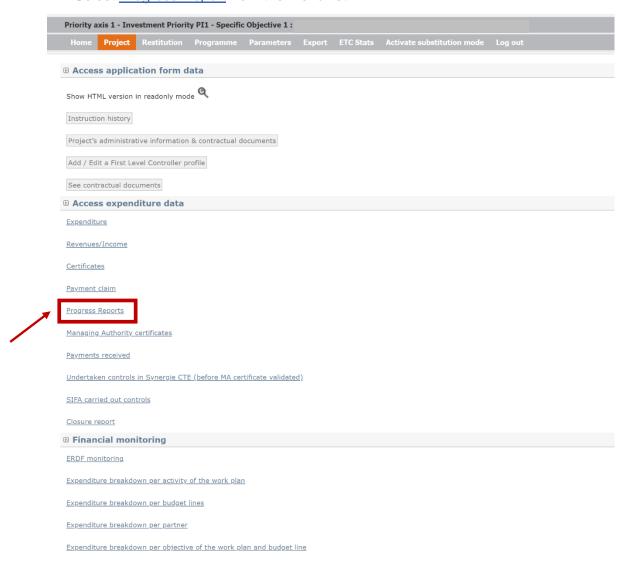
IMPORTANT

The Progress Report MUST be submitted using SYNERGIE-CTE – no other format is acceptable.

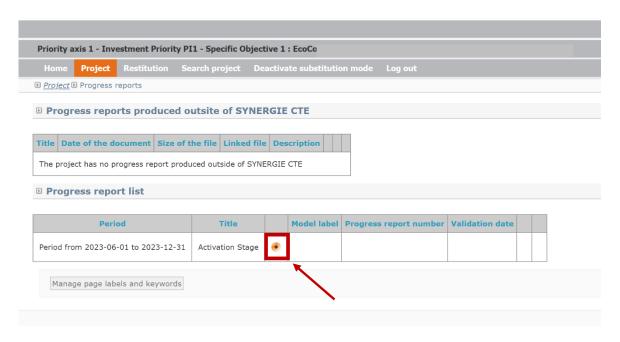
After logging in on https://cte-2127.synergie-europe.fr, you should see the following screen, where you can visualise three different chapters "Access application form data", "Access expenditure data" and "Financial monitoring".

2.1. Creating a Progress Report

> Select Progress Report from the menu list.

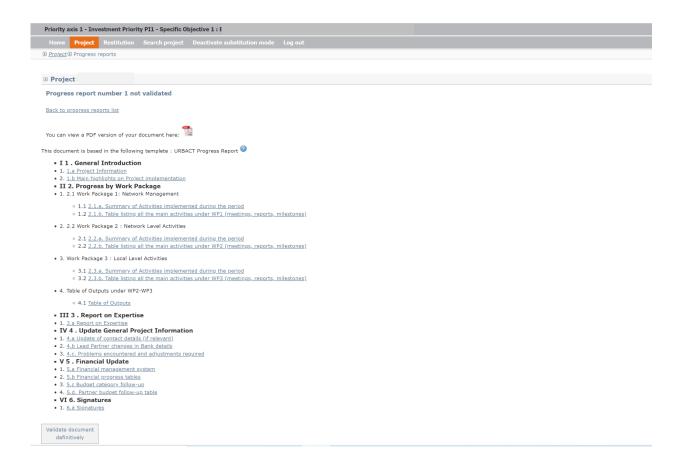


> Add a <u>Progress Report</u> using the ● button



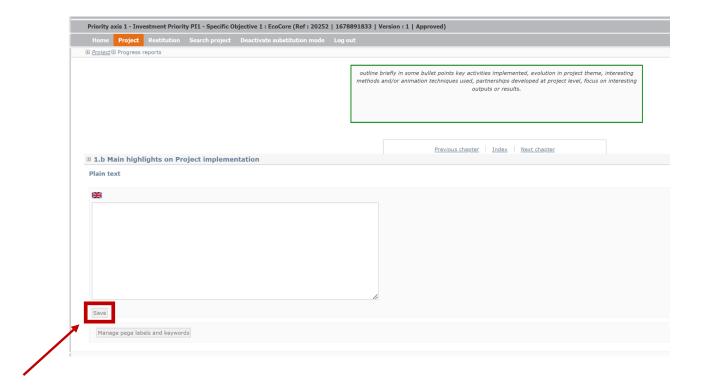
2.2. Filling in a Progress Report

Start entering the data into the report using the main menu.



