



# MULTIANNUAL WORKING PROGRAMME for the Urban Agenda for the EU - the Next Generation

Informal Meeting of Ministers responsible for Urban Matters

26 November 2021 | Brdo pri Kranju, Slovenia

## Introduction

### **From the Pact of Amsterdam to the Ljubljana Agreement**

The Working Programme of the Urban Agenda for the EU (UAEU) describes the Operational Framework of the UAEU in detail: the working method, concrete actions and the themes of the UAEU. It supports the Pact of Amsterdam (2016) for the period 2016–2021.

The New Leipzig Charter and its Implementation Document reaffirmed the Pact of Amsterdam and call for continuation of cooperation, coherence and continuity within and between Trio Presidency Programmes. A Multiannual Working Programme has therefore been prepared for the period 2022–2026. It provides a framework for the planning, implementation and monitoring of the UAEU. The DGUM can already suggest amendments for approval by the Ministers responsible for Urban Matters before 2026 if relevant.

### **Three pillars of the UAEU**

To enhance the impact of the UAEU at the EU level, the UAEU should be better linked with EU agenda setting, policymaking and legislative processes at different levels. When relevant, links to existing EU initiatives should be pursued on an ad-hoc basis, for example bringing up cities' perspective in the Fit for Future Platform, encouraging cities to join Horizon Europe's Mission for 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030, and enabling an active collaboration between Partnerships and the Regional Hubs of the Committee of the Regions.

The participation of relevant sectoral Directorates-General (DGs) of the European Commission and national or regional ministries is crucial and should be ensured, for example by involving them in the set-up and work of the Partnerships and Other Forms of Cooperation (OFC) from the beginning.

Systematic and early engagement from the European Investment Bank and European Parliament and other stakeholders in future Partnerships/OFC will further strengthen the UAEU.

For Partnerships it is recommended that all three pillars are addressed while, when focusing on selected pillars, OFC should be the primary approach. The DGUM however can decide differently.

## **Strengthening the Better Regulation pillar**

In order to strengthen the Better Regulation pillar, knowledge and awareness of the EU policymaking and legislative processes will be addressed more closely, using also the outcomes and results of the Better Regulation Initiative. At the same time, the Better Regulation pillar will be complemented by improving the knowledge of policymakers and other stakeholders about urban challenges and territorial specificities through the Better Knowledge pillar.

With the ex-ante assessment carried out prior to the start of work of the Partnerships potential links to the EU policy cycle will be identified. It will help the Partnerships/OFC to:

- a) Participate and contribute in ongoing policy processes and consultations on EU legislation that are relevant for the UAEU priority themes.
- b) Contribute to the ongoing and future priorities of EU policy.

The engagement of relevant European Commission DGs in Partnerships/OFC shall be sought to facilitate early and informal exchange of views on regulatory issues in the pursuit of simpler and better EU laws.

Partnerships/OFC are strongly recommended to use available EU feedback opportunities, such as public consultations, to make their views on EU policies and legislation known to the European Commission and the general public.

## **Small and medium-sized cities and towns**

To stimulate the participation of small and medium-sized urban authorities in the UAEU processes and multi-level cooperation:

- a. Partnerships or OFC should consider, when relevant, the challenges of small and medium-sized cities and towns;
- b. Participation of national associations that represent local and regional governments should be further encouraged by Member States;
- c. National associations representing local governments can also be involved to foster outreach to small and medium-sized cities and towns on national or regional level;
- d. Selection criteria for partners should motivate and encourage small and medium-sized urban authorities to get involved in the UAEU multi-level cooperation;
- e. Challenges faced by small and medium-sized cities and towns could be addressed specifically by the future UAEU multi-level cooperation.

To support the participation of small and medium-sized urban authorities in the UAEU activities:

- a. Voluntary support of mentor cities that were involved in the first Partnerships to accompany small and medium-sized cities and towns in the process;
- b. CoR, CEMR, Eurocities and Eurotowns can serve as mentor organisations to involve cities with less resources and expertise;
- c. The use of digital tools, for example part of the Partnership or OFC meetings could be online meetings, to reduce travel costs;
- d. Additional support for small and medium-sized cities and towns should, where possible, be enabled by the European Commission and Member States, based on

available resources (for example as regards travel costs, overcoming language barriers; outreach activities).

