



ORIENTATION PAPER
of the URBAN AGENDA FOR THE EU
GREENING CITIES PARTNERSHIP



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Disclaimer:

This document reflects the discussion on the partnership's future thematic focus at the time of its meetings in December 2022, March and April 2023. Its structure is based on existing orientation papers from previous partnerships.

Since the Urban Agenda for the EU has no legal basis and participation is voluntary, the actions presented in this Orientation Paper are not compulsory. They are recommendations.

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INTRODUCTION

This orientation paper sets the background for the work of the Urban Agenda for the EU **Greening Cities Partnership**. It includes the specific challenges to be addressed and the description of main topics that characterise the partnership.

While there are vast differences in urban governance models and populations, as well as economic, social, environmental and spatial backgrounds across Member States, resulting in various policy responses and priorities, many of the issues and challenges outlined in this document are nonetheless shared across the EU.

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This document describes the **objectives** and **working arrangements** of the partnership, including **deliverables** and **meetings** in order to prepare, adopt and implement the **Action Plan**.

The working method was agreed and programmed with all interested Partners during the second partnership meeting which took place on **15 March 2023** in **Turin (Italy)**, in the context of the 5th edition of the Cities Forum. In order to facilitate the development of this Orientation Paper, it was decided to invite all Partners to contribute with comments and suggestions, with the purpose of identifying their key interests and opportunities to contribute to the further works of the entire Partnership and ensure a tailor-made Action Plan. A survey was circulated among the partners and an **online interactive meeting was organised on 30 March 2023**. This allowed each Partner to:

- present the expectations and what should be achieved;
- establish the main priorities that should be focus on;
- identify potential action to be dealt with as well as bottlenecks and emerging evidence base;
- map relevant expertise and rank the topic according to the criteria selected.

The survey was open from March 12th until March 28th and collected answers from 22 participants in eleven different countries. The questions raised were:

- What expectations do you have for our Partnership? What do you want the partnership to achieve?
- Please tell us your three main priorities we should be focusing on in the Greening Cities Partnership. Consider the topics, crosscutting issues, challenges and gaps identified in the EAA as a guidance.
- What are your plans to contribute to the implementation of this partnership?

This document was edited by the Partnership Coordinators with the contribution of all Partners. Strong support in the above mentioned activities was delivered by EUKN, Eurocities and JPI Urban Europe & DUT.

This document will be presented at the **Directors General on Urban Matters** in **May 2023** in the context of the **Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union**.



PARTNERSHIP COMPOSITION

The Greening Cities Partnership includes partners representing 3 national authorities, 9 urban authorities, 4 umbrella organisations, 8 European institutions, 3 regions, as well as 3 other stakeholders. The full list of partners is presented below, coordinators in italics:

NATIONAL AUTHORITIES	CITIES (URBAN AUTHORITIES)	EUROPEAN/ NATIONAL CITY UMBRELLA ORGANISATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration, Coordinator (RO)</i> ❖ Ministry of Physical Planning, Construction and State Assets (HR) ❖ Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy (PL) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>Nuovo Circondario Imolese, Coordinator (IT)</i> ❖ Roma Capitale (IT) ❖ City of 's-Hertogenbosch, Department of Urban Development (NL) ❖ City of Utrecht (NL) ❖ City of Tampere (FI) ❖ City of Ostrava (CZ) ❖ Ādaži Municipality (LV) ❖ City Council of Pontevedra (Ayuntamiento de Pontevedra) (ES) ❖ Lisbon Metropolitan Area (PT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Eurocities (BE) ❖ European Investment Bank ❖ Association of Urban Municipalities of Slovenia (SI) ❖ European Urban Knowledge Network (EUKN EGTC) (NL)

EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS	REGIONS	OTHER STAKEHOLDERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ European Commission Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO) ❖ European Commission Directorate-General for Employment, social affairs and inclusion (DG EMPL) ❖ European Commission Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW) ❖ European Commission Directorate-General for Climate Action (DG CLIMA) ❖ European Commission Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (MARE) ❖ European Commission Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (EAC) ❖ European Commission Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI) ❖ European Commission Joint Research Centre (JRC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Vlaamse Milieumaatschappij (VMM) (BE) ❖ Brussels Environment (BE) ❖ Marshal's Office of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship (PL) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ INCASÒL – Catalan Land Institute (ES) ❖ Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUn), Environmental Engineering Laboratory (EnvE-Lab) (GR) ❖ JPI Urban Europe/ DUT Partnership

The activities of the Urban Agenda for the EU are coordinated through the Directors-General on Urban Matters (DGUM) meetings, which will also provide feedback to the Partnership's Orientation paper and Action Plan. The Urban Development Group (UDG) is an informal advisory body to the DGUM, where the deliverables and progress will be discussed before being presented to the DGUM.



PARTNERSHIP OBJECTIVES

“To put the green transition of cities at the forefront of sustainable development priorities”

The context of the partnership

It is commonly understood that the development of urban areas will have a major impact on the future sustainable development (economic, environmental, and social) of the European Union and its citizens. This is associated with the recognition that urban areas of all sizes can be engines of the economy, which boost growth, create jobs for their citizens and enhance the competitiveness of Europe in a globalised economy. As a result, it is recognised that the success of European urban development is highly important for the economic, social and territorial cohesion of the European Union and the quality of life of its citizens.