I 1. General Introduction

- Section 1.a is prefilled.
- Section 1.b is free text to be completed reporting on the overall state of play of the network activities. In a few short paragraphs, you should outline briefly in some bullet points key activities implemented, evolution in project theme, interesting methods and/or animation techniques used, partnerships developed at project level, focus on interesting outputs or results.



REMEMBER TO SAVE

After each section, if you do not click on the Save button, the data not saved will be lost and you will have to redo it.

II 2. Progress by Work Package

1. Work Packages 1,2,3

There are three sub sections per work package. You should complete each work package one after the other:

a. Summary of Activities implemented during the period

This free text section should refer to the activities planned in the work package and report on their progress during the reference period.

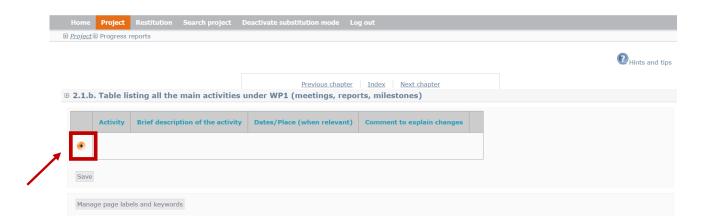
You are invited to underline the positive progress but also to mention the problems specifically related to the development and the performance of activities and outputs of the work package (mentioning, for example, if new needs or ideas came up or if contents/form of some outputs and activities must be reviewed).

b. Table listing all the main activities for each work package

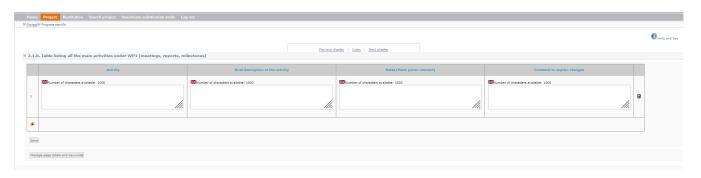
This table should be completed to inform the Programme secretariat of the key milestones of activity during the reference period. These activities can cover a wide range of things depending on the work package.

Examples of activities can be found in the Programme Manual; in addition, indications on completing this section can be found in Annex 1 of this guide.

You should click on the [●] button to add activities.



Complete the table of free text which appears:



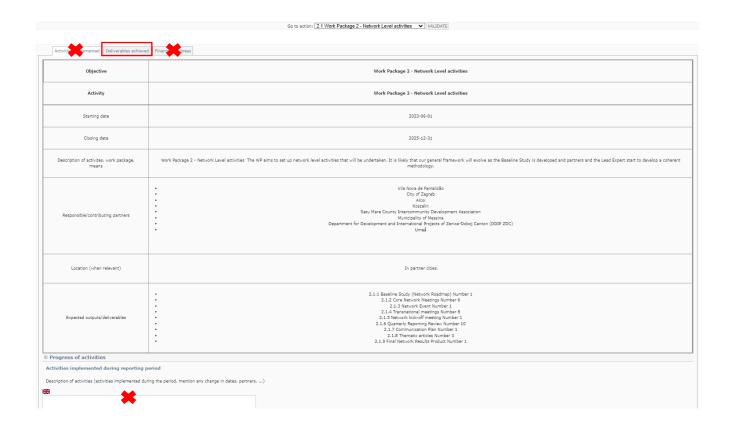
2. Table of Outputs under WP2-WP3

In the section 4, a table should be completed to report on the official project outputs according to the approved application form. It should show the quantity achieved and should list all the evidence that should be submitted with the reporting documents.

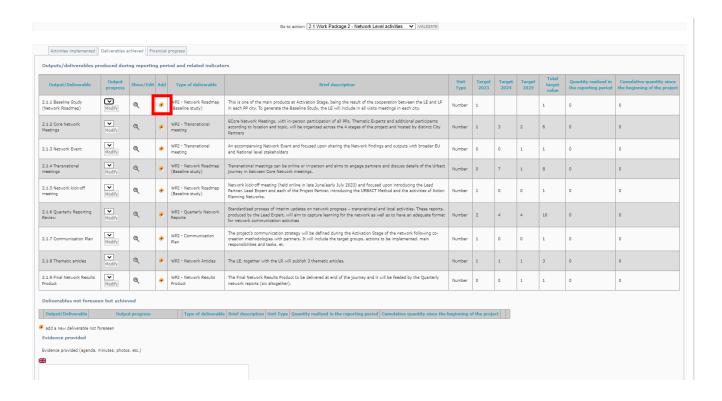
We remind you that no outputs were planned for WP1.