## **1. Governance of the Urban Agenda for the EU**

### **I / Delivering of the UAEU**

The UAEU parties involved are invited to continue to contribute to and support the UAEU process and activities according to their commitments, competences and capacities. The strategic orientation should aim to secure an efficient operationalisation of the UAEU governance including continuous verification of the process according to urban development priorities set in the New Leipzig Charter, EU policy priorities, in particular Cohesion Policy, and global goals with a clear urban dimension.

In order to support European, national and urban leaders in defining further evolutions of the Urban Agenda for the EU shared responsibilities and actions, a Cities Forum will be held ideally every two years. This event gathers all levels of governance, and presents multiple opportunities for discussing sustainable urban development, which makes it an important milestone for communicating about the UAEU, and increasing its outreach.

The DGUM should seek to strengthen an early debate on relevant issues with an urban dimension in the Council Working Parties using recommendations from the UAEU and intergovernmental cooperation.

The best use of the knowledge already created within the framework of the UAEU should be secured. For that purpose, first generation partnerships will be encouraged to support the knowledge and experience dissemination process further, for example as mentors or active partners in the next generation of Partnerships/OFC; ambassadors of the UAEU.

The content of the existing web page (FUTURIUM) should be kept and stay accessible to enable the connections between past and future UAEU discussions and maintain a transparent flow of information.

All UAEU parties involved will strive to:

- Ensure the further development of the UAEU via dedicated support to future Partnerships and OFC under the UAEU;
- Secure coherence and continuity between (Trio) Presidencies on urban matters;
- Use the existing inter-governmental cooperation and decision-making bodies (UDG, DGUM) to facilitate and enhance the policy dialogue on urban matters;
- Enable the equal involvement of cities of all sizes in the UAEU;
- Improve the coordination between the Territorial Agenda 2030, national urban policy frameworks, the Urban Agenda for the EU and the urban dimension of Cohesion Policy.

## The European Commission

The European Commission, with the help of the European Urban Initiative secretariat (EUI Secretariat), when it becomes available and based on available resources, will aim to strengthen multilevel cooperation on urban matters in the EU by:

- Linking the UAEU to EU policymaking and funding cycles;
- Monitoring and assessing UAEU Partnerships/OFCs;
- Supporting UAEU Partnerships;
- Promoting the UAEU's results;
- Organising the Cities Forum.

For the future delivery of the UAEU, the Partnerships and OFC will need communication, expertise, management, and organisational support. This support may contain:

- Organisational support to the Partnerships and OFC in their working phases (duration, number of meetings, necessary consultations, dissemination, etc);
- Provision of dedicated expert support;
- External communication;
- Internal communication and cooperation within and between the Partnerships and OFC and key actors;
- Monitoring of actions, when relevant.

The European Commission, with the help of the EUI secretariat, when it will be available and based on available resources, will aim to support the intergovernmental cooperation on urban matters in areas that bring EU added value and are relevant for the UAEU as well as for the EUI by:

- Providing, upon request, expert support to the policy dialogue led by the UDG and DGUM based on an analysis and synthesis of urban policy developments;
- Supporting Member States in exchanging experiences related to their national urban policies and providing linkages with the broader European and global objectives, in particular the Sustainable Development Goals;
- Providing, upon request, expert support to the coordination between urban and territorial policy.

## Member States

The UDG/DGUM are the ideal context to foster intergovernmental cooperation and knowledge exchange on national urban policy and implementation practice, including forms of communicating and translating the UAEU at the national level, successful examples of policy initiatives and tools and national frameworks of multi-level cooperation on urban development. Member States are invited to inform the UDG/DGUM on national urban policies, implementation of the New Leipzig Charter and the UAEU related activities, as well as to discuss urgent urban issues, searching for better solutions at all governance levels, thus contributing to the overall EU wide debate on urban matters.

Opportunities to better explore the reciprocity and overlay between the UAEU and the Territorial Agenda 2030 should be created. For this purpose, a dedicated event should be jointly organised by the UDG/DGUM and/or NTCCP/DGTC at least once per Trio Presidency, for example a joint session, workshop or seminar. The mutual connections

between the UAEU Partnerships/OFC and the Territorial Agenda 2030 pilot actions can be a specific object of exchange. A joint form of cooperation could also be established especially in relation to cross-cutting issues, for example climate adaptation, urban-rural relationships or housing.

