

URBAN AGENDA FOR THE EU



Frequently asked questions

**Relevant for the 2025 Call for UAEU
Thematic Partnership on Compact Cities
– Sustainable Urban Planning and Sprawl
Mitigation**

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*This document lists the frequently asked questions for the 2025 call.
The document will be updated during the period of the call, to incorporate the new questions received.*





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1. ELIGIBILITY

1.1 What are the key eligibility criteria for joining the Compact Cities Sustainable Urban Planning and Sprawl Mitigation partnership?

In short eligible applicants are:

- Cities of all sizes / intermunicipal cooperations
- Regions/regional development agencies
- European and national umbrella organisations
- Member States (through their national ministries) and Norway/Switzerland
- Others (e.g. academia, associations, NGO, urban stakeholder related to urban and spatial planning)

Please consult the [Background Document for applicants](#) (page 20) of the Call for Partners for the Compact Cities Thematic Partnership for more detailed information.

1.2 Are UN agencies eligible to apply?

Yes, UN agencies are eligible to apply, depending on the relevance of their work for the themes proposed. Please select the category “other” under the section “Type of entity” of the application survey.

1.3 Are private companies, businesses, SMEs eligible to apply?

Yes, private companies/ businesses are eligible to apply, albeit not being the primary target to become partners of the Urban Agenda for the EU. Therefore, their relevance within the partnership framework will be thoroughly assessed based on the motivation and expertise presented. As a pan-European partnership which will work on issues relevant for the EU objectives any organisation which would apply would need to prove motivation and expertise linked to such scope.

1.4 Can stakeholders from outside the European Union apply?

Only stakeholders from EU Member States and Partners States can apply to become a member of an Urban Agenda Thematic Partnership. These are signatories of the [Pact of Amsterdam](#) and the [Ljubljana Agreement](#). Stakeholders from countries outside the EU, including candidate countries are not eligible.

1.5 Who are the Partner States?

The Partner States are Norway and Switzerland since they are signatories of the [Pact of Amsterdam](#) and the [Ljubljana Agreement](#).

1.6 Can cities from the Partner States apply?

Yes, cities from the Partner States (Norway and Switzerland) can apply since the partner states are signatories of the [Pact of Amsterdam](#) and the [Ljubljana Agreement](#).



1.7 Are city districts eligible to apply to become a partner in the partnership?

In exceptional cases, city districts can apply to become a partner in the partnership as long as they have an independent legal status as local administrative unit classified as DEGURBA 1 or DEGURBA 2.

To find out if your district is considered DEGURBA 1 or DEGURBA 2 please consult:
<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/nuts/local-administrative-units>

1.8 Is there a minimum or maximum population requirement for cities and urban authorities to apply?

There is no minimum or maximum population requirement for cities and urban authorities to be eligible to apply for the Call for Partners.

1.9 Which stakeholders can apply to become a coordinator of the Compact Cities Partnership?

Any type of stakeholder meeting the eligibility requirements as discussed in the [Background Document](#), can apply to become a coordinator of the Thematic Partnership.

Any stakeholder who is motivated, experienced with the topic and European programmes and initiatives and who is able to commit both the extra time and human resources required are invited to apply as a coordinator.

The stakeholders will be evaluated based on horizontal and specific selection criteria. For candidates interested in the role of Coordinator specific selection criteria apply and a specific section in the application form is required to be filled in: "6. Specific Selection Criteria for Applicants as Coordinators".

1.10 Can consortiums apply to the call?

Institutions must apply individually. Applications from consortiums will not be accepted.

1.11 Are third sector organisations eligible to apply?

Yes, third sector organisations can apply to become members. Please consult the [Background Document](#) for more detailed information concerning eligibility.

1.12 Is a metropolitan area eligible to apply? If yes, in which category of partners?

Yes, metropolitan areas can apply to become members as long as they are a legal entity. Such areas apply in the category of "city of all sizes".