You will first see a general table with 3 pages: <u>activities implemented</u>, <u>deliverables achieved and</u> financial progress.

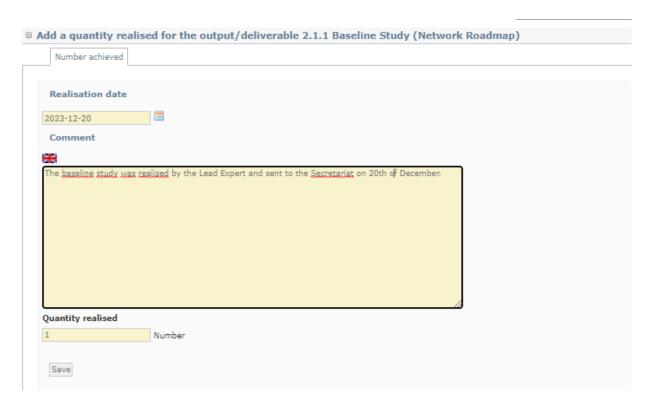
We ask you to go straight to page 2: "deliverables achieved". The other pages can be skipped as the information is provided in other parts of the template already.



Once in the "deliverables achieved" section, you will see this table:

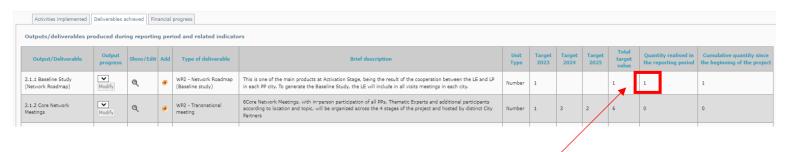


To enter details, click on the • button.

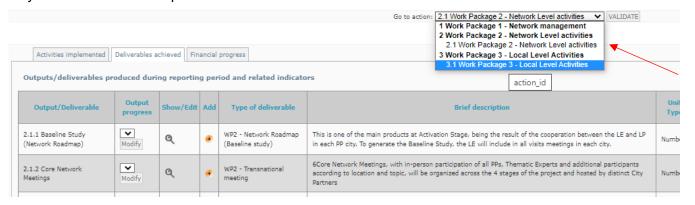


Fill all cases, putting the date of the last activity achieved in cases of several of them. You can also list here the evidences provided for each output (instead of the table at the top of the general table).

Then, save the information.



Going back to the table, you can see the quantity realised has been actualised. Proceed the same way with all achieved outputs of the table.



Then, select the WP3 in the drop-down menu at the top of the table and do the same steps for WP3.

REMEMBER TO SAVE

After each section, if you do not click on the Save button, the data not saved will be lost and you will have to redo it.

> III 3. Report on Expertise

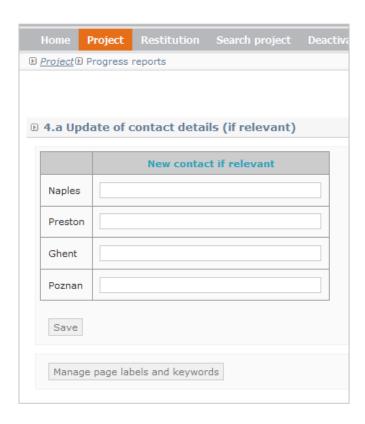
The free text box in this section should provide information about the use of experts during the reference period.

- It should state the number of days reported and used by the project Lead Expert as well as the number of days remaining for the Lead Expert.
- It should also outline other experts which may have been contracted and used by the project.
- For each expert used you should state the partner concerned, the name of the expert and the tasks the expert has completed.

> IV 4. Update General Project Information

4.a Update of contact details (if relevant)

The table shows all the project partners and a free text box to update information on contact details.



4.b Lead Partner changes in Bank details

This free text box is for the Lead Partner ONLY and should provide updated bank account details if relevant.

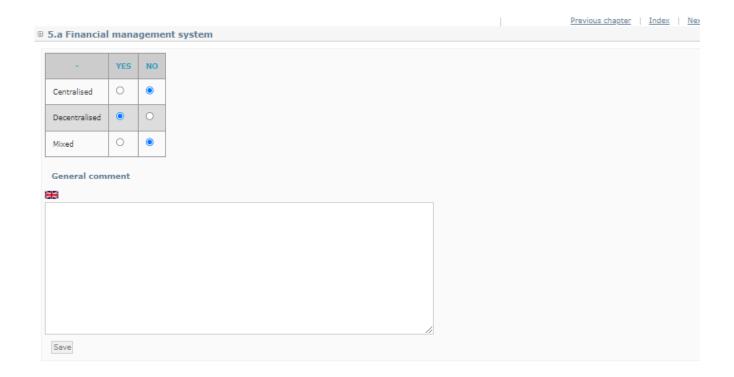
4.c Problems encountered and adjustments required

This free text box should be completed to highlight any problems the project has encountered during the reference period. It can also report on solutions found to the issues raised. Lead Partners are asked to consider all aspects of the project and should refer to Annex 3 of this guide for more information.