For the future delivery of the UAEU, the Partnerships/OFC, the Member States will strive to continue to allocate or mobilise their resources, considering national circumstances and opportunities<sup>1</sup>:

- To the organisation of UAEU meetings or events in their country/region (e.g. Partnership/OFC meeting or event);
- To minimise language barriers when required (e.g. translations of important documents or their summaries, information);
- To support the implementation of the Action Plans especially when actions are addressed to the national level;
- To stimulate and support the participation of cities and towns of all sizes in Partnerships/OFC (e.g. technical or expert support);
- Support the information, dissemination and outreach of the UAEU on national/regional level, possibly via National Contact Points or/and other communication channels.

In order to facilitate European, national and urban leaders to define a common agenda, shared responsibilities and actions, a regular high level political meeting on urban issues should be held. The involvement of cities in policy making on urban matters, in line with the partnership approach of the UAEU, should be part of this process. The European Commission is invited to facilitate this within the Cities Forum.

### **City organisations**

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), EUROCITIES, and other bodies representing Urban Authorities at European and national level (e. g. Eurotowns) will contribute to the further development of the Urban Agenda for the EU and the exchange of good practices, and to make use of the outcomes of the Urban Agenda for the EU actions, especially the work of the Partnerships/OFC.

### **European Parliament**

As the key urban representative body in the European Parliament, the Urban Intergroup is asked to play an advisory role in the UAEU process. The Members and the Committees of the European Parliament are also invited to be informed and to follow the work of Partnerships/OFC and to exchange on their recommendations.

### **Committee of the Regions**

As the EU institutional body representing local and regional authorities, the Committee of the Regions is asked to provide input and support, within its competences, to the next

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<sup>1</sup> Member States have provided support to the first generation Partnerships in different ways and according to their capacity and availability of different resources. It is not expected of MSs that they contribute only financially and to all Partnerships/OFC. Resources can be human, financial, technical etc.

generation Partnerships/OFC established under the UAEU, through dissemination activities aiming to involve a broader range of stakeholders in the process.

### **European Investment Bank**

The European Investment Bank (EIB) plays an important role in the financing of investments in areas covered by the UAEU, in grant-loan blending for urban investments, and in advising Member States and cities about urban project preparation and financial instruments.

The EIB is invited to support the development of better funding approaches in the urban context, including through financial instruments, through the existing and new Partnerships/OFC.

The EIB is invited to reflect, where relevant, the principles and outcomes of the UAEU as appropriate in its urban lending, grant-loan blending and advisory services approach in the urban context, including in its activities in support of the European Green Deal and the implementation of its Climate Bank Roadmap. This should take into account the need to support sustainable urban development projects and strategies without jeopardising its financial discipline.

### **European Economic and Social Committee**

As the EU institutional body representing organised civil society (NGOs, employers' organisations and trade unions), the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) is asked to provide input and support, within its competences, to economic and social aspects linked to the UAEU and the territoriality of the development, to the next generation Partnerships/OFC, and support for the dissemination to and involvement of a wide range of stakeholders in the process, as well as to actively participate in the operational steering of the UAEU.

### **Others**

The URBACT programme is invited to continue to contribute to the priority themes with its activities. It can especially contribute to the multilevel governance process with its expertise via active participation of URBACT cities in Partnerships/OFC, direct participation as a relevant actor in the UAEU process, supporting the Partnerships'/OFC work by using URBACT knowledge and expertise, as well as by looking for the opportunities to support better knowledge actions within URBACT IV programme.

## **II / Urban Agenda Technical Preparatory Group (UATPG)**

- a. Mandate: UATPG has the mandate to support operational steering of the UAEU by providing technical guidance and support to the UDG and the DGUM. UATPG will perform the following activities:
  - Steer the UAEU operational workflow, including ex-ante assessments, calls for Partners;
  - Follow the delivery of the UAEU, its monitoring, and the provision of technical guidance and support to Partnerships and OFC;



- Share information and discuss the UAEU outreach, communication and dissemination activities of the different stakeholders;
- Support the rotating Presidencies and the European Commission in the preparation of the documents to be submitted under the UAEU strategic steering agendas of the UDG and DGUM, including Multiannual Working Programme proposal and review.

