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ANNEX

Work programme for 2021-2022 for the European Urban Initiative

1. Introduction

The European Urban Initiative (EUI) constitutes a part of Cohesion policy's support to sustainable urban development in the 2021-2027 period. The objectives of the EUI are to strengthen integrated and participatory approaches to sustainable urban development and to provide a stronger link to EU policies and, in particular, to Cohesion policy.

On the basis of the objectives set out in Regulation (EU) 2021/1058, and in particular Article 12 thereof, this multiannual work programme contains the actions to be financed and the budget breakdown for the years 2021 and 2022 as follows:

- a) for grants (implemented under direct management) (point 2): N/A,
- b) for prizes (implemented under direct management (point 3): N/A,
- c) for procurement (implemented under direct management) (point 4): N/A,
- d) for actions implemented under indirect management: point 5,
- e) for contributions to trust funds (point 6): N/A,
- f) for financial instruments (point 7): N/A,
- g) for contributions to blending facilities (point 8): N/A,
- h) for other actions or expenditure (point 9): N/A.

Legal basis

Article 12 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

Budget line

05.0203 – European Urban Initiative

Objectives pursued

The multiannual work programme for 2021-2022 for the EUI aims to provide coherent support to cities by supporting innovative actions, capacity and knowledge building, territorial impact assessments, policy development and communication in the area of sustainable urban development.

The work programme shall also support the Urban Agenda for the EU. Upon request from one or more Member States, the work programme may also support inter-governmental cooperation on urban matters.
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The support under the work programme shall cover all urban areas, including functional urban areas. The final beneficiaries are mainly urban policymakers and practitioners at all
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levels of government, and in particular cities of all sizes.

In accordance with Regulation (EU) 2021/1058, this work programme consists of, with regard to sustainable urban development, the following two strands:

(a) support of innovative actions;

(b) support of capacity and knowledge building, territorial impact assessments, policy development and communication.

Strand (a) targets the testing of transferable and scalable innovative solutions to address issues relating to sustainable urban development at Union level. It also aims at collecting and sharing results from these experimentations, and at supporting transfer activities with the ultimate goal to foster innovation capabilities and knowledge building for all EU urban areas and to mainstream proof-tested innovative solutions to sustainable urban development challenges, as referred to in Article 11 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1058.

Strand (b) targets two areas of activities. The support of capacity building (sub-strand b.1) is focused on improving the capacities of cities in the design of sustainable urban development policies, strategies, and practices in an integrated and participative way. It also improves the design and implementation of sustainable urban development policies, strategies, and action plans in cities. The support of knowledge building, territorial impact assessments, policy development and communication (sub-strand b.2) is centred on the development of a knowledge base in support of better sustainable urban development policy and strategy design, implementation and mainstreaming. It also ensures easier access to horizontal and thematic knowledge and shares know-how on sustainable urban development. In addition, support to the Urban Agenda for the EU, and possible support to the intergovernmental cooperation on urban matters are foreseen under sub-strand b.2.

When implementing activities under strands (a) and (b), the aim is to create an effective value-chain between them in view of achieving stronger coordination, synergies and complementarities between the urban support tools for the benefit of cities in Europe.

The multiannual work programme takes into account that appropriate coordination and complementarities with the dedicated programme URBACT IV under Article 3, point (3)(b) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 (Interreg Regulation) dealing with sustainable urban development are ensured. This work programme also seeks complementarities and synergies with the other pertinent EU initiatives.

Expected results

The activities of the EUI will contribute to the strengthened integrated and participatory approach to sustainable urban development, and to the creation of a stronger link to EU policies and, in particular, to Cohesion policy. The support of innovative actions will result in the increased innovation capabilities and profiles of cities in Europe as well as in the improved deployment and transfer of proof-tested urban innovations across the EU. The support of capacity building will improve the capacities of cities in the design and implementation of sustainable urban development policies and strategies in an integrated and participative way. These sustainable urban development strategies should take into account their impact and spill over effects in the surrounding territories. It will also result in the enhanced quality of sustainable urban development policies and strategies and related investments. The support of knowledge building and policy development will improve the access of urban policymakers and practitioners to consolidated knowledge for evidence-based policymaking. The activities will also result in the maximised profile and visibility of

the EUI by communicating its activities to the widest possible audience. More cities of all sizes, especially small and medium-sized cities, will know about the EUI support available and will benefit from its services.