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Nowadays, Europe is considered to be one of the most urbanized parts of the world, with the estimation that over 80% of Europe's population will live in the urban areas by the middle of this century. This brings about a number of unprecedented challenges and issues to be dealt with in the years to come. These include unsustainable consumption and production patterns, loss of biodiversity, pressure on ecosystems, pollution, natural and man-made disasters, climate change and its related risks, undermining the efforts to end poverty in all its forms and dimensions and to achieve sustainable development.

In order to address those challenges, in order to foster the operational framework of informal cooperation in urban matters and in order to realise the full potential of the European Union and deliver on its strategic objectives, in 2017, on the basis of the *Pact of Amsterdam*, the *Urban Agenda for the EU* was initiated, a process that strives to involve local level in achieving better regulation, better funding and better knowledge. The Urban Agenda for the EU offers a new form of multilevel and multi-stakeholder cooperation with the aim of strengthening the urban dimension in EU policy.

Since 2017, 14 priority themes were approached through partnerships and 139 actions were proposed. A large share of the actions were fully implemented, contributing to the improvement of the local, regional, national and European framework for urban development.

The *Bucharest Declaration*, endorsed during Romanian Presidency (2019), established political support for the implementation and continuation of the *Urban Agenda for the EU* in line with the guiding principles of the new Leipzig Charter in order to guarantee a coherent policy framework for urban development at the EU level (linking the operational nature of the *Pact of Amsterdam* to the strategic framework of the *New Leipzig Charter*).

In 2021, the renewal process of the *Urban Agenda for the EU* started, in line with the directions provided by the *New Leipzig Charter* and its implementing document. On 26 November 2021, EU Ministers responsible for Urban Matters adopted the *Ljubljana Agreement* and its *Multiannual Working Programme* (Slovenian Presidency) that materialise the start of a new phase of the Urban Agenda for the EU, including its operational parameters, work method and steps. The agreement also comprises the addition of four new themes: [Greening cities](#), Sustainable tourism, Food and Cities of equality.

The *Ljubljana Agreement* highlights that *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.

The Multiannual Working Programme, part of the Ljubljana Agreement, updates the Working Programme of the Urban Agenda for the EU established in the Pact of Amsterdam and requests an Ex-ante Assessment for each priority theme. In this regard, identifying subthemes pertinent to greening cities was analysed as part of the *Ex-ante Assessment of the Thematic Area “Greening Cities” under the Urban Agenda for the EU*. This section contains excerpts taken directly from the EAA¹.

The Ex-ante Assessment concluded that there is a **good opportunity for launching a Greening Cities Thematic Partnership** with a focus on green and blue infrastructure in an urban context and with extensive links to a number of priority sectors, namely the built environment, sustainable transport, water management and urban agriculture. The new Partnership would be of high relevance to the problems and the needs of the cities of all sizes, including small and medium-sized cities with regards to biodiversity preservation and adaptation to climate change. The Partnership would be aligned with the objectives of cities to provide higher well-being to citizens through cleaner air, better inclusiveness and more aesthetic environment.

The EAA identified the following potential themes to guide future partnership activities:

- Types of green and blue infrastructure
- Benefits of GI in an urban context:
 - Environment (habitats, connectivity clean air, etc.)
 - Society (health, well-being, recreation, etc.)
 - Economy (tourism, job creation, livelihood, etc.)
- Quality of green and blue infrastructure:
 - Quality of design
 - Quality of implementation
- Integration into other sectoral policies:
 - Energy
 - Built environment
 - Transport
 - Health
 - Air (National Air Quality Plans)
- Implementation of GI
- Better transposition of EU policies with GI relevance on national and local level

The new Partnership is coherent with numerous global (a number of SDGs) and EU policy agendas such as the Biodiversity Strategy, the Green Infrastructure Strategy, the Climate

¹ Varbova, V. (2022), *Ex-ante Assessment of the Thematic Area “Greening Cities” under the Urban Agenda for the EU* (<https://futurium.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-06/EAA%20Report%20Greening%20Cities.pdf>)



Adaptation Strategy, the New European Bauhaus Initiative, The Davos Declaration “Towards a High-quality Baukultur for Europe”, adopted by European Ministers of Culture and stakeholders in January 2018”, etc. It is also coherent with a number of other EU initiatives, which represents potential for cross-fertilisation and exchange at policy level. The new Thematic Partnership will build on and complement the results of the previous Thematic Partnerships on Sustainable Use of Land and Nature-based Solutions, Air Quality and Climate Adaptation, as well as on the knowledge generated on green and blue infrastructure.