1.13 In what ways could research institutions and universities become partners?

Research institutions and universities can apply to become partner on the same basis as any other eligible stakeholder. The application procedure is identical for all types of stakeholders and any eligible stakeholder can apply to become either a Partner or a Coordinator.

1.14 What are the possibilities to be involved as an expert in the Urban Agenda? Can you be a partner or just an external advisor?

In the call for partners for the Compact Cities Partnership the EUI Permanent Secretariat is seeking only members of the new partnership.

Several active UAEU partnerships are interested in exchanging and cooperating with external partners during the partnership period. This is however up to each individual partnership. Please consult the Urban Agenda webpage to explore what ongoing partnerships are working on: <https://www.urbanagenda.urban-initiative.eu/partnerships>

External expertise support is provided to UAEU Partnership through the Provision of External Expertise Support Service. Interested experts who are already in the EUI pool of experts are invited to apply to any internal call that might be relevant. Experts who are not in the EUI pool of experts are invited to regularly consult the EUI website for upcoming opportunities: <https://www.urban-initiative.eu/jobs>

2. THE SUPPORT OFFERED

2.1 Will the selected members of the UAEU Partnership receive any budget for their involvement in the UAEU?

There will be no direct financing for the selected members of the UAEU Partnership. The participation of the members of the UAEU Partnership should be ensured through their own resources for the entire duration of the UAEU Partnership. This includes both the development of the Action Plan and its implementation.

2.2 Will the selected members of the UAEU Partnership receive any support?

Yes. The UAEU Partnership (as a whole) will benefit from the Support Service Package, a series of support services provided by the European Urban Initiative as the Permanent Secretariat of the UAEU on behalf of the European Commission.

The Support Service Package consists of:

- Administrative support -Thematic Partnership Officer (TPO)
- Initiation Phase Service



- Provision of External Expertise
- Communication and Dissemination Support
- Support Services for Creation of Synergies
- Travel and Accommodation Support

Please consult the Support Service Package factsheet for more detailed information:
<https://www.urbanagenda.urban-initiative.eu/urban-agenda-eu#anchor-eui-support-services-to-the-partnerships>

Additionally, small and medium-sized cities will benefit from the **Travel and Accommodation Support Service**.

2.3 How can small and medium-sized cities benefit from the Travel and Accommodation Support Service?

To benefit from this service, members need to fulfil these cumulative conditions:

1. **Be an urban authority of a local administrative unit within the EU** and defined according to their degree of urbanisation as city, town, or suburb, corresponding to DEGURBA code 1 or DEGURBA code 2 of Eurostat (see Eurostat website for more information).

OR **be an association or grouping of urban authorities** with the legal status of organised agglomeration composed of Local Administrative Units, **within the EU**, where the majority (at least 51%) of inhabitants live in Local Administrative Units defined according to the degree of urbanisation (DEGURBA) of Eurostat as cities, towns, or suburbs (corresponding to DEGURBA code 1 or DEGURBA code 2).

2. Have a population **smaller than 500.000 inhabitants**.
3. Respect the **reimbursement procedure and its deadlines**.

2.4 How are cities reimbursed for travel and accommodation for participation in in-person meetings and events?

Financial support is offered to urban authorities and associations or groupings of urban authorities through the Travel and Accommodation Support Service:

1. **To actively participate in their UAEU Thematic Partnership in-person meetings** to compensate for their limited resources - Activity 1 and
2. **To actively participate in the Coordinators and Action leaders' in-person Meetings (CALM) – Activity 2**

This financial support will be provided as lump-sums. For eligible partners, financial support is provided to **1 person for a partner** of a UAEU Partnership, and **up to 2 people for an eligible coordinator** of the UAEU Partnership.



2.5 How many people from each city / institution can participate in the in-person events?

There is no set limit to how many people from each partnership member can participate in an in-person meeting. Normally participation from one member varies between 1 and 3 people. However, as mentioned above, only eligible partners are reimbursed for their Travel and Accommodation expenses with 1 or 2 people depending on the role in the partnership.

