

URBAN AGENDA FOR THE EU



Background document for applicants

Thematic Partnership on Food



July 2023





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INITIATIVE**



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GLOSSARY:

CALM	Coordinators and Action Leaders Members
DGUM	Directorate General on Urban Matters
EAA	Ex-Ante Assessment
EUI	European Urban Initiative
UAEU	Urban Agenda for the EU
UIA	Urban Innovative Actions
UDG	Urban Development Group
OFC	Other Forms of Cooperation



1 Context of the Call and selection process

This Call for expression of interest for Partners aims at establishing the **Partnerships** under the Urban Agenda for the European Union (UAEU) on (i) **Cities of Equality** and (ii) **Food**.

This Call is preceded by **Ex-Ante Assessments (EAA)** on the "Food" and "Cities of Equality" themes. The EAA was proposed as a new step towards the creation of Partnerships and Other Forms of Cooperation (OFC) in the scope of the new phase of the UAEU established by the Ljubljana Agreement. The EAAs were developed between 18th of January and 30th of June 2023, to deploy a pragmatic, effective and result-oriented approach aiming at increasing the impact of future UAEU deliverables. The EAA has the purpose to optimise focus, timing and activities of the multi-level cooperation, as well as safeguard suitable level of partners' thematic and procedural expertise, in view of proposing an analysis and recommendations as to the conditions to launch a Call to create two new Partnerships of the UAEU.

Both EAA reports highlight the importance of a launch of the Partnerships and propose recommendations for a possible thematic focus of the Thematic Partnerships in relation to Better Knowledge, Better Funding and Better Regulation pillars. The final EAA reports were welcomed by the **Directors General on Urban Matters (DGUM)** via a written procedure and a decision was taken to launch the Calls for the selection of Partners.

As per the Multiannual Working Programme accompanying the [Ljubljana Agreement](#), urban authorities, Regions, Partner States, city consortiums and national city umbrella organisations are able to apply to this call. Moreover, Member States and other stakeholders (Managing Authorities for EU funds, experts/academia, NGOs, economic and social partners, civil society organisations and private sector representatives) are also able to apply to the Call. The eligible categories of Partners are specified under each priority theme, in the corresponding section below.

The Call will remain open- until 29 September 2023.

Once the Call is closed, the assessment of the application will start and then a **proposed list of selected partners** will be presented by the Urban Development Group to the **Directors General on Urban Matters** seeking for their decision. The final agreement on the establishment of the Partnerships on Cities of Equality and Food will officially take place at the occasion of the Informal Ministerial Meeting of 13-14 November 2023.

2 Background information on the UAEU and partners' responsibilities

2.1 What is the Urban Agenda for the EU?

The following sections aim at identifying the **key objectives and features of the Urban Agenda for the European Union (UAEU)**. Applicants who wish to have more in-depth knowledge on the UAEU may read the following relevant material which contain more comprehensive information and details.

- [Pact of Amsterdam \(2016\)](#)
- [Assessment Study of the Urban Agenda for the European Union \(2019\)](#)
- [New Leipzig Charter \(2020\)](#)
- [and its Implementation Document \(2020\)](#)
- [Ljubljana Agreement \(2021\) and Multiannual Working Programme for the Urban Agenda for the EU - the Next Generation \(2021\)](#)
- [Urban Agenda for the EU: Multi-level governance in action \(2021\)](#)
- [The UAEU website: www.urbanagenda.urban-initiative.eu/](http://www.urbanagenda.urban-initiative.eu/)

The Urban Agenda for the EU is an **innovative multi-level governance initiative on urban policy**, developed in the scope of intergovernmental cooperation on urban matters, and officially established by the [Pact of Amsterdam](#) in 2016. It enables cities, Member States, city networks, the European Commission, other EU institutions, the Union's advisory bodies, and other stakeholders to come together to **jointly tackle pressing urban matters** and deliver concrete outputs for the benefit of EU citizens. The Urban Agenda for the EU is **boosting the role of cities** in national and EU policymaking to better connect the EU with citizens' needs. It is a key delivery mechanism at EU level for the [New Urban Agenda \(Habitat III\)](#).

Making **multi-level governance** tangible has been recognised as one of the most important successes of the Urban Agenda for the EU. Multi-level governance is crucial beyond this initiative and at the EU level, it is widely promoted through **Cohesion policy** in order to target the investments in the most efficient and balanced way.