V 5 - Financial Update

5.a Financial management system

The Lead Partner should select the management system approved for the project. All projects have normally a decentralised management system, check your Joint Convention if you're not sure. The free text box should be used to report any changes which may be required explaining why they are needed.

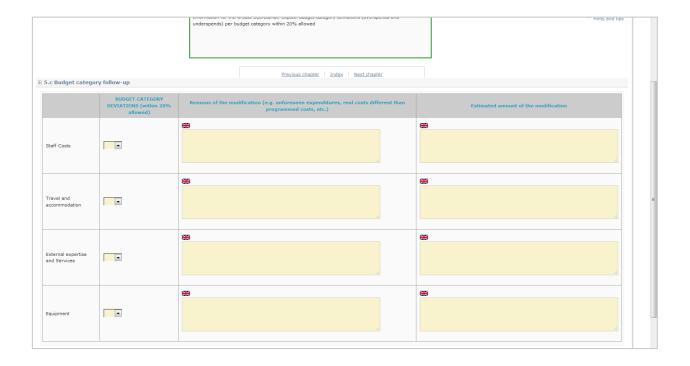


• <u>5.b. Financial Progress per year and budget category (including administrative closure period)</u>

The table is automatically filled in using information from the validated payment claim document. It is important to validate the payment claim BEFORE the Progress Report or the figures will not be updated.

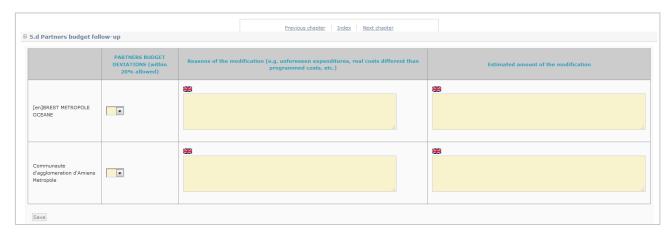
5.c Budget category follow-up

This table should be completed to highlight POTENTIAL problems with overspending by budget category. If your project foresees an issue in any particular category, it should be explained clearly. With this information the Secretariat will be able to help your project to find a solution to this matter.



5.d Partner budget follow-up

This table should be completed to highlight POTENTIAL problems with overspending at partner level. If your project foresees an issue in any particular partner, it should be explained clearly. With this information the Secretariat will be able to help your project find a solution to this matter. It is also in this table that significant under spending at partner level should be explained clearly.

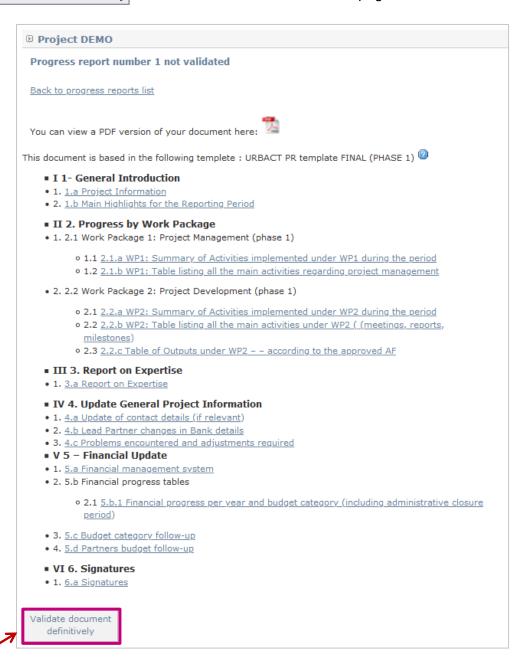


> VI 6. Signatures

The hard copy version of your Progress Report should be signed by the Lead Partner and the First Level Controller of the Lead Partner.

2.3. Validating a Progress Report

Once the Progress Report is complete and all the other reporting documents are validated (it is IMPORTANT to validate the payment claim BEFORE the Progress Report to ensure all the figures are correctly reported) then the Progress Report should be validated in SYNERGIE by clicking on the Validate document definitively button at the bottom of the content page.