3. THE APPLICATION FORM

3.1 Why do applicants need to estimate their human and financial resources?

Estimating and understanding the expected human and financial resources an organisation intends to commit to the UAEU Partnership will help both the applicant and the evaluators of the applications received. The applicants will be able to better estimate their level of involvement. The evaluators will have more information to evaluate how a well-balanced partnership can be formed.

All applicants should consider resources for both the development of the Action Plan and its implementation. Moreover, they should take into consideration both the work taking place during meetings/events and in between them. Over the course of the Partnership period, it is estimated that each **partner will dedicate approximately 0.25 to 0.75 days per week** to Partnership activities. **A Coordinator**, due to their additional responsibilities, **is expected to commit around 0.5 to 1.5 days per week**. Therefore, we advise all applicants to describe how they view their participation in the UAEU Partnership by estimating:

- the number of staff involved, and/or
- experience level of staff and/or
- estimated time and/or
- costs you are ready to cover per year.

The best application will state the seniority of the role and full-time equivalent (This will not be a prevailing criterion for small and medium-sized cities). Consider the adequate allocation of resources if you are applying for a role as coordinator and provide evidence.

3.2 Can links to previously prepared papers and best practice handouts be included in the application?

It is not required to upload documents nor include links to previous work in the application form. Uploading documents is not a possibility, however, it is possible to include links. Please note that we encourage all applicants to focus on writing concise and to-the-point answers. Adding links will not necessarily make the application stronger if the written answers are missing.



3.3 Is there a different application form for applying as a Partner and a Coordinator?

The application form is the same for applicants applying as a Partner and a Coordinator. The stakeholders will be evaluated based on horizontal and specific selection criteria. An additional section in the application form concerns only applicants for the role of Coordinator: "6. Specific Selection Criteria for Applicants as Coordinators".

Please consult the [Background Document](#) (page 21 -22).

4. ADMINISTRATIVE ASPECTS (OF THE CALL)

4.1 What is the deadline of the call?

The call for UAEU Partnership members is **open from 27 August until 1 October 2025 - 14:00 (CEST)**.

4.2 Who will evaluate the applications submitted?

EUI contracts independent experts to assess the applications received and propose a balanced composition of the partnerships in relation to scoring and the selection criteria mentioned in [the Background Documents](#). The proposed composition will be presented to the Urban Agenda governance body Directors-General for Urban Matters (DGUM). The DGUM will endorse the final composition of the new Thematic Partnership.

4.3 Can an organisation apply to become a member of more than one Thematic Partnership?

Yes, this is possible. There is no rule restricting applicants from applying to more than one UAEU Partnership.

4.4 Will the UAEU Partnership cover the entire EU territory?

It is unlikely that any partnership will include representatives covering the entire EU territory. However, ensuring geographical balance and reflecting diverse urban realities are horizontal criteria that guide the composition of each partnership, so that it remains consistent with the objectives of the Urban Agenda for the EU and the new Partnership.

4.5 What will happen after the call is closed?

After the call for UAEU Partnership members closes, the assessment of applications will be conducted by external experts and the Urban Agenda Technical Preparatory Group (UATPG). A proposed list of selected partners is expected to be presented to the Directors-General on Urban Matters (DGUM) in November 2025 who will decide to endorse the partnership or not. Both selected and not selected applicants will be notified by email. Selected applicants will be invited to confirm their availability for



joining the respective Thematic Partnership after the composition of the partnership is formally endorsed. The partnership is scheduled to begin their work by January 2026 the latest.

4.6 How are members selected for the partnership?

The independent experts contracted by the EUI evaluate all submitted applications based on the selection criteria listed in the Background Document. Each application gets a final score which will determine their ranking amongst the total number of applications. On top of this, the expert must make sure there is a diversity of types of stakeholders, governance level as well as ensure geographical balance. Please consult the [Background Document](#) for more information concerning the evaluation of applications.