'The main **aim** of the Urban Agenda for the European Union is to **identify and tackle urban challenges** by bringing together Member States, cities, the European Commission and other stakeholders, into a framework for dialogue and finding solutions on policy initiatives that affect urban areas (Pact of Amsterdam, 2016). The Urban Agenda proposes to use a new multi-level, multi-stakeholder working method to better achieve the objectives of the Union and national policy by involving urban authorities in both the design and implementation phases of policy making. This in turn is intended to **strengthen the urban dimension of**

policies as well as facilitate their uptake, ultimately leading to a more efficient and effective policy making and implementation process. [...] The Urban Agenda seeks to stimulate action along three key objectives (or “pillars”): **Better Regulation, Better Funding and Better Knowledge.**



Figure 1 - Source: EUI

In addition, the UAEU aims to address several cross-cutting issues and thematic priorities'. [...] 'The Pact of Amsterdam led to the selection of an initial list of 12 priority themes for challenges to be addressed in Thematic Partnerships. In 2018, two more themes were added, and two Thematic Partnerships launched accordingly' (Assessment study, 2019). Lastly, in 2021 the Ljubljana Agreement defined other four thematic focuses: Greening Cities, Sustainable Tourism (which had been launched in winter 2022) and Food and Cities of Equality (which will be launched in 2023).

1. Urban Poverty
2. Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees
3. Housing
4. Air Quality
5. Urban Mobility
6. Digital Transition
7. Circular Economy
8. Jobs and Skills in the Local Economy
9. Sustainable Land Use
10. Public Procurement
11. Energy Transition
12. Climate Adaptation
-
13. Culture/Cultural Heritage
14. Security in Public Spaces
-
15. Greening Cities
16. Sustainable Tourism

At the moment of writing this document, the 16 Partnerships have brought together 25 Member States, 100 cities and/or metropolitan regions, 18 regions and 15 Directorate-Generals of the European Commission, and no less than 44 institutions, ranging from European umbrella organisations, programmes and networks, to civil society organisations and private companies.

2.2 The process of the UAEU:

As per the Pact of Amsterdam, a Partnership achieves results in about three years but the partners may agree to prolong their activities. Each Partnership is tasked to prepare an **action plan which contains actions** (and possibly recommendations) that aim at addressing issues that hamper urban development in the specific thematic area and that are meant to be implemented after. The actions target one (or more) specific pillar(s) of the UAEU on Better Regulation, Better Knowledge and/or Better Funding and are addressed at the local level, national level and/or EU level. As for the type of actions, these may include the development of (new) data and indicators, guidance documents and handbooks, roadmaps/strategies, the design of a new governance structure, impact assessments, policy recommendations, toolkits etc. Each action has an action leader and contributors. Each action describes the issue at stake and explains what action is needed to solve this issue, including how it will be concretely implemented, by when and by whom. For more inspiration on what previous actions had been defined and implemented, you can consult the [Urban Agenda for the EU Brochure](#) as well as the [Monitoring Table of Actions \(version 2021\)](#)

In order to reach the final action plan, the Partnership enters a **scoping phase** that includes brainstorming on the themes and challenges, elaborating the objectives of the Partnership etc. This materialised with a scoping or orientation paper. As the current two themes: Food and Cities of Equality have been subject to an **Ex-Ante Assessment**, the scoping phase will be reduced in time and scope. The EAA represents a major contribution to the scoping phase and could be considered as the **baseline document for this phase**. Partnerships will have the flexibility to choose the specific topics they will be working on, considering **the recommended thematic focus**, and will draft an orientation paper that will explain the rationale of their choice.

After this phase, the Partnership enters into the **stocktaking phase**, which entails analytical and research work on the identification of specific bottlenecks, mapping existing solutions and an initial brainstorming on themes and challenges. After this, the Partnership establishes a **shortlist of possible actions** to work on, and they decide jointly, as Partnership, which actions they select to be included in the action plan. Partners identify the objectives and deliverables per action and draft the **action plan**. Actions should be new, address a real need, be implemented, have visible impact, and concern several cities and Member States.

The action plan goes through a **public feedback** (consultation) on a dedicated portal and relevant colleagues in the European Commission are consulted. The Partnership revises the action plan following comments received and the document is presented to the Urban Development Group who may provide additional feedback. The Partnership revises the action plan accordingly. The action plan is considered final once presented at the meeting of Directors General on Urban

Matters (which takes place one time per semester) and the implementation of actions may begin. All these phases, including the implementation phase that follows the finalisation of the action plan, entail a number of Partnership meetings as well as work in between these meetings. The number of meetings depends on the working method of the Partnership.

