

**Driving
change
for better
cities**

URBACT Pioneers Accelerator

Call for Applicants

(Open 19 Nov 2024 - 22 Jan 2025)



INFO SESSION 12 December 2024

URBACT



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THE WEBINAR FLOW

Introduction

SECTION 1 - WHAT IS URBACT ?

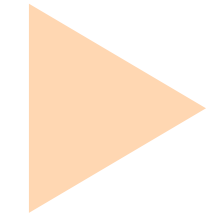
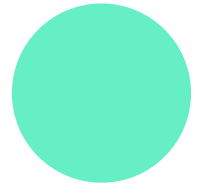
SECTION 2 - THE BESPOKE OFFER

SECTION 3 - THE PIONEERS ACCELERATOR ADVENTURE

SECTION 4 - APPLICATION and SELECTION PROCEDURE

SECTION 5 - Q & A

Final messages and closing



Kristijan RADOJČIĆ

Strategic Programme
Development Lead



Teofil Oliver GHERCA

URBACT Programme
DIRECTOR



European territorial COOPERATION programme

co-funded by European Regional Development Fund

Since
2002



Over
1000
cities
involved



more than
150
networks

MISSION:

Promoting sustainable urban development in cities

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URBACT is... driving change for better cities

With the URBACT Method:

- **Integrated approach** – designing and delivering cross-sectoral strategies/ actions
- **Participation in practice** - engagement of relevant stakeholders and citizens
- **Transnational exchange** - connecting cities and learning from peers
- **Tailor-made support for Action learning** - experts, tested methods & tools;



3 key pillars of activities

Networking



Between cities,
local actors,
stakeholders

Investing in people & skills



Practice, learning,
capacity building

Sharing knowledge



Knowledge uptake &
dissemination

Active community creating the positive impact 😊



“It will be remembered as an opportunity to experiment and explore. Communities will remember the fun events that brought people together. Institutions will be affected by changes in ways of working.”



THE BESPOKE OFFER

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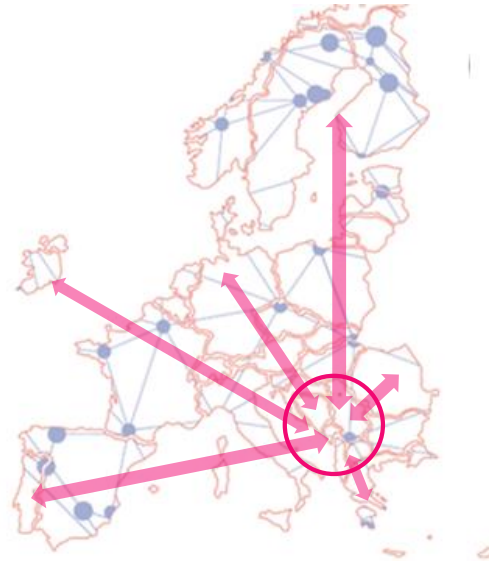
A bespoke offer for cities from IPA beneficiary countries

In addition to the possible involvement in URBACT Networks, a bespoke offer has been developed:

URBACT Pioneers Accelerator

The learning programme dedicated to cities from Western Balkans

- Albania
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Montenegro
- North Macedonia
- Serbia



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URBACT Pioneers Accelerator purpose:

Ensure better understanding of EU integrated sustainable urban development policy framework, values and practices

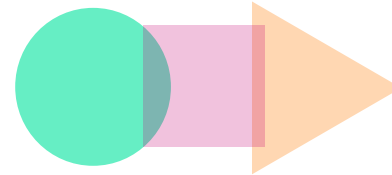
Enhance the design and delivery of local strategies with integrated and participatory approaches

Enable effective action learning with tailored expert support at local level and practical application of concrete methods and tools enabling innovation in public administrations.

URBACT Pioneers Accelerator targets...

Enthusiastic public service agents (teams) working in municipal departments/ agencies tackling specific urban challenges.

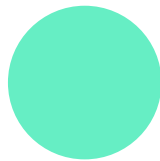
Around 20 cities
'Local Teams'
shall be selected



...aiming at:

Creating a generation of “Pioneering cities” (with urban professionals’ leaders), who will be shaping the future of their cities in a new way, and be recognized as inspiration for their peers in the region.

