

Driving change for better cities

Call for Action Networks

Exchange & Learning
journey

12 May 2026



URBACT




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Who's in the Zoom



EXCHANGE & LEARNING

- 
- **The URBACT Programme**
 - **What's in it for cities**
 - **The Action Network journey**
 - **Shaping network activities**
 - **Expertise support**

The URBACT Programme

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URBACT IV

2021-2027

European Territorial Cooperation programme

co-financed by:

- the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF),
- The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)
- the and Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)

Objective:

Promote sustainable urban development in Europe

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European Territorial Cooperation Programme

Promoting sustainable urban development in cities

Since
2002



Over
1000
cities
involved



more than
150
networks

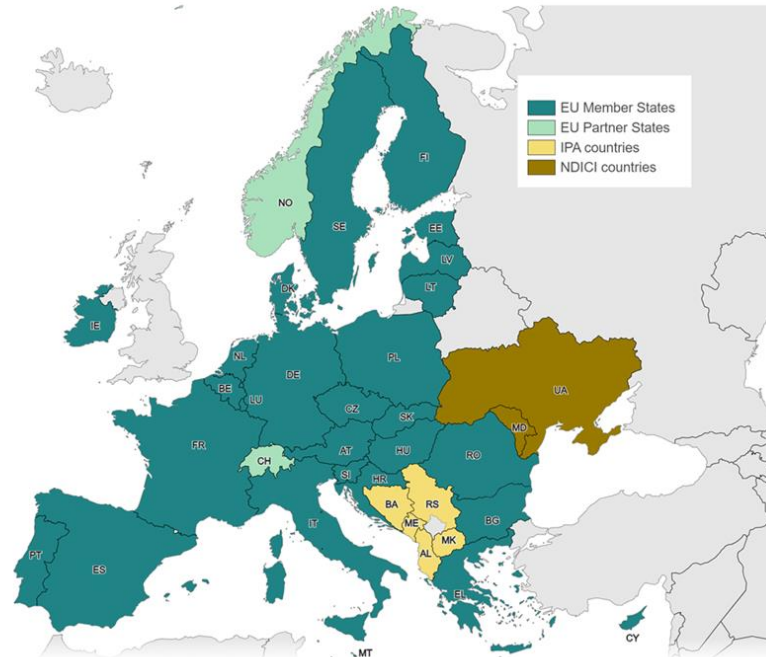
Three main activities

Networks of European cities

Capacity building activities & tools



Programme Area



Knowledge uptake and sharing



Currently 525 cities involved in 65 networks

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What is an Action Network



WHAT IS AN ACTION NETWORK?

URBACT Action Networks support cities with **strategies on a specific topic to implement actions.**

[WHY APPLY TO AN ACTION NETWORK?

- To **build on an existing strategy or policy** framework.
- To take part in **transnational exchange** throughout the network lifecycle.
- To use **co-creation through a participatory approach** with the URBACT Local Groups.
- To refine, **implement** and monitor **concrete actions**.
- To benefit from **visibility & communication activities** at EU and national levels.

- ✓ **Benefit from the support of URBACT experts**
- ✓ **Benefit from the involvement of local stakeholders**
- ✓ **Enjoy a safe space for experimentation**

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CALL FOR ACTION NETWORKS – MAIN FEATURES

Network composition

Cities from the **European Union**, Norway, Switzerland, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Moldova, Ukraine

6-8 partners
(including Lead Partner)



A graphic featuring a large Euro symbol (€) inside a white circle with a red border, set against a light blue background with a faint map outline. Below the symbol, the text reads: "EUR 1.000.000 for network activities and implementation of local actions".



[PARTNERSHIP - ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- ✓ **Between 6 and 8 partners;**
 - ✓ **A city can be a candidate Lead Partner of one Action Network proposal only (but can be additionally a Project Partner in another network);**
 - ✓ **A beneficiary can be a partner in max. 2 approved networks;**
 - ✓ **A partnership cannot include more than one partner from the same country;**
 - ✓ **1 “non-city partner” allowed per network;**
 - ✓ **At least half of the partners must come from EU Member States;**
 - ✓ **A partnership may include a maximum of 1 partner from IPA and NDICI countries.**
- >>> **It is recommended to build a diverse partnership**
- >>> **It is also encouraged to include in the partnership, cities which are newcomers to URBACT**