As mentioned in the Pact of Amsterdam, the UAEU ‘will be taken forward by Member States together with the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), the European Investment Bank (EIB), representatives of the European Urban Authorities and other relevant stakeholders.’

2.3 The governance bodies of the UAEU:

‘The strategic steering of the UAEU is provided by the **Directors-General on Urban Matters (DGUM)**, which is the high-level decision-making body initiated prior to the Urban Agenda for the EU. The DGUM is composed of all Member States, the Commission and city representatives and associations (European Committee of the Regions (CoR), Eurocities, Council of the European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), and is co-chaired by the country holding the EU Presidency and the Commission (European Commission, 2017). The DGUM meetings may include a range of organisations as observers, such as representatives of Partner States, European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), European Parliament (EP), European Investment Bank (EIB), URBACT, ESPON and European Urban Knowledge Network (EUKN) (European Commission, 2016)’ (Assessment study, 2019).

‘The **Urban Development Group (UDG)** (expert working level) is made up of representatives of the Member State ministries responsible for urban issues, as well as other representatives of the multiple levels of governance (EC, EP, EIB, CoR, EESC, city representatives Eurocities and CEMR). Several organisations and networks may act as **observers** and / or be invited to participate in a particular relevant session, such as Partner States, URBACT, ESPON, JPI Urban Europe and EUKN. The UDG is an informal advisory body to the Directors-General’s on Urban Matters (DGUM). Its role is to both review the progress of the Partnerships and discuss issues pertaining to the UAEU at the intergovernmental level (European Commission, 2016). In principle, DGUM takes decisions based on the opinion forming process at the level of the UDG’ (Assessment study, 2019).

‘It was considered that the work of the Partnerships requires “operational guidance and interpretation of aspects of the Pact of Amsterdam and its Working Programme in between UDG meetings.” (Bulgarian Presidency of the EU Council, 2018) [...] The mandate, scope, responsibilities and tasks of an **Urban Agenda Technical Preparatory Group (UATPG)** was thus created as a non-decision-making body, to act “as a technical executive group, supporting the actual Presidency of the Council in preparing UDG and DGUM meetings only with respect to the items

related to UAEU”, and coordinate the technical issues related to the preparation of UAEU Partnerships (ibid). The UATPG is composed of 10 members, including: six Member States at a time – representing the rolling Presidencies (the two past Presidencies, the current one and the three succeeding ones); Commission (with the UAEU Technical Secretariat until available); three members in total from the European Committee of the Regions, Eurocities and CEMR’ (Assessment study, 2019).

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. The renewal of the UAEU was concluded by the adoption of the **Ljubljana Agreement on 26 November 2021**, which lays out the updated parameters for its implementation over the period 2022-2026. It materialised the start of a new phase of the Urban Agenda for the EU, including its operational parameters, work method and steps. The Pact of Amsterdam remains valid as a framework document for this intergovernmental multi-level governance initiative.

The Ljubljana Agreement emphasises some new features of the UAEU. The **ex-ante assessment (EAA) of priority themes** is a step put in place prior to the establishment of the Partnerships to raise the impact of the work developed by the Partnerships, and to better correlate it to the EU policy and regulatory framework. The first EAA had been prepared in 2022 for the UAEU Partnerships of Greening Cities and Sustainable Tourism. Moreover, **Other Forms of Cooperation** can be established, besides Partnerships, with a more flexible approach (shorter duration, targeted on a specific angle or question, smaller group etc.). Finally, more attention will be paid to the role and participation of **small and medium size cities**.

2.4 Role of Partners within the Partnership

The following sections aim at capturing some of the expected roles of the partners in the scope of the Partnership in a succinct and non-exhaustive manner. The Pact of Amsterdam and the Multiannual Working Programme contain more comprehensive information and details on these roles.

Cities

Urban authority representatives are at the heart of the UAEU. They identify the challenges they face at the local level and act as partner by contributing to the work on the actions and to their implementation (also as action leader), by bringing inputs, by making the link to relevant activities or resources and by taking part in meetings. They also liaise with other cities to create bigger impact on the implementation of actions.



City organisations (European and national) and URBACT

City organisation such as the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), EUROCITIES, other bodies representing Urban Authorities at European and national level, as well as EU programmes dedicated to sustainable urban development such as URBACT and The European Urban Initiative (EUI) bring their expertise and experience on the exchange of good practices and knowledge. They act as partner, by contributing to the work on the actions and to their implementation (also as action leader), by bringing inputs, by making the link to relevant activities or resources and by taking part in meetings. They disseminate the outcomes of the UAEU to the cities which are part of their networks and promote synergies with a second circle of cities, who may in turn, contribute to the Partnership.