[Opportunity to...



...Get connected and learn from the URBACT and wider EU community (practitioners and experts) by utilising accumulated knowledge - mutual learning tools and methodologies



...gain inspiration and insights from first hand by visiting inspiring EU cities, exploring potential solutions and good practices



...gather key local stakeholders around a common urban challenge and create a productive ecosystem for effective implementation of the concrete sustainable solution on the ground.

Finding the solution to a particular urban challenge!

Each applicant city (Local team) has the opportunity to work on a specific urban challenge **by combining different thematic areas.**



Example:

Primary topic:

Sustainable Tourism Development

Secondary topic:

Sustainable Mobility

The city is interested in improving soft mobility for tourists, promoting walking tours, connecting public transport, and enhancing accessibility.

**One can also consider specific target groups within transversal topics (i.e. Youth)*

! CHECK ANNEX 2 of the Call document

Expected results

Enhanced Capacity and Skills to tackle complex urban challenges:

> Developing practical skills in urban planning, stakeholder engagement, data analysis, strategic communication, project management, etc.

A Roadmap for Future Projects aligned with European and Global sustainability goals:

> Embracing the methodological framework enabling the elaboration of plans and strategies that guide future initiatives, etc.

Documented Success Stories and increased City Visibility:

> Implementation of small-scale pilot projects – visible quick-win on the ground, showcasing city's vision helping to attract future funding and partnerships.

A learning Network of peers:

> Strong connections with other cities and a support network for continued learning and collaboration beyond the programme.

Integration into the URBACT (and wider EU) Community:

> Increased access to resources, expertise, and opportunities for future collaborations within the broader EU urban policy framework.



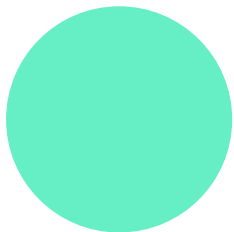
THE LEARNING PROGRAMME ADVENTURE

URBACT



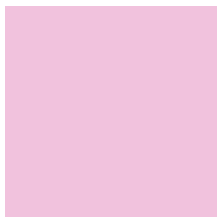
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The Learning Programme: Core dimensions & activities



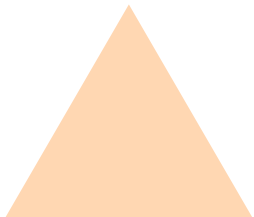
EMBRACE in the Pioneers Nest

All participant cities embrace the core methodological approaches and project management tools: at Milestone events (in-person workshops), online Masterclasses, 1 to 1 support sessions.



EXPLORE at Thematic Expeditions

Thematic Clusters - cities gathered around the common thematic challenge visit inspiring EU cities and explore potential solutions and good practices for the deepening of the thematic knowledge.

