European Programme
for urban sustainable
development

European Union
European Regional Development Fund

The URBACT II Local Support Group Toolkit

a guide on creating Local Action Plans

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Local Action Plans

This document will be translated into the local language of all URBACT II Local Support
Groups in early 2009

Downloadable as a Pdf file from:
http://urbact.eu/footer/documentation/projects-documents/local-support-groups.html

Photographs courtesy of John Thompson & Partners, Nick Wates Associates, URBACT and
Von Zadow. Please note that images are indicative only and do not all show URBACT projects.
See page 40 for locations and sources.

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Foreword

by **Dirk Ahner**
Director-General
for Regional Policy,
European Union

Cities are everywhere in Europe, and the vast majority of Europeans live and work in urban areas. Today, over 70% of the European citizens live in urban areas.[1] From big metropolises like London and Paris to small market towns in rural areas, the continent has a significantly high share of city dwellers. The recently published Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion[2] underlines the fact that Europe is characterized by remarkable urban structure, comprising cities of all sizes and types.

Most jobs, businesses and higher education institutions are to be found in urban areas. Cities are key locations in which to achieve greater competitiveness and create more and better jobs. At the same time, they not only concentrate

Making meetings better
Post-it board at a workshop to produce an action plan helps make the process more interesting, inclusive and productive.

opportunities but also challenges, such as social exclusion and environmental degradation.

Complex challenges in urban areas require versatile cross-sectoral solutions. Integrated urban development seeks to coordinate the different sectoral policies having an impact on cities and on city dwellers. The European Union's URBAN Community Initiative Programmes from the years 1994 to 2006 clearly illustrate that the integration and combination of many different but complementary actions can result in more than just the sum of single pieces. Designed and implemented beyond sectoral thinking and traditional administrative schemes, integrated operations signify a real European added value – for the benefit of our regions, cities and their inhabitants.

It is one of EU Cohesion Policy's main challenges to activate the full potential of European regions and cities – and to bring Europe to its citizens. I am convinced that only those strategies which show strong local involvement and sufficient public participation in their design and delivery will be sustainable, effective and supported by society at large. Citizens need to play an active role in shaping their immediate living environment.

The URBACT II Programme confirms this important idea on different levels. Not only by creating strong ties between cities and their Managing Authorities, but also by introducing Local Support Groups as important elements in all Thematic Networks and Working Groups. Within these partnerships, local, regional and national stakeholders as well as the European Commission are joining forces in developing European cities in an integrated and sustainable way.

Cooperation in, among and for our cities can be an effective tool to move towards the ambitious goals we have set ourselves. I am convinced that the URBACT II Programme and all the cities involved will make a valuable contribution to this.

1. *According to DG REGIO calculations based on the Urban Audit and the urban morphological zones of the EEA, 71% of the EU population lives in urban agglomerations, cities or towns of more than 5 000 inhabitants. www.urbanaudit.org.*
2. *Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion: Turning territorial diversity into strength. Communication from the Commission to the Council, the Parliament, the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee of 6 October 2008 {SEC(2008) 2550}.*

Using this toolkit

This toolkit has been produced mainly to help those involved with the URBACT II projects to produce the Local Action Plans which are a key part of the Programme. It is aimed at:

• Members of URBACT Local Support Groups throughout Europe
• Others interested in the URBACT Programme

It will also be useful to anyone wanting to produce an action plan.

There are three main sections:

1. Information about the URBACT Programme, including the role of Local Support Groups and Local Action Plans;

2. Guidance and tools to help in preparing a Local Action Plan;

3. A resources section providing references to additional useful information sources and a glossary explaining simply the meaning of terms used in this document.

This toolkit should be used for inspiration and is not intended to be too prescriptive or restrictive. We acknowledge a variety of working cultures and public participation practices across Europe, and therefore in the various URBACT II Local Support Groups. Hopefully this toolkit will be useful in some way to all LSG members, but degrees of familiarity or even interest in such methods, tools and issues may vary widely. Each local group faces different challenges and different cultural contexts and will want to adapt the guidance to suit their specific circumstances.

Any comments or suggestions for improving future editions of this toolkit will be appreciated and should be sent to:
Shandi Miller s.miller@urbact.eu or Melody Houk m.houk@urbact.eu

Book features
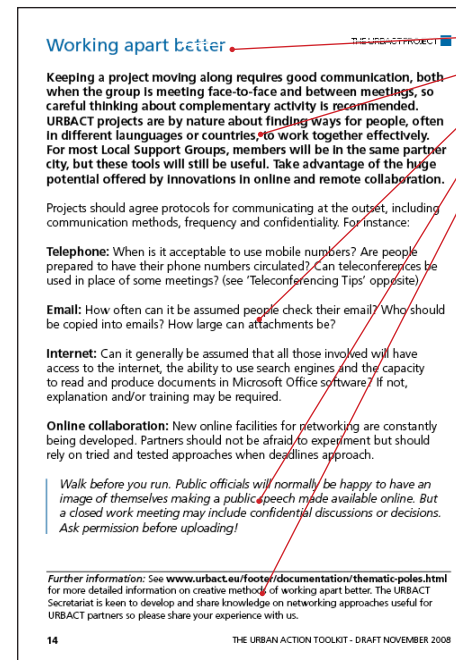
Structured main pages
Title of method / subject – in section colour
Purpose – in bold type
Features – in plain type
Tips – inset in italics with bar
Further information – at bottom of page
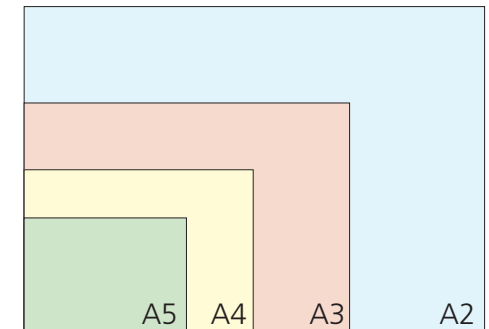
Modular format
Copy pages as exhibition posters or leaflets (no copyright problems providing you credit the source).

Charts and templates
Tables used in action planning completed (in blue script) with hypothetical examples.
Blank templates in Word can be downloaded from the URBACT website.

Linked website
Further information and updates on
http://urbact.eu/footer/documentation/ projects-documents/local-support-groups.html

The URBACT Programme

URBACT II is a Programme funded by the European Union (European Regional Development Fund) and national contributions, which runs from 2007 to 2013. It follows on from URBACT I which ran from 2002 to 2006.

The overall objective is to promote sustainable, integrated urban development policies throughout Europe. Urban areas face major challenges of dealing with poverty and managing integration but at the same time they are the drivers of the European economy and, in particular, of the new knowledge based industries. Exchange of experience between cities under the URBACT Programme helps to speed up the policy innovation process in each city. The involvement of diverse stakeholders – including economic and political actors and the general public – is essential.

Specifically, URBACT II aims to:

- **Facilitate the exchange of experience and learning** among city policy-makers, decision-makers and practitioners;
- **Disseminate good practice and lessons** drawn from these exchanges and ensure the transfer of know-how;
- **Assist city policy-makers and practitioners** (including managers of operational programmes) to define, and put into practice, Action Plans for sustainable urban development.

The Programme achieves this by helping to establish 'projects' - which can be Working Groups or Thematic Networks - on different urban issues. Each project has several partners (8-12 for Thematic Networks, 6-8 for Working Groups) from at least 3 different Partner or Member States. The partners may be cities, regional authorities, national authorities or universities and research centres. A few projects have been granted the 'Fast Track' label.