Member States

Member States ensure that the UAEU outcomes reach the local authorities in their Member State, e.g. by sharing the outcomes with cities that are not directly participating in the UAEU. Member States may provide financial resources to the implementation of the UAEU, e.g. through the organisation of meetings/events, the translation of documents in their national language, the support for the participation of cities etc. They act as partner, by contributing to the work on the actions and to their implementation (also as action leader), by bringing inputs, by making the link to relevant activities or resources and by taking part in meetings.

EU Institutions

The **European Commission** acts as facilitator of the UAEU by providing EU funds to support the Partnerships' activities and by making the link with the EUI Permanent Secretariat. The Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy coordinates the EU support and helps to connect to relevant services within the European Commission to support the design and implementation of actions. The European Commission services act as partner of the Partnership, by contributing to the work on the actions and to their implementation (also as action leader), by bringing inputs, by making the link to relevant activities or resources and by taking part in meetings.

The **European Parliament** may consider the results and recommendations of the Partnerships for the agenda of relevant Committees when discussing relevant new and existing EU legislation and the [Urban Intergroup](#) may play an advisory role in the UAEU process.

The **European Committee of the Regions** and **European and Economic and Social Committee** may act as partner by contributing to the work on the actions and to their implementation (also as action leader), by bringing inputs, by making the link to relevant activities or resources and by taking part in meetings. They may





contribute to the outreach of the UAEU, with dedicated activities aiming to involve a broader range of local authorities and civil society organisations.

The **European Investment Bank (EIB)** acts as partner by contributing to the work on the actions and to their implementation (also as action leader), by bringing inputs, by making the link to relevant activities or resources and by taking part in meetings.

Other stakeholders

Other stakeholders act as partner, by contributing to the work on the actions and to their implementation (also as action leader), by bringing inputs, by making the link to relevant activities or resources and by taking part in meetings.

Coordinators

Coordinators are responsible for the overall coordination of Partnership activities and are the main contact person for internal and external communication and outreach. They organise and chair Partnership meetings, organise and coordinate the work in between meetings, send e-mails to partners, reach out other Partnership Coordinators, represent the Partnership in conferences, monitor and report on the Partnership's activities etc. Coordinators act as partner, by contributing to the work on the actions and to their implementation (also as action leader), by bringing inputs, by making the link to relevant activities or resources and by taking part in meetings.

2.5 The European Urban Initiative

The Cohesion policy legislative package for 2021-2027 includes the establishment of the [European Urban Initiative](#) (set out in Article 12 of Regulation No 2021/1058 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 on the European Regional Development Fund and on the Cohesion Fund¹ - ERDF/CF Regulation) – an instrument of the European Union, successor of the [Urban Innovative Actions](#) Initiative implemented during the 2014-2020 programming period and building also on activities undertaken in the Urbact III Programme and Urban Development Network.

This Initiative is an essential tool to support cities of all sizes, to build capacity and knowledge, to support innovation and develop transferable and scalable innovative solutions to urban challenges of European Union relevance. The EUI provides, overall, different levels of assistance:

¹ Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 on the European Regional Development Fund and on the Cohesion Fund: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32021R1058>.

- **Supporting urban authorities with up to 80% direct co-financing** and up to €5M ERDF, allowing EU cities to experiment as testbeds for their innovative idea and transferring it to other cities.
- **Strengthening capacities of cities** in the design and implementation of sustainable urban development strategies, policies and practices in an integrated and participative way.
- **Providing a knowledge environment for cities** to ensure easier access to horizontal and thematic knowledge and share the know-how on sustainable urban development.
- **Supporting the Urban Agenda for the EU (UAEU)**, and upon request of Member State(s), supporting the intergovernmental cooperation on urban matters.

The EUI is managed by the EC's Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO) via indirect management. The EC has designated the [Region Hauts-de-France](#) (France) as Entrusted Entity, for the implementation of EUI. The EUI Permanent Secretariat has been created to assist the Entrusted Entity and to ensure the day-to-day management of EUI.

One of the objectives of the EUI is to **provide support to the Urban Agenda for the EU** as indicated in the Pact of Amsterdam and Ljubljana Agreement and further detailed in Annex 1b) to the Contribution Agreement between the Commission and the Region Hauts-de-France.