ACTION NETWORK: 30-MONTH 3-STAGE JOURNEY



PROGRAMME SUPPORT
 Network experts
 URBACT (University) 8/2027
 URBACT Toolbox
 Digital
 Gender
 Green
 URBACT KNOWLEDGE HUB
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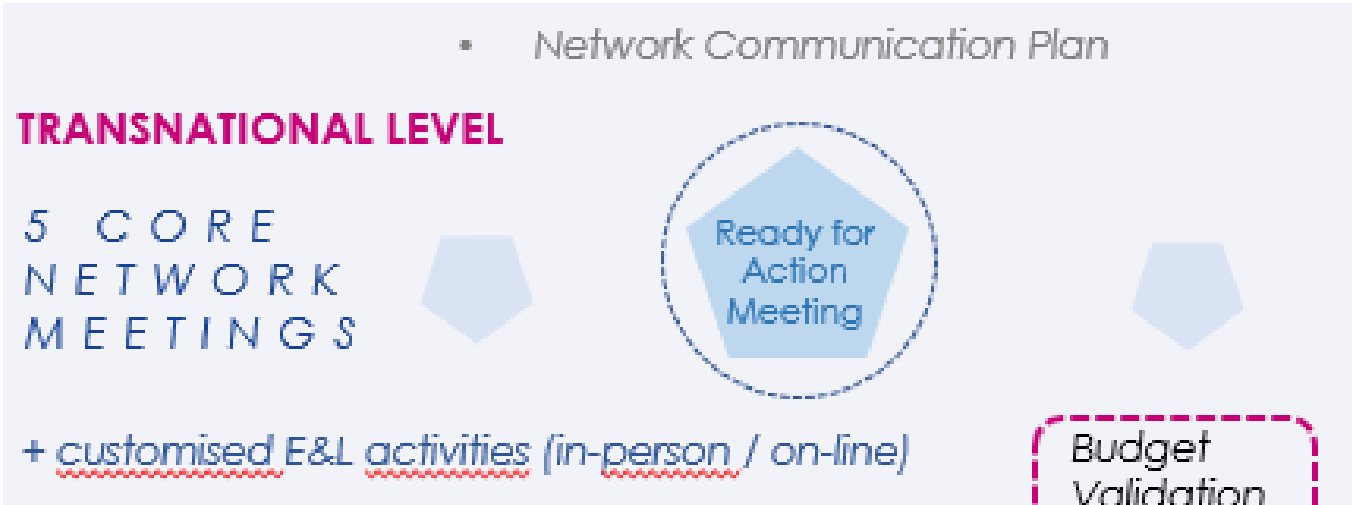
11/2026

7 months

6/2027

Activation

- Contracting & onboarding (First 3 months)
- Set up of URBACT Local Groups
- Baseline Study and Network Roadmap
- Devel
- Orga
- Supp com



CITY LEVEL

Action Portfolio - Step 1:
Strategic Anchor & Action Scope



Activation



6/2027

20 months

1/2029

Develop & Deliver

- **Development, implementation and monitoring of concrete actions**
- **Organization of Actions Labs to mobilise stakeholders to co-design and co-implement actions**
- **Support learning with transnational exchange** - comparison of implementation approaches, common barriers, action adaptations, resources, longer-term urban transformation etc.

Plan

• Network Journals, Articles



Budget
Validation
for Actions

Action Portfolio - Step 2:
Action Implementation



Action Portfolio
Evidence of

Develop & Deliver

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1/2029

3 months

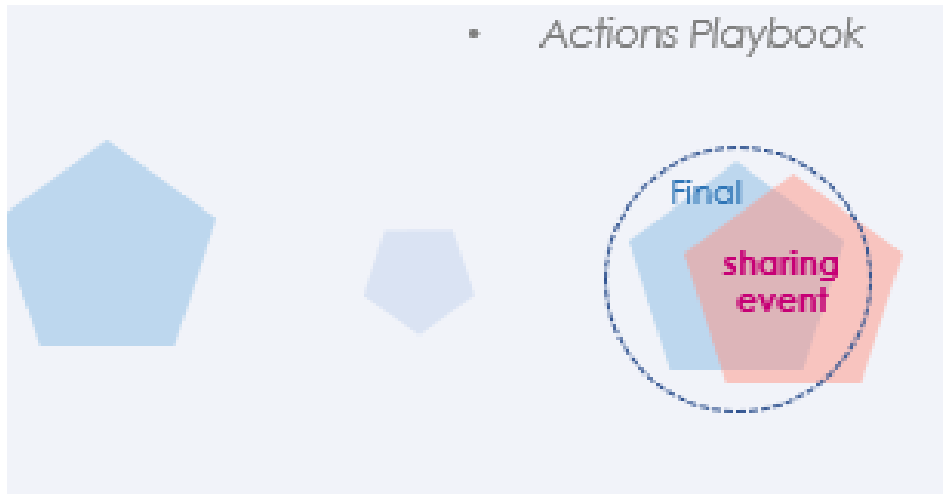
4/2029



ent actions

proaches,
etc.