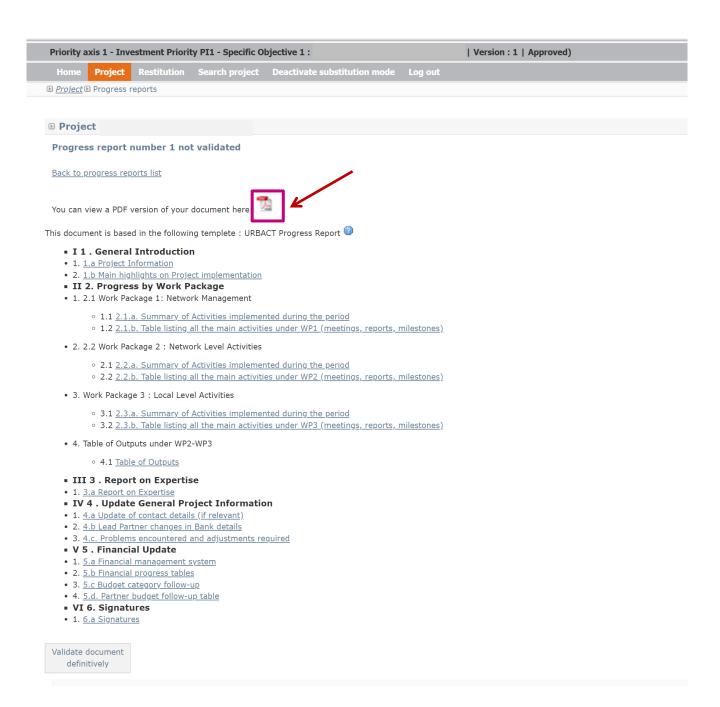


3. REVIEW, SIGNATURE AND SUBMISSION OF THE PROGRESS REPORT

3.1. Review and Signature

Once the Progress Report is complete and all the other reporting documents are validated (it is IMPORTANT to validate the payment claim BEFORE the Progress Report to ensure all the figures are correctly reported) then the Progress Report should be validated in SYNERGIE by clicking on the button at the bottom of the content page.

A PDF version of the report should be generated by clicking on the PDF icon. This version will be available in the restitution menu once it starts to flash:



The Lead Partner should download the PDF version of the certificate and print and sign the last page. The FLC should review the contents of the report to ensure that it is coherent with the financial reporting and countersign the Progress Report.

3.2. Submission of the Progress Report

The electronic version of this signature page shall form part of the submission required for each reporting period along with all the other compulsory documents (partners FLC certificates, payment claim, project outputs) within the Programme deadline.

These documents can be sent using online data transfer tools such as Dropbox or WeTransfer.

3.3. URBACT Secretariat Review

The Lead Partner should submit a full package of reporting documents together by e-mail to their dedicated Project Officers (and apn@urbact.eu in copy) at the URBACT Secretariat respecting the deadline.

The Secretariat team will review the package and inform the lead partner of any questions within maximum 80 days. The completeness and quality of the submissions has a direct impact on the speediness of payments.

ANNEX 1. Reporting on Main Activities in the Progress Report – Examples

Within the update on each work package, the Lead Partner is asked to report on key milestones and activities. The first element is the brief description of the activity including the type of the activities, the partners involved, what is the specific purpose in the network activities, the relation between the activity and the outputs produced in the reference period.

The column "Comment to explain changes compared to the Application Form", must be used to underline if there were some minor variations or small adjustments to the activities foreseen in the last application form. It should also be used to refer to the major changes validated with a reprogramming procedure.

NB: The following table collects some reporting examples about different activities.