2.6 Support to the UAEU Partnership

The **support to Partnerships and Other Forms of Cooperation (OFC)** is described in the Multiannual working Programme², namely:

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 to small and medium size cities³, 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:

² https://www.urbanagenda.urban-initiative.eu/sites/default/files/2022-10/multiannual_working_programme_uae_u_2022_2026.pdf

³ A support scheme for travel and accommodation reimbursement is put in place for urban authorities under a certain threshold to benefit in the framework of their participation to a Partnership



- 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

The support will build on the outputs from the previous years of work and implementation, and will seek to integrating as much as possible elements of the relevant urban-related initiatives and programmes as well as the other work streams of the EUI. The UAEU will benefit from wider support in the context of the EUI, notably National Urban Contact Points that will assist in the communication, dissemination and capitalisation activities of the UAEU and support relevant outreach.

The support to be provided by the EUI will include, among others:

- I. the setting up of new Partnerships (including the ex-ante assessments of Partnership proposals), and possibly Other Forms of Cooperation on an ad-hoc basis;
- II. the implementation of the UAEU and delivery of actions, with expertise support; and
- III. the setting up of capitalisation, communication and dissemination activities on the outcomes/results of the UAEU.



3 The new Thematic Partnership on Food

The objective of this **call for Expression of Interest** is to **select suitable and motivated partners for the UAEU Thematic Partnership on Food**.

A comprehensive assessment has already indicated a favourable opportunity to establish this partnership, which primarily focuses on the role of cities in leading food systems transformation. Considering the current momentum surrounding food system resilience and the urgent need for comprehensive legislation, it is crucial for the Thematic Partnership to align with current trends. This entails maintaining a balanced focus on the three pillars of Better Regulation, Better Funding, and Better Knowledge. The significance of better regulation processes is growing, supported by the upcoming EU Sustainable Food Systems Framework and the EU Food Policy Council. Therefore, it is vital to ensure coordination and collaboration between these initiatives and the Thematic Partnership to drive global transformation in food systems and position cities as catalysts for change. The Partnership acknowledges the importance of flexibility and a systemic focus to adapt and align with ongoing processes. By complementing existing initiatives, frameworks, and platforms, and integrating knowledge and experiences gained from local food governance experiments, the Partnership effectively contributes to the broader transformation of food systems.

Multilevel governance plays a crucial role in addressing food system unsustainability at the EU level. It entails coordinated action and shared responsibility among the European Union, Member States, and local and regional authorities, aiming to ensure coherence and effective implementation of policies. By involving diverse stakeholders, promoting transparency, participation, accountability, effectiveness, and coherence, multilevel governance facilitates inclusive decision-making processes and fosters sustainable outcomes in tackling the complex challenges of the food system.

The UAEU Partnership on Food has to align with the **EU regulatory and policy environment** on food, which includes the EU General Food Law 2002, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), and the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). The Partnership will support the objectives of the CAP, such as promoting sustainable farming practices and ensuring food security. It should complement initiatives like the Fit for 55 package, Food 2030, the EU biodiversity strategy, and sustainable food procurement through the EU procurement directive. By fostering collaboration and coherence, the Partnership is meant to aid the overall efforts of the EU in addressing food system challenges and promoting sustainability while identifying possible gaps and respectively opportunities for further consideration of the urban dimension.



In terms of **trends and evidence about EU cities**, it is to be stressed that cities are catalysts for food system transformation, driving sustainability, resilience, and equity through innovative policies and practices, with local institutions and individuals. Therefore, cities play a critical role in championing change and shaping governance in the field. Local food councils, strategies, and hubs are vital for collaboration and resource mobilization, reflecting local needs. The experiences of cities like Barcelona, Thessaloniki, Vitoria Gasteiz, Gent, Lejre, and Ostend demonstrate the potential for cities to lead the revolution in the food system by promoting sustainable production and consumption, shortening food chains, reducing waste, and creating social added value.

Articulation of the Food TA with other Thematic Areas: The Food TA is closely linked to other TAs considered by the UAEU. Recognizing the interconnectedness of the food system with climate change, water scarcity, biodiversity loss, public health, cultural preservation, and energy transition is fundamental. Integrated food policies are necessary to address these challenges collectively. Existing UAEU Thematic Partnerships on related topics provide valuable outputs that can be leveraged and advanced upon.

3.1 Thematic focus

The UAEU Partnership on Food is driven by core values that guide its monitoring activity including maintaining a food system perspective, supporting multilevel governance, considering the real price of food including externalities, and recognizing food as a human right and common good.