The Partnership lends itself to the key pillars of the Urban Agenda for the EU, namely better knowledge, better regulation and better funding. In terms of better knowledge, while a solid base already exists, the **access to knowledge is unequal and significant improvements are possible for the deployment of concrete green and blue infrastructure solutions at city level**, following tested methodologies. Concerning better regulation, the Partnership can work with Member States, the European Commission and other relevant EU organisations to strengthen the urban dimension of upcoming EU nature policies and support the implementation of existing and in progress legislation, including the Nature Restoration Law. The Partnership could also support cities to better implement relevant EU policies and also better integrate GI into national, local and regional voluntary and mandatory planning documents. In terms of better funding, the Partnership could **develop new knowledge and strategies for increasing absorption of funding for GI in an integrated manner**. Cities could also be supported in greening their budgets. On one hand, this could be beneficial for the members and other cities across Europe, while it could also feed into the European Commission’s process of tailoring different financial instruments through place-based approaches, sensible to the needs of cities of different sizes.

Furthermore, the GRETA² research has identified six areas that would need further research for successful GI implementation:

- **Understand the demand for GI.** The type of analysis presented in this research can help to inform the prioritisation of efforts to develop and invest in GI to meet current and future demands and further research in this connection is needed, building on GRETA results. The GRETA research has also found practical planning examples where the GI supply and demand analysis are used as an indicator for planners in the municipality of Oslo (Norway) and the municipality of Gothenburg (Sweden).
- **Continuous monitoring and sharing data.** The positive link between GI on the one hand, and biodiversity and ES on the other, is a starting point for the GRETA spatial analysis. Time series and change/trend analysis in this context of monitoring and data might be beneficial towards proactive and anticipatory planning.
- **Establish and assess the quality of GI.** Improved indicators and metrics for assessing the quality of GI are needed. Such indicators can possibly be linked to the ongoing development of indicators for the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.
- **In-depth analysis on synergies and trade-offs in different European regions.** Further research is needed to understand the social and geographical disparities of

² GRETA – Green infrastructure: Enhancing biodiversity and ecosystem services for territorial development (<https://www.espon.eu/green-infrastructure>)



the trade-offs and synergies. This can be used to identify alternatives to minimise side effects.

- **Investigation into the role of the private sector.** There is a need to further highlight the importance of the private sector, NGOs, and private individuals in GI implementation. To further the integration of actors and institutions other than public administration, the role of private actors (business owners, farmers and foresters, and urban land owners) in the implementation and management of GI needs further research attention.
- **Investigate implementation failures.** The GRETA research indicates a need to further identify failures in implementing GI. Such failures could for instance be found in situations with low political support for GI, and where a holistic and spatial perspective of GI is lacking.

In order to operationalise the European Green Deal, the European Commission launched an important tool supporting the creation, development, restoration and monitoring system of green infrastructure at the local and national level. The bill is currently under negotiation and is expected to be adopted by the end of 2023.

The Nature Restoration Law is the first continent-wide, comprehensive law of its kind. It is a key element of the EU Biodiversity Strategy, which calls for binding targets to restore degraded ecosystems, in particular those with the most potential to capture and store carbon and to prevent and reduce the impact of natural disasters.

The Nature Restoration Law aims to restore ecosystems, habitats and species across the EU's land and sea areas in order to:

- enable the long-term and sustained recovery of biodiverse and resilient nature
- contribute to achieving the EU's climate mitigation and climate adaptation objectives
- meet international commitments.

EU countries are expected to submit National Restoration Plans to the Commission within two years of the Regulation coming into force, showing how they will deliver on the targets. They will also be required to monitor and report on their progress.

As such, the Nature Restoration Law can serve as a guiding framework, especially through *Article 6 Restoration of urban ecosystems*, which is of particular interest to the Greening Cities Partnership, under which the partners can develop and further implement actions in their fields of interest.

In order to operationalise the principles and measures established by the Nature Restoration Law there is a strong need to create a friendly framework for the local level to implement and for the national level to support and monitor.

Existing policy framework

Apart from the Nature Restoration Law initiative, currently pending approval, there are also other important framework documents to be taken into account at the global and European level, including the UN New Urban Agenda, the Paris Agreement, European Green Deal, the New Leipzig Charter, the EU Cohesion policy, the EU Biodiversity Strategy, the EU Forest Strategy, the EU Green Infrastructure Strategy, the EU Climate Adaptation Strategy, the EU



Climate Law, the Zero pollution action plan, the European Digital Strategy, the Green Deal Industrial Plan, the Farm to Fork Strategy, the European Pillar of Social Rights, the Territorial Agenda 2030, the EU Mission: Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities and the EU Mission: Adaptation to Climate Change, EU Mission 'A Soil Deal for Europe' (Soil health and food), EU Soil Strategy, New European Bauhaus Initiative, EU Renovation Wave Strategy & Affordable Housing Initiative, New European Mobility Framework, European Partnership Driving Urban Transitions of Horizon Europe, Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, Green City Accord, European Green Capital and Leaf Awards, and Intelligent Cities Challenge.

Additional EU policy framework that might be relevant for the partnership include the OMC Group report Towards a Shared Culture of Architecture with a focus on high-quality living environment for everyone, the quality of public spaces including green and blue infrastructure, green spaces³.