Activity	Brief description of the activity	Dates/Place (when relevant)	Comment to explain changes compared to the AF
Organising and holding coordination meetings	The coordination group is composed by the representatives of each project partner and is the decision-making organ of the network. It meets at least once every six months. The contents of the meetings and the moderation are performed by the LP. If possible, the coordination meetings are organised back-to-back with the transnational meetings. In the application form for the Activation Phase, we foresaw 2 coordination meetings (one virtual and one in person). After each coordination meetings, the LP will write and circulate to project partners the report of the meeting, including agenda, participants list, summary of the decisions made. The first coordination meeting took place during the online kick off and was dedicated to the set up of internal project management procedures. All the partners were present and agreed on the procedures proposed by the LP. The partners also agreed on inviting the LE to join the following coordination meetings. The meeting was also used to draft the Joint Convention. The second and third meetings were dedicated to the re-definition of the partnership following the drop off of one of the partners. The LP, the 7 PP and also the LE took part to these meetings. The fourth meeting took place during the in person transnational meeting and was dedicated to the preparation of the baseline study and planning of the work for the second phase. The LP, the 7 initial PP and also the new PP and LE took part to the meeting. The meeting was also used to review the Joint Convention	 Coordination meeting 1 29-30.06.2023, (session during the online kick-off of the network) Coordination meeting 2 17.07.2023 (virtual meeting) Coordination meeting 3 25.09.2023 (virtual meeting) Coordination meeting 4 29-30.11.2023, Riga (session during the first in person transnational network meeting) 	Due to the difficulties encountered in finalising the partnership, following the dropoff of one partner, two additional meetings were needed. Therefore, we organised 2 skype conferences.

	with the new partner. The LP also took the chance to collect the Letter of Commitment.		
Organising and holding transnational exchange and learning meetings	The transnational meetings planned in the Activation phase were the online Kick off meeting and the first in person transnational project meeting. In general, the transnational meetings are organised as 2-days meetings, and they include a thematic input by the LE, a thematic workshop session as exchange between partners, a study visit, and a coordination meeting. After each meeting, the LE produces a report to summarize the activities of the 2 days. After each transnational meeting, the partners are invited to share the report with the ULG members of their city and to translate it for local dissemination purposes. The kick off meeting was organised by the LP and moderated by the newly appointed LE. All the partners could participate despite the short notice and the changes of date and time slots. The first day of the meeting was meant mainly to be a chance for the Partners and the expert to get to know each other in person, to define better the problematic issues and challenges of the network and to have the first coordination session. During the second day, the hosting Partner invited the director of the urban planning department to give an overview on the local policies and showed a movie on a start-up incubator managed by the technical university and the city of Ljubljana. Like the kick off, the first in person transnational meeting of the network was organised and moderated by the LE and the LP. Beside LP, PP, LE, also the representatives of all the 7 project partner cities were invited and managed to join. This meeting was dedicated to the preparation of the baseline study and roadmap for the following 2 years. The members of the ULG core group of the host partner were involved in the meeting and organised a walkshop to co-working spaces in the city centre. During the visit, it was possible to interview some users and this was very helpful to better understand their needs and to guide the partner in the elaboration of actions to improve the service.	 online kick off meeting Phase 1 on 29 - 30.06.2023, first in person transnational network meeting on 29 - 30.11.2023, Riga 	In the application form, we foresaw the online kick off meeting at the end of July. However, due to urgent issues to be discussed following the dropoff of a partner (and the need to replace it), we managed to anticipate it. For the in-person meeting, we also agreed to have it in Riga rather than in Paris as initially planned to combine it with one of the LE and LP visits to Project Partners.
Organising and holding ULG meetings	Each partner had to establish an URBACT Local Group (ULG) to discuss about the selected issue at local level. Each ULG should meet regularly, at least once every six months period. The role of the group is to elaborate the contents of the IAP. All the partner cities managed to establish their ULG, to appoint a ULG coordinator and to organise the first meeting. Even if not all the stakeholders identified in the application form accepted or managed to participate, the ones who attended the first meeting committed to be members of the core group. The topics of the first meeting were the same for all the groups and were: report on network kick-off and final meetings of the Activation phase by PP, preparation of	 Paris 20.07.2023 Brussels 28.07.2023 Riga 07.09.2023 Ljubljana 21.09.2023 Gdansk 25.07.2023 and 19.09.2023 	No variation compared to the application form: each Partner planned and held successfully the first local meeting. The partner Gdansk had even a second meeting during the reporting period.