The progress in implementing the work programme will be measured with indicators in the following overarching dimensions:

- Innovative actions
- Capacity building
- Knowledge building and policy development
- Support to the Urban Agenda for the EU and possible support to intergovernmental cooperation on urban matters
- Communication
- Value chain between different parts of the EUI (strands (a) and (b)) and urban areas as under Article 11 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1058.

Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming

In accordance with Article 5(1) of the CPR, the EUI (as supported by the ERDF) shall support the policy objective ‘a greener, low-carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy and resilient Europe by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate change mitigation and adaptation, risk prevention and management, and sustainable urban mobility’.

Also, as a support to the Urban Agenda for the EU, the EUI shall support participation of local authorities in the thematic partnerships under the Urban Agenda for the EU, thus contributing to partnerships with themes addressing green priorities.

As the actions of the EUI, in accordance with the CPR, are designed to support the objectives of the Funds, in combination with the objectives of the Urban Agenda to the EU, they will contribute to the establishment of climate and biodiversity mainstreaming.

2. Grants

N/A

3. Prizes

N/A

4. Procurement

N/A

5. *Actions implemented in indirect management*

5.1. **European Urban Initiative implemented under indirect management**

Implementing entity

The EUI is to be implemented under indirect management in accordance with Article 7(2) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060, Article 12(1) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 and point (c) of Article 62(1) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046.

In compliance with Article 154(1) of the Financial Regulation, the Commission organised a call for expressions of interest¹ for the indirect management of the EUI between 5 May and 5 July 2021. As the entrustment of indirect management tasks requires the designated entity to have proper financial and operational capacities, and in the specific case of the EUI, a demonstrated track record in managing resources from the ERDF in several countries, the call was restricted to managing authorities of interregional and/or transnational ERDF programmes of the 2014-2020 period.

On 23 July 2021, the French Région Hauts-de-France was selected as a result of this call and is currently subject to the assessment set out in Article 154(4) of the Financial Regulation in view of the signature of a contribution agreement entrusting them with tasks for the indirect management of the EUI.

Description

Strand a - Support of Innovative Actions

Under this strand, the entrusted entity will organise calls for proposals taking into account themes defined by Commission services on a regular basis, in view of the Urban agenda for the EU and of the EU strategic priorities, such as the green and digital transitions. The first call for proposals to be launched at European level in 2022 will notably support the New European Bauhaus initiative. The following authorities will be able to apply for innovative actions support:

- any urban authority of a local administrative unit defined according to the degree of urbanisation as city, town or suburb and comprising at least 50 000 inhabitants;
- any association or grouping of urban authorities of local administrative units defined according to the degree of urbanisation as city, town or suburb where the total population is at least 50 000 inhabitants. This can include functional urban areas and cross-border associations or groupings, associations or groupings in different regions and/or Member States.

The entrusted entity will select the innovative actions on the basis of the recommendations of an expert panel and in agreement with the Commission. The amount granted to each innovative action shall not exceed EUR 5 000 000 and must be implemented within a maximum period of four years. A ‘Seal of excellence’ type of quality label may be granted to facilitate access to alternative sources of funding (in particular from Cohesion policy programmes) to positively assessed proposals not selected only due to insufficient budgets under the EUI calls. Under this strand, the entrusted entity will also work in close cooperation with the managing authority of URBACT IV for the establishment and functioning, with funding from that interregional programme, of a transfer mechanism of

¹ As published on 5 May 2021 on [Publication of Calls for expressions of interest - DG REGIO - Regional Policy - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)

successful Urban Innovative Actions (2014-2020) and EUI-Innovative Actions (2021-2027) in view of their wider transnational deployment across the EU.

Strand b.1. - Support of capacity building

1. Establishment of a technical coordination mechanism with URBACT IV

Under this activity area, the entrusted entity will prepare the cooperation with the URBACT IV managing authority that enables the coordination and complementarities between the EUI and URBACT IV in the operational delivery of activities. Such preparatory activities will result in a ‘technical coordination mechanism’ between the EUI and URBACT IV.