Other relevant initiatives, helpful in creating synergies and/or build on existing initiatives and draw from their expertise/outcomes are Cultural and Creative Spaces and Cities, European Capitals of Culture, REGIOSTARS Awards, TAIEX-REGIO PEER2PEER, Access City Award, Urban development Network, ECHN – European Creative Hubs Network, EU Policy Lab of Joint Research Centre, Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor, Support to New European Bauhaus Local Initiatives, Affordable Housing Initiative, Innovative Implementation of the Partnership Principle in EU Cohesion Policy, Cultural heritage in action, Culture in cities and regions, Peer-learning scheme for cities and regions on high quality architecture and the built environment, EU Prize for Contemporary Architecture – Mies van der Rohe Award.

Furthermore, URBACT and ESPON could act as knowledge providers and as such be relevant contributors to the partnership.

³ The Report contains a collection of case studies introduces ideas on how to operationalise key quality criteria and how to put them into action at multiple governance levels. <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/eac/high-quality-built-environment/en/>



Thematic focus

How can public-private partnerships and innovative funding models be leveraged to link nature-based solutions with private landowners and companies, and make a business case for urban greening?

How can multi-level governance be leveraged to ensure effective implementation of green infrastructure plans and national targets for nature-based solutions?

How can practical guidelines/measures be developed for implementing green solutions in cities?

How can the EU Nature Restoration Law be translated into actionable recommendations for cities to advocate for urban greening interventions, and how can it be used to shortcut the level of national politics if necessary?

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The EAA suggests a thematic focus on green and blue infrastructure in an urban context and between cities, also integrating the perspective of cities of various sizes, as well as their surroundings (FUA).

In relation to the importance of the Nature Restoration Law, especially Article 6, as well as a result of the expressed interest by the members, the thematic focus of the Partnership will be expanded to provide a detailed framework for implementing the provisions of the Nature Restoration Law and to ensure the restoration of urban ecosystems in cities, towns and suburbs, and periurban areas.

The EU Green Infrastructure Strategy defines GI as *a strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services. It incorporates green spaces and other physical features in terrestrial (including coastal) and marine areas. On land, GI is present in rural and urban settings.*

Green infrastructure includes planned green and blue surfaces and other nature-based spatial solutions, which are implemented in cities and which contribute to the preservation, improvement and regeneration of nature, natural functions and processes in order to obtain environmental, economic and social benefits of sustainable development.

The list of topics related to green and blue infrastructure and potential contributions, as identified by the EAA, constituted the partnership's thematic starting point. These were further discussed and adjusted to the members' expressed interests, expertise and resources in four phases, as of April 2023:

- via members' written comments on the first draft of the Orientation paper;
- at the second partnership meeting in Turin (IT), in the form of a general brainstorming session;
- through an online survey of members' preferred thematic areas;
- during an interactive online workshop meant to further focus and cluster the identified thematic areas.



Overall, regardless of the clustering method, members' interests tended to repeatedly lean in the same general directions. The graphic below highlights all the thematic priorities raised by the survey.

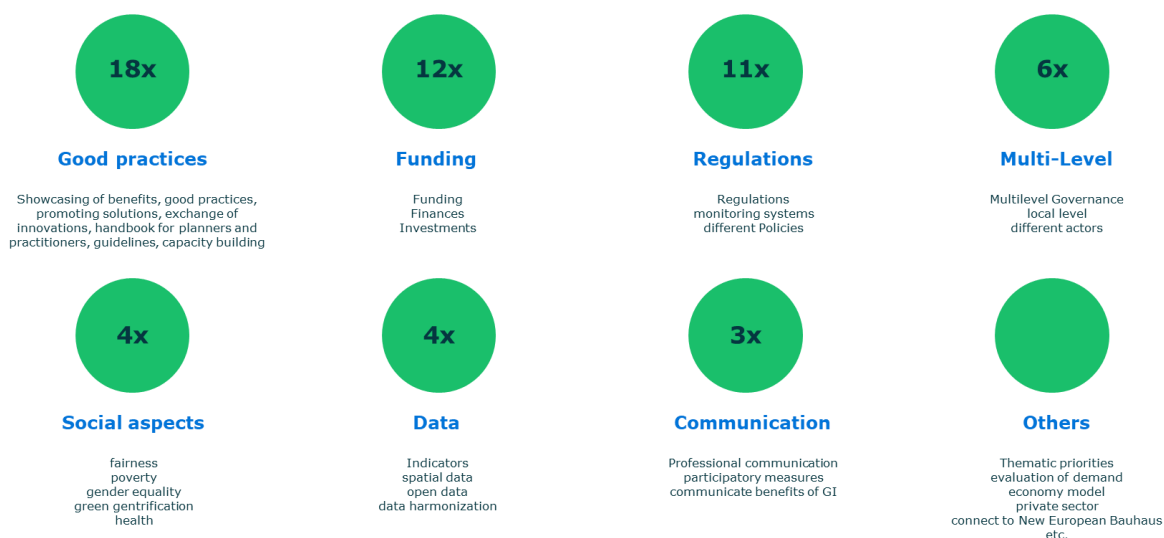
The topics that emerged from the survey include showcasing benefits, good practices, and solutions; providing guidelines and capacity building; funding and investments; regulations and monitoring systems; multilevel governance involving different actors; and policies supporting sustainability. Effective collaboration and knowledge sharing among stakeholders are critical for successful implementation.