The DGUM can mandate the UATPG with additional activities.

**b.** Composition: The standing members of the UATPG are the following UDG members:

- representatives of the current Presidency;
- representatives of the two former Presidencies;
- representatives of the three future Presidencies;
- representatives of the European Commission (DG REGIO);
- representatives of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR);
- representatives of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR);
- representatives of Eurocities.

The UATPG shall work as an informal and flexible structure. The Presidency and European Commission can open meetings of the UATPG up to the representatives of other Member States, EU institutions, cities and organisations, or regroup key stakeholders in dedicated task forces/working groups, when needed and relevant.

**c.** Meetings/workflow: Meetings are called by the Presidency and the European Commission. It is advisable that at least one UATPG meeting is arranged prior to the UDG and DGUM meetings. Reporting on UATPG work to the UDG could elaborate on the mobilisation required from UDG members and other UAEU or external stakeholders. Reports from the UATPG meetings should be delivered to all UDG members after the UATPG meetings.

### **III /Monitoring and reporting**

Periodic reports on the state of play of the Partnerships or OFC actions on Better Regulation, Better Funding and Better Knowledge will be submitted with a lower intensity than stipulated in the Pact of Amsterdam. Partnerships or OFC should present their progress to the UDG around midterm and at the end of their work.

Regular exchanges between the Partnerships and the UDG should continue and be strengthened, to debate the UAEU's implementation and take stock of its policy achievements. It should foster multi-level cooperation (and when relevant the place-based approach) for coherent development and the reflection on the follow-up of the UAEU recommendations' impacts on EU and national urban policies. The bottlenecks that a Partnership/OFC experience can also be brought to the attention of the UDG and DGUM outside reporting periods.

Exchanges with the relevant European Parliament committees and the Urban Intergroup with the UDG and DGUM should be organised jointly.

#### **IV / Outreach, communication and dissemination of the UAEU**

Outreach, communication and dissemination of the UAEU will be improved to increase the awareness, accessibility and uptake of information and outputs of the UAEU for external stakeholders, as well as seeking their input and involvement. The UAEU stakeholders should contribute to outreach, communication and dissemination activities. The European Week of Regions and Cities and the Cities Forum will continue to provide opportunities to communicate and disseminate the UAEU.

The future process of the UAEU should strive to reach out to a wider circle of cities and stakeholders at local, regional, national and EU level to maximise benefits of the Partnerships and the overall UAEU process results.

Outreach to relevant stakeholders in the UAEU (JRC, Eurostat, EIGE, ESPON, JPI UE, EUKN, URBACT, EIB, EPRS, Urban Innovative Actions etc.) for their expert and other forms of involvement should be continued and strengthened. When looking for external input activities should be ad-hoc and flexible and should respond directly to the need of Partnerships or OFC or UAEU governance structures.

#### **The National Contact Point (NCP)**

The UAEU dissemination and communication should take advantage of and be built upon the urban networks and structures available on the EU level and in each Member State, according to the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, taking into account the administrative arrangements and distribution of competences in each Member State.

The future network of NCPs could provide opportunities and channels to increase the overall awareness and enhance the impact of the UAEU, EUI, URBACT and other urban related information at national, regional and local levels.

## **2. Priority Themes**

The fourteen UAEU priority themes remain valid: inclusion of migrants and refugees; air quality; urban poverty; housing; circular economy; jobs and skills in the local economy; climate adaptation (including green infrastructure solutions); energy transition; sustainable use of land and nature-based solutions; urban mobility; digital transition; innovative and responsible public procurement; culture and cultural heritage; security in public spaces.

The following four themes were added to the list of priority themes by the Ljubljana Agreement on the basis of co-creative process lead together by the Slovenian Presidency, Eurocities, CEMR, CoR and other urban stakeholders in 2021. The four themes are linked to the New Leipzig Charter, EU policies, other emerging urban development trends and needs of cities<sup>2</sup>:

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<sup>2</sup> Descriptions of four themes are for illustrative and discussion purposes only. The descriptions will not in any way restrict the process of the ex-ante assessment or place limitation on future Partnerships.



