QUARTERLY NETWORK JOURNAL No.1

May to August 2025

# CITIES4CO-HOUSING INNOVATION TRANSFER NETWORK

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CITIES4CO-HOUSING
INNOVATIVE TRANSFER NETWORK

Access to decent and affordable housing remains one of Europe's most urgent urban challenges. The URBACT Cities4Co-Housing Innovative Transfer Network is dedicated to exchanging practical solutions for long-term housing affordability, drawing inspiration from the pioneering CALICO project in Brussels Capital Region. Grounded in the Community Land Trust model, **the Network empowers cities to nurture vibrant communities, mutual support, neighbourhood inclusion, gender equality, and a strong sense of belonging at the core of local initiatives.**
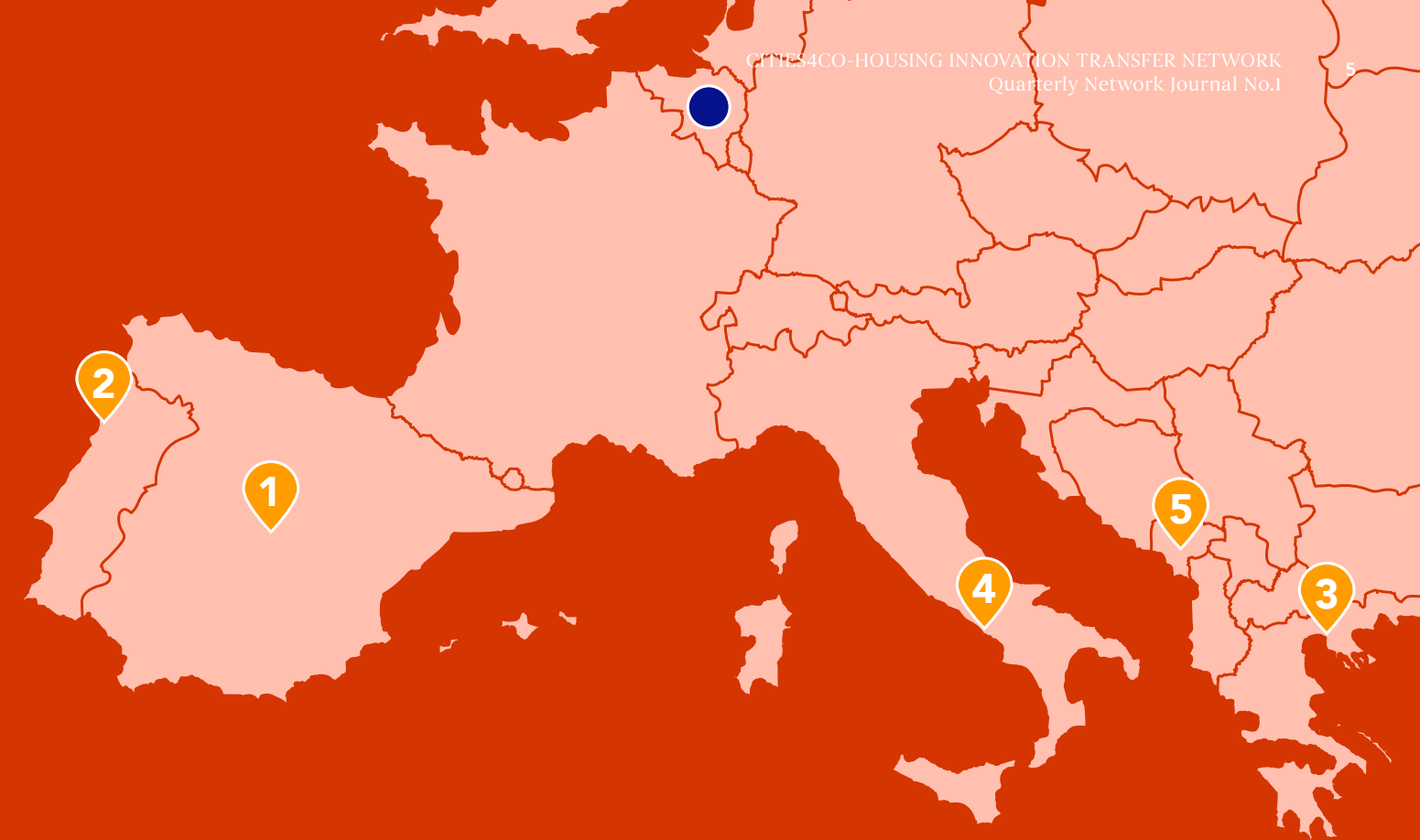
Who is Involved

The partnership is led by Regional Public Service Brussels - Brussels Housing (Belgium), with project partners in:

1. Fuenlabrada, Spain

2. Vila Nova de Gaia, Gaiurb, EM, Portugal

3. Thessaloniki, Greece

4. Naples, Italy

5. Nikšić, local community Stara Varoš, Montenegro

Executive Summary

The first quarter of the Adapt Phase of the Cities 4 Co-Housing Innovation Transfer Network (May to August 2025) was marked by significant progress in the transfer and adaptation of innovative housing practices inspired by the CALICO project. Partners across five European cities engaged in dynamic transnational and local activities aimed at fostering inclusive, affordable housing solutions tailored to diverse urban contexts.

Key themes during this period included deep learning from CALICO's most complex modules—Legal and Financial (TM3) and Building (TM4)—and translating these innovations through co-created testing actions adapted to local realities. The pivotal transnational meeting in Vila Nova de Gaia provided a platform for capacity building, collective intelligence, and hands-on development of nearly 50 testing actions through participatory methodologies including the OPERA method, World Café, and Iterative Co-Design Workshops. This resulted in the establishment of the ITN Cities4Co-Housing Testing Actions Bank, a living repository serving as a vital resource and source of inspiration across partner cities.

Investment plans have advanced with partners making tangible progress in drafting Sections 1 and 2, covering needs analysis, policy responses, and initial investment proposals aligned with CALICO principles. Sections 3 and 4, including detailed investment cases and budgeting, are underway, with continued refinement supported by expert-led one-to-one sessions and collective network discussions.

Local URBACT Local Groups (ULGs) have actively engaged in refining testing actions and investment plans, driving community involvement and tailoring approaches to unique local challenges. Communication efforts have been bolstered through coordinated outreach, including websites, press releases, and social media, strengthening stakeholder engagement throughout the network.

Looking ahead, partners are preparing for upcoming key milestones: the next transnational meeting focused on Governance and Social modules, further expert feedback on testing actions, and crucial steps towards finalizing draft investment and continuity plans by the end of the year. The network remains committed to collaboration, adaptation, and innovation to ensure sustainable, community-led housing solutions become a reality.

This quarter underscores a vibrant phase of collective learning and practical advancement, aligning closely with URBACT's mission to promote resilient, inclusive urban development across Europe.