2. Peerlearning

Under this activity area, the entrusted entity will prepare the content and procedural practices of peer learning activities including a review of the existing peer learning tools. Based on the inventory, the tools/modules for peer learning activities will be designed. After the preparatory phase, the entrusted entity will implement peerlearning activities (city2city exchanges and peer reviews).

3. Urban Development Network (UDN)-type of capacity building

Under this activity area, the entrusted entity will prepare the Urban Development Network (UDN)-type of activities. The entity will then implement the UDN activities which comprise the organisation of events that are either country-specific, cluster of Member States-specific, or EU-wide. In addition, the supporting material (handbooks, toolkits, videos, etc.) aimed at building the capacities of cities as well as benchmarking good practices are to be prepared by the entrusted entity. In the long-term, this activity will result in the setting up of a ‘capacity building community’/‘space for exchange’ on sustainable urban development with all the relevant stakeholders.

Strand b.2. - Support of knowledge building, territorial impact assessments, policy development and communication

1. Establishment and functioning of a network of Urban Contact Points (UCPs)

Under this activity area, the entrusted entity will prepare a Terms of Reference for the establishment of the Urban Contact Points (UCP) network that describes the detailed tasks of the UCPs (each Member State will be requested to appoint an entity to participate in the UCP network that is best capable at national level to fulfil its tasks). In parallel with the appointment process of the UCPs, the entrusted entity will prepare the activities of the UCP network. Once the UCP network is in place, the entrusted entity will manage the activities of the network and provide support for these activities.

2. Establishment and functioning of a Knowledge Sharing Platform

Under this activity area, the entrusted entity will design and set up a EUI web-portal section for the Knowledge Sharing Platform based on the conceptual specifications provided by the Commission. The entity will then maintain and develop further the Platform that hosts outputs of the other EUI activities and provides inputs for them, carries out knowledge collection, consolidation and data mining as well as information and knowledge sharing. The entrusted entity will also design (based on the specifications provided by the Commission and on the final approval of the Commission) and implement a forward-looking biennial survey on the pressing urban challenges and support needs of cities.

3. Capitalisation of knowledge in support of evidence and experience-based policymaking

Under this activity area, the entrusted entity will prepare the capitalisation of knowledge activities. The entity will then implement the activities, which comprise the organisation of ‘Knowledge for Policy Labs’ and ‘Focused Policy Labs’, as well as the preparation of ‘Thematic Reviews for Policy’ (policy briefs).

4. Communication and dissemination

Under this activity area, the entrusted entity will prepare a communication and dissemination strategy accompanied with an annual activity plan. The entity will then implement the communication and dissemination activities (e.g. design, setting up and maintenance of the EUI web-portal, organisation of the EUI launch event/other events, preparation of generic and specific communication and dissemination material).

5. Support to the Urban Agenda for the EU and the intergovernmental cooperation on urban matters

Under this activity area, the entrusted entity will operationalise the support to the Urban Agenda for the EU and the support to the intergovernmental cooperation on urban matters that has been agreed by the Commission and the intergovernmental cooperation actors. The entrusted entity will then implement the support activities for the two groupings.

Horizontal activities

Setting up of the EUI monitoring system and reporting

Under this activity area, the entrusted entity will prepare the EUI monitoring system for the 2021-2027 programming period, and will then implement the system. The monitoring system will capture, through its key performance indicators, the outputs, results and impacts of the EUI in relation to its overall and specific objectives. The entrusted entity will also set up the system for reporting (including the contribution to the Commission’s biennial report to the European Parliament and to the Council, annual EUI work programmes and implementation reports).

Governance system

Under this activity area, the entrusted entity will set up a secretariat for the indirect management of the initiative to carry out the day-to-day activities of the EUI including the support to the EUI governance structure. The secretariat will also deliver the support to the Urban Agenda for the EU, and to the intergovernmental cooperation on urban matters within the scope defined by the Commission.

6. Trust funds

N/A

7. Financial instruments implemented in direct or indirect management

N/A

8. Contribution to blending facilities

N/A

9. Other actions or expenditure

N/A