	/ feedback on the LE/LP visit, better definition of the problem at local level as input for the local and transnational activities, mapping of other potential stakeholders, planning of next ULG meeting(s), first brainstorming for future local dissemination events. The partners Gdansk, Rome and Vilnius managed to organise and perform two meetings: the first was more focused on the thematic aspects and the second one on the organisation of the next activities. For the moment, none of the group discussed about the contents of the IAP.	 Rome 27.07.2023 and 29.09.2023 Vilnius 27.07.2023 and 18.09.2023 	
Setting up online communicati on and disseminatio n activities on social media	In the application form we foresaw the creation and the animation of project pages on social media, in particular on Facebook and Twitter. The social media network pages on Facebook and Twitter were created as planned already during the Activation phase. Lasting the transnational meeting in Riga, the Project Partners suggested the creation of pages in Linkedin and Instagram as well, to increase visibility and potential connections.	Date and place not relevant	The additional activities suggested during the transnational meeting will be probably included in the application form updating in the description of the output with the next reprogramming.
Organising and holding local dissemination events	Each partner should organise at least one local dissemination event during the project life to enlarge the participation to a broader local community and to increase the visibility of the network and programme activities at the local level. During the reporting period, there were two local dissemination events organised by the PP Riga and Ljubljana. The event in Riga was part of a bigger event "The week of entrepreneurship" organised in the congress center. During a workshop session run by the ULG coordinator and speed-dating session with the members of the ULG core group and the participants of the event, it was possible to collect new information and ideas about needs, wishes and expectations about employment and entrepreneurship services that the city could develop, provide or fund. This event was used also to identify some interested employers and employees and to invite them to the ULG meetings. The dissemination event in Ljubljana was organised directly by the city representative involved in the network, Ms Novak. She made a presentation on the URBACT programme and the activities of the network to the members of the different departments of the local administration. Some project and URBACT publications were distributed during the event.	■ Riga 17- 18.10.2023 ■ Ljubljana 23.11.2023	No modification compared to the application form is required. However, the two partners will probably organise at least another meeting during the project life.
Participating to external events	LE, TE, LP might take part or be invited to attend international and national conferences to promote the activities and the findings of the network. During the reporting period the LP coordinator and the LE were asked by the Secretariat to present their networks during a workshop of the OpenDays 2023 in	■ LE Mr Rossi and LP coordinator Ms Moulin: Workshop URBACT, Opendays	In the application form, it was foreseen that just the LP and the experts could participate to external events.

Brussels. The LE gave an overview on the topic of the network and the first contents of the IAP with a presentation during the first session. Afterwards both the LE and LP took part to two parallel round tables to share their personal experience. The LP was also available for questions after the workshops and distributed some network brochures with the URBACT team at the stand. The LE and the LP agreed that the participation to this event was a great chance to significantly increase the visibility of the network at the European level.

3 network representatives took part to a thematic conference about SMEs experiences in Europe in November. Two months before the conference, LE and LP received an invitation from the organiser of the event and forwarded it to the project partners, but due to previous scheduled meetings, the LE couldn't participate and other PPs representatives managed to attend together with the LP. The LP made a presentation about the network IAPs during the morning plenary session of the first day and all 3 network representatives attended the thematic workshop sessions in the afternoon of day 1 and in the morning of day 2. The participation to the conference was useful to get to know better some of the best practices and potentially implement the actions of the IAPs. It allowed to personally meet representatives of cities and international organisation that are dealing with the same issue and to set the basis for a future cooperation.

2023 16.10.2023, Brussels

LP Coordinator Ms Moulin, ULG coordinator of PP Gdansk Mrs Kowalski and communicatio n officer of PP Brussels Mr Peeters. Conference "Supporting SMEs . an international perspective with EU best practices and flagship initiatives". 28.11.2023. Prague

However, because of the importance of the disseminating at transnational level, during the last coordination meeting it was agreed that even the PP could attend.

Press activities (press conferences and press releases)

In the application, we foresaw a press conference during each transnational meeting in the city and the language of the hosting partner. We also planned the publication of at least one article in a national or local press during the project life by each partner. Hopefully, the partners will be able to involve the press more often than foreseen. The goal is to promote the transnational and local activities at national and local level in local language. These press activities are complementary to the publication of news on URBACT website and blog, and on social media.

During the reporting period, two press conferences were held, respectively during the Kick off meeting in Ljubljana and the Final Meeting in Riga. The press conference in Ljubljana was filmed and published on the website of the city. Unfortunately, none of the journalists published an article about the meeting. For the press conference in Riga, just one journalist was present, although all the main local newspapers were invited to join. A short article on the conference was published on Leta.lv on 12.02.2016. In addition, the communication officer PP Brussels was interviewed about network first 6 months of activities and participation to conference in Prague; the article was published on 01.03.2016 on Brussels Times.

- Press conference PP Ljubljana on 30.06.2023, (during Kick off), video published on 17.07.2023
- Press
 conference
 PP Riga on
 29.11.2023,
 (during first in
 person
 meeting)
- Press release PP Riga, published on 30.11.2023
- Press release
 PP Brussels,
 published on
 01.11.2023

No change compared to the application form. The workplan of the activities is respected.