One of the main innovations in URBACT II is the requirement that each project partner (both city and non-city partners) establish a Local Support Group (LSG) and produce a Local Action Plan (LAP). This section of the toolkit explores what this means in practice.

Exchanging expertise on urbanism
Conferences, visits, collaborative working and local projects in cities throughout Europe.

Learning with others in URBACT

URBACT II Key facts

(Accurate as of 20 January 2009)
(prior to approval of Thematic Networks)

21	Thematic Networks (2 of which are Pilot Fast Track Networks)
6	Working Groups

Project partnerships:

181	Partner cities
18	Equivalent Public Bodies
7	Regional Authorities
1	National Authority
11	Universities
1	NGO

Thematic Network projects have a budget of €710,000 over 36 months; Working Group projects have a budget of €300,000 over 24 months.

URBACT II Themes

- Promoting entrepreneurship
- Improving innovation and knowledge economy
- Employment and human capital
- Integrated development of deprived areas and areas at risk of deprivation
- Inclusion
- Environmental issues
- Governance and urban planning

URBACT II Thematic Poles

1. Cities, engines of growth & job creation
2. Cities, social inclusion & governance
3. Cities & integrated, sustainable development

URBACT II Programme Timeline

First call for URBACT II Project Applications

- Launched (in December 2007)
- Declarations of Interest submitted (by February 2008)
- Approved by Monitoring Committee (in April 2008)

Development phase

(6 months for Thematic Networks, 4 months for Working Groups)

- Project development
- Partnerships finalised
- Production of baseline studies
- Initial composition of Local Support Groups (LSGs)
- Final Applications & contractual documents prepared (August to October 2008)
- All approved projects assigned to one of the three Thematic Poles
- Thematic Pole and URBACT Secretariat support to projects

Implementation phase

- Final approval for projects to enter Implementation phase (September 2008 for Working groups; November 2008 and January 2009 for Thematic networks)
- Exchange and learning activities
- LSGs meet regularly
- Development and production of Local Action Plans (LAPs)
- Thematic Poles coordinate capitalisation of project outputs
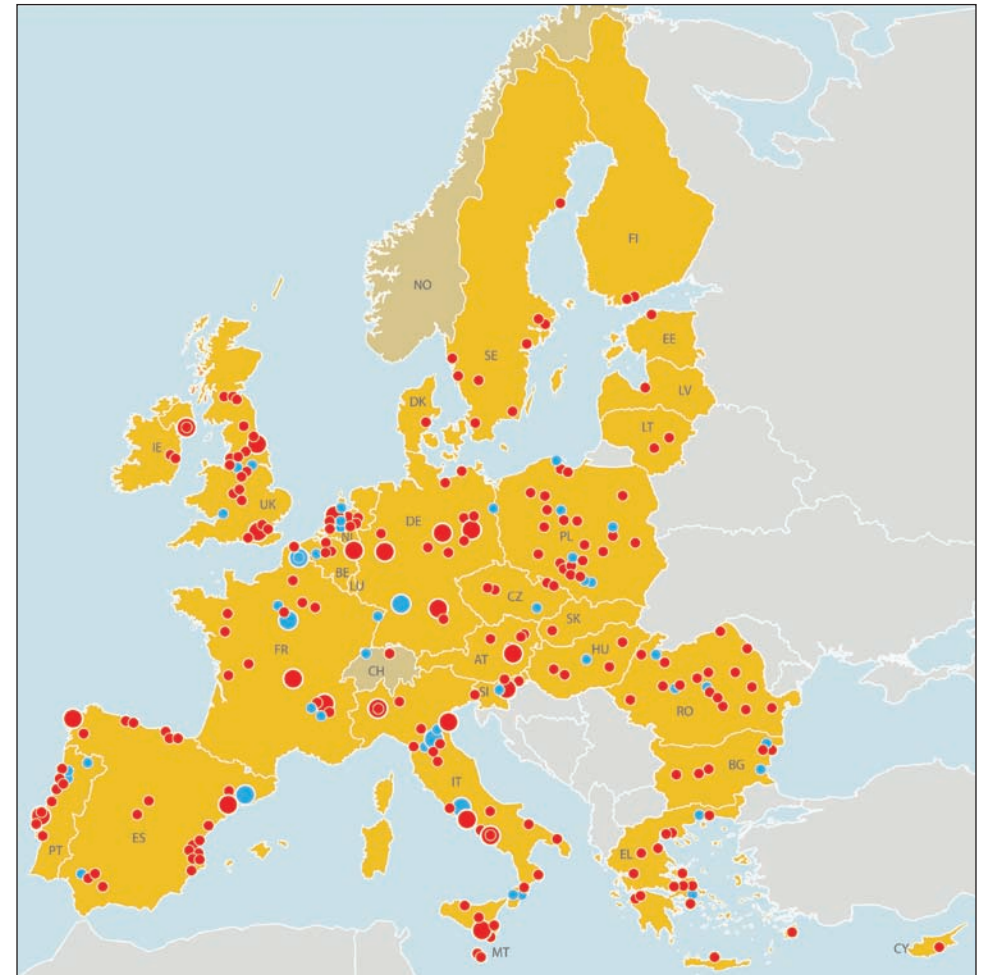
URBACT II partners - as of January 2009

Thematic networks:

- 🔴 Lead partners
- • Partners

Working Groups:

- 🔵 Lead partners
- • Partners

Further information:
www.urbact.eu for complete lists of all Thematic Networks and Working Groups and details on their partners and progress to date.

Local Support Groups

The URBACT programme requires each partner to set up a local support group (LSG). This group works to maximise the impact of the transnational exchange of practice between cities. LSGs can ensure that ideas emerging from the project are realistic and can test their viability at local level. They have the potential, as part of a European wide URBACT "community", to take key messages about managing sustainable cities to a far wider audience. They can mobilise stakeholders, define needs, and co-produce the Local Action Plan (LAP). They have the potential to become a long-lasting legacy once the URBACT project is finished.

The responsibility for building effective LSGs, bringing together appropriate stakeholders, rests firmly with each URBACT II partner.

The membership of each LSG will be tailored to suit the specific circumstances. There is no magic formula – a LSG's objectives, activities and composition depend upon the project topic, the nature of the exchange activities proposed and the nature of local needs and experience.

To help with the co-production of a LAP, the Group should involve some actors in a position to contribute to its design and implementation.

It can sometimes be relevant to involve Managing Authorities in LSGs. They might not take part in all activities but it is worth keeping them informed.

LSGs should be mobilised and reinforced during the project life-cycle, and eventually assume ownership of the outcomes.

> *Aim for quality rather than quantity. Go for a core group of motivated people rather than a large number of passive listeners.*
>
> *Build outwards from what already exists. Avoid duplicating or upsetting effective existing structures. In many cases a completely new group will be best, in others it may be better to "piggy-back" on existing structures.*
>
> *A core group of 10 people maximum is recommended. Where more people are interested, a larger open forum can be organised as well.*
>
> *Use stakeholder analysis (page 22) to ensure inclusion of key local players.*

Objectives
for Local Support Groups

- Help clarify the particular needs or concerns of the partner /'city' in relation to the Thematic Network or Working Group topic.
- Help identify (to mobilise and disseminate to stakeholders) what the city can offer to the project in the form of good practice, existing tools, site visits, policies and other experience. Help ensure that this knowledge is reflected in the base line study and the Local Action Plan.
- Help disseminate the findings of the project to a wider local audience and ensure that end-users have a voice in the decision-making process.
- Act as project champions and help to mobilise the political and institutional support required to ensure that the Local Action Plan leads to real change.

