
CITY-TO-CITY REGION-TO-REGION

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) EU Cities & Regions applying to IURC

IURC Central Coordination Service



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1. General Questions: What is it? How does it work? ...

Question	Answer
1.1 What is the IURC programme and who finances it?	<p>Implemented since 2017, the European Union's International Urban Cooperation (first phase) programme has become the world's largest city-to-city (C2C) cooperation programme involving 165 cities from the EU and non-EU countries in North- and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), Asia and South Asia.</p> <p>Complemented by 40 regions from Europe and LAC cooperation on Smart Specialisation Strategies, the IUC is an example of the way local and regional authorities can more effectively achieve their goals in partnership with the key stakeholders including research, business and civil society (quadruple helix).</p> <p>The new phase of the programme launched in early 2021 and now called International Urban and Regional Cooperation Programme (IURC) aims to capitalise on the results and lessons learned from the first phase with the aim to optimise the added-value of international cooperation, transforming the new programme into an international network of reference for urban & regional innovation and sustainable urban development.</p> <p>IURC will have two components or thematic strands of cooperation, notably city-to-city cooperation in the field of sustainable urban development and region-to-region cooperation in the field of innovation.</p> <p>The programme, financed under the EU Partnership Instrument and benefiting from the strategic support of the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy of the European Commission, will contribute to the objectives of the <u>New Urban Agenda</u>, the <u>Agenda 2030 (SDGs)</u>, the <u>Urban Agenda for the EU</u> and the <u>political objectives of the European Cohesion Policy</u>, through city-to-city diplomacy and collaborative regional efforts to overcome common challenges.</p>

1.2 How does it work?	<p>Successful applicants from the EU will be matched with partner cities and regions in one of the Geographical Areas (GA)¹ of the programme, which is tackling similar sustainable urban development and innovation challenges. The selection and matching process will take place in the spring and summer 2021. Participating cities will become part of a wide community of peers and stakeholders engaging in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ <u>GLOBAL NETWORK</u>: Thematic and Networking Events, technical sessions and trainings on specific topics will be organised in person and virtually across the international programme. Through this Global Network, cities/regions and key stakeholders will meet with other cities/regions working on the same sustainable urban development/innovation topics. ⇒ <u>ONE-TO-ONE PAIRINGS</u>: Selected cities and regions from the Member States of the EU will be matched with non-EU cities and regions from the designate GA based on a range of selection criteria including shared interests in one or more of the cooperation themes of the programme. Representatives from a participating city/region will take part in <u>learning exchanges, knowledge sharing and capacity building activities</u> (e.g. study visits, site visits, trainings, networking and thematic events) and will develop an action plan together which will serve as a road map over the course of cooperation including actions and pilot projects that can produce transferable results. ⇒ <u>CLUSTERS</u>: Pairings will have the opportunity to form small clusters with (groups of cities/regional pairings) to share solutions and knowledge on similar challenges and topics of cooperation <u>within the same GA</u>.
1.3 How long is the cooperation intended to last?	<p>The cooperation will last at least <u>18-24 months</u></p> <p>The programme encourages cities and regions to continue their cooperation beyond this time, such that they themselves commit appropriate resources to continue a rewarding cooperation into the future.</p>
1.4 When does it start?	<p>Indicatively, city/region pairings or clusters are expected to kick off their cooperation activities in <u>September – October 2021</u>.</p>

¹ IURC Geographical Areas (GA) are **ASIA**: China –**ASIA-AUSTRALASIA**: *South Asia*: India, East Asia: Japan, Republic of Korea; *South East Asia*: Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam; *Pacific* :Australia and New Zealand , **Latin America**: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Mexico, Peru , and **North America** Canada and the United States.

1.5 How broad or narrow are the cooperation topic(s) expected to be?	<p>The areas for cooperation are pre-defined by the programme in <u>Thematic Networks and related sub-themes</u> (see table on p.8-9). Cities/regions must select their preferred themes and subthemes in the application. Cities/regions will be matched – <i>as much as possible</i> – according to these preferences and interests. Once pairings and clusters begin cooperating together they can further refine their specific topics according to their relevant needs, strengths and interests.</p>
1.6 What are the expected results from our participation in the programme?	<p>One of the main objectives of the programme is to show concrete progress and impact resulting directly from bilateral and multilateral cooperation on the pre-defined themes and sub-themes of the programme.</p> <p>The concrete focus and roadmap for the cooperation will be set out in Urban or Regional Cooperation Action Plans - a shared template where objectives are identified and actions are planned with the aim creating policy and practice under chosen thematic priorities including joint pilot projects and to contributions to best practice.</p> <p>Pairings and clusters will also be expected to gather lessons learned and case studies which can be successfully capitalised and mainstreamed.</p>
1.7 Can a city or region apply from more than one department or policy area?	<p>Cites/regions are expected to coordinate internally and submit only one application.</p> <p>In the case that more than one application is submitted from different departments and specifying preferences for different GA and regions to partner with, then these applications will be evaluated accordingly.</p>
1.8 Is it possible that we will work in one-to one pairings and in thematic clusters?	<p>Yes. Initially all successful applicants from EU cities /regions will be paired one-to-one with a non-EU city/region according to several criteria and as much as possible considering their shared sustainable urban development / innovation challenges. If there are several pairings in your GA that are working on similar challenges then they will have the opportunity to form a small cluster to collaborate together and share best practice and knowledge.</p>