Addressing themes like agroecology, food justice, access to land, and public land management, the partnership should promote sustainable and equitable food systems. It should emphasize the importance of localizing food systems, incorporating externalities in food prices, and public procurement of local and organic foods. By advocating for policy alignment and resource pooling, the partnership can drive systemic transformation within the EU and contribute to broader objectives such as the European Green Deal and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

	Area of intervention	Possible actions	Why
Better Regulation	Integrated food policy and regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaboration with the EU FSFS and upcoming Food Policy Council - Support the development of adapted EU policies that enhance the local level in elaboration of integrated food policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the complexity and extensive impacts of the food TA require a systemic approach and overarching legislation ensuring coherence and synergies at all



			levels (thus supporting multi-level governance)
	Regulation analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct an analysis of the regulatory landscape to identify obstacles and drivers for promoting sustainable food systems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the identification of regulatory obstacles and drivers is necessary for guiding successful action in the field; - the comprehensive understanding of the food regulatory and policy landscape can nurture policy recommendations; - the outcomes of this analysis can represent solid evidence for changes in regulations that support the transition to more sustainable and equitable food systems.
	European framework to foster sustainable innovations in the food sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of an European framework to foster sustainable innovations in the food sector. This can take the form of a set of regulation and tools proposed in correlation with the FSFS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provide specific guidance for various stakeholders; - facilitate the implementation, promotion and replication of successful innovative technologies, practices, and business models that contribute to sustainable food systems.
	Public procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advocate for policies and criteria that favour the procurement of locally grown and organic foods by public institutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - can support the consumption of locally grown and organic foods through their procurement by public institutions; - can contribute to raising awareness about the benefits of local and organic production.
	City-region framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote collaboration and partnership between urban and rural areas within the city-region framework. - Facilitate dialogue and knowledge exchange between different 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the official recognition and support of the city-region framework is needed for better cooperation between the different levels of governance as well as



		stakeholders, including policymakers, farmers, producers, distributors, and consumers, to develop integrated approaches that address the complex challenges of food resilience at the local level.	<p>enhanced connections between urban and rural areas;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - it is key for developing integrated approaches that address the complex challenges of food resilience at the local level.
	the EU free market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advocate for the regulation of the EU market by integrating the need of localisation of food systems in the pursuit of the sustainability goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the regulation of the EU market impacts on the sustainability of food systems; - it has to be considered in relation to local production and consumption pursuing sustainability, carbon emissions reduction, economic development, and waste reduction.
Better Knowledge	Knowledge exchange and collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating a platform or network to map and monitor local food projects and initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - can enhance knowledge sharing, collaboration, and the dissemination of best practices across cities and regions; - can inform policy recommendations and advocate for changes in regulations that support the transition to more sustainable and equitable food systems.
	Regulatory obstacles and drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Performing a comprehensive analysis of the regulatory framework allowing for the identification of barriers and enablers in the promotion of sustainable food systems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - by utilizing this analysis, policymakers can make informed policy recommendations and advocate for regulatory changes that facilitate the transition to more sustainable and equitable food systems.
	Targeted analysis and targeted evidence support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct focused analysis and gather evidence to clarify key themes requiring attention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - by focusing on specific areas and gathering relevant data, the challenges and opportunities associated with those themes can be better understood. This analysis and evidence-gathering



			<p>process will provide valuable insights and help guide decision-making and action towards addressing those key themes effectively.</p>
	<p>Food systems data and tools</p>	<p>- Establish a regional food systems observatory that serves as a platform for data collection, analysis, and knowledge sharing. This observatory will systematically monitor and track key indicators, trends, and challenges related to food systems in the region.</p>	<p>- by gathering and analysing data, the observatory will provide valuable insights to policymakers, researchers, and practitioners, enabling evidence-based decision-making and facilitating the exchange of best practices and lessons learned. This platform will enhance collaboration and cooperation among stakeholders, fostering innovation and continuous improvement in regional food systems.</p>
	<p>Capacity building and pilot projects</p>	<p>-Implement capacity building programs and provide support for the implementation of pilot projects in regions and cities. These initiatives will focus on key areas such as sustainable agriculture practices, food waste reduction, community gardens, and other innovative solutions that promote the development of sustainable food systems.</p>	<p>- by equipping regions and cities with the necessary knowledge and resources, these capacity building programs and pilot projects will empower local communities to adopt and implement sustainable practices, leading to positive transformations in their food systems.</p>
<p>Better Funding</p>	<p>Capacity building, and knowledge exchange</p>	<p>- Development of a regional food systems observatory, enabling among others the identification and assessment of different funds available</p> <p>For eg. for capacity building for food policy: DG REFORM funds, Governance & Public administration and Technical support for implementing the European Green Deal</p> <p>for training, partnerships, building capacity and new skills: ESF + and ERDF (regional</p>	<p>- this tool enables a better access of regional stakeholders to funds helping them enhance their capabilities, establish partnerships, and acquire the necessary skills to advance sustainable and resilient food systems in their respective regions.</p>