4.7 Is previous participation in a partnership an advantage or not?

Participation in ongoing or previous Urban Agenda partnerships can be an advantage, but it is not a requirement. Applicants with prior experience are not automatically prioritised over newcomers.

4.8 How many partners will be selected for the compact cities partnership?

The number of partners that will be selected for the partnership is not defined. This depends on the number of applications and the quality of these applications. As stated in the [Pact of Amsterdam](#) “Advisable composition of the Partnership: a partnership is composed of about 15 to 20 partners”.

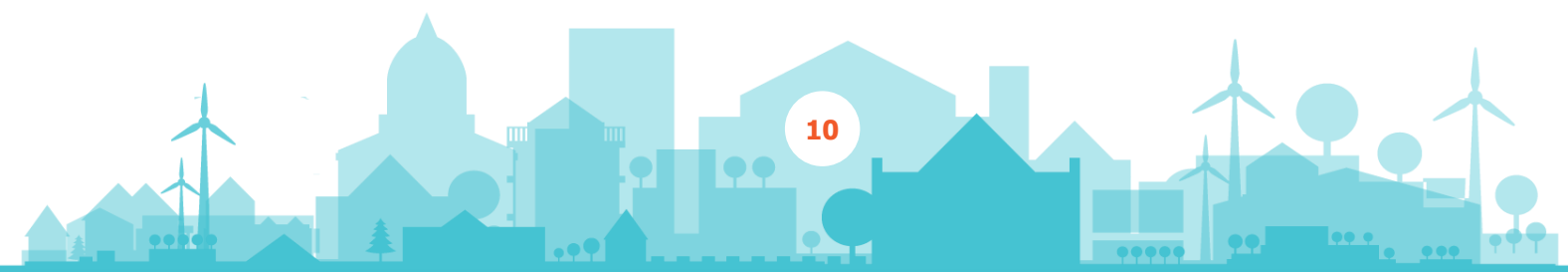
More important is for the partnership to be “balanced geographically and between Commission, Member States, Urban Areas and other stakeholders. With regards to the Urban Areas, there should be a representation of both ‘bigger’ and ‘small and medium’ cities”.

Please consult the [Background Document](#) for more information about eligibility and selection criteria.

5. THE ORGANISATION OF THE PARTNERSHIPS

5.1 What is the duration of a Thematic Partnership?

“The timeframe of each Partnership to achieve results is about three years. After these three years, the Partnership will present its results to the DG meeting. Thematic Partnerships may then be terminated or continued if deemed necessary and on decision by the partners” ([Pact of Amsterdam](#), 2016).



5.2 What is the estimated workload for each partner?

For the duration of the partnership (3 years, with a potential extension), it is estimated that **a Partner** would need to devote **between 0,25 to 0,75 days per week**. For a **Coordinator**, this **estimation is 0,5 to 1,5 day per week**. Keep in mind these are only estimations, and the workload might differ depending on the time of year and milestones. In some periods the workload might be higher and in other periods it might be lower.

5.3 How many meetings will the UAEU Partnership organise?

The number of meetings that will be organised is subject to the decision of the UAEU Partnership members. According to section III on Practicalities of the [Pact of Amsterdam](#): 'Each Partnership will decide how often it convenes. During the stocktaking phase, the Partnership may meet once every two months. In other stages, the Partnership could meet at least every six months to debate progress on the Action Plan.'

There are usually around 2 in-person meetings organised per year, additional meetings are mainly online. It is up to the partners of the UAEU Partnerships to decide the format they wish to apply to their meetings. However, in-person meetings are beneficial, and they must be included in the set-up. For cities/urban authorities of up to 500.000 inhabitants travel and accommodation is covered by EUI (see question 2.3 and 2.4).