Contents

1.
INTRODUCTION: WHERE ARE WE IN THE NETWORK JOURNEY AND WHERE ARE WE HEADING?

The first Network Journal for Cities 4 Co-Housing offers a comprehensive overview of progress in the innovative practice transfer and collective learning between May and August 2025, **spotlighting transnational and local activities designed to foster inclusive, affordable housing solutions inspired by CALICO's innovative approaches.**

1. Introduction: Where are we in the network journey and where are we heading?

Advancing the Adapt Phase

The initial quarter of the Adapt phase was characterised by a rich array of activities at the network and local levels. Partners from across the network embraced a series of collaborative exchanges and targeted sessions—both online and in person—focused on developing testing actions, advancing investment and continuity plans. These engagements laid the groundwork for adapting CALICO's Legal and Financial (TM3), and Building (TM4) modules to suit diverse local contexts.

Identifying Partners' Needs

The Adapt phase network journey started with identifying the partners needs through a qualitative survey and online discussion. This multifaceted approach ensured that partners' voices shaped next steps in network development, aligning resources and expertise with the realities faced at the local level. The ITN online meeting on 21 May 2025 placed a strong emphasis on discussing and addressing the specific needs of partner cities within the Cities4Co-Housing network expressed in the survey. Partners engaged in open dialogue to clarify challenges and priorities. These were used to shape the next set of ITN activities. Benefiting from peer insights shared by Vila Nova de Gaia, who presented approaches to Investment Plan development, and Thessaloniki, who contributed experience in Testing Actions the ITN made the preliminary steps in the development of testing actions and investment plans.
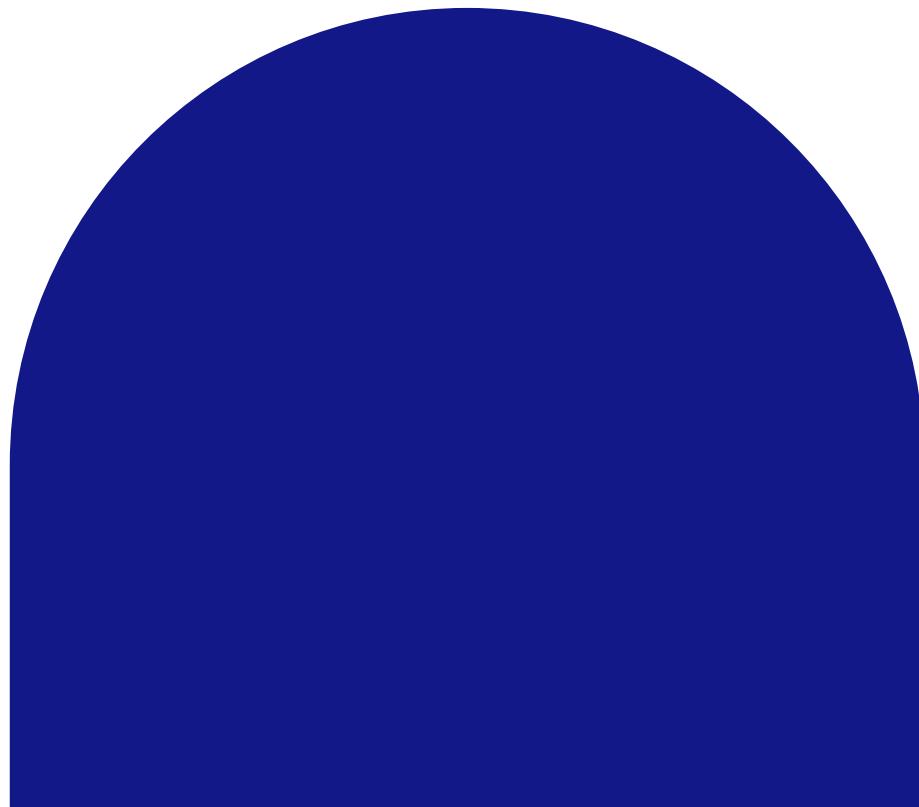
Transnational Meeting Spotlight

At the initial phase of the Adapt phase the Network prioritized in-depth exploration of the most complex aspects of CALICO's practice: Legal and Financial (TM3), and Building (TM4) methodologies. A key highlight was the transnational meeting hosted in Vila Nova de Gaia, Portugal (26–28 May 2025). The meeting centred on deepening knowledge and practical skills around the most challenging CALICO modules, with methodologies for knowledge transfer and testing actions design applied during dedicated workshops.

The key milestone of the ITN was the establishment of the ITN Cities4Co-Housing Testing Actions Bank. Notably, during the transnational meeting, and with guidance from the Lead Expert, the partners harnessed their collective intelligence to co-create nearly 50 testing action prototypes for their ULGs (URBACT Local Groups), resulting in substantial progress and a dynamic employment of new methodologies designed for this purpose.

Tailored Support and Network Dialogue

Following the Vila Nova de Gaia meeting, targeted one-to-one exchanges with the Lead Expert supported partners in advancing ULG operations locally, selecting or designing local testing actions to be implemented and launching the initial stage of writing of the investment plans. An online follow-up meeting on 10 July 2025 featured peer-driven presentations and open dialogue on overcoming challenges, sharing best practices, and brainstorming investment plans development in each partner city. In addition the partners have brainstormed the ideas for advancing the continuity plan of the Lead Partner, this external viewpoint provided a fresh view on the CALICO practice and suggested new avenues for the future. These exchanges enabled actionable steps and promoted ongoing collaboration, as well as mutual support in organizing thematic events and sessions.

Looking Ahead

Throughout this period, the Cities 4 Co-Housing network demonstrated substantial progress in developing testing actions, advancing investment plans, activating local groups, and promoting innovative practice knowledge-transfer. Collective action and transparent communication underscored the commitment of all partners to sustainable, community-focused housing innovation—anchoring each city's unique journey within the broader URBACT values of inclusivity, co-learning, and practical impact.