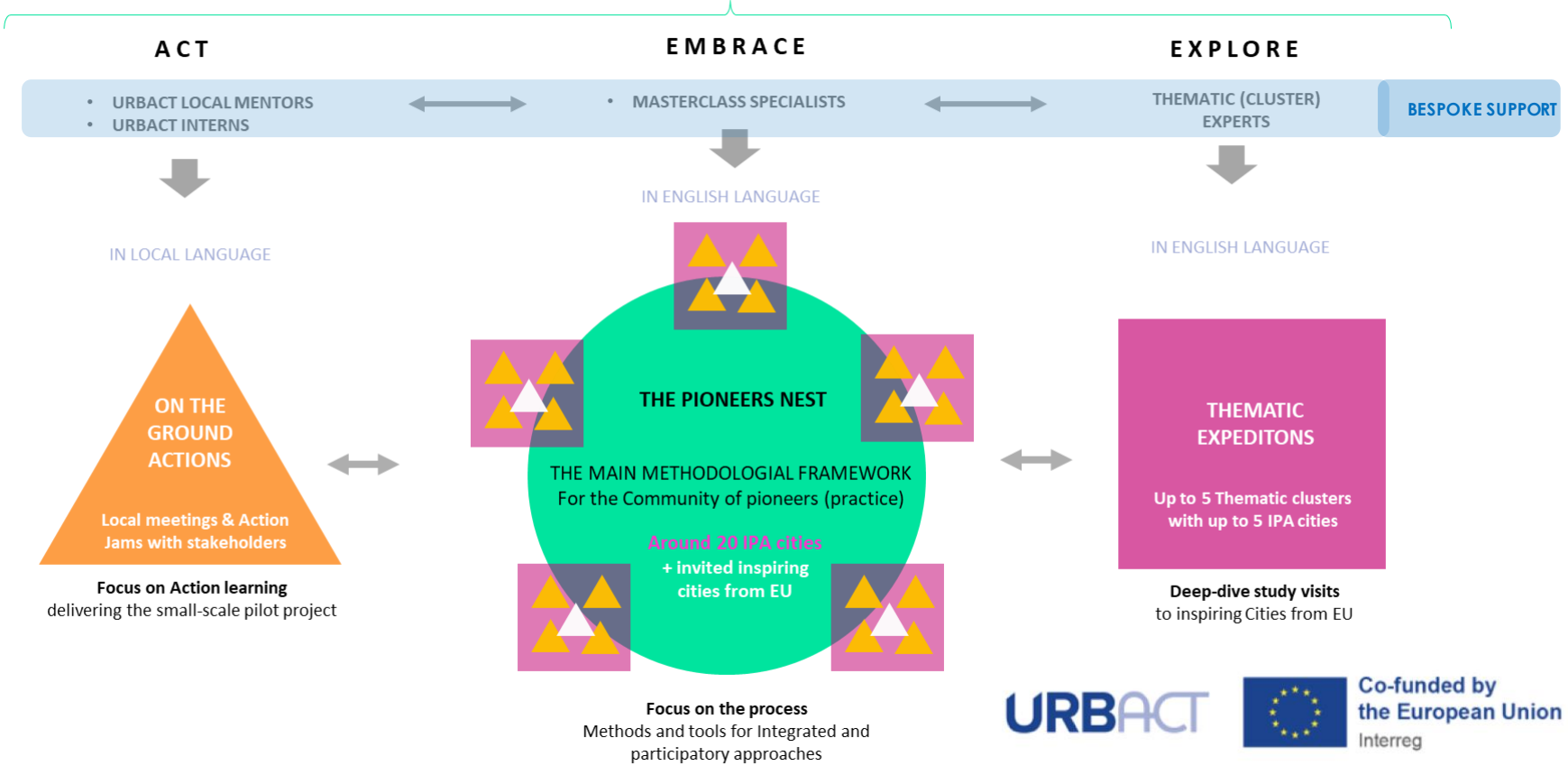


ACT with On-the-ground Action

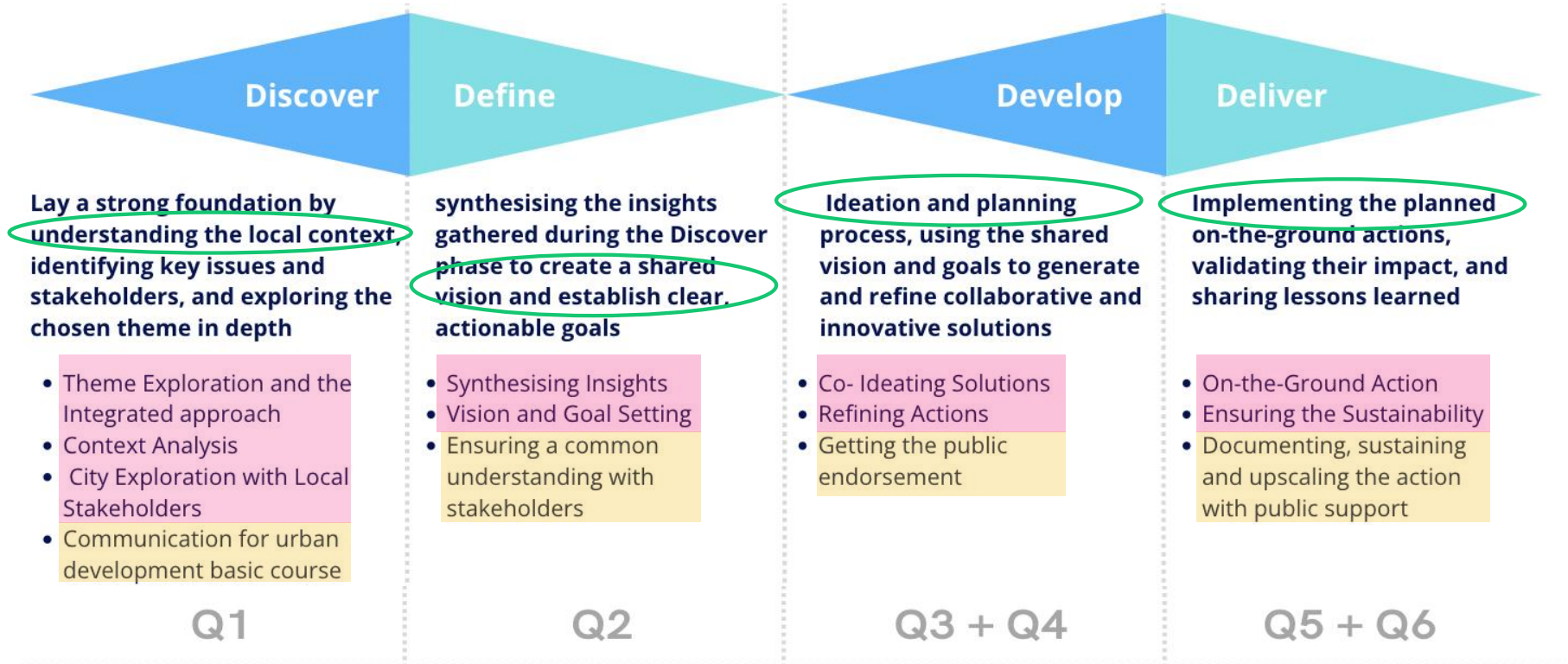
In each participating city, local teams will apply the 'learning by doing' approach and implement a