		development funds: eg: OP1 Smarter, OP2 Greener Europe)	
	Innovation in Food area	<p>- Tailor-made guidance for the distribution of funds available, for eg. for sustainable agriculture, food production and innovation: CAP funds (with focus on measures like Leader and Akis) and ERDF (regional development funds: eg: OP1 Smarter, OP2 Greener Europe);</p> <p>- Setting up a Food innovation fund can be as a blending of grants and financial instruments: grants (as a first phase) and loans (second phase) to help the food businesses overcome barriers to their innovations becoming a successful, commercial reality. The aim is to make a considerable economic impact which results in significant, sustainable business growth.</p>	<p>- by leveraging these funding opportunities, stakeholders in the food industry can access financial support and resources to advance innovation, promote sustainable practices, and foster the growth of successful food businesses.</p>
	New entrepreneurship start-ups in Food area	<p>Type of funds available that can be capitalised for enhancing new and existing entrepreneurship are:</p> <p>Sustainable agriculture, food production, CAP funds, with focus on measures like Leader</p> <p>ERDF (regional development funds: eg: OP1 Smarter, OP2 Greener Europe);</p> <p>ESF +; New skills</p>	<p>- by tapping into these funding opportunities, new entrepreneurship start-ups in the food sector can access financial support and resources to launch and grow their businesses.</p> <p>- these funds contribute to the promotion of sustainable agriculture, the adoption of innovative practices, and the development of new skills, ultimately fostering a vibrant and resilient food entrepreneurship ecosystem.</p>



4 Categories of partners

Eligible applicants include:

- **Cities of all sizes** (small, medium, and large)
- **City regions**
- Regions and Regional Development Agencies
- Member states (through relevant national level ministries and agencies)
- Partner States
- European and national city umbrella organizations

Other stakeholders such as:

- NGOs and other organisations dedicated to food (systems.)
- EU organisations dedicated to different dimensions of food
- Social economy partners/businesses at the EU, national and city levels

The UAEU Food Partnership (TFP) plays a crucial role in supporting the transformation of EU food systems by bringing together all relevant stakeholders and facilitating their collaboration. By creating a platform for exchange, guiding European regulations and funding, building capacity, and fostering knowledge sharing, TFP can contribute to a more sustainable and just food system. It should adopt a system thinking approach and encourage strategic collaboration to address the complex challenges of food transformation effectively. Tools such as a communication platform, scenario building and evaluation tool, and a food innovation fund can further enhance TFP's cohesion and capacity-building role. A multi-layered organization, including a core partnership and an advisory board of local authorities and representatives from various organizations and institutions, can ensure representability and effectiveness in decision-making processes. In the core partnership may be representatives of concerned EC DGs (DG AGRI, DG SANTE, DG RTD), different level public administration umbrella organisations, regional development agencies, EIT Food, representative of the EU executive agency in charge with the Food area (food systems) REA B Green Europe, European Investment Bank (EIB), thematic associations (NGOs working with cities and on territorial development and food issues), education and research institutions, professional association of food systems researchers such as AESOP Sustainable Food Planning Group, Food Policy experts, representatives of food system actors (from production, transformation and distribution). EESC (European Economic and Social Committee), CoR, EU Food Policy Coalition, representatives of URBACT, representatives of Food Councils and City Food Policy Departments can constitute an advisory board.

In order to effectively drive positive change and enhance EU policies and regulations related to sustainable and resilient food systems, the UAEU Food Partnership must bring together a diverse range of partners with specific expertise and knowledge. Drawing on the analysis, interviews, and lessons learned from



previous partnerships, it is crucial that the partnership collectively covers the following areas of expertise. Firstly, partners should possess in-depth knowledge of concrete and tested solutions in the field of food, including innovative approaches to production, distribution, and consumption that promote sustainability and resilience. Secondly, partners should have expertise in the integration of food into urban and spatial planning, as well as the ability to align food-related strategies and actions with broader sustainable urban development and territorial investment plans. This integration is essential for creating coherent and effective policies that address the complex interplay between food systems and urban environments. Additionally, at least one partner should have a demonstrated track record of developing and implementing food initiatives in an urban context, ensuring practical relevance and applicability of the partnership's work. Lastly, partners should have experience in including and coordinating diverse city stakeholders, such as regional development agencies, universities and research institutions, civil society organizations, and other relevant actors. This collaboration is essential for fostering meaningful engagement, knowledge sharing, and collective action towards achieving sustainable and resilient food systems at the city level.