5.4 Do different types of stakeholders have different roles or expectations?

Thematic Partnerships are flat and informal structures aiming to create a space for exchange and collaboration between different stakeholders from different levels of governance, sectors and geographical locations. Applicants applying to the Call for Partners are evaluated based on the same set of criteria, independent from what category of stakeholders they belong to. In practice, this means a regional authority, a university, an NGO, a national agency and a city are expected to contribute on equal basis (in line with their capacities). In case a member is not committing to the work of the partnership, the member might lose their membership.

5.5 Do Directorates-General of the European Commission participate in the Urban Agenda Partnership?

Yes, the European Commission (EC) is represented in all the Urban Agenda Partnerships through different Directorates-General (DG). Representatives from the DGs contribute with valuable knowledge and expertise from the European Commission on policies, legislation and funding. The participation of the DGs in the partnerships create a unique opportunity for cities, regions and other stakeholders to work directly with representatives of the EC on a common output.

6. THE EXPECTED OUTPUTS OF A PARTNERSHIP

6.1 What examples can illustrate the process and the added value of being part of the UAEU Partnerships?

The partnership approach provides the framework for implementing the Urban Agenda. While the Urban Agenda and its outcomes are legally non-binding, the new mechanism helps anchor the policy across a wide range of actors and spatial scales.

Below are some resources to help you explore the impact and results of the UAEU partnerships:

- Inform yourself about the composition, the action plans and the outputs of the ongoing and recently closed Thematic Partnerships on their dedicated website: [Water Sensitive City](#), [Building Decarbonisation](#), [Cities of Equality](#), [Food](#), [Sustainable Tourism](#), [Greening Cities](#), [Culture and Cultural Heritage](#), [Public Procurement](#), [Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees](#)
- Outputs of closed and ongoing [Urban Agenda partnerships on Portico](#).
- The Monitoring Table of Actions for the Urban Agenda for the EU offers a thorough overview of initiatives carried out by the Thematic Partnerships. [Consult the Monitoring Table of Actions](#)
- Read the latest news on the Urban Agenda and the Partnerships' progress
 - Explore the landscape of outputs of Urban Agenda partnerships: [From policy to practice: a landscape of outputs from the Urban Agenda Partnerships](#)
 - Updates from the Sustainable Tourism Partnership: [Resetting the compass: sustainable tourism pathways for Europe's future](#)
 - Updates from the Greening Cities Partnership: [Financing the future: a common challenge across Urban Agenda Partnerships](#)
 - UAEU article following Cities Forum: [Unlocking urban potential through European Cooperation – The Urban Agenda at Cities Forum 2025](#)
- [Studies regarding the implementation of the UAEU](#)
- Video of the thematic partnership Coordinator testimonials to get a feeling of the success of the partnership's activities:
 - [Urban Agenda for the EU Thematic Partnerships](#)
 - [Water Sensitive City](#)
 - [Building Decarbonisation](#)

7. EUI SUPPORT ACTIVITIES FOR CITIES:

7.1 Is there a link between the Compact Cities Thematic Partnership and the EUI Innovative Actions Call 4?

The topics and the format for the next EUI Innovative Actions Call 4 are not known yet. Moreover, participation in the Thematic Partnerships does not guarantee qualification for funding under EUI Innovative Actions. Nevertheless, synergies can indeed arise between the topics for Innovative Actions and the UAEU Thematic Partnerships.

7.2 How can Partnership participants benefit from additional EUI support?

EUI aims to enhance and strengthen cities' abilities to develop Sustainable Urban Development policies, strategies, and practices in a collaborative and inclusive manner.

Complementary support to cities is provided through EUI capacity building offers e.g.:

- Apply for a [City-to-City exchange](#) to get inspiration from other European cities facing similar problem
- For more information about Capacity Building offers for cities click [here](#)

Furthermore, EUI has established a network of national [Urban Contact Points \(UCP\)](#). These contact points help connecting UAEU members with local, regional and national urban stakeholders to increase visibility and promote partnership results and achievements.