concrete small-scale pilot projects – visible quick wins on the ground.

The Pioneers Accelerator Support Model

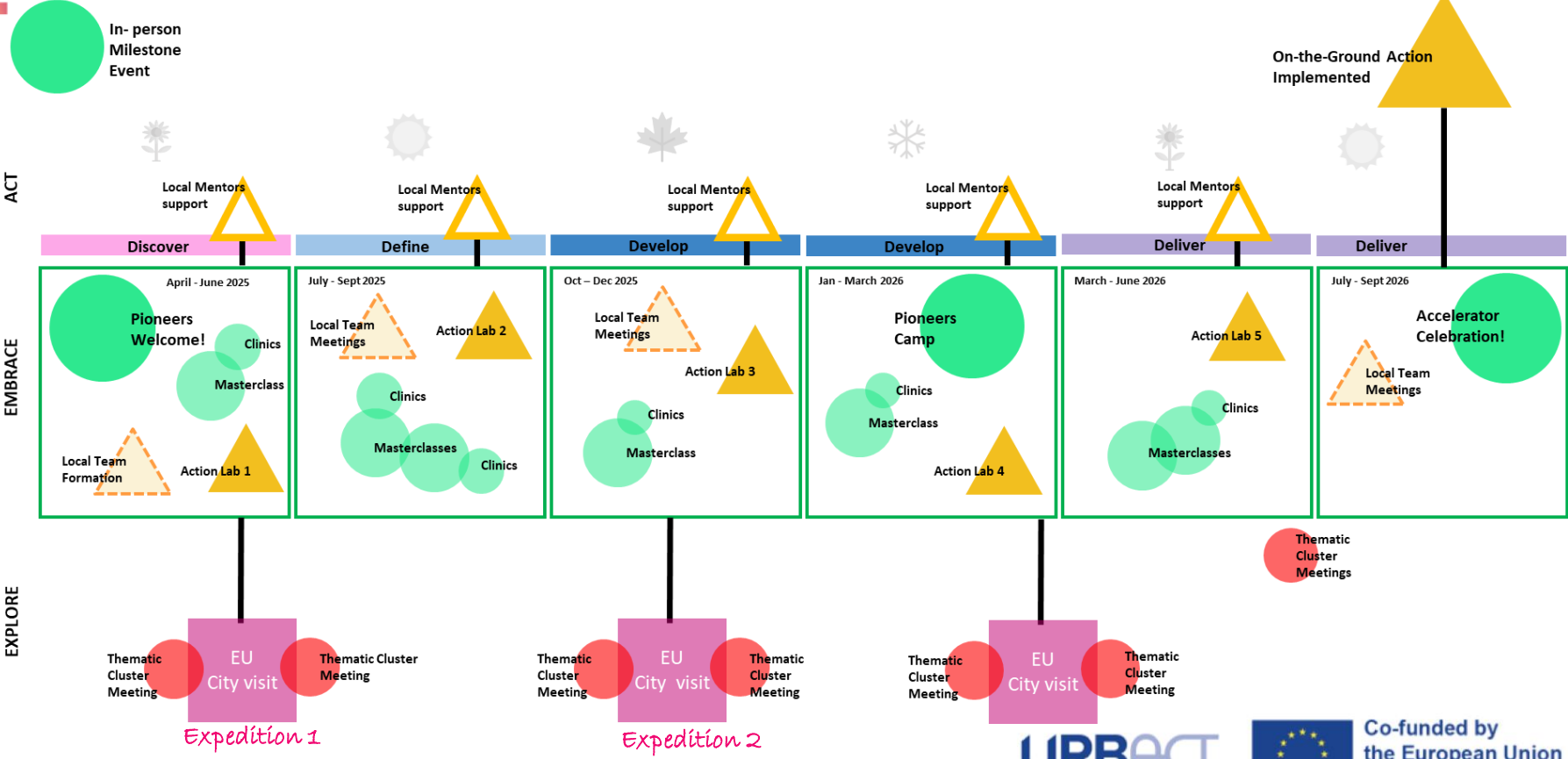
STEERING TEAM
(URBACT Secretariat & PA Guides – external experts)