Tasks
for Local Support Groups

- Input to and/or validate the baseline study
- Work to develop the Local Action Plan
- Identify and/or validate project inputs or outputs such as case studies
- Take part in exchange activities through meetings and online contact.
- Periodic meetings, especially to contribute to partners' input to project seminars and to get feedback from seminars to ensure dissemination of results and outputs
- Comment on final outputs
- Test or pilot recommendations through the Local Action Plan
- Act as local project champions and lobby for changes
- Organise local dissemination events
- Obtain media coverage

Neighbourhood meeting

Further information:
See **http://urbact.eu/footer/ documentation/projects-documents/ local-support-groups.html** for additional Guidance Notes, tools and Action Plans produced by existing Local Support Groups

Working together better

The benefits of the URBACT Programme and of the Local Support Groups (LSGs) themselves will be maximised if all those involved work together as creatively as possible. Some bureaucractic procedures are necessary but should be kept to a minimum. LSGs are encouraged to make the most of the wide range of new methods for collaborative working now available.

The format and style of meetings and events should be carefully planned to provide a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere for participants as well as achieving the given objectives.

To run efficient 'meetings' (which can include teleconferences, or scheduled online collaborations, covered in the next section), an agenda should be circulated in advance, specifying if there are any additional documents to be printed or read beforehand. Following each meeting, a summary report should be circulated to all participants, as well as any members who were not able to participate or who will benefit from the information.

Good quality facilitation of meetings and events is essential to create the conditions necessary for effective participation and collaboration. Facilitation expertise needs to be recognised and may need to be procured.

In the case of Thematic Networks, LSGs each have a minimum budget of approximately €7,000 during the project's life-cycle of 36 months.* This can be used for capacity building purposes such as training of members, hiring facilitators, refreshments at meetings, translation of materials and travel.

> *Workshops where participants are treated as equals will often be more useful than formal meetings dominated by expert presentations.*

> *The success of the LSG will depend on many factors but a critical aspect is how well the meetings are run. Get all members to explore and discuss the way meetings themselves will be organised.*

* Thematic Networks are required by the Programme to allocate a minimum budget of €70,000 to its LSGs, split between an average of 10 partner LSGs.

Further information: See **http://urbact.eu/footer/documentation/projects-documents/local-support-groups.html** for links to information about creative methods of working.

Methods for working together
Some examples

Community planning events
Carefully structured collaborative events at which all stakeholders, including the local community, work closely with specialists from all relevant disciplines to make plans for the future of that community or some aspects of it. Can vary in length and format.

Hands-on planning
Method of community involvement where small groups make plans for the future using table top plans or flexible cardboard models.

Interactive displays
Visual displays which allow people to participate by making additions or alterations to them.

Open house events
Events designed to allow those promoting initiatives to present them to a wider public and secure reactions in an informal manner. Halfway between an exhibition and a workshop.

Reconnaissance trips
Direct inspection of area under consideration by mixed team of locals and technical experts. On foot or by bus. Also known as field visits or walkabouts.

Vision fair
Where people vote on their favourite visions. Vision statements or images are exhibited. People use coloured sticky dots to indicate which visions they would like to pursue. They may also make personal pledges to take action.

Better ways of working together
Reconnaissance trip; Hands-on planning; Post-it board in an interactive display.

Working apart better

Keeping a project moving along requires good communication, both when the group is meeting face-to-face and between meetings, so careful thinking about complementary activity is recommended. URBACT projects are by nature about finding ways for people, often in different languages or countries, to work together effectively. For most Local Support Groups, members will be in the same partner city, but these tools will still be useful. Take advantage of the huge potential offered by innovations in online and remote collaboration.

Groups should agree protocols for communicating at the outset, including communication methods, frequency and confidentiality. For instance:

Telephone: When is it acceptable to use mobile numbers? Are people prepared to have their phone numbers circulated? Can teleconferences be used in place of some meetings? (see 'Teleconferencing Tips' opposite)

Email: How often can it be assumed people check their email? Who should be copied into emails? How large can attachments be?

Internet: Can it generally be assumed that all those involved will have access to the internet, the ability to use search engines and the capacity to read and produce documents in Microsoft Office software? Training and induction will often be needed for new online tools and ways of working.

Online collaboration: New online facilities for networking (see 'Methods' box, opposite) are constantly being developed. Partners should not be afraid to experiment but should rely on tried and tested approaches when deadlines approach.

> *Agree appropriate protocols and levels of privacy – for example by asking permission before publishing potentially embarrassing photos on the internet or other details such as mobile phone numbers and email addresses!*

Further information: See **http://urbact.eu/footer/documentation/projects-documents/local-support-groups.html** for more detailed information on creative methods of working apart better. The URBACT Secretariat is keen to develop and share knowledge on networking approaches useful for URBACT partners so please share your experience with us.

Methods for working apart
Some examples

Email
Most straightforward way of communicating but danger of overload. Group software (social networking or project management) may be better.

Online file storage
Create an online library of shared documents for people to access (e.g. Google Groups or Yahoo Groups are two free, easy-to-use versions).

Project management software
Can reduce email traffic, provide forum space, host documents in central location and manage tasks (e.g. Zoho projects, Basecamp, Project Pier)

Skype
Free or cheap calls for teleconferencing by internet. Programme needs to be installed on all computers (administrator access often required) and may require some familiarization.

Teleconferencing
SImple to use, and can be useful at all stages. (see box below)

Online training platforms
To create / access training modules online.

Web 2.0 tools
Includes a range of new tools for sharing material and working online:
- Online forums and networking sites
- Crowdvine (for bookings and agendas for meetings)
- Delicious (for bookmarks)
- Flickr (for photos)
- Slideshare (for powerpoints)
- Surveymonkey (for online surveys)
- Weblogs and blogs (for opinion & news)
- Wikis (for editing and libraries)
- Youtube (for videoclips)

Teleconferencing tips

☐ Appoint a moderator / facilitator.

☐ Shop around to find best service.

☐ Ensure participants have technical capability.

☐ Schedule carefully to ensure people are free at the appointed time. Allow 5-10 mins for everyone to call in.

☐ Ensure equal participation (video for all or none)

☐ Prepare and circulate agenda by email in advance, including any websites or documents to be looked at beforehand.

☐ Send reminder text message and email 30 mins before the event.

☐ Allow 5 minutes at the start for people to dial in and connect

☐ Avoid over-long sessions (1 hour max)

☐ Record session for future reference (often a service provided).

The Local Action Plan

Local Action Plans (LAPs) should provide for each partner a concrete roadmap and a range of solutions to tackle the core issues identified at the start of the URBACT project. If funding is going to be sought from the Structural Funds the involvement of Managing Authorities is recommended. But there is no rigid definition of what a LAP has to be, and project partners and LSG members are encouraged to be creative in determining the best format for theirs.

Local Action Plans are a new dimension to the URBACT Programme. Drawing on the URBACT I experience, they are intended to:

- Improve the impact of transnational exchange and learning on local policies;

- Give concrete form to the outputs from networking activities carried out by partners;

- Be an instrument of further change.

Each URBACT II partner commits itself to developing its own LAP as an output of its participation in the Programme. LAPs will be co-produced by the URBACT II partner and the LSG made up of relevant local stakeholders.