The members' priorities deal with the working method (better knowledge, better funding, better regulation) in relation to the concept of green infrastructure, entailing:

- collaboration at all territorial levels, as well as examples of good practice for better understanding and replication of projects;
- financing solutions in support of greening cities; and
- on the regulation side, developing a series of monitoring indicators, as well as correlation with sectoral and urban planning policies.

Priorities of this partnership

mentioned in the survey



The top four priorities resulting from the survey and discussed during the interactive workshop and represent the main focus of further work. Furthermore, several other concrete goals and actions were formulated on a Miroboard. Some potential actions that have emerged from the



workshop and could be included in the action plan can be found on the Miroboard (<https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVMXi8JuQ=/^4>), such as:

- Guidelines on vertical level of implementing GI plans and NRL targets: collaboration between local, national and EU level (better knowledge)
- Combine / link horizontal and vertical levels for urban green planning (better knowledge)
- Guidelines on horizontal level of implementing GI plans and NRL targets: collaboration within (sectoral policies) and between cities, private land owners, private companies (+ link to point under 'Regulations') (better knowledge)
- Methodology for quantifying the demand for green infrastructure at local level (better knowledge);
- MOOC (massive open online courses) to provide technical expertise to all territorial levels (better knowledge);
- Ecosystem accounting: best practices and ways to implement in city decision making (better knowledge);
- Database on experts and consultants for all territorial levels (better knowledge);
- Inventory of tools/models/knowledge instruments (better knowledge);
- Prepare an overview of existing funding models (national funds, local fiscal policies, subsidies, private funding etc.) for GI and UGPs (as local level of NRL targets) and case studies (better funding);
- Explore and promote PPPs and innovative funding models for NBS linking with private land owners and private companies (better funding);
- Developing standard/ certificate on sustainable development compensation measures (municipalities, private companies and private land owners) (better regulation);
- Guidelines to define a system of indicators for monitoring and reporting the implementation of local GI Plans (better knowledge);
- Link with horizontal multilevel of working with private land owners (and companies) (better regulation);
- Developing indicators: action areas, biodiversity, ecological connectivity, climate resilience, environmental co-benefits, socioeconomic co-benefits (better regulation).

In particular, for Nature Restoration Law were identified as potential action:

- Support coordination between local, regional and national level on implementation of the EU Nature Restoration Law (better knowledge);
- Develop methods for horizontal cooperation between local authorities and relevant stakeholders such as private land owners and citizens (better knowledge);
- Develop a standardised methodology for mapping and monitoring urban biodiversity (better knowledge);
- Develop a standardised certificate for compensation methods in construction of new developments (better knowledge);
- Explore possible local fiscal policies to support the implementation of the EU Nature Restoration Law, particularly for long term maintenance (better funding);

⁴ The link doesn't provide direct access; it needs to be copied&pasted into an address bar



- Develop guidelines for member states and local authorities to support the implementation of the target for ‘no net loss’ of urban green space and an increase in tree canopy cover (better regulation);
- Develop guidelines for developers on ‘sustainable’ development (better regulation).

Specific objectives of the partnership

Based on the above thematic objectives, the Partnership strives to involve urban authorities and all relevant stakeholders in achieving better regulation, better funding and better knowledge. This is based on the following considerations, as stated in Pact of Amsterdam:

- EU legislation is to a large extent implemented in urban areas and has direct and indirect implications for urban authorities, with the latest EU level nature legislation including specific and legally binding targets for cities. EU legislation sometimes has conflicting impacts and its implementation at local level can be difficult. Therefore, EU regulation should anticipate and prevent these difficulties;
- urban authorities are among the key beneficiaries of EU funding. Access to existing funding is however sometimes administratively burdensome. The Urban Agenda for the EU aims to improve accessibility and coordination of existing funding possibilities and to contribute to their simplification;
- knowledge on how urban areas evolve is fragmented and successful experience can be better valorised, diffused and exploited. The Urban Agenda for the EU therefore intends to enhance a better urban policy knowledge base and the exchange of good practice.

Specific objective better regulation: Support the integration of green and blue infrastructure into urban and spatial planning systems and city policies and legislation and develop standardised methodology for urban biodiversity mapping and monitoring.

Specific objective better funding: Support the definition of a better and greater orientation of European funds, and other funding mechanisms as well, for funding and implementation of green and blue infrastructures at the urban level through new financial instruments that support greening cities and by reinforcing the prioritisation and financing for this topic a in other existing ones. Establish compensation measures to ensure sustainable development and support the implementation of ‘no net loss’ target under the EU Nature Restoration law.

Specific objective better knowledge: Support the design, implementation and evaluation of local green and blue infrastructure plans and the improvement of knowledge on green and blue infrastructure at local level, including guidelines for vertical (local, regional and national level) and horizontal (local authorities and private landowners, citizens) cooperation and highlighting de benefits of green infrastructure.