2025				2026	
Q3. Mar-May	Q4. Jun-Aug	Q5. Sept Nov	Q6. Dec Feb	Q7. Mar May	Q8. Jun Aug

STAGE 2 ADAPT — STAGE 3 Prepare for RE USE

Core Network Meetings

TM.1 Investment Plans | TM.2 Modules III. & IV. | Reporting period | Follow-up 1. | TM.3 Modules I. & II. | Mid-Term | Follow-up 2. | Follow-up 3. | TM.4 Peer Review | Sharing events

URBACT Local Group Meetings

Partners develop draft investment plan sections | Draft Plans | Draft Plans finalised for PEER REVIEW | Final Plans

Quarterly Network Journal 1. June | Quarterly Network Journal 2. September | Quarterly Network Journal 3. December | Quarterly Network Journal 4. March | The Network Final Report

Network Articles 1 to 4

The transnational meeting, held from 26–28 May 2025 in Vila Nova de Gaia, was dedicated to advancing partner expertise in Module TM3 (Legal & Finance) and Module TM4 (Building)— **the most complex and innovative aspects of the CALICO practice adapted for the Cities4Co-Housing network.**

2.
TRANSNATIONAL MEETING (TNM) IN VILA NOVA DE GAIA

2. Transnational Meeting (TNM) in Vila Nova de Gaia

Setting the Meeting Objectives

On the opening day, participants were welcomed by the lead expert, the lead partner, and the host city. The introduction to the meeting focused on addressing three core questions for the meeting:

**Where are we on our roadmap?
What are our aims for this meeting?
How will we design and generate testing actions?**

The agenda was shaped around supporting and training the partners to transform broad ambitions into actionable, local testing actions.

Developing Testing Actions with Structured Methodology

A central focus of day one was helping partners conceptualise and design testing actions for inclusion in forthcoming investment plans. **Adapting a formulation of research question (RQ) methodology proposed by the Lead Expert, the participants learned to define, develop, and refine testing actions—translating visionary 'umbrella actions' typical in early network stages into practical, locally adaptable solutions. Brainstorming sessions generated a diverse set of ideas, most importantly it prepared the partners for the adaptation of the concrete CALICO modules in the day two.**

Deepening Knowledge and Building Capacity

Day two turned to in-depth exploration and capacity-building for Modules TM3 and TM4 (see the next session for more details). Through two interactive workshops—each structured by module presentations, guided discussions, and collaborative creation of testing actions—partners examined building design principles such as co-created layouts, energy efficiency, and climate adaptation, as well as legal and financial issues including Community Land Trust (CLT) legislation, tenure models, and funding. Each session facilitated peer exchange and practical skill development, culminating in tangible progress deepening knowledge about these modules, but most importantly developing concrete testing actions from this learning.

Synthesis and Planning Next Steps

On the third day, partners reflected on workshops learnings, outlined next steps for local adaptation, and focused on the potential approaches to drafting investment plans. The Lead Expert provided three methods for structuring investment plans and distributed a template to streamline the drafting process. The meeting concluded with the organisation of upcoming activities and reminders of URBACT deadlines for plan submissions.

This transnational meeting was a key moment for Cities4Co-Housing, empowering partners to exchange ideas, tackle challenges in the first phase of the Adapt state of the journey, and confidently advance testing actions for the next phase of their collaborative journey.

The key milestone was development on nearly 50 testing actions through comprehensive methodology featuring three methods.
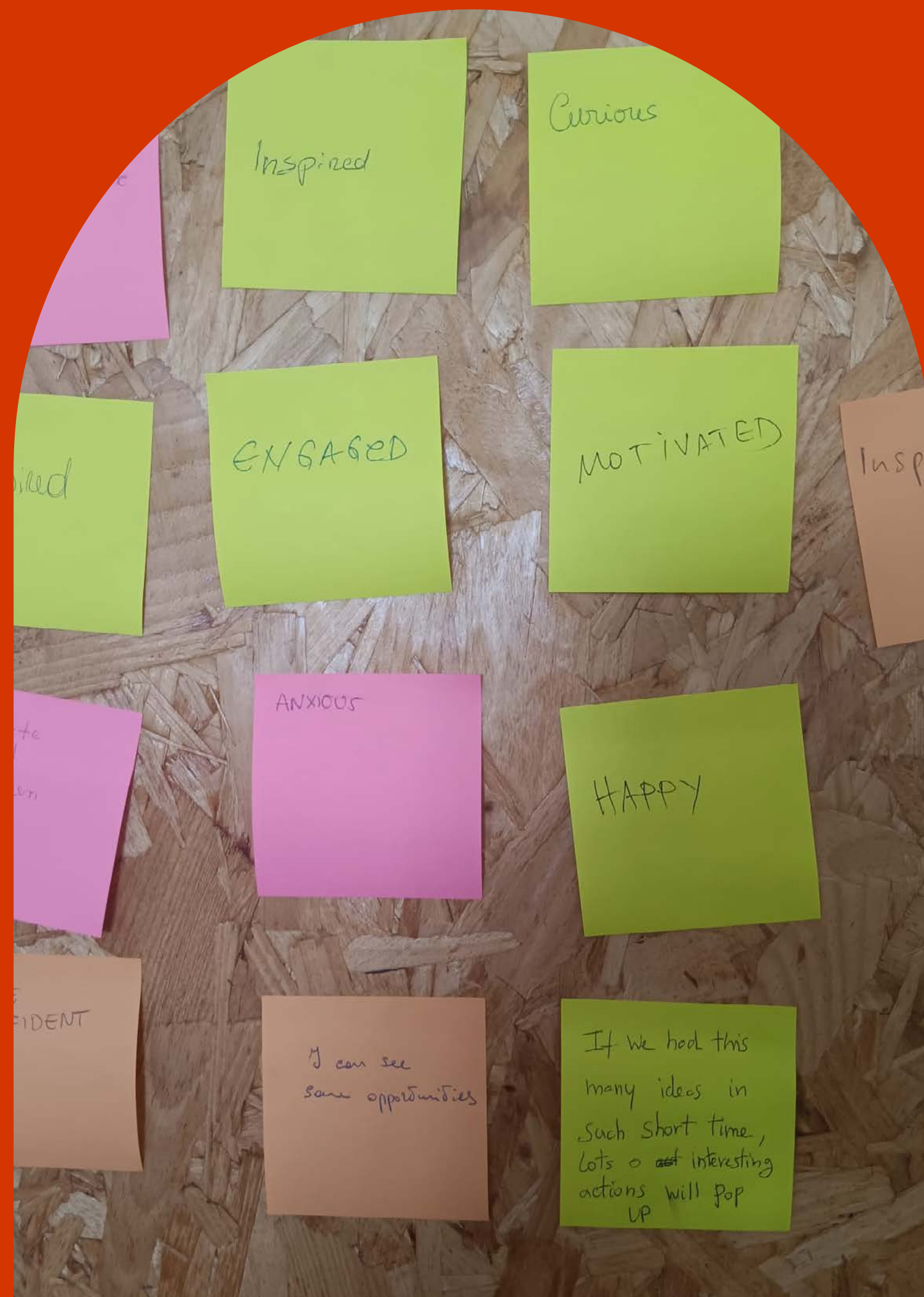
3. Key Themes or Strategic Topics

3.
KEY THEMES OR STRATEGIC TOPICS

CALICO Module TM3 Legal and finance

CALICO Legal Model

At the Vila Nova de Gaia transnational meeting, the Community Land Trust Brussels (CLTB) team showcased the legal and financial framework behind the CALICO model, highlighting how it secures long-term affordable housing. They shared insights on what aspects work well, which elements can be adapted, and what proves more challenging to replicate in different contexts.