The composition, territorial level addressed, and format will differ according to the type of partner. It may simply be an 'Action Plan' or a 'Regional Action Plan' rather than a 'Local Action Plan'. It may instead take the shape of a national policy framework or a strategic plan concerning a specific agency responsible for the issue addressed. In the case of non-city partners (such as universities or a group of researchers), the Action Plan may be comprised of the research components of an action research project, of methodological support to partners developing their LAP, or of a newly developed research programme related to the policies relevant to the project topic. Normally the LAP will be a written document, but it may be complemented by other media.

LAPs are likely to have most chance of being implemented if they have been produced and validated collaboratively by key local stakeholders , and with the involvement of the Managing Authorities.

A LAP may be put in place early enough so that its implementation can be monitored during the project, or it may be put in place afterwards. Regardless of when it will be implemented, the LSG and project partner are encouraged to decide when it will be implemented and why, and to foresee some sort of peer review of each LAP by all members of the project network during the project life-cycle.

The next section provides guidance on how to produce a Local Action Plan.

Some examples of possible URBACT Local Action Plans

Neighbourhood action plan
A comprehensive roadmap to tackle the identified problem, within a defined geographical area.

Regional thematic action plan
A research component of an action research project; Provision of methodological expertise; Development of a research programme; Improvement or recommendations made on an existing plan.

National action plan
A national policy framework or a strategic plan for integrated development in cities.

What is an action plan?

For the URBACT programme an action plan consists of the actions required to realise a strategy'. This may include:

- actions about an existing local plan;
- actions for different levels of government to work together;
- a set of funded projects focused on a particular goal.

Further information:
See **http://urbact.eu/footer/ documentation/projects-documents/ local-support-groups.html**
for examples of Action Plans produced to date by URBACT Fast Track Networks, MILE and URBAMECO

Improving impact
Transnational exchange of information benefits local policies through the Local Action Plans.
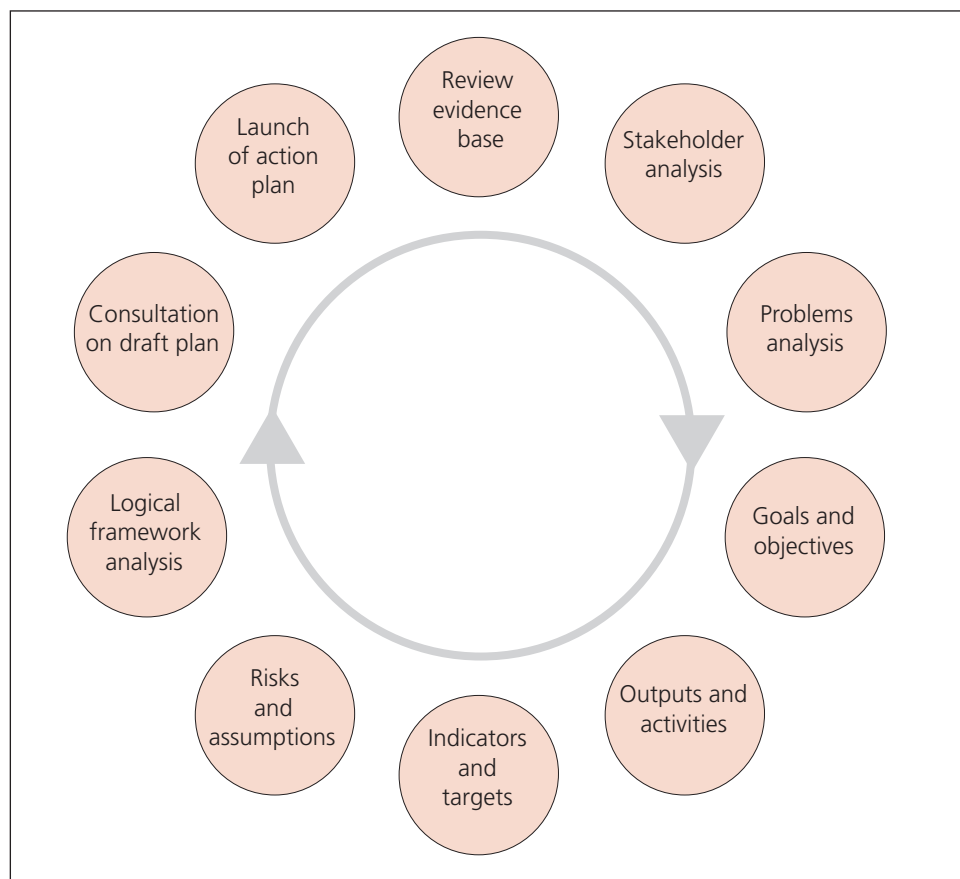
A Planning Cycle Model
Representation of planning as a cyclical process which does not start or end. Such a cycle brings together all aspects of planning into a coherent, unified process, helping to ensure that your plan Is fully considered, well focused, resilient, practical and cost-effective. It can also help to ensure that you learn from any mistakes you make, and feed this back into future planning and decision-making.

Further information: For further details on the Project Cycle Management or Logical Framework approaches to developing an Action Plan please see the Resources section page 35 and Annex 3 of the 'Guide to Local Action Plans' produced by the URBACT Secretariat
http://urbact.eu/footer/documentation/projects-documents/local-support-groups.html

Making an action plan

This section provides some tools that you may want to use in producing your Local Action Plan, particularly if you are starting from scratch and developing a fully-fledged plan. In other cases, partners and LSGs will be working in a city or on an issue where there is already an advanced plan in place, so a parallel plan might be counterproductive and it might be more useful to evaluate and propose adjustments to the existing plan instead. It can be useful to think of the process as cyclical or circular (as in the model, opposite) so that learning along the way and from other plans can be continually integrated.

Several of the following tools have been adapted from a Project Cycle Management approach. But regardless of the exact methods chosen by the partner and LSG in co-producing the LAP, it is crucial to explore and clarify in detail the key elements — objectives, activities, responsibilities, timeline, funding, and so on. An Activities Table (p. 27) can be used to organise this process.

In addition, it can be very valuable to test the internal logic of the plan itself, for instance to check that proposed activities are likely to achieve the desired outputs. This will avoid producing a plan that is just a 'wish list' and will ensure that the scale of the solution measures up to the problem and that there are ways to measure progress. The 'logframe analysis' (p. 28) can be useful here.

In this section:
• Review evidence base
• Stakeholder analysis
• Problems analysis
• Goal to activities
• Logical framework
• Consultation on draft plan
• Launch

Review evidence base

Finding and consulting the evidence that explains what is happening in relation to the issue your project is dealing with will help to ensure that your Local Action Plan (LAP) is based on reality.

A. Revisit baseline study

From the outset the Local Action Plan (LAP) should be rooted in the project's baseline study, both of which are directly informed by local inquiry and knowledge. Review the baseline study which was undertaken at the start of your project. Translate into the local language if necessary. Collect additional data if required.

B. Project comments

An assessment was conducted of all URBACT II projects by an External Assessment Panel and this was transmitted to Lead Partners at the outset of the Implementation Phase. This forms part of the evidence base and should be discussed amongst the wider project partnership and in Local Support Groups (LSGs), particularly where it refers to the composition of the LSG or makes propositions for the LAP.

C. Policy mapping

Identify what agencies are already doing to address the issue. Map this out in a suitable format (spreadsheet, table, geographical map).

Policy mapping needs to identify all relevant actions by possible stakeholders. It is also helpful to map the level of coverage provided by existing actions.