Links with other UAEU partnerships

The EAA has also identified links with several of the previous thematic partnerships, which have included themes that are relevant for greening cities. The earlier generation of partnerships with more explicit links to greening cities are **Sustainable Use of Land and Nature-based Solutions**, **Air Quality** and **Climate Adaptation**. Depending on the approach,



wider thematic linkages can be found with the thematic partnerships on circular economy, energy transition and urban mobility.

The Thematic partnership on **Sustainable Use of Land and Nature-based Solutions** aimed to promote the liveable compactness city model and mainstream and promote nature-based solutions for a more resilient and liveable urban space. There are direct links between this partnership and the greening cities in particular with regards to expanding knowledge of nature-based solutions (NBS) to address adaptation challenges, encouraging the uptake and increasing awareness of NBS.

The following deliverables produced should be considered in particular in the framework of the new actions to be developed:

- Action 1 - Guidebook on Including Land Take and Soil Properties in Impact Assessment Procedures
- Action 3 – Handbook on Sustainable and Circular Re-use of Spaces and Buildings
- Action 6 – Better regulation tools to boost NBS at European, national and local levels
- Action 9 - Agreeing on Common Targets and Indicators for Nature-Based Solutions, Urban Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Cities.

The Thematic partnership on **Air Quality** aimed to improve air quality in cities and bring the ‘healthy city’ higher on the local, national and EU agendas as part of the Urban Agenda. Complementarities between this partnership and greening cities theme can be seen with regards to the knowledge gaps how to integrate green and blue infrastructure elements into policies pertinent to public health.

The following deliverables produced should be considered in particular in the framework of the new actions to be developed:

- Action 2 - Better air quality planning
- Action 3 – Better targeted funding for Air quality

The main focus of the Thematic partnership on **Climate Adaptation** was to “to anticipate the adverse effects of climate change and take appropriate action to prevent or minimise the damage it can cause to urban areas. The focus was on: vulnerability assessments, climate resilience and risk management (including the social dimension of climate adaptation strategies).”

The following deliverables produced should be considered in particular in the framework of the new actions to be developed:

- Action 1 – Analysis of national multilevel urban development and planning regulations with focus on climate adaptation
- Action 4 – A new LIFE for urban adaptation projects
- Action 5 – Improving EU municipalities knowledge in the framework of Copernicus Climate Change Services
- Action 6 – Enhancing the local content of Climate-ADAPT
- Action 7 – Political training on climate adaptation



Challenges

Challenges relevant to greening cities not addressed by previous partnerships, as proposed in the EAA, are listed below:

THEMATIC PARTNERSHIP	BETTER KNOWLEDGE	BETTER FUNDING	BETTER REGULATION
Sustainable use of land and nature-based solutions	Redefining the basis of city infrastructures and design in the context of climate change Implementation of GI and NBS to address climate-related challenges (e.g. rainwater management, drainage system, transport networks, etc.)	Channelling investments to improve and retrofit existing infrastructure while integrating GI elements	Mainstream green and blue infrastructure in spatial planning policies
Climate adaptation	Insufficient dialogue and coordination between local authorities and national governments on climate adaptation Better use of existing templates (and their refinement) for local climate adaptation strategies/plans	Funding adaptation-related capacity building activities for cities Improving access to funding for climate adaptation in cities (e.g. explore opportunities under Interreg programmes)	Lack of effective participatory tools for multilevel governance Connection between risk management, climate adaptation planning and urban planning
Air quality	Dissemination of knowledge on relevant air quality measures that integrate green aspects	Funding mechanisms that require integration of green and blue aspects in projects on air quality	Greening the cities and better air quality as elements of the urban regeneration policies

Cross-cutting issues

The complexity of urban challenges requires integrating different policy aspects to avoid contradictory effects and to make interventions in urban areas more effective. The Pact of Amsterdam established a list of 11 cross-cutting issues, which can be updated. The partnership will take into account the following cross-cutting issues at all phases of development, implementation and monitoring:

- Effective urban governance, including citizens participation and new models of governance;
- Governance across administrative boundaries and inter-municipal cooperation: urban-rural, urban-urban and cross-border cooperation; link with territorial development and the Territorial Agenda 2030 (well-balanced territorial development).
- Sound and strategic urban planning, with a place-based and people-based approach;
- Integrated and participatory approach;
- innovative approaches;
- Impact on societal change, including behavioural change, promoting, among other things, equal access to information, gender equality and women empowerment;
- Challenges and opportunities of small and medium-sized Urban Areas and polycentric development;
- Urban regeneration, including social, economic, environmental, spatial and cultural aspects, also linked to the brownfield redevelopment with the objective of limiting greenfield consumption;