The Learning Programme: Four Distinct Phases



URBACT Pioneers Accelerator Calendar



Key expected outputs

The Dynamic Journal (DJ)

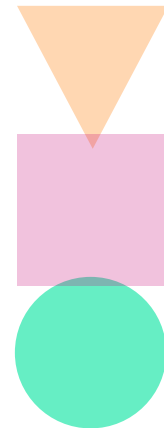
All participating cities are expected to produce their respective DJs reflecting their learning experience and results. It serves as a reference for cities to document, revisit and build upon for future projects. It shall include:

- The portfolio of strategic planning tools being tried out
- Prioritised Ideas and strategic Vision for the city
- Communication and Engagement Materials
- Illustration of concrete On-the-Ground Actions with implementation outcomes

The URBACT Pioneers Playbook

Key knowledge output produced at Programme level reflecting the outcomes of the URBACT Pioneers Accelerator learning journey.

- It shall be a practical “how to“ guide for cities starting the process of designing and implementing sustainable transformation in urban environments.



The Budget and Reporting

The budget available for each selected city is 35 000 EUR. It shall ensure proper implementation of all expected Pioneers Accelerator learning activities. This includes the following estimations:

- Around 15 000 EUR for the implementation of expected local activities including the On-the Ground action (small-scale pilot project).
- Around 10 000 EUR for the internal staff costs salary (notably the URBACT Intern) supporting the local team with the project implementation over the entire duration of the programme.
- Around 10 000 EUR for travel and accommodation of the Local team participating at in-person events

[The available budget is co-financed 95% by IPA Funds. The remaining amount shall be financed by the local municipal budget]
[Up to 20% advance payments will be made possible for all participating cities on request]

+ The bespoke expertise support for the organisation of local activities by URBACT Local Mentors – around 20 expertise days available for each city.
This support will be managed and payed directly by the URBACT Joint Secretariat.

All participating cities will sign the subsidy contract with the URBACT Managing Authority. The reporting of all expenditures will be supported by the URBACT Joint Secretariat. Several reporting rounds are foreseen over the duration of the programme.



APPLICATION & SELECTION PROCEDURE

Who can participate?