D. Identify what is working and what is not

Systematically record with partners which current actions are achieving positive results and which are not. If possible identify the costs and benefits of different approaches.

E. Transnational exchange and transfer of knowledge

Reflect on case studies and practice that has been discussed within the exchange activities of the URBACT project to see what local practices might be improved through transfer from elsewhere.

Much delivery focuses on doing things that have always been done. Externally generated evidence (for example evaluations or reviews) can be useful to inform this kind of reflection, promote dialogue and provide an evidence base.

Working sessions
URBACT partners' meetings in formal round table format

Stakeholder analysis

Stakeholder analysis is a simple technique that can be used to establish whether the right people are in the Local Support Group (LSG) and are involved in the Local Action Plan (LAP). it is likely that some such analysis formed part of the project's baseline study.

In preparing and developing the LAP it will be very important to identify the nature and interests of stakeholders. This can be done using a blank version of the table opposite, preferably in a workshop setting.

Stakeholders are all those with an interest (or 'stake') in the Local Action Plan. This includes intended beneficiaries, intermediaries, winners and losers and those involved or excluded in the decision-making process.

As stakeholders have different interests, it is useful to define what their involvement is with the project and how their interests differ. In particular, it can be important to identify (and maximise the support of) those who are likely to support the plan, and to identify (and try to minimise resistance of, ie. bring on board) those who may be more likely to block it.

Stakeholders are often divided into two groups:

1. **Primary stakeholders** – those affected directly by the policy, either positively or negatively, and

2. **Secondary stakeholders** – those with an intermediary role including delivery agencies, policy makers, and field workers.

Sometimes the number of stakeholders is limited by defining some members of each group as *key* stakeholders; otherwise the potential numbers can be limitless.

By systematically analysing the stakeholders it is possible to see whether there are any missing voices. The omission of the client group is perhaps the most frequently missed voice.

It is important to assess and if necessary develop or adapt the capacity of different stakeholders to fully engage in the process.

Stakeholder interest analysis For understanding the various interested parties			
Issue:	local employment project		
Stakeholders	Interests and how affected by the issue	Capacity and motivation to bring about change	Possible actions to address stakeholder interests
Primary stakeholders			
1. Potential employers	Believe that grants may be available	Important to understand barriers and solutions	Meetings with employers to discuss incentive mechanisms
2. Local unemployed and inactive people	Direct beneficiaries who should access work as a result	Important to test whether new approaches work and to secure "buy in" of users	Focus groups and research to better understand barriers
3. Representatives of unemployed	Members affected directly	Important consultees	Strategy meetings
Secondary stakeholders			
4. Employment agencies	Threatened by criticism, looking for funding, potential blockers	Resistant to change	Implementation of new outreach policies
5. Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in employment creation	Possible implementing bodies, looking for funding	Important for future delivery of plan and policy innovations	Commission pilot projects
6. Local government	Possible implementing body	Statutory responsibility for economic and social benefit. Local knowledge but limited involvement in employment	Engage as commissioning body
7. Government ministries	Funder and policy maker	Interested in 'what works' but little local knowledge	Create long term funding mechanism

Note: The example above is hypothetical and is included only to help people understand how to use the template. Download a blank Word template from **http://urbact.eu/footer/documentation/projects-documents/local-support-groups.html**

Problems analysis

Problems analysis is used to understand what is causing particular problems and the effects of those problems. It is best done in facilitated sessions involving all key stakeholders.

The Local Action Plan (LAP) should include a clear outline of the nature and scale of the problems relating to the project topic in the LAP area.

A fresh and comprehensive understanding of the existing situation and the problems that exist is essential to enabling the right solutions to be found.

Stakeholder involvement in this stage will expand the way that the problem is perceived and ensure that problems are not merely 'agency' views. It is particularly important to involve the users or beneficiaries (the primary stakeholders) in problems analysis.

Completing a problems and solutions table (shown opposite) can be helpful.

The Action Plan needs to recognise that problems facing cities are complex, intractable and inter-connected. No simple solutions are likely to work and 'business as usual' approaches by existing agencies need to be challenged.

There are many different ways of viewing the same problem and, depending on the perspective, different solutions will be deployed. The idea is to outline and elaborate possible choices between different options.

One well established technique for working with problems in a group setting is to make a problem tree (see example opposite). This is a simple graphical representation of the problems, their causes and effects (before settling on one).

Evidence is needed at stakeholder meetings for people to understand the problems. This can be provided from statistics and studies already available or through specially commissioned research.

Problems and solutions table
For analysing issues and brainstorming possible solutions.

Example used:	High school drop outs	
Problems	**Solutions**	**Resources**
Too many young people dropping out of school at 16 because of inflexible curriculum	Make curriculum more interesting	Finland – most successful education system with low drop out and high average achievement
Lack of teachers able to teach new curriculum	Train existing teachers and recruit new ones	Not known
Students truanting in final years and not reachable by school	Develop outreach programme and offsite provision	Not known
Drug and alcohol abuse affecting students	Work on drug prevention programmes	Netherlands
Teenage pregnancies making girls drop out	Better sex education, outreach provision so that girls can stay in touch during pregnancy and after	Netherlands
Teenage counter culture and 'cool' street culture discouraging students from working hard	Work with role models to challenge slacker culture	Nowhere yet

Note: The example above is hypothetical and is included only to help people understand how to use the template. Download a blank Word template from
http://urbact.eu/footer/documentation/projects-documents/local-support-groups.html

Drawing up a problem tree

1. List all problems that come to mind related to the main topic. Problems need to be carefully identified: they should be existing problems, not possible, imagined or future ones. The problem is an existing negative situation, not the absence of a solution.
2. Identify a core problem (may involve some trial and error before settling on one).
3. Determine which problems are 'Causes' (roots) and which are 'Effects' (branches).
4. Arrange in hierarchy both Causes and Effects, i.e., how do the causes relate to each other - which leads to the other, etc.
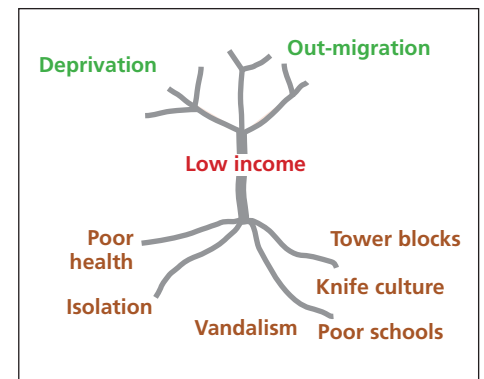
Problem tree example
Simple graphic for analysing complex issues

Goal to activities

Goals, objectives, outputs and activities are the four key central elements of an action plan and establishing agreement on them is a crucial part of the action planning process. Four important steps are usually necessary and the Activities Table (opposite) can be used to provide an overview:

A. Establish a goal

Given the project topic and the particular Local Action Plan, define and make explicit the overall goal. A goal is an observable and measurable end result, with one or more objectives, to be achieved within a more or less fixed timeframe. A goal can be summarized in the phrase "Dream with a deadline."

B. Establish objectives

Objectives will be a more limited and more specific version of the goal. It is suggested that the plan should focus on the medium term (5 years) but you can make it longer (or shorter).

C. Establish outputs

Set out what outputs are needed to achieve the objectives. Outputs are the measurable results of projects or activities (eg, number of trees planted).

D. Establish activities

Set out what activities are needed to achieve the outputs.