- **Cities of Equality**

Despite the progress that has been made in protecting the fundamental and social rights of citizens, inequalities persist based on characteristics such as gender, age, disability, sexual orientation and identity, ethnicity, migration status. This is hindering social inclusion which is an important part of the EU's vision. Focus could be on education, labour market participation, service provision, safety, urban planning and design, including accessible and safe public spaces.

- **Food**

Food production, distribution and consumption are all important sectors of the economy, which are at the same time linked to complex social and ecological challenges. Cities are the centres of food distribution and consumption which makes local authorities key actors in the food supply chain. Focus could be on food resilience and sustainability, fair and sustainable production, urban-rural linkages, local food supply chains, innovative procurement, health and quality food.

- **Greening Cities**

Cities are at the forefront of the interlinked climate change and biodiversity crises. They face frequent flooding, drought, heatwaves, intense rain events and other climate-related hazards and are suffering increased air pollution, water scarcity and growing food insecurity. Focus could be on urban forests and green space development; providing carbon storage and sequestration; reducing air pollution; purifying water; halting biodiversity loss; improving physical and mental health of citizens.

- **Sustainable Tourism**

Cities are increasingly dealing with issues of unregulated (over-)tourism that has led to unintended consequences such as the rise of a low-quality tourism industry, undermining the resilience of the sector and bringing adverse consequences to the quality of life in cities. Focus could be on challenges of unregulated and low quality tourism, resilience and sustainability of tourism, impact on community and quality of life, housing, digitalisation of the sector and use of data, new demands related to COVID-19 pandemic, and the revitalisation of city centres.

Priority themes already explored by the Partnerships can be further addressed from a different perspective, with challenges that have not been addressed yet, priority issues that need to be further explored or issues shared by a cluster of several of the fourteen already explored themes.

A “linking matrix” can be used as an instrument for defining the priority themes. It should help cities, Member States and the European Commission to explore together the new priority themes for the UAEU by linking them to the New Leipzig Charter principles and dimensions (the just, green and productive city and the transformative power of cities for the common good), EU policy priorities (for example European Green Deal, European Pillar of Social Rights, European Digital Strategy, the Renovation Wave, Cohesion policy, Long-term Vision for Rural Areas, New European Bauhaus), the Territorial Agenda 2030, other emerging urban relevant policy trends and initiatives as well as global agendas (for example 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, New Urban Agenda). Suggestions for new themes should be based on the identified needs of cities.

Besides the search for new priority themes, the “linking matrix” can help revise the existing UAEU priority themes or cluster of themes according to new challenges and priorities and revise them for future UAEU cooperation. The revision process should follow a bottom-up and inclusive approach and should allow wider participation of European cities and other stakeholders.

The process to determine new UAEU priority themes remains in line with the Pact of Amsterdam. The DGUM can review the list of priority themes annually and provide guidance based on contributions from the bottom-up approach. New themes or other amendments to the list of priority themes are revised by the Ministers responsible for Urban Matters.

Cross-cutting issues should continue to frame the activities of the future UAEU multi-level cooperation. The revision of the cross-cutting issues should be taken according to the principles of the New Leipzig Charter and EU policies and priorities, together with the revision of the priority themes in 2023. A “linking matrix” can be used for the revision.

### **3. Working method of the Partnerships and Other Forms of Cooperation**

Partnerships or OFC shall not be established on all agreed priority themes at the same time but should be initiated sequentially through the whole UAEU process.

All forms of multi-level and multi stakeholder cooperation in the framework of the UAEU need to be initiated by a well-reasoned proposal linked to an already determined UAEU priority theme or cluster of themes. The proposal can be based on an initiative from cities, regions and/or one or more stakeholders of the UAEU.

The proposal should be submitted to the UDG and DGUM. The DGUM can take a decision to launch the ex-ante assessment on the basis of a proposal followed by an open call for partners.

#### **I / Ex-ante assessment (EAA)**

The main aim of EAA is to enable the deployment of a pragmatic, effective and result-oriented approach aiming at increasing the impact of future UAEU deliverables.

EAA will look at the proposal to help optimise focus, timing and activities of the multi-level cooperation and safeguard suitable level of partners’ thematic and procedural expertise. However, it should still allow the flexibility in the work and decision making of Partnerships according to the spirit of the UAEU.