The CLT legal structure ensures housing affordability over time by separating land ownership from building ownership. A non-profit or public utility foundation maintains permanent collective ownership of the land. Residents own or rent their homes but lease the land on a long-term basis, typically through 99-year emphyteutic leases. These leases allow the CLT to set conditions on the use and resale of properties, which Belgian law upholds as valid when serving the public interest. Should the CLTB foundation cease operations, land ownership would transfer to another CLT or Brussels authorities to continue serving the community.

The leases include specific conditions to reinforce social goals: homes must be primary residences (occupied at least nine months annually), owners cannot hold additional properties, and rental is allowed only at regulated social rates. While inheritance is permitted, the CLTB retains the right to repurchase the property under certain circumstances, such as major rule violations or after a long period (30 or 50 years). These provisions emphasize prioritizing community benefits over private gains.

Resale prices follow a transparent formula: the initial purchase price plus 25% of investments and added value, with 6% of that added value returned to the CLTB. This mechanism helps safeguard affordability for future generations.

Clarifying the social impact, the Brussels team explained their model targets low-income residents eligible for social housing. With an average annual income of around €17,000 and 60% of households being single-parent families, community participation is foundational— not only in project development but also in governance. This approach reflects a strong commitment to inclusion and empowerment.

However, the CALICO team acknowledged that the legal innovation of CALICO is the most challenging aspect to transfer. Partner cities operate under diverse housing systems and legal frameworks, often without legislation supporting CLTs or emphyteutic leases. Accordingly, Brussels encouraged partners to treat the CLT model as a flexible source of inspiration.

CALICO Financial Model

Financially, CALICO demonstrates how strategic public investment can deliver affordable housing outside speculative markets. The project's total budget was approximately €10 million, allocated primarily to land purchase (€1.73 million), construction (€8.3 million), and related expenses. A significant share of this funding came from European Union support—€5 million from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) with the Community Land Trust Brussels (CLTB) also owning the land. Complementing these sources, ethical loans and public subsidies played an essential role in closing the financing gap.

Brussels recognizes that its funding model is unique and cannot be replicated exactly across all partner cities in the Cities4Co-Housing ITN. While some partners currently benefit from substantial EU funding—such as Vila Nova de Gaia, which has

access to €143 million in EU funds through 2026, and Fuenlabrada, receiving over €6 million from the EU SHARE project—others face more constrained or uncertain financial situations. Thessaloniki encounters challenges securing a clear funding base; Naples faces social housing complexities; and Nikšić relies heavily on URBACT support.

As a result, the Brussels team recommends that partner cities diversify their funding strategies. Combining local subsidies, cooperative financing models, and ethical loans can build financial resilience and reduce dependence on European funds alone. This flexible, mixed approach will better equip cities to adapt the CALICO model sustainably within their unique social, economic, and political contexts. To support the partners in this endeavour, the ITN has organised an upcoming online meeting in September where the funding and financing options will be discussed in more detail. The partners will also attend the workshops organised by EUI and URBACT on this theme.

CALICO Module TM4 Building

The CLTB team offered valuable insights into the building-related challenges and successes experienced in Vila Nova de Gaia, providing partners with practical lessons from Brussels and fuelling ideas on how to adapt these learnings locally.

In their presentation, CALICO highlighted key aspects of regulatory frameworks, participatory processes, and affordability measures. Brussels' Regional Town Planning Regulations set high standards for building design and performance, covering building size, appearance, accessibility, insulation (U-values), energy consumption limits, ventilation, and thermal solar panel monitoring systems. Accessibility for people with disabilities and sufficient parking spaces were emphasized as essential components, reflecting Brussels' dedication to inclusive design. The team also shared updates on numerous housing projects either completed or underway in Brussels.

The CLTB team stressed the vital role of participatory processes in project success, illustrated through two pilot projects. Starting with the owner's group before land acquisition, the process followed five steps: training future residents to understand architectural plans and learning their neighbourhood context; soliciting residents' recommendations for architect competitions and involving them in the selection jury; running workshops where residents collaborated with architects to refine shared spaces and technical solutions; and maintaining engagement during construction and initial occupancy through site visits and thematic groups.

This structured engagement fosters deep resident ownership and pride. However, the group also recognized lengthy timelines—over five years from land purchase to move-in—in early projects. To improve efficiency, they advised limiting active resident participation to about two years before occupancy and broadening workshop participation to potential buyers, neighbours, and local associations to enrich perspectives without extending schedules.

This approach contrasts with CALICO's co-creation under a strict three-year funding deadline, which prioritized timely delivery through a turnkey purchase and less resident involvement. While the CALICO model focused on speed, the CLTB method received positive feedback for cultivating a strong sense of community and better aligning buildings with residents' needs, despite some debates around lengthy procedures and benefit scales.

Additionally, the team introduced an innovative "Reno-Solidarity Pack," which blends solidarity financing tools (debt-free) with CLT land rights acquisition to fund energy-efficient renovations for low-income homeowners. This model safeguards affordability throughout renovations and offers robust support throughout the process. The presentation included photos of two renovation pilot projects, prompting partner cities to recognize renovation as equally crucial as new construction—especially when paired with affordability measures.

Transferability Challenges and Possibilities

As planned, the first transnational meeting in the Adapt phase centred on the two most challenging CALICO innovation modules: TM3 Legal & Finance and TM4 Building.

However, the network went beyond knowledge sharing. The lead expert invited partners to harness their collective intelligence to co-develop tailored testing actions inspired by CALICO's learnings (see Methodology section for details) and start thinking about the possibilities of their local adaptation.

Brussels' model holds strong potential for cities ready to innovate legally and build reliable funding methods, with core principles including removing land from speculative markets, securing ongoing affordability, and fostering democratic governance. Yet, practical transfer remains challenging due to structural differences.

In order to show a potential in locally developing a CLT model, insights were enriched by a presentation from Torino CLT, showcasing a functional CLT model in the Italian context, helping ground the complex Legal & Financial module in real experience beyond Belgium.

While transferring the building module seems easier than legal and financial ones, challenges persist—most partners will focus on renovating existing housing stock rather than new builds. Specific hurdles include identifying and selecting residents before construction and recruiting co-creation participants. Partners appreciated Brussels' energy efficiency training but highlighted the need to tailor it to southern European climates.

To deepen learning, the lead expert invited Vila Nova de Gaia representatives to present their energy renovation projects and share lessons learned.