> *This is the place where incoherence can easily creep into plans as partners try to ensure that their projects are included as activities regardless of whether they contribute to critical outputs. What is needed is an iterative and at times negotiated process to bring appropriate activities into the activities table while excluding those that do not make significant contributions to the objective.*

Further information: See resources section page 35 and **http://urbact.eu/footer/ documentation/projects-documents/local-support-groups.html** for links to examples of action plans

Activities table
For specifying activities and outputs to achieve a given objective

Goal example used:	Increasing the employment rate to 70%				
Activity title	Lead partner	Description of activity (brief)	Intended outputs	Timescale	Resources per annum
1.1 Outreach and personalised job placement services	Job centre	New diversity proofed service to advise clients about job opportunities	Higher % of successful job placements	June 2009 ongoing	€500,000 (4 advisers)
1.2 Liaison with employers	Private agency	Marketing programme to local businesses to encourage them to advertise vacancies at job centre	More jobs to offer (numbers of jobs per month)	March 2009	€100,000 (one contract)
1.3 Employment retention counselling	Job centre	1 to 1 advice over the first 6 months after taking job,	Increased job retention % after 6 months	Start June 2009 ongoing	€300,000 (five counsellors)
1.4 Childcare	Local authority, social enterprise	Increased access to daycare for women going into employment	Child care spaces available to employees and trainees	Jan 09	€200,000
1.5 Transport subsidy	Transport authority	Transport vouchers for job		June 09	€400 per placement
1.6 In work benefits support	Benefits office	Support for school meals, rent and tax credit		June 09	

Note: The example above is hypothetical and is included only to help people understand how to use the template. Download a blank Word template from **http://urbact.eu/footer/documentation/projects-documents/local-support-groups.html**

Logical framework analysis

Logical framework analysis is a way of testing the internal logic of an Action Plan. It is widely used by the European Union, international funding agencies and national agencies because any inconsistencies can quickly be identified.

All the main components of the plan are fed into a single matrix called the Logical Framework, or 'log frame' (see table opposite).

In feeding the information into the table it will become clear:
- whether the activities will achieve the desired outputs
- whether the outputs will achieve the desired objectives
- whether the objectives will achieve the desired goal
- how success will be measured and what assumptions have been made.

Once identified, inconsistencies in the plan can be rectified and the logframe revised accordingly. For this reason, it is important to use such a tool before the end of the process so that necessary adjustments can be made.

> *Log frames are helpful in developing action plans that are coherent with their objectives. But the approach can be daunting for a group that is not trained in their use. Experienced facilitators may be essential.*

Creative working method
Ideas developed in small group sessions and then presented to everyone present

Further information: See resources section page 38 and **http://urbact.eu/footer/ documentation/projects-documents/local-support-groups.html** for detailed guidelines on Logical Framework Analysis or Project Cycle Management.

The logical framework (log frame) For final checking of the action plan logic and consistency		
Example used:	*Reducing social exclusion among refugees and ethnic minorities.*	
Intervention logic	**Indicators and means of verification**	**Assumptions**
Overall goal: Superior goal for the action plan *Increasing integration of refugees and ethnic minorities*		
Action Plan Objective: The changed situation which the action plan is trying to bring about. *To raise the income levels of refugees by increasing their employability and helping them start enterprises*	How to recognise that the action plan objective has been achieved`; Sources of information to show progress towards objective *Income measure from survey data*	Factors outside the action plan which must happen if the Objective is to be achieved. *Legislation on right to work by refugees remains permissive*
Outputs: Products, services and other deliverables generated by the Action Plan activities *Improved language skills, vocational skills, job placements*	Major characteristics of the outputs. Sources of information and methods used to show delivery of outputs. *Skill level of participants.*	Factors outside the action plan which must happen if the outputs are to be achieved. *Partners able to find resources to run courses*
Activities: *Language classes, training programmes, enterprise advice, incubation centre focused on refugee community*	Numbers of activities of each type that take place.	*Target group can be recruited on to programmes*

Note: The example above is hypothetical and is included only to help people understand how to use the template. Download a blank Word template from **http://urbact.eu/footer/documentation/projects-documents/local-support-groups.html**

Consultation on draft plan

Consulting on a draft plan ensures that stakeholders fully support its content and have the opportunity to make final amendments before it goes public. A wide range of methods are available.

Although the development of the Local Action Plan should have involved the input of local groups the Local Support Group (LSG) should double check the final draft of the plan with them before wrapping up and/or going public. This can help to ensure that the plan has not been 'captured' by particular interests and will flag up potential problems from hidden voices that could upset the launch and implementation.

Where possible, throughout the development process, the Action Plan should be kept flexible to allow for updates and amendments.

Produce an Action Plan Summary aimed at the general public in non technical language (see sample contents opposite). This will make it easier for people to understand the project and get enthusiastic.

Have the draft plan peer reviewed by all members of the project network (project partners and LSGs, as well as local partners); ask others partners and LSGs to comment on it as well.

Commenting on draft proposals Post-it notes at an exhibition and in recorded conversation

Relaxed setting *Participants at an open house record their comments on a draft action plan*

Useful consultation methods for reviewing a draft plan

Participatory editing
Display draft as an exhibition, a report mock up or a pdf file and encourage people to add their comments.

Public forum and Open house
Present the draft at a public forum with interactive displays and workshop sessions.

Online
Create a web version of the draft action plan with mechanisms for feedback. Promote the website to all stakeholders.

Sample contents for an Action Plan summary

Simplified version or overview for a general audience

Introduction - what and why

Problems - what they are

Overall goal - for initiatives

Objectives - for initiatives

Activities proposed - what, by who

Timing - when will things happen

Funding - who will pay for what

Indicators - to prove success

Launch

A public launch signals to the outside world that the action plan has been agreed at high level and by its stakeholders. It will help secure publicity and public interest and will normally take the form of a reception for stakeholders, politicians and the media organised by the Local Support Group.

A. Decide on level of profile required

Some Action Plans may not benefit from being publicised. Mostly it will be important that the completed plan is signed off at the highest level by the partners involved, with an event to acknowledge both this agreement and the plan itself.

B. Decide on timing

It may be helpful to link a launch with some other activities or political initiatives. It may be effective for an URBACT project to launch several partner Local Action Plans simultaneously for instance.

C. Organise communication strategy for launch

Encourage all stakeholders to take part in organising the launch and activating their networks to get the word out. Produce a press release, invite TV and radio, and document yourselves for web release.

D. Celebrate

The production of a well thought out plan that has stakeholder buy-in and political and financial support is a significant achievement. Congratulations!

> *Planning a launch event for an action plan is also a good opportunity to firm up details of implementation, indicators for measuring progress, monitoring and evaluation.*

Publicity opportunities *Launching a Town Design project by setting up a stall in the town square, inviting the Mayor to say a few words and filming interviews with citizens.*

Resources

This section provides information on resources that may be useful for Local Support Groups and others producing Local Action Plans.