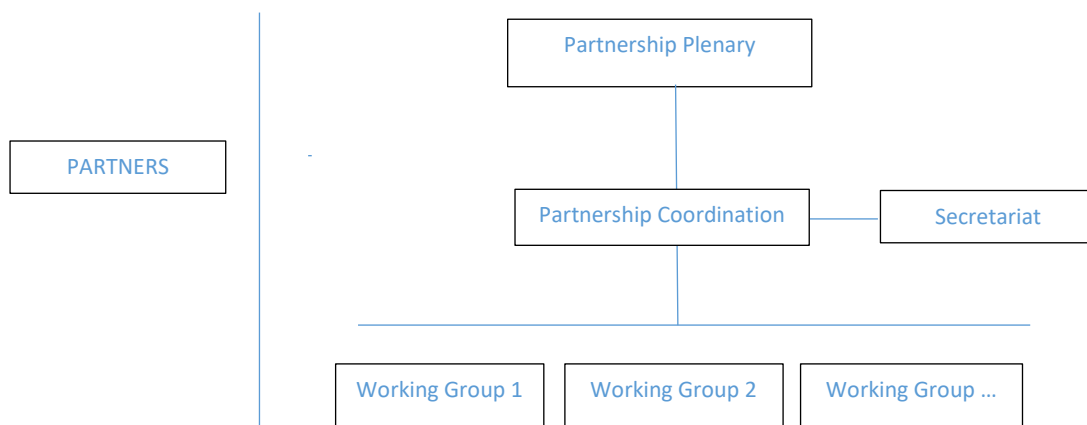
- Adaptation to demographic change and in- and out migration;
- Provision of adequate public services of general interest;
- International dimension: link with the New Urban Agenda (Habitat III) of the UN, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development) of the UN and the Paris Agreement on climate change of December 2015.



ANNEX

I. PARTNERSHIP FUNCTIONING

Working arrangements and internal communication



Partners

The partners are the foundation of the Greening Cities Partnership and are fully engaged in the works on the agreed topics and subtopics, as well as in the process of developing content. All partners are encouraged to:

- contribute to the thematic working groups;
- actively participate in partnership meetings, engage experts and expertise from external networks, when available and relevant, and promote the activities of the partnership;
- share knowledge and experience and generate ideas for the partnership works;
- make available the necessary resources needed to guarantee these commitments to the partnership.

The partners have specific roles and responsibilities:

- contribute to the implementation of different actions of the action plan;
- participate in the technical work of the partnership with their own resources (the possibility of providing financial support to small and medium-sized cities will be explored);
- contribute to the partnership through their own individual expertise, but also the wider knowledge of the organisation they represent;
- assist in the debate about the partnership within their territory;
- contribute to the implementation/dissemination of the partnership action plan at the national/regional/local level.



Coordinators

The works of the Partnership are coordinated by the Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration (Romanian national authority) and Nuovo Circondario Imolese (Italian urban authority), which allows for sharing the organizational and thematic duties, as well as exchanging experience in order to provide a clear, cohesive and productive coordination of Partnership activities.

According with the Multiannual Working Programme, the coordinators have the following responsibilities:

- organising Partnership meetings, including but not limited to preparing the agenda, sending invitations, providing meeting rooms, inviting external speakers if appropriate and drafting minutes;
- chairing all Partnership meetings;
- organising the work in-between Partnership Meetings, including but not limited to written consultation, asking for contributions, preparing documents and drafting a concise annual report;
- ensuring the link between the partnership and urban authorities, Member States and the Commission, including the UDG and DGUM meetings, as well as other stakeholders not directly involved in the partnership;
- cooperating with other Partnerships, when deemed to add value;
- participating and contributing to other working groups/ networks;
- coordinating and drafting the Action Plan;
- monitoring and reporting on progress;
- coordinating the work by ensuring the quality and timeliness of contributions, mediating different positions with the purpose of finding common ground and an agreeable position;
- ensuring visibility by coordinating the communication on actions and results;
- relaying results from the partnership to the DGUM meetings.

Working groups

The coordinators will set up working groups on specific issues. Coordination of the working groups will be handled by one of the partners. The responsibilities of the working group leaders include:

- organising, preparing and chairing working group meetings;
- defining and allocating the work among working group members;
- reporting on progress towards coordinators;
- delivering work results according to the partnership timetable;
- delivering information via website, articles;
- communicating and exchanging with other partnerships.

The results of the working groups will be discussed with all partners at the Greening Cities Partnership meetings.

Secretariat

The Secretariat provides technical support, such as:



- facilitating internal communication between the partners (sharing of information and documents and ensuring smooth consultation on emerging priorities and actions);
- facilitating external communication to stakeholders not directly linked to the partnership about its work, composition, progress made and its emerging actions (strengthening the website and making the partnership more visible to the outside world);
- helping collect and understand the progress made and deliverables produced (papers, reports, studies, presentations) by the partnership and its subgroups so that there is a compendium of information on the partnership all in one place;
- supporting coordinators and partners in the organisation of partnership meetings;
- attending partnership meetings throughout the year (taking the minutes, helping facilitate any breakout groups, providing opinions and feedback on the discussions);
- undertaking background research to inform the emerging actions found in the action plan to ensure they are robust, supported by clear evidence and articulated in the right way, if needed.

Communication strategy

The coordinators and the Secretariat have developed a communication strategy for the Partnership, which includes:

- regular videoconferences;
- effective use of the European Urban Initiative website;
- attending external events;
- public relations, such as press releases, articles and information material;
- online file sharing through SharePoint.