The central outcome of the detailed CALICO module learning during the day two of the transnational meeting was brainstorming about adapting knowledge locally by developing testing actions. To achieve this, three workshops were organised—following presentations on legal, financial, and building aspects—that harnessed partners' collective intelligence through a comprehensive methodology. These workshops aimed to build partners' capacity to develop testing actions, adapt the CALICO learning to the local contexts, and contribute to the ITN Testing Actions Bank (see the next and Methodology sections for details).

4.
TESTING ACTIONS & INVESTMENT PLANS PROGRESS

In the first months of the Adapt phase, the network focused on three key priorities.

First, partners worked on transferring knowledge from CALICO's two most challenging modules—TM3 Legal and Financial and TM4 Building.

Second, they started conceptualising investment plans by exploring options and selecting approaches suited to their local contexts.

Third, directly inspired by CALICO, partners developed testing actions tailored to their cities for maximum local relevance and impact.

Local highlights

4 . Testing Actions & Investment Plans Pro

Following the Vila Nova de Gaia meeting, partners engaged with their local authorities and URBACT Local Groups (ULGs) to refine and shortlist locally relevant testing actions and to draft the initial sections of their investment plans. The partners have received one to one support from the lead expert on the issues related to the work with ULGs, the development and choice of the testing actions and the development of the investment plans. The local progress was discussed on the ITN level online meeting held on the 10th of July, where the partners had the opportunity to discuss the progress as well as challenges related to this phase. The milestone of this meeting was the advancement of the Lead Partner's Continuity plan through harnessing collective network intelligence.

1. Brussels

As the Lead Partner, Brussels made significant progress in the 1st and 2nd phase of the project. The monthly progress report shows that they laid the groundwork for transferring the CALICO Community Land Trust model to five European partner cities: Vila Nova de Gaia, Naples, Thessaloniki, Nikšić, and Fuenlabrada. Key accomplishments so far include setting up administrative processes for redistributing European funding, identifying stakeholders, and developing an initial testing action plan.

During the June 2025 ULG meeting, participants shared updates. The session saw strong stakeholder participation, including CALICO residents, Brussels Housing representatives, and project coordinators. The key topics discussed included an overview of current CALICO challenges and developments, as well as an introduction to the Cities 4 Co-housing project objectives. They also presented testing actions, which generated strong interest among CALICO residents.

Progress on testing actions is not yet in the report as they are still in the planning stage. These actions are aimed for the second ULG meeting in September. The proposed action will focus on initiatives to improve the common garden.

The lead partner has also put significant effort into communication activities. They shared the project plan on LinkedIn to keep stakeholders informed and engaged. They have built international connections, including hosting a Korean delegation that visited Brussels Housing in September 2024. The CALICO project was also presented in Fuenlabrada in May 2025. Looking ahead, visits to the CALICO project are planned for the NEB Festival in June 2026 and by representatives from the European Commission.

The report highlights several challenges, such as limited time due to other missions and absence of regional government since June 2024, which have affected project commitment.

Continuity plan

The key progress of the Continuity Plan was achieved at the meeting held on the 10 of July. Notably, in waiting for the URBACT guidelines on the continuity plans, the lead partner organised a brainstorming session where the partners had the opportunity to suggest the Lead Partner to enhance the CALICO project. This outsider view helped the CALICO team to move away from the operational matters that characterised their work since winning of the UIA award and funding in 2018 back to visioning and future strategy. The Continuity Plan drafting is set to begin in autumn.

Local highlights

2. Fuenlabrada

Fuenlabrada has made significant progress in the period covered. The city has successfully held several ULG meetings with a range of stakeholders. This group includes neighborhood associations, municipal representatives, SHARE Project partners, youth representatives, and local businesses.

Fuenlabrada has developed a strong understanding of the CALICO methodology and started applying it to the EUI SHARE Project. The city has also secured a preliminary financial framework for rental models.

From November 2024 to June 2025, five ULG meetings took place. They covered topics such as the CALICO methodology transfer, creating an intergenerational care system, governance models and community engagement strategies. Their monthly report annex details the discussions from these meetings.

During the ULG meeting on May 5, 2025, the group established initial ideas for testing actions. These include awareness questionnaires, participatory workshops with Chasa II residents, youth engagement activities, care system development with the Matia Institute and communication efforts at the Home Care Congress.

After the Vila Nova de Gaia transnational meeting, more testing actions were created in Fuenlabrada. These include pilot projects for managing shared spaces and resident involvement, developing intergenerational frameworks and time bank systems, and planning for energy efficiency. These initiatives match the CALICO methodology and build on lessons learned.

The report also includes an overview and plan for the budget. A total of €6.15M is set aside for transforming San Esteban Public School, with €4.92M in EU co-funding secured. However, there are challenges in prioritizing CALICO knowledge exchange in future transnational meetings. Topics such as rental contract models and resident preparation workshops are crucial for successfully completing the Investment Plan.

In line with CALICO learning, Fuenlabrada has improved its communication strategy through municipal websites, press releases, and conferences. Collaborating with the existing SHARE Project has created a synergy in housing innovation. This positions Fuenlabrada as a model for future initiatives aimed at helping vulnerable groups and repurposing abandoned buildings.

Investment Plan

Fuenlabrada has advanced well on Sections 1, 2, and 3 of its Investment Plan, following the prescribed template. In Section 3 (Actions), the Legal & Financial Module (TM3) outlines measures to engage beneficiaries, notably involving ULG discussions addressing elderly residents' concerns about housing transfers and rental terms. For the Building Module (TM4), co-design activities with architectural studios and elderly residents shaped common spaces through participatory workshops. Each testing action is clearly linked to CALICO learning and details challenges, transfer approaches, activities, implementation steps, partners, timelines, and success indicators.

Local highlights

3. Naples

Naples has made meaningful progress by selecting the Stadera 1.3.7 Solidarity Condominium in the Poggioreale district as its main transfer case. This site, with 24 apartments, commercial ventures, co-living spaces, and community associations, provides a practical platform to apply CALICO's innovative approaches. The city held its first URBACT Local Group (ULG) meeting on May 20, 2025, engaging over 45 stakeholders from municipal departments, universities, and other sectors.

In collaboration with the lead expert, Naples verified and adopted the list of the key testing actions to include in their investment plan. These include community engagement through a QR-code questionnaire to capture residents' service needs, organizing a public-private partnership workshop to foster innovative legal frameworks, mapping funding sources to support project scaling, and exploring affordability models based on local incomes. Social and governance testing actions involve developing municipal resolutions for vulnerable populations, drafting solidarity condominium regulations, and experimenting with new resident selection methods. Communication efforts have been strengthened with targeted articles, posters, photo reports, and coordinated stakeholder engagement through a centralized project email.

Beyond Stadera, Naples is testing a mutual-aid condominium in the historic center aimed at intergenerational cohabitation and is exploring additional public buildings for similar solidarity housing initiatives.