ANNEX 2. MANDATORY EVIDENCE TO BE SUBMITTED FOR EACH OUTPUT DECLARED AS PRODUCED

This annex contains the list of the mandatory evidence for the main network outputs declared as produced. It should be used to help you to ensure that you gather the necessary documents according to each of your outputs.

It is important to ensure evidence is provided as proof of activities and justification of eligible costs are linked to each other – in some cases, without the evidence the costs cannot be considered eligible for ERDF refund.

Work Package 2

Network Level Activities

- ☐ Kick off, transnational, final meetings and study visits, workshops, dissemination events...: agenda with place, date, participants list, indication about contribution of the meeting to the draft of IAP and/or other thematic outputs + thematic outputs (such as thematic reports or minutes or case studies) + communication pieces if delivered (flyers, videos, brochures...);
- ☐ Thematic Reports (Quarterly Network Reports, Communication Plan...): an electronic copy of the reports.
- Articles, press releases and conferences: a link to the page where the article is or copy of the piece (digital file or screenshot of articles, minutes, videos, etc.)
 NB: evidence can be provided even not in English, but it must me clear that the information refers to an URBACT activity;

Work Package 3

Local Level Activities

- ☐ ULG contact list: list of the participants (name, surname, institution/group of interest, email address, core group or not, role);
- ☐ Integrated Action Plans and IPA roadmap: copy of the document

Other outputs

- External events: agenda with place and date of the meeting;
- Website updates and social media: file containing screenshot of online page + http address;
- ☐ Digital (newsletters, videos, etc.) and physical dissemination tools (brochures, flyers, reports, etc.): digital version of the files (in all languages they are produced);
- ☐ Promotional materials (posters, banners, pens, bags, usb-keys, etc.): photos of them showing the required logos or one example.

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU PUT THE APPROPRIATE LOGOS ON ALL PROJECT DOCUMENTS

ANNEX 3. POTENTIAL PROBLEMS AND IDEAS FOR SOLUTIONS

	Examples of potential problems	Example of possible solutions
Transnational exchange activities	Difficulties or delays in organising meeting, in respecting the work plan for the meetings, difficulties of partners in participating to the project activities, etc.	Change of the work plan or reduction of number of meetings through reprogramming procedure, reading the guide provided by the Secretariat about exchange and learning and animation techniques, etc.
Outputs	Difficulties or delays in the elaboration of one or more outputs, one output is not considered useful anymore, high costs for translation/dissemination of the project outputs, etc.	More days of expertise then foreseen for LE/ad hoc expert to support the partners in the elaboration of the output, reduction of the number of foreseen outputs or replacement of output type with reprogramming procedure, etc.
Communication activities	Difficulties or delays in updating the website, in using social media, in involving national and local media, in disseminating the project outputs at local or transnational level, in disseminating information about URBACT, in the organisation of local dissemination events, etc.	Participation to the training sessions in communication organised by the Secretariat, using external expertise budget to hire consultants for communication and organisation/moderation of the events, etc.
Project management	Delays in approval of FLC, complexity in claiming costs (difficult procedures, complicated calculation or planning of costs, mistakes on eligible costs) delays in receiving information or evidences or contractual or reporting documents from PP, difficulties in using SYNERGIE-CTE, strict internal budgetary and administrative rules, internal management problems (changes in partner personnel, lack of financial and administrative skills in human resources), lengths of refunding procedures and delays in reimbursement, misunderstandings in the communication between LP and PP, etc.	Reading guides provided by the Secretariat, participating to the training sessions in finance organised by the Secretariat, using external expertise budget to hire consultants for administrative and financial support, organising trainings and trouble-shooting sessions for the project partners, ask the Secretariat for ad hoc assistance and help etc.
ULG	Difficulties with the organisation of the meetings, the involvement of important stakeholders, lack of commitment of the stakeholders involved, etc.	Designation of an "external" impartial ULG coordinator, support of LE/ad hoc expert, use of URBACT Guidance - Setting up and running a multi-stakeholder group, etc.
Expertise	(temporary) inability of the Lead Expert or as hoc experts to take part to the project activities, not enough expertise days allowed to support properly the network activities, LE lacks certain skills, lack of coordination between LP and LE, etc.	Replacement of the LE, use of different ad hoc experts in different activities, etc.
Partnership	Inactive partner, eligibility issues due to change of statute or name of one partner, lack of commitment, difficult interaction among partners, lack of language skills in personnel, cultural misunderstandings, and bad working atmosphere.	Uni or bilateral partner drop out, revision of internal communication procedure, higher budget for translations, more informal interactions, and better meetings moderation, etc.