Contributors

The partnership can expand by accepting new partners as contributors, subject to voting by existing members. Contributors will be working with the members, broadening the knowledge base and bringing the results of the partnership to a larger group of urban authorities and relevant stakeholders. Contributors must be relevant for a specific action and support the partnership with expertise and evidence.

Decision-making

The partnership is an entity in itself and not just the sum of its members. As such, all actions promoted by the partnership have to be agreed on by the members, expressed via voting, in order to ensure general ownership and not just individual preference. Said actions will be judged based on consistency with the general and specific objectives of the partnership, as well as be implementable in the available timeframe.

Also for the purpose of partnership cohesion and ownership of activity, a minimum attendance of partnership meetings (at least half+1 of the partners), as well as engagement in the development of actions is encouraged.



II. PARTNERSHIP WORKING PLAN

Overall working method

The working method was agreed and programmed with all interested partners according to what has already been described in the introduction of this document.

Work plan steps

The following phases and deliverables are laid out by the Pact of Amsterdam⁵:

Step no. 1 – Stocktaking

In the first step, the members of the Partnership would identify the existing work carried out on the Priority Theme (strategies, actions and working groups/ networks covering these issues at EU level). As the aim is to avoid duplication but rather ensure coordination and reinforce what is already being done, this step is crucial to decide how to move forward in building the Partnership (for example: adjust the topic of the Priority Theme and assessing the relevance of main cross-cutting aspects; limit the scope of the Partnership; organise active participation to existing strategies, actions and working groups/ networks to ensure that the urban dimension of all Member States is taken into account; etc.). In this stocktaking step, the members of the Partnerships would also identify the sources of funding and expertise which could be made available for the functioning of the Partnership. The Commission will contribute by providing the stocktaking at EU level.

Step no. 2 – Preparatory actions (Identifying bottlenecks and potentials)

In the second step, the members of the Partnership would identify the bottlenecks and the potentials to identify the areas on which the Action Plan should focus. This will require in depth research and analytical work. These could be at EU, national or local level. It would lead to a list of preparatory actions that are needed to define the final actions. The Partnership will take into account and respect the available data from Member States whose representatives are not included in the Partnership.

Step no. 3 – Define the objectives and deliverables

In the third step, the members of the Partnership would agree on a set of actions that address the issues of the Priority Theme (Action Plan). The proposed actions need to respect the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. This should ideally be done in the first 6-12 months of the Partnership. A model Action Plan is available for each Partnership and should include:

- Actions which could be, for example:
 - Developing a proposal for better use of or adaptation of existing EU legislation and funding instruments;
 - Implementing a research project to find possible solutions and/or fill EU wide knowledge gaps.

⁵ Pact of Amsterdam (https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/policy/themes/urban-development/agenda/pact-of-amsterdam.pdf)



- Roadmap of each action indicating deliverables, target dates and the responsible organisation (e.g. Commission, participating Member States, Urban Authorities, etc.).
- If appropriate, indicators and targets could be set (but only if there is a direct link between the Action Plan and the target).

Step no. 4 – Implementation of the Action Plan

In the fourth step, the members of the Partnership should coordinate the work (aimed at Better Regulation, Better Funding and Better Knowledge) on and carry out the implementation of the Action Plan with partners of the partnership and other interested parties i.e. other Member States, Urban Authorities and existing Urban Networks concerned, etc. (once the Action Plan has been designed and agreed). It is important that the members of the Partnerships develop links with the relevant authorities/ organisations/ enterprises/stakeholders and work in full transparency.

Deliverables, milestones and timing

The main operational deliverables of the Partnership will be outlined in the Action Plan, concurring the requirements from the Pact of Amsterdam, the Ex-ante Assessment and guidelines given by the Directors General on Urban Matters meeting.

As far as administrative documents go, the following deliverables have to be linked with the events organised by the rotating presidencies, namely UDG and DGUM.

- Delivery of the draft Orientation Paper: February 2023
- Presentation of the Orientation Paper: May 2023 (DGUM SE)
- Delivery of the draft Action Plan: January 2024
- Delivery of the final Action Plan: March 2024 (UDG BE)
- Presentation of the final Action Plan: May 2024 (DGUM BE)

Considering the timeline for initiating the preparations for the next programming period, a major objective for the partnership will be implementation in time of the actions that will be proposed into the action plan.

Depending on how the work progresses, there will be up to four partnership meetings (in a physical or hybrid form) with all partners while working on the draft of the Action Plan (first year of the partnership):

- First partnership meeting: November 2022 – online
- Second partnership meeting: March 2023, Turin (IT) – Cities Forum
- Third partnership meeting: June 2023, Malmö (SE), Green Cities Conference
- Fourth partnership meeting: October 2023, Brussels (BE) – European Week of Regions and Cities

Whenever possible, partnership meetings will be linked to relevant European conferences, workshops, thematic events (such as the European Week of Regions and Cities and the Cities Forum).

Additionally, partners are invited to organize working-groups meetings (in a physical or hybrid form) that can support development and implementation of the Action Plan (on different topics/themes).