Investment Plan

Naples investment plan includes a solid needs analysis linking housing with broader socio-economic factors, clear adaptation of CALICO principles to Italy's legal context, and identification of diverse funding sources aligned with municipal goals. The actions verified with expert guidance will feed into the ongoing development of the investment plan, ensuring a well-grounded roadmap for affordable housing innovation.

Examples of testing actions include community surveys via QR code, public-private partnership workshops, funding mapping exercises, development of affordability models, drafting social and governance guidelines, and piloting new resident selection approaches. These diverse tests reflect Naples' commitment to tailoring CALICO innovations locally while fostering community involvement and financial sustainability. There is potential to expand testing actions in Modules 3 and 4 as these remain the focus of the Adapt phase.

Local highlights

4. Nikšić

In Nikšić several major activities took place between May and August 2025, including two ULG meetings held in May and June 2025. A feasibility study for installing solar panels on four residential buildings was finalized. This study provides technical details to support the city's energy efficiency efforts.

The partner reported that the ULG meetings addressed topics like energy efficiency, social entrepreneurship, and citizen energy communities. Workshop activities involved discussions with residents about shared housing solutions and intergenerational care approaches. These efforts encouraged community engagement and knowledge sharing.

The report clearly documents the two testing actions carried out and their results:

1. Testing Action 1: A resident survey with seven questions was conducted during a workshop to assess community needs and engagement levels.

2. Testing Action 2: Following CALICO Module 4 (Building), the team used templates and questions from transnational meetings on energy efficiency and solar panel installation. A community event and survey took place with 17 participants, focusing on energy efficiency and solar panels. Results indicated that 94% of respondents would attend future meetings on energy efficiency.

Their report shows how these actions combine energy transition with social inclusion through participatory management and informal community events, aiming to increase resident participation. These surveys reflect CALICO learnings and suggestions. It also shows active communication efforts through several social media platforms and websites.

Investment Plan

Significant progress has been made on the investment plan:

1. Sections 1 and 2, covering Needs Analysis, Policy Response, and the Investment Proposal, are complete.

2. The plan includes an €85,000 solar panel project across four buildings, expected to generate €12,000 annually to fund community initiatives such as social services, in-home care for the elderly, and social enterprises supporting unemployed women.

3. A draft of Section 3 outlines testing actions related to solar panels (Module 3) and financing strategies, including workshop plans (Module 4). Initial work on barriers, risks, and monitoring steps is underway.

The plan also identifies funding challenges, including uncertainty over the Eco Fund's 50% co-funding and possible permit delays. To mitigate these risks, it explores alternative financing sources like partnerships with EPCG, local energy communities in Spain, and public-private collaborations.

Local highlights

5. Thessaloniki

During the reporting period the city has reached an important milestone, it has secured a vacant public property on Siatistis Street in the city center, capable of housing 10 units as a pilot cohousing development. The project represents a new possible initiative for the city, but still needs to secure adequate funding for its completion. It aims to start social housing programs and prepare for cooperative housing development within Greece's challenging regulatory environment. A strong network of stakeholders has also been created, involving over 25 organizations, including municipal authorities, NGOs, academic institutions and community initiatives. An important stakeholder interest analysis is included in the annex.

During the reporting period, the city organized two (ULG) meetings. The first meeting was in November 2024 and involved 15 stakeholders. These focused on inspiring experiences, legal frameworks, financing, community building, and sustainability. There was a successful ULG meeting with several stakeholders including representatives from the municipality, from women center and from NGOs . The local team also participated in several fruitful meetings with colleagues from other housing projects that MDAT is implementing (Cohouselience, Plan Einstein).

The city also came up with 4 testing actions that have been developed through the ULG meetings. Two (social) actions including one (linked with building modules) about resident participation workshops to strengthen future inhabitants' voices in the design and planning phase. Another one in governance and one about Building is aimed to research began on vacant public buildings listed in the national cadastre to identify ownership and housing potential for future cooperative housing negotiations.

The city has also launched a communication strategy that matches the testing actions. This includes announcements on the MDAT webpage, press releases, and coordinated social media campaigns.

Investment Plan

The investment plan shows substantial progress, with most sections completed for this preliminary stage. Section 1 combines local housing data with a policy context tailored to Greek conditions, while Section 2 outlines detailed objectives across all four CALICO modules, adapting practices for the Greek context. Additionally, Section 2.2 includes testing actions focused on improving community participation through design workshops and raising tenant awareness of energy efficiency. Although no testing actions are currently included under the legal and financial module, the existing actions are well developed and supported by thorough information. There is potential to expand testing actions in Modules 3 and 4 as these remain the focus of the Adapt phase.

Local highlights

6. Vila Nova de Gaia

Vila Nova de Gaia has made good progress during this period. Their monthly report documentation clearly outlines all the key activities carried out in the initial stages of the Adapt phase. These include forming a Partner-level Project Management Team (PMT), setting up (ULG) meetings with various stakeholders and hosting a transnational meeting from May 26-28, 2025.

Concerning the progress with ULG meetings, they organised 3 meetings as well as held workshops to develop stakeholder involvement. They also organised the 3rd transnational meeting in May 2025. They participated in URBACT meetings and ITN adapting meeting.

Their report shows good progress on testing actions, which are described in detail. The municipality managed to transfer knowledge from CALICO Modules into these actions. The first testing action relates to legal, financial, and governance issues. This testing action involves a competition and selection process of residents in the housing cluster solution in Grijó (30 houses), targeting individuals over 55 years, single-parent families and general households.

Currently, the application phase is complete and technical services are now analysing housing submissions in collaboration with the Cities 4 Co-housing project team.

This could aim at creating more inclusive and resilient communities through different selection criteria.

The second testing action includes community-building activities scheduled after housing allocations are complete. It will implement participatory workshops where residents can design communal spaces, consistent with CALICO's focus on collaboration.

Vila Nova de Gaia team also organized communication activities, such as featuring the project in posters and on their website to enhance stakeholder engagement. Regarding challenges, they noted the need for senior management commitment and potential impacts that could slow down the project due to upcoming municipal elections affecting housing policies.

Investment Plan

Vila Nova de Gaia, took an alternative approach to the development of their investment plan. This meant that they have not written it up at the time of the reporting period. This said, the partner seems to have a clear vision of the testing actions that they wish to test and implement.

The progress report is thorough, featuring concrete testing actions that focus on modules 3 and 4, as well as on governance. The report is well organized, and shows clearly how they intend to transfer CALICO ideas about co-design, social housing, community, and intergenerational housing to their context.