The call is open to all 'cities' beneficiaries from IPA countries (Western Balkans):

- ✓ Cities, municipalities, towns,
- ✓ Infra-municipal tiers of government,
- ✓ Local agencies defined as public or semi-public organisations set up by a city,
- ✓ Metropolitan authorities and organised agglomerations

Cities already involved in ongoing URBACT networks can apply as well but only in cases where a different department (Local team) would be involved.

>> ADDED VALUE and SUFFICIENT CAPACITY SHALL BE DEMONSTRATED IF THE SAME PEOPLE ARE INVOLVED !

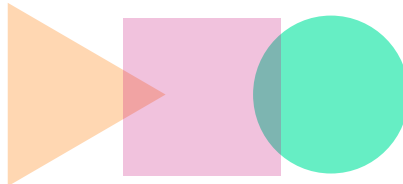
! The information about the Local team capacity to actively participate in the programme shall be provided in the application form. The appraisal of the capacity is part of the selection criteria.

The Pioneers Accelerator activities under the EMBRACE dimension - notably the specific online Masterclass sessions will be open to all cities from IPA countries already involved in ongoing URBACT networks regardless of their active participation in the Pioneers Accelerator.

[The application process

All interested 'Cities' shall submit an online application form via the online EU survey platform.

! The Commitment Letter signed by the city's elected representative shall be attached to the application form.



! BEFORE YOU SUBMIT THE APPLICATION FORM:

- Please read carefully the call document.
- Prepare your application responses in word (or similar)
- Review/ re-read your application
- Don't hesitate to send us your questions to accelerator@urbact.eu
- Final Q&A online session will be organised 16 January at 10h

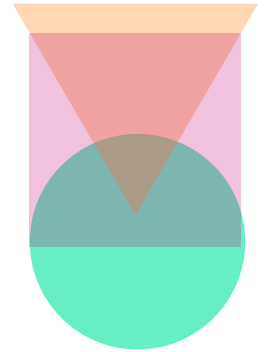
! All resources including the link to the Application form are provided at <https://urbact.eu/get-involved>



Selection criteria

Application form questions and criteria for the selection of cities are designed to understand:

- Cities genuine need for this learning programme
 - Motivation to implement concrete solution by applying the integrated and participatory approaches,
 - Key capacity conditions for active involvement in foreseen activities,
-
- ✓ Having a **clearly defined thematic focus** representing the diversity of regional challenges and urgencies and urban contexts
 - ✓ Demonstrating **sufficient capacity** - having urban planning structures and technical expertise in place that will allow them to form Local Teams for effective knowledge uptake.
 - ✓ **Commitment** to Integrated Planning and Peer-to-peer learning, openness to share
 - ✓ **Strong Stakeholder Engagement Understanding**
 - ✓ **Willingness to Implement and Innovate – test new ideas**, approaches. Ability to apply learning within local projects/ policies



Key milestones of the call

Call for applicants open:

! Final Q&A session 16 January 2025 at 10h

- All applications must be submitted by 22 January 2025 at 15h latest

February 2025:

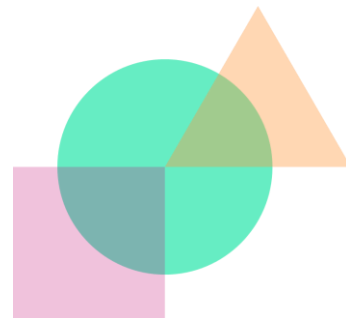
- Selection of cities and matchmaking for thematic clusters.

March 2025

- Applicants notified about the call results.
- Online Info session with all selected participating cities.
- Finalisation of all administrative procedures (subsidy contracts).

April 2025

- **Welcome of all selected cities at URBACT City Festival in Wroclaw 8 – 10 April 2025**
- **Launch of the URBACT Pioneers Accelerator** > Duration of the programme is 18 months.
- End of the programme is expected in September 2026.





Any questions?

PLEASE CHECK THE **FAQ**

from the info session:

<https://urbact.eu/get-involved>



HVALA, FALEMINDERIT, БЛАГОДАРАМ, ХВАЛА
THANK [u] FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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