If you know want to suggest additional items please email:
Shandi Miller s.miller@urbact.eu or
Melody Houk m.houk@urbact.eu

For latest information please check
http://urbact.eu/footer/documentation/projects-documents/local-support-groups.html
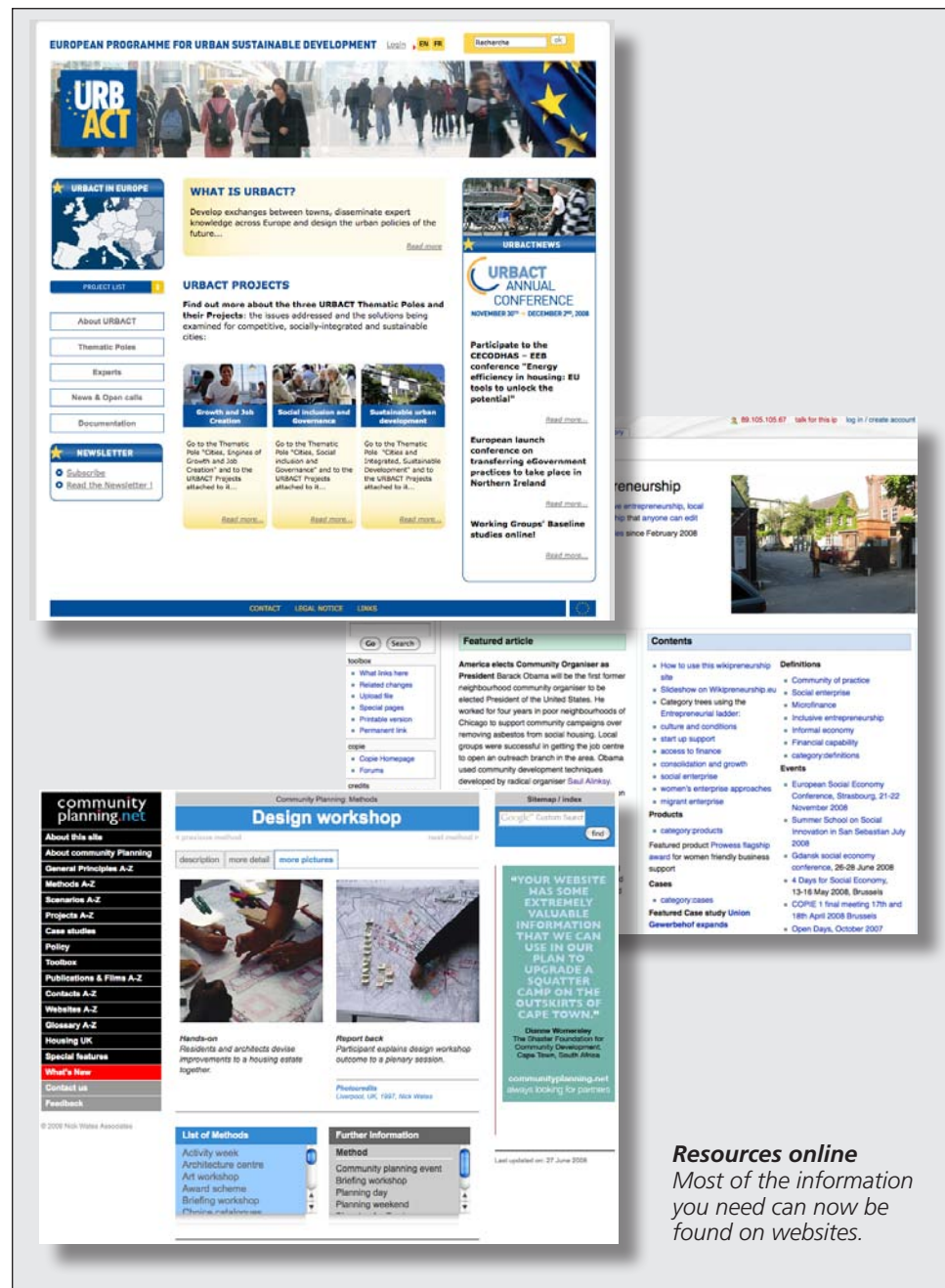
Resources online
Most of the information you need can now be found on websites.

Glossary

Terms used in this toolkit simply explained

Baseline study
Compiling information about the starting point of any project or initiative against which improvement can be measured later. Each URBACT project baseline study includes a 'state of the art' on the issue at European level, a set of partner profiles and a profile of each partner city.

Capitalisation
Making maximum use of the knowledge, outcomes and experience of a project.

Community of practice
Process of social learning that occurs when people who have a common interest in some subject or problem collaborate over an extended period to share ideas, find solutions, and build innovations.

Community planning events
Carefully structured collaborative events at which all stakeholders, including the local community, work closely with specialists from all relevant disciplines to make plans for the future of that community or some aspects of it.

Fast Track label
The European Commission may give this label (and specific support) to Thematic Networks that develop strong participation of Managing Authorities and whose theme falls under the priorities of the Commission's 'Regions for Economic Change' initiative.

Goal
The broad objective.

Hands-on planning
Method of community involvement in planning where small groups make plans for the future using table top plans or flexible cardboard models.

Indicator
Something used to measure progress in relation to achieving objectives (e.g. counts of number of service users).

Interactive displays
Visual displays which allow people to participate by making additions or alterations to them.

Intervention logic
Description of links between actions and results, based on evidence.

Local Action Plan (LAP)
Plan produced by local URBACT partner, as a result of exchange and learning activities within the network or working group setting out objectives and activities proposed to reach that objective. (See page 19 for more detail.)

Local Support Group (LSG)
Group of key stakeholders and project champions who help to produce a Local Action Plan, validate and/or input local knowledge, and disseminate to and mobilise stakeholders. (See page 10 for more detail.)

Logical framework (log frame) analysis
A process (represented by a table, as on page 29) which gives a summary of a project plan and analysis of the plan itself.

Managing authority (of Operational Programmes)
Organisation responsible for managing European funds at national level.

Objective
A desired change.

Open house
Event designed to allow those promoting initiatives to secure reactions from the public in an informal manner. Halfway between an exhibition and a workshop.

Peer review
Evaluation of a piece of work (e.g. a LAP) by experts in the same field. Widely used for funding and publishing proposals but can also be useful for action plans and development proposals.

Post-it board
Sheet of flipchart paper where people make written comments on Post-it notes.

Project cycle management (PCM)
Term given to the process of planning and managing projects, programmes and organisations. Widely used in the business sector and increasingly used by development organisations. (See p. 19 for more information.)

Reconnaissance trip
Direct inspection of area under consideration by mixed team of locals and technical experts. On foot or by bus.

Stakeholders
Persons or organisations with an interest in an initiative because they will be affected or may have some influence. *Primary or key stakeholders* are those most affected. *Secondary stakeholders* are less affected. (See page 22 for more information.)

State of the art
The best (most effective, proven) level of development or practice achieved.

Sustainable urban development
Urban development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own urban needs. (Definition from the Brundtland Report, 'Our Common Future', 1987)

Thematic Network
A type of URBACT II project focused on exchange and learning activities. Characteristics include a partnership of 8-12 cities, a duration of 36 months, and a city as Lead Partner.

Transnational
Across or involving a number of countries.

URBACT
European Programme for promoting sustainable urban development.

Verification
Testing/proving that something is true.

Vision fair
An event where people vote on their favourite visions. Vision statements or images are exhibited. People use coloured sticky dots to indicate which visions they would like to pursue. They may also make personal pledges to take action.

Walkabout
Direct inspection on foot of area under consideration.

Wiki
An internet tool used to store and display information on a webpage, which can be changed and updated by authorised users

Working group
A type of URBACT II project focused on producing outputs. Characteristics include a partnership of 6-8 members (public authorities, universities, research centres), a duration of 24 months, and a Public Authority as Lead Partner.

Websites & publications

This section provides information on resources that may be useful for Local Support Groups and others producing Local Action Plans. If you want to suggest additional items, please email Shandi Miller s.miller@urbact.eu or Melody Houk m.houk@urbact.eu.