5.
TOOLS & METHODOLOGY

The ITN Cities4Co-Housing Testing Actions Bank

The testing actions bank was established through a comprehensive methodology that combined three participatory methods used during the transnational meetings: the OPERA method, the World Café, and the Iterative Co-Design Workshop. Through this collaborative process, partners co-created nearly 50 testing actions inspired by the innovative CALICO practices embedded in modules TM3 Legal and Financial and TM4 Building. This Testing Actions Bank is a living database hosted on Google Drive, where draft testing actions are shared as a source of inspiration and a foundation for discussions within Urban Local Groups (ULGs). More than just a repository, the bank serves as an empowering tool, enabling partners to adapt, develop, and tailor testing actions suited to their local contexts and needs.

Developing Testing Actions from CALICO innovation with Structured Methodology:

The Adapt stage focuses on deep learning from CALICO modules and, most importantly, adapting their innovative practices to local contexts. Testing actions can help facilitate this transfer, but partners first needed to learn how to derive these actions from the CALICO modules. At the Vila Nova de Gaia meeting, four methods were used to support testing action identification and development, train participants to develop testing actions for their local authorities and empower them in doing so.

These included:

Development of the testing actions from high ambitions through "formulation of research question (RQ) methodology"

At the outset it was important to clarify what testing actions are. While they are defined as simple and measure actions to test specific issues, coming up with them may be challenging. Not because of the lack of ideas or ambitions, quite the opposite because at the outset of any project the ambitions are high. This means that the first testing actions proposals were also very ambitions and high level, this means that they needed to be broken down to concrete actions that can be tested. In order to achieve this the "formulation of research question (RQ) methodology" was used. Applied in the URBACT context, the partners were asked to break down the ambitions actions that the lead expert termed 'umbrella actions' into several simple concrete actions (eg. Research questions) that can be tested and most importantly visualised by the partners.
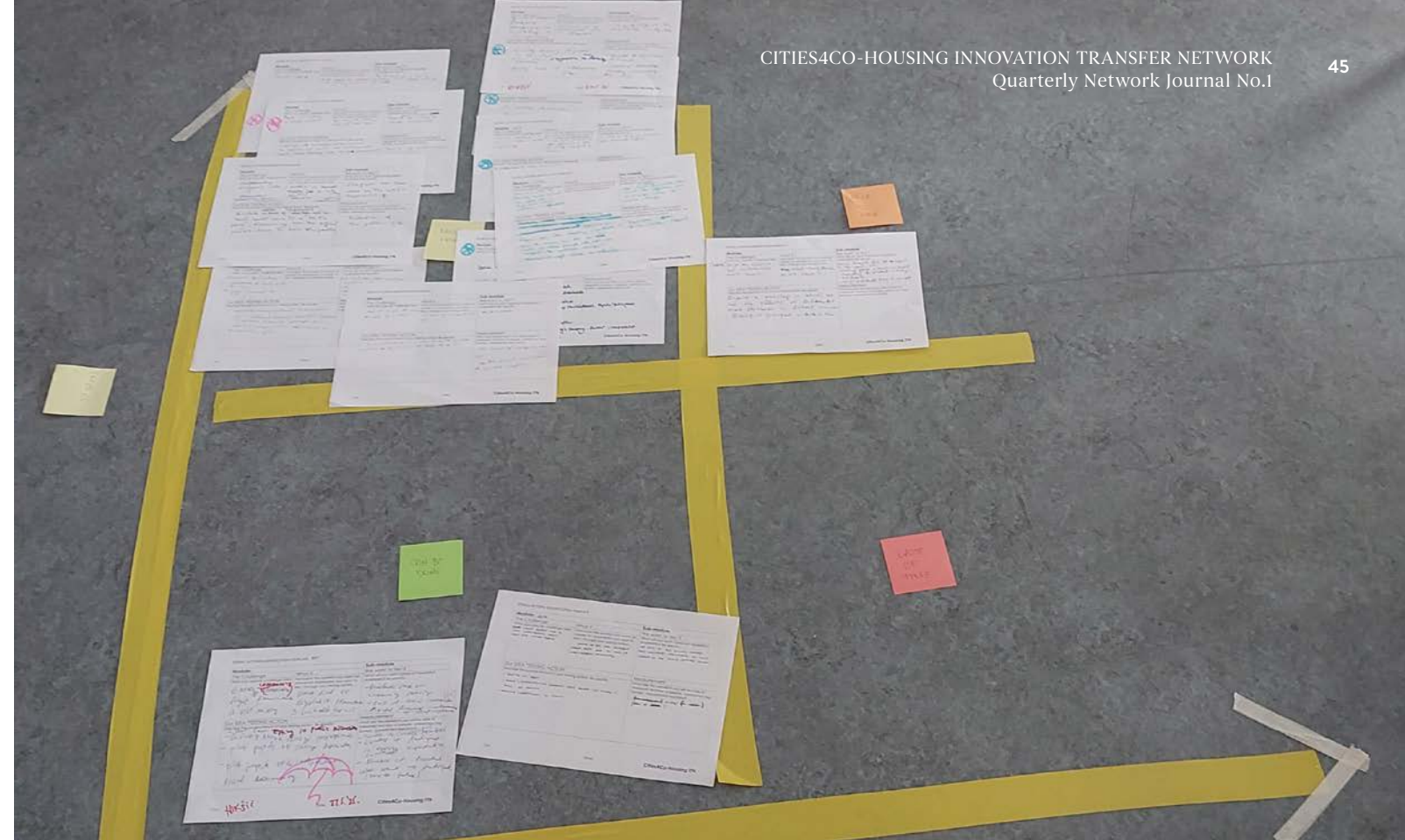
Qualitative survey for identifying partners needs

At the initial steps of the Adapt stage journey it was deemed important to identify the partners needs, requirements and ideas for the next period. This has been carried out using the qualitative survey that has given the opportunity to partners to freely express their needs and other issues and actively shape the agenda and the next steps of the partnership road map.

The online meeting on 21 May 2025 focused strongly on addressing these partner needs, using the survey results as a basis for open dialogue. This process allowed partners to clarify priorities and informed the next activities of the network, including early steps in developing testing actions and investment plans.