- Sharing results and future prospects
- Project closure



Finale

*Action Portfolio - Step 3:
Evidence of Change & Outlook*



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NETWORK DELIVERABLES

Network level

- A Network roadmap (Baseline study)
- A Communication Plan
- Transnational Network meetings (5)
- Network Journals (3)
- Network Articles (3)
- Final Network Output: Actions Playbook

Local level

- A URBACT Local group
- Action Portfolio
- Actions implemented

+ Additional customised set of Exchange & Learning and Communication activities to be decided by the partnership

[Baseline Study

- ✓ A detailed description of the policy challenge, placing it within the context of the EU's urban policy priorities
- ✓ A review of each partner's local context and potential for engagement
- ✓ The network's customised exchange and learning methodology
- ✓ Highlights local assets and barriers to implementation, as well as complementarities between partners
- ✓ Takes account of local strategic priorities, levels of political support and potential funding sources
- ✓ Sets the basis for a unique “network roadmap” with a detailed workplan of activities at transnational and local level

[Action Portfolio

- ✓ The main city-level legacy of the network
- ✓ Documents the actions implemented, the learning generated through practice, and evidence of change resulting from their delivery.
- ✓ Is based on an existing local strategy, policy or action plan and is progressively developed during the lifetime of the network
- ✓ Demonstrates how an action system evolves and produces tangible change.

Consists of three main components produced on the way:

1. Strategic Anchor & Action Scope (Delivered in Stage 1)
2. Action Implementation (Delivered in Stage 2)
3. Evidence of Change & Outlook (Consolidated in stage 3)

[Actions Playbook (network level)

- Capturing learning from all partner cities
- Providing actionable guidance for other cities, policy-makers and European organisations

Two main components:

1. Synthesis of Implemented Actions and Delivery Experience

A practical implementation reference for other cities and an evidence base for decision-makers considering policy adaptation or scaling.

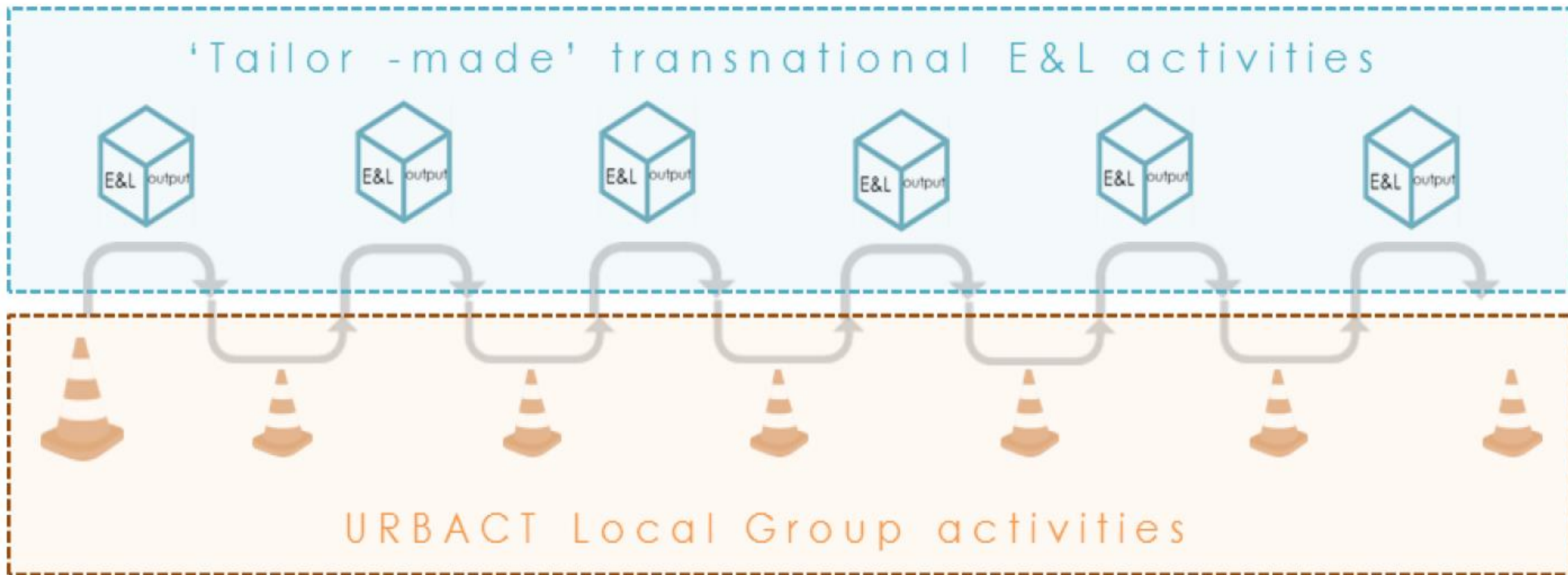
2. Scaling and Replication Pathways

A forward-looking framework building on the implementation evidence, identifying options for continuation, scaling and transfer beyond the network.