The purpose of the EAA is:

- To ensure the relevance and focus of the theme in the policy and regulatory context;
- To guide and ease the work of the Partnership in stocktaking and preparatory actions phases;

- To secure suitable level of partners' expertise in Partnership;
- To optimise the workflow of the Partnership.

### **Content of the assessment**

The EAA of the proposed theme will be carried out according to a series of criteria chosen to establish its relevance in terms of scope and timing. The criteria are:

1. Multi-level governance;
2. Policy environment;
3. Regulatory environment;
4. Existing identified gaps and recommendations;
5. Trends and evidence from EU cities.

In a second part, findings and recommendations based on additional research and analysis should provide the following elements:

- Deliver recommendations to help interpret and focus the thematic scope of the subject;
- Identify the most suitable form of multi-level cooperation (Partnership/OFC);
- Recommend the timing for successful implementation;
- Identify the suggested type of expertise of the members;
- Identify potential institutions/stakeholders of interest, relevant and related to the thematic issue, to be involved in the multi-level cooperation set-up;
- Identify the type of support that will be required for the implementation;
- Provide an assessment on the opportunity for a Partnership/OFC.

### **Expected results**

The final report will provide a detailed assessment according to the proposed criteria as well as recommendations. The results will serve as:

- Input for open calls for partners;
- Proposal of the most suitable form and outline of conditions to be met for successful implementation of the multi-level cooperation (expertise, type of partners etc.);
- Proposal of institutions to be involved and secure involvement of relevant stakeholders (EC DGs, relevant national ministries, other organisations);
- Guidelines for the Partnership for the Stocktaking and Preparatory actions phases of the Working Method of the Partnerships as in Working Programme of the UAEU (2016);
- Proposal for the type of support to the multi-level cooperation when established.

### **Responsibility and process**

Member States and the European Commission are responsible for jointly conducting EAA.

To keep EAA as an open and collaborative process, the UATPG should steer its preparation in active collaboration with the UDG and with expert support. The UATPG should consult with the proposers of the new Partnership if required.

When relevant, the EUI secretariat should be available by request to support the EAA with an expert support.

## Timing and duration

The EAA process is launched by a DGUM decision and precedes the open call for partners.

An EAA should be performed within 6 months, starting with the designation of an expert. Should the EAA not be concluded in due time, the process of selection of partners could be launched and Partnership/OFC will be allowed to start its work on the basis of a DGUM decision.

As this is a new experimental step, adjustments could be made in the future depending on the experience and feedback on this new process.

## II / Selection of partners

A balanced composition of Partnerships/OFC should be ensured continuously in terms of geographical and institutional balance, between representatives of the Commission, Member States, urban authorities and other stakeholders. A balanced and competent representation of urban authorities of all sizes needs to be secured to account for the rich diversity of the urban and regional fabric in Europe. It is recommended that at least one Coordinator of the Partnership/OFC is an urban authority.

The selection of partners representing urban authorities will be based on an **open call** for expression of interest<sup>3</sup>. EURO CITIES and CEMR may still each nominate one representative of the secretariat of their own organisation.

Selection of the partners representing Member States will continue to be based on the nominations by Member States. The nominations should be targeted to the relevant national institutions as recommended in the EAA.

Selection of members representing other stakeholders should from now on also be based on the EAA recommendations. This means that the nomination procedure as defined by the Working Method of the Partnerships can be followed in the future (Working Programme of the UAEU, 2016).

Criteria for selection of partners should be clear and part of the open call. Suggested criteria for partners are expertise, capacity and motivation based on the outcomes of the ex-ante assessment but all the following aspects should be considered:

- Interest of partner in participation;
- Commitment of partner to be actively involved;
- Capacity and readiness of partner to dedicate resources;
- Experience and sufficient expertise of partner on the topic (link with the EAA);
- Ability of partner to connect (e. g. membership of networks, organisation);
- Readiness of partner to assist in the debate about the topic and Partnership within their territory (local, regional, national level);
- Geographically balanced composition of the Partnership;
- Balanced representation of urban authorities of all sizes in the Partnership.

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<sup>3</sup> Regions, Partner States, city consortiums or national city umbrella organisations can also apply at the open call and be selected instead of an Urban Authority as partner in the partnership (as was possible for nomination in Working Program of the UAEU (2016)).