Furthermore, the partnership aligns with the key pillars of the Urban Agenda for the EU, which emphasize improving knowledge, regulation, and funding related to urban development.

5 Selection criteria

5.1 Horizontal selection criteria applicable to the Partnership

The Partnership will represent a diversity of member at different levels of governance.

The horizontal selection criteria aim at guaranteeing a composition of the Partnership consistent with the objectives of the Urban Agenda for the EU and of the new Partnership on “Food”. These will be considered once the specific selection criteria described below are assessed, to make a selection amongst the highest scoring participants.

In line with objectives of the Urban Agenda for the EU, the selection criteria for the potential members of the Cities of Equalities UAEU Partnership are as follows:

- i. **Multi-level and multi-stakeholder approach:** in line with the Pact of Amsterdam, the Partnership will be composed of **about 15 to 20 partners** from all levels of government and from different types of organisations. In order to ensure the representativeness of the local level, the Partnership will include **at least five cities** (urban authorities), as well as European and national city umbrella organisations.
- ii. **Size of cities:** at least one ‘small-sized city’ (below 50000⁴ inhabitants) and one ‘medium-sized city’ (below 250000 inhabitants) will be part of the Partnership. In line with the Ljubljana Agreement Multi Annual Working Programme, ‘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.’ As the horizontal criteria will not be scored, the small and medium-sized cities with the highest assessment score(s) on the specific selection criteria will be selected.
- iii. **Geographical balance:** During the selection process, one of the aims will be to ensure a relative geographical balance between the members in terms of the EU 27.

⁴ As discussed and requested on 24 of October 2022 during the DGUM meeting in Prague, Also noted in the Meeting Minutes.

- iv. **Prior involvement in the UAEU:** Prior involvement in the UAEU is not required. The selection should give the opportunity to new cities/organisations to be involved as far as possible.
- v. **Coordinators:** maximum two will be appointed, at least one from a city (regardless of size). In their expression of interest, applicants should indicate if they would like to be considered for the role of a Coordinator.

5.2 Specific selection criteria for applicants as Partners

The specific selection criteria below will be assessed on the basis of a **0-3 scale**.

- a) **Motivation to become a member**, advance one or more identified policy domains (Table 1) and sub-themes (Tables 2, 3, 4) in line with the principle 'leaving no one behind', in a way that contributes betterment of EU policy, regulation and knowledge and brings specific contribution at the city level. Provide evidence of relationship between the specific expertise developed by an applicant (and a potential member) and the specific issue or set of issues that motivate the applicant to be part of this specific partnership. Applicants should show awareness of [previous activities in UAEU Partnerships](#) that may be related to the sub-themes and issues of their concern. Applicants need to demonstrate willingness to participate in meetings, share experience and disseminate knowledge; willingness to participate in EU policy dialogue etc.
- b) **Expertise** and qualifications of the applicant with regard to at least one of the sub-themes and issues included in Tables 1 and 2. In the case of small and medium-sized cities, the expertise may be limited to specific aspects of the issue concerned and may have been developed through cooperation agreements with local, regional or national stakeholders. In case applicants possess knowledge/experience other than the ones mentioned above, they should clearly state it in the expression of interest. Expertise should be clearly demonstrated through description of past projects and initiatives.
- c) **Outreach** to relevant stakeholders and participation in networks and cooperation programmes at local, regional, national and EU level, also based on previous experiences, with reference to sustainable tourism and/or urban policy issues, as well as the sub-themes and issues included in Tables 1 and 2.
- d) **Readiness to participate with own human and financial resources:** availability and commitment of human and financial resources throughout the duration of the Partnership. As per the [Multi Annual Working Programme](#), this will not be the prevailing criterion for small and medium-sized cities.



5.3 Specific selection criteria for applicants as Coordinators

All the above specific selection criteria (i-iv) and **in addition:**

- i. **Project management expertise:**
 1. specifically concerning projects and initiatives in multilevel governance and European/international contexts, based on evidence from previous experience
 2. including expertise in dissemination and institutional communication at EU and national level
- ii. **Commitment of adequate allocation of human and financial resources** throughout the lifecycle of the Partnership
- iii. **Proposal of a plan** for the kick-start of the Partnership's work based on the outcomes of the Ex-Ante Assessment and for the management of the new Partnership