OPERA Method adapted for Collaborative Testing Action Development

The OPERA method was used as a structured co-creation approach to collaboratively develop and prioritize ideas through five stages. Participants began individually by reflecting on specific questions that emerged from learning about the CALICO modules (TMs) and writing down their thoughts about potential testing actions over 3 to 5 minutes. Next, they formed pairs to discuss their written ideas and jointly develop proposals on testing actions. Each pair then explained their proposals to the wider group, allowing for shared understanding. Following this, the group ranked the ideas based on criteria such as impact and effort. Finally, participants aligned and arranged the prioritized ideas into thematic clusters, such as the TM3 themes, to provide clarity and guide further development. This method combined systematic thinking with creative problem-solving and enabled the group to harness collective knowledge effectively and build consensus around actionable solutions.
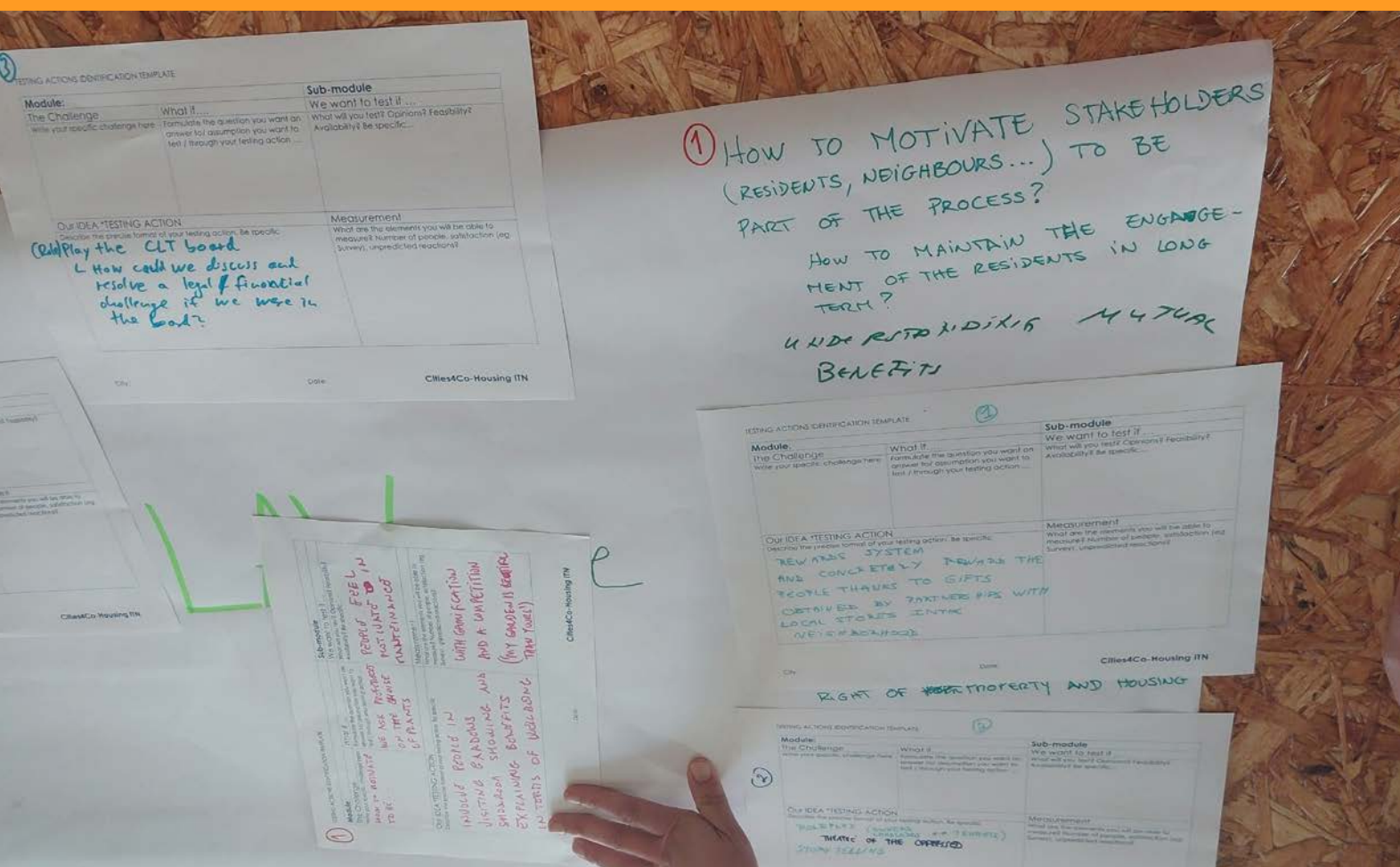
Iterative Co-Design Workshop for the Testing Actions Development

This collaborative method engaged participants in a three-stage process designed to foster creativity in developing testing actions from the CALICO acquired knowledge and collective refinement of ideas. First, groups created initial testing actions, including umbrella concepts and specific testing actions (TAs). Next, groups rotated through three rounds, visiting other groups' workstations to review, add to, and develop the found testing actions further. Finally, participants returned to their original group to report on the evolved actions, sharing insights and consolidating outcomes. This iterative exchange enabled continuous building on ideas, enriching the solutions and strengthening ownership through active group engagement and cross-pollination of perspectives.

The World Café Method for Testing Actions Development

To foster deep, collaborative testing actions creation from the knowledge acquired from CALICO, the partnership was divided into four smaller groups, each seated at a dedicated table. A rapporteur was appointed at each table, responsible for guiding the discussion around a specific set of questions and capturing the groups' ideas and insights on developing testing actions for the specific TM. The groups spent seven minutes with each rapporteur, allowing the facilitators to delve deeply into each question through successive discussions. This rotating approach ensured all topics related to the specific CALCIO TM were explored in depth, while promoting dynamic interaction and the cross-pollination of ideas on potential testing actions across groups. The method enabled structured, participatory knowledge-building and supported the co-creation of testing actions tailored to the network's objectives.

The strategic priorities for the next quarter are ambitious and inspiring, focusing on advancing the drafts of the investment and continuity plans. These include completing Section 1 (Needs Analysis and Policy Response), Section 2 (Investment Proposal with adapted practices), and Sections 3 and 4 (Investment Case, Costing, Budgeting), alongside addressing key cross-cutting issues and detailing the participatory, **collaborative processes at the heart of the network's work.**

6.
NEXT STEPS

To achieve these goals, the Cities4Co-Housing Network has laid out a clear and engaging roadmap:

2. The upcoming transnational meeting in Fuenlabrada (15-17 October) will delve into CALICO modules TM1 Governance and TM2 Social, building on the successful collaborative approach used for modules 3 and 4. Partners will be tasked with developing corresponding sections of their investment plans after this meeting.

4. Partners will receive expert feedback on their action plans from the lead expert and a dedicated ad-hoc specialist—an invaluable opportunity to refine and strengthen their proposals.

1. An online meeting on 10 September will focus on unlocking funding opportunities for cities, discussing cross-cutting themes, and following up on investment and continuity plan progress.

3. The mid-term review at the close of this period will provide all partners with the chance to reflect on achievements, challenges, and next steps—a moment to celebrate progress and sharpen focus for the

5. A follow-up meeting scheduled for the end of November will review the progress on investment plans and support finalizing their first drafts.

This next phase is a time of momentum and opportunity. With strong partnership, shared expertise, and a clear plan, the Cities4Co-Housing network is poised to transform ideas into impactful, sustainable housing solutions. Together, partners will continue to learn, adapt, and innovate—building a future where affordable housing is a reality for all.

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