2. Costs & Funding

Question	Answer
2.1 Which costs are covered by the programme?	<p>The programme covers travel costs for two study visits (one from the EU delegation to the non-EU counterpart and vice versa): round-trip economy class flights, visa application costs, arrival and departure transfers at destination (where needed), accommodation and meals. Translation support may be available if needed</p> <p>Also, a pairing manager (or similar support) from the programme will be assigned to support and facilitate the cooperation process for each pairing and cluster.</p>
2.2 How many people are sponsored to participate in the study visits?	<p>It is expected that up to <u>4 international trips</u> from each EU city/region will be covered, depending on the pairing/clustering options and GA specificities. Also, one representative from each participating EU city/region will be sponsored to attend the annual IURC global event in Brussels.</p> <p>Within the final composition of the delegation participating in the study visits, it is highly recommended to include a quadruple helix balance (government, business, academia, civil society) if relevant to the topic of cooperation.</p>
2.3 Is my city expected to pay any direct costs?	<p>No. However, your city/region must commit to providing human resources (e.g. time from staff members as required) to support the cooperation process.</p> <p>Also hosts cities may offer to provide for some hospitality costs such as local transport, coffee breaks, or a welcome dinner for the study visits.</p>
2.4 Is there any funding provided to implement pilot action or projects?	<p>No. <u>The IURC programme does not supply funding of these pilot projects</u> however in some cases seed funding to co-finance short term actions may be available through competitive funds or similar instruments. The amount will be defined in the course of implementation. Further, the IURC teams will provide information on possible financing sources in Europe as well as in the GA.</p>

3. Eligibility Requirements & Call Procedures

Question	Answer
3.1 Who is eligible to apply?	<p>For City-to-City Cooperation: Applicants from cities, Metropolitan Areas or Functional Areas in EU member states are welcome to apply.</p> <p>For Region-to-Region Cooperation, regional governments or authorities from EU member states can apply.</p>
3.2 Are there population limitations for applications?	<p>For City-to-City Cooperation: EU cities, Metropolitan Areas or Functional Areas with more than <u>100,000 inhabitants</u> are eligible to apply. In the case of an MA or FA then a lead entity or city would need to be designated.</p>
3.3 When will the call be open for EU cities to apply?	<p>The call opens on 14th April 2021 and closes at midnight CET on 31st May 2021.</p> <p>Selected cities and regions are expected to be notified between July and September 2021</p>

4. Application Process

Question	Answer
4.1 What are the steps for EU cities applying for the programme? <i>NB: Please note that a high score on the application does not automatically guarantee a participation to the programme. Once applications are assessed, successful cities and regions need to be paired with available eligible non-EU cities/regions</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make sure your city/region is eligible according the information provided presented in this FAQs and in the application form. 2. Complete the <u>application form for cities or regions</u>. 3. Applicants are expected to be notified if they have been selected or not in between July and September 2021 4. Cities/regions and their partners will initiate work together in September-October through online meetings. The first step will be signing a high-level <u>Partnership Agreement</u> in the form of a Protocol, letter of intent, MoU or similar document, (following a programme template), and agree on specific topics of cooperation. 5. In-person exchanges could be expected for 2022 though their implementation will largely depend on pandemic-related travel restrictions.
4.2 Will we be matched according to our preferred themes of	Not necessarily. Though the matching process aims to accommodate preferences, the main priority of the programme is to match cities/regions according to their preferred themes and

cooperation and Geographical Areas indicated in our application?	sub-themes as well as mutual challenges, similar characteristics, etc.
4.3 If our city participated in the IUC programme (first phase), can we apply to work again with the same partner?	EU Cities/Regions that participated in the first phase of the programme (IUC) and are now applying to IURC (if selected) may be paired with a new counterpart to extend their networking possibilities. However, it may be possible to continue their cooperation with their former pair in exceptional cases where joint actions are under development or in a thematic cluster and/or through thematic networking events. <i>*However an exception may be made on a case-by-case basis for the few city pairings from the first phase (IUC) which were affected by the Covid-19 travel restrictions and demonstrated commitment developing an action plan and defining concrete activities</i>
4.4 What profile and experience should the main contact /coordinator from the city or region have?	The main contact / coordinator should ideally have a solid track-record of experience in international cooperation and should be able to act as a delegate for decision-making on the activities of the project and be able to represent your city or region at international meetings and events. The designated person needs to be fluent in English unless your city or region is matched with city or region that shares your language. In any case, your team needs to have at least one person who can participate in international events in English.
4.5 For City Applicants only: Is it important to have a Sustainable Urban Development Strategy (e.g. Article 7 of the EDRF or similar) which is in alignment with challenges that we want to exchange on ?	Yes. The IURC intends to support the implementation of integrated strategies to urban sustainability per the New Leipzig Charter. Your city should have a whole city strategy for sustainable urban development.

This is an alive document that will be permanently being update with your questions. If you need further information, please do not hesitate to contact us at

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Annex: Thematic Networks & Cross Cutting Overall Challenges

Thematic Network 1:

ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION- GREEN DEAL (a greener Europe)



Synergies

- Circular Economy, waste management, plastic
- Nature Based Solutions, greening, water management,
- Sustainable urban agriculture, healthy food, urban gardens
- Renovation Wave, decarbonized & energy efficiency in buildings
- Sustainable urban agriculture, Agrofood Chain, Foods Systems, Technologies 4.0

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Thematic Network 2:

URBAN AND REGIONAL RENEVAL- URBAN POVERTY (A more connected & social Europe)



Synergies

- Urban Agendas/planning, SUD Strategies, public space, urban model (eg. 15 min. vision)
- Mobility & Transport, street for people, superblocks, metropolitan connections
- Urban Poverty, deprived neighbourhoods, housing, social cohesion
- Industry 5.0 (Regions) bigger Competitiveness, Productive Diversification

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Thematic Network 3:

INNOVATIVE, SUSTAINABLE & CARBON NEUTRAL ECOSYSTEMS AND STRATEGIC SECTORS (A smarter Europe)



CROSS-CUTTING OVERLAP CHALLENGES