Details correct at time of production but please remember that websites are constantly evolving. Items are listed alphabetically within sections.

URBACT

URBACT

www.urbact.eu
Comprehensive information on the Urbact Programme. Material relating specifically to this toolkit can be found at **http://urbact. eu/footer/documentation/projects-documents/local-support-groups.html** and includes:
• Existing URBACT Action Plans (by Pilot Fast Track Networks, URBAMECO and MILE)
• Diagrams to stimulate thinking about action planning
• Guides created for URBACT II partners on Local Support Groups, Local Action Plans, Work Programmes and Baseline Studies.
• Templates provided in this toolkit
The site also includes outputs of URBACT I in the field of citizen participation.

Project planning and Project Cycle Management

EQUAL Italia
www.sns-equal.it/
Online training course in Project Cycle Management.

International Association of Facilitators
www.iaf-world.org
Organisation dedicated to growing facilitators and encouraging the use of group process methodologies world-wide.

Project Cycle Management
Rachel Blackman, Tearfund, 2003. A guide to using PCM to plan and manage projects. Download from: tilz.tearfund.org/webdocs/Tilz/Roots/English/PCM/PCM_E.pdf

A Project Cycle Management and Logical Framework Toolkit
A practical guide for Equal Development Partnerships, Freer Spreckley, GB Equal Support Unit, 2005. Download from **www. equal.ecotec.co.uk**

Project Cycle Management Guidelines
Volume 1 of Aid Delivery Methods, European Commission, 2004.
Guide to logical framework in project design; useful sections on problem analysis, stakeholder analysis, etc.
Download from: http://soundplanning.esflive.eu/files/pcm_guidelines_2004_en_0.pdf

Sound Planning and Management
http://soundplanning.esflive.eu/
A community of practice on Project Cycle Management (PCM) in Europe.

Tools for Development
A handbook for those engaged in development activity, Department for International Development (DFID), UK, 2003. Outlines range of techniques designed to help undertake development activities and interventions of any size and kind, including: stakeholder analysis, problem trees, participatory methodologies, partnership, conflict, facilitation.
Download from: http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/toolsfordevelopment.pdf

Wikipreneurship
www.wikipreneurship.eu
Wiki knowledge centre about inclusive entrepreneurship, local development and social entrepreneurship that anyone can edit. Used by partners in the URBACT MILE Network for sharing documents and training. Constructed by Communities of Practice on Inclusive Entrepeneurship (COPIE) with EU funding. 689 articles since February 2008. See especially: 'What is a a Log frame?'

Participation and consultation

The Citizen's Handbook
A guide to building community, Charles Dobson, Vancouver Citizen's Committee, 2006. Quick guide to community organizing. Good section on meetings. On the web. www.vcn.bc.ca/citizens-handbook

The Community Planning Event Manual
How to use Collaborative Planning and Urban Design events to improve your environment, Nick Wates, Earthscan, 2008, 978-1-84407-492-1
Explains why and how to organize community planning events. With lots of illustrations, sample documents and checklists to help save you time.
Order from www.earthscan.co.uk

The Community Planning Handbook
How people can shape their cities, town and villages in any part of the world, Nick Wates, Earthscan, 2000, 978-1-85383-654-1
Features an accessible how-to-do-it style, best practice information on effective methods, and international scope and relevance.
Order from www.earthscan.co.uk

The Community planning website
www.communityplanning.net
A global resource on ways that local people can be involved in planning and urban design. Details on many relevant methods.

The Guide to Effective Participation
David Wilcox, Partnership Books, 1994, 1-870298-00-4
Overview of general participation methods. Download from http://www.partnerships.org.uk/guide/index.htm

Neighbourhood Action Planning Kit,
City of Vancouver, Office of Neighbourhoods, 2003. Good example of a guide for preparing a Neighborhood Action Plan document. Download from www.cityofvancouver.us/neighborhoods

Tools to Support Participatory Urban Decision-Making
United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), 2001, 92-1-131616-2
Toolkit on participatory urban decision-making. Download from: http://www.unhabitat.org/pmss/getPage.asp?page=bookView&book=1122

Upgrading Urban Communities
http://web.mit.edu/urbanupgrading/
Web resource for practitioners including tools and resources (including Logical Framework and Problem trees).

Photo credits

Photographs courtesy of John Thompson & Partners (www.jtp.co.uk), Nick Wates Associates (www.nickwates.co.uk), URBACT (www.urbact.eu) and Von Zadow (www.vonzadow.de).

Activity, location, date and photographer or source of photographs, where known. Listed from left to right and top to bottom.

Cover: Neighbourhood meeting, Senate Department for Urban Development; Modelmaking, City of Apeldoorn, Baseline study 2008, Rotraut Weeber, Co-Net (URBACT project); Final meeting, September 2008, Pécs, UNIC (URBACT project); Cutting the cake, EGTC (URBACT project). Background image: Stakeholder consultation day, Cambridge East Area Action Plan, 2005, Nick Wates

2. Stakeholder Consultation Day, Cambridge Southern Fringe Action Plan, UK, 2003, Nick Wates

6. Le Vie Della Partecipazione, International Seminar, Florence, Italy, 2006, Nick Wates; Walkabout, RegGov (URBACT project); Team working, community planning weekend, Lübeck, Germany, 2007, Von Zadow; Congreso sobre participación, Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, Spain, 2008, Nick Wates; Walkabout, Castleford, Yorkshire, UK, 2003; Le Vie Della Partecipazione, International Seminar, Florence, Italy, 2006, Nick Wates.

11. Neighbourhood meeting, Senate Department for Urban Development.

13. Walkabout, Upper Calder Valley, Yorkshire, UK, 2003, John Thompson & Partners; planning workshop, community planning weekend, Lübeck, Germany, 2007, Von Zadow; Post-it board, open house exhibition, Greenwich, London, UK, 2005, Nick Wates.

17. Conference, Building Health Communities (URBACT) project.

21. Working session, MILE (URBACT project) (2).

28. Training session, Tools for engaging communities, Cambridge, UK, 2007, Nick Wates (2)

30. Open house exhibition, Greenwich, London, UK, 2005, Nick Wates; Placecheck consultation event, Swindon, UK, 2004, Nick Wates; open house exhibition, Greenwich, London, UK, 2005, Nick Wates.

33. Town Design Statement launch event, Petersfield, UK, 2007, Nick Wates.

41. Kick off meeting, Brussels, FIN-URB-ACT (URBACT project) (2). Final meeting, Rome IT 10/10/2008 - Sicily Region, representation office (5).

42. LSG meeting, Gliwice, FIN-URB-ACT (URBACT project), Antoni Witwicki; Final meeting, Rome, IT, Oct 2008, Sicily Region: representative office, Urban N.O.S.E. (URBACT project) (2).

Hard work
URBACT II getting started; initial meetings. (Right and over page)

In towns and cities throughout Europe, projects are being set up to exchange experience as part of URBACT II, a Programme for sustainable urban development funded by the European Union.

This toolkit will help those involved to establish Local Support Groups and create Local Action Plans. It is intended mainly for members of Local Support Groups and URBACT II partners but will also be useful for anyone interested in the local participation aspects of the Programme.

The Toolkit includes:
• Straightforward explanation of the URBACT Programme
• Practical guidance
• Time-saving templates
• Sources of further information and advice

For comments or questions related to this toolkit, please contact Shandi Miller s.miller@urbact.eu or Melody Houk m.houk@urbact.eu

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