+ additional outputs of relevance for an external audience, to be decided by the partnership

SHAPING NETWORK ACTIVITIES

SHAPING NETWORK ACTIVITIES



[SHAPING NETWORK ACTIVITIES - key points

- ✓ Different lengths of transnational network activities
- ✓ Meetings should be interactive, stimulating and enjoyable
- ✓ Thematic focus – type of stakeholders – type of activities proposed (expert input, ‘forensic’ site visits, peer review exercises, group problem-solving, structured discussions and analysis sessions using dynamic facilitation techniques, ...)
- ✓ Key role of local stakeholders
- ✓ Advance planning

SHAPING NETWORK ACTIVITIES – tools for learning and knowledge uptake

FOR EXAMPLE

- ✓ Pre- and post-meeting **briefing notes**: capture and document the E&L rationale
- ✓ **Different tools to capture learning**: includes key learning points for each partner and actions to be carried out at local level, helps partners record the history of learning and monitor actions throughout the journey
- ✓ **Support and follow up materials**: materials, handouts, produced for/at network activities that can help ULG participants design debriefings at local level

Developing your proposals around exchange and learning activities

STUDY all the activities described in **the Guide for applicants to the call for AN**



CHECK the questions in the **application form** (Annexed in the terms of Reference)



EXAMINE **assessment criteria** in the Terms of Reference

[Keep in mind

- Actions implemented: a driver of the transnational exchange & learning activities as well as a concrete output of the participation in the Network
- The network journey, although a shared experience, is ultimately a unique / tailor-made one for each partner.
- **The lessons learnt during the transnational activities will inspire partners to adapt this knowledge at local level and develop skills related to actions implementation.**

Questions?



EXPERTISE SUPPORT

Expertise support

Additional envelope of 127 500€ for expertise support
> Up to 170 expertise days available

- **Network Lead expert** supports the network over the entire duration of the network
- **Several network Ad-Hoc Experts** providing specific support on a particular policy subject, methodology, communications...
- **Experts are selected from the URBACT IV pool of validated experts** available on the URBACT website



Expertise support

- Production of the **Baseline Study**
- Development of the **network methodology**
- Support for setting up **URBACT Local Groups** in each partner city
- Expertise for the **design and delivery of transnational exchange and learning activities** in collaboration with partners
- Support for the **design and delivery of Action Labs** at local level
- **Thematic expertise** related to the policy challenge being addressed
- Support partners in applying **integrated and participatory approaches**
- Support partners with the design and peer review of their **Action portfolios**.
- Production of **key network outputs** and contribution to **programme-level activities** on relevant topics

Lead Expert Selection

1. **Expertise needs and criteria for the selection of network experts shall be provided in the application form based on URBACT expertise framework outlined in the ToR and Guide**
2. **After the approval of Action Networks, experts validated in the URBACT pool** will be invited to express their interest in becoming Lead Expert of an AN
3. **URBACT Secretariat will check suitability** in coherence with the Application Form
4. **Final selection agreed with the Lead partner based on interviews with candidates**



Questions?



Where to start with the application?

Main resources:

- ✓ Terms of Reference
- ✓ Guide for applicants
- ✓ Guide to Synergie
- ✓ Programme Manual
- ✓ FAQ
- ✓ [Infographic of the call](#)
- ✓ Partner Search Tool

All available at:

urbact.eu/get-involved

Cannot find what you are looking for? Contact an@urbact.eu



Join [u]s for the next online info sessions!

- 1 April, 10:00 -11:30 CET: Call Presentation & How to build a strong partnership for an Action Network
- **12 May, 10:00 - 11:00 CET: Exchange & learning during the network journey**
- 27 May 2026 - 10:00-11:00 CET: Time to submit your application: tech & troubleshooting (for candidate Lead Partners)
- 29 May 2026 – 10.00-11.30 CTE: How to write good applications using storytelling techniques
- 9 June 2026 - 10:00-11:00 CET: Final troubleshooting (for candidate Lead Partners)

Details: urbact.eu/get-involved

Contact: an@urbact.eu

➤ For information and support in your national language, you may contact the National URBACT Points:

<https://urbact.eu/how-find-us/nup>

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