To ensure more active involvement from small and medium-sized cities and towns, adjusted criteria could be applied during the call:

- The readiness of partner to participate in the technical work with own resources should not be the prevailing criterion (additional support by the European Commission and Member States should be available if needed for small and medium-sized cities and towns);
- Readiness of partner to participate with experience and expertise on one particular aspect of the topic addressed should be sufficient.

If no small and medium-sized urban authorities are selected in the open call, a nomination of small or medium-sized urban authorities can follow. Nominations can be proposed by Member States, Committee of the Regions and URBACT (upon approval of the Monitoring Committee) to the DGUM. The nominator has to present and explain that nominated urban authority has the expertise capacity and interest to actively participate in the Partnership. The DGUM can select a maximum of two additional partners from the nominated list.

The DGUM decides to start the open call for partners and is a decision-making body in the following selection process.

The calls will be steered by the UATPG in close cooperation with the UDG.

The network of UDG members and National Contact Points, if established, and other possible communication channels should be used for a dissemination of the call.

In case of institutional change within the Partnership/OFC, the Coordinators shall inform the DGUM.

### **III / Other Forms of Cooperation (OFC)**

When a more specific and targeted approach is needed, for example when an urban topic requires a quicker response, targeted delivery or a specific focus on one pillar of the UAEU and/or question/issue, OFC can extend opportunities for the UAEU multi-level and multi-stakeholder cooperation besides Partnerships.

The OFC operational framework is to be kept limited and flexible, so there is room for innovation and experimentation:

- Initiation of an OFC is by a justified proposal submitted to the UDG/DGUM, explaining also why an OFC is more appropriate than a Partnership. The DGUM can launch an EAA on the submitted proposal if needed. Establishing an OFC can also be based on the recommendation of an EAA.
- The scope of the OFC should be a specific issue, one pillar of the UAEU, a cluster of themes or a cross-cutting issue. The scope should link to the actions needed at the EU, national, regional or local level and in underlining the benefits of multilevel cooperation.
- The recommended timeframe for operation of OFC is less than 18 months; however it should not exceed three years.

- Organisation of OFC membership can follow the **nomination** of Urban authorities and others as in Working Programme of the UAEU (2016), or an open call can be organised based on the decision by the DGUM.
- The recommended composition is less than 15 members. Membership should show high expertise, capacity and interest for cooperation, followed by geographical, institutional and size balance.
- An OFC should also have a coordinator, chosen among members after establishment of the OFC. It is recommended that a coordinator is an urban authority.
- The role of partners is the same as for members of Partnerships defined in the Pact of Amsterdam and Working Programme of the UAEU (2016).
- Expected outputs are concrete recommendations, proposals, tools or actions related to the issues or questions addressed.
- The OFC could benefit from support by the EUI Secretariat on ad-hoc basis. All parties involved should contribute according to available resources.

The DGUM has the mandate to establish OFC and agree upon the members of the OFC.

#### **IV / Support to Partnerships and Other Forms of Cooperation**

Organisational elements that require support should be defined at the initial phase through the EAA of each Partnership/OFC. Such support should be provided by all parties involved according to their commitments, roles and available resources.

Requirements for technical support for Partnerships and OFC:

- Providing templates of Action Plans, securing consultation method for draft Action Plan and facilitate reporting to UDG/DGUM;
- Maintaining a website and social media communication effort for Partnerships/OFCs follow up;
- Providing adequate expert support in cooperation with Partnership/OFC;
- Providing specific support in defined cases, for example in regards to small and medium-sized cities and towns or deprived cities, in order to secure the participation of members in the Partnership/OFC;
- Organising ideally an annual coordinators' – and if relevant – action leaders' meeting (CALM).

Other potential elements of technical support required by Partnerships:

- Translation of finalised Action Plans into national language when organised by an individual Member State;
- Calls for contributions, evaluations;
- Administrative support for Partnerships/ OFC;
- Support for communication and outreach activities, such as:
  - Providing a visual identity for UAEU and corresponding materials to be used by Partnerships/OFC;
  - Hosting webinars and online outreach activities;
  - Surveys and peer reviews;
- Case studies.