|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **FRAMEWORK FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EXCHANGE PROVISIONS UNDER URBACT III**  **Scenarios for Transfer Networks** | MC Consultation 03/02/2015 |

1. **Provisions for Transfer Networks in the Operational Programme**

Under Specific Objective 3, it is foreseen that URBACT III shall aim to improve the implementation of integrated strategies/ action plans for sustainable urban development in European cities. The Operational Programme also specifies that this will “*be mainly achieved through “Implementation networks” dedicated to cities implementing integrated urban strategies/ action plans with secured funds, and through “Transfer networks which support the re-use of a good practice already implemented in a city” (URBACT III OP, sections 2.A.3.1.c).*

1. **General context and state of play**

**A first exchange with Member and Partner States took place on 12 September 2014 in Rome**, based on a first discussion paper circulated by the URBACT Secretariat (*First calls for proposals under URBACT III*, 12/09/2014). During the meeting, some options related to the implementation of the networking activities were discussed. Regarding Transfer Networks, discussions focused on the following issues:

* *Timeframe*

It was considered appropriate to launch the 1st call for Transfer Networks in the first half of 2015, depending on the approval of the OP by the European Commission and subsequent steps to be taken for the launch of URBACT III.

* *Number of networks to be created*

The OP foresees the creation of 15 transfer networks. It was then proposed to create up to 8 transfer networks under the 1st call to be launched early 2015, and a second series of around 7 transfer networks to be created later under another call to be opened in the first part of 2018, when the first round of networks would be finishing their activities. Several Member and Partner States expressed high interest for this new type of network, building on the experience of the ongoing Pilot Transfer Networks and the need to foster the transfer of good practices across cities. It was suggested that there could be more Transfer Networks created under URBACT III in general, and especially under the 1st call for Transfer Networks (opening a call for only 7-8 networks was deemed to be inappropriate, both for the URBACT Secretariat in terms of manpower and for the potential applicants who would have less chance of being financed).

* *Procedure for the creation of Transfer Networks*

Building on the experience of the Pilot Transfer Networks being tested under URBACT II, the URBACT Secretariat raised the issue of the framework and procedure to be deployed to create Transfer Networks. The Pilot Transfer Networks were created by means of an open call for proposals, inviting cities to submit network proposals including the good practice proposed for transfer as well as the partnership including the giving city and the receiving cities. In this experiment, proposals were assessed both in terms of the good practice identified for transfer itself and the network proposal as a whole (partnership, work plan, methodology, expected results, etc.).

The URBACT Secretariat suggested that an alternative could be to separate the selection of the good practices to be transferred from the selection of the Transfer network proposals, with a sequential approach: 1) an open call for good practices in the field of sustainable and integrated urban development; 2) an open call for the creation of Transfer Networks, inviting cities to transfer a good practice among the ones identified and proposed for transfer in the call. Member and Partner States expressed interest for this scenario and it was agreed in Rome that the Secretariat would follow-up with a proposal along these lines.

**A second informal exchange took place on 11 December 2014 in Paris**, where the above issues related to the procedure for the creation of Transfer Networks were further discussed. The note circulated by the Secretariat (*Discussion Paper on Transfer Networks*, 11/12/2014) presented the rationale and a first possible timeframe for the creation of Transfer Networks by means of a call based on pre-selected good practices offered for transfer.

One Member State expressed concern about the proposed scenario, in terms of time frame for implementation, with networks possibly starting their activities mid 2016 only. It was agreed that, once the URBACT III MC would be set up, a consultation process would be launched to agree on key principles for the creation of these Transfer Networks.

Following the setting up of the URBACT III MC mid-January 2015, the present consultation aims to take a step further in defining the framework for the implementation of the provisions related to Transfer Networks. It builds on the previous discussions summarized above, and outlines the 2 scenarios proposed for the creation of these networks, with pros and cons for each.

MC members are invited to indicate which scenario they support so that the URBACT Secretariat continues preparing related items for the first URBACT III MC scheduled on 10 March 2015 in Riga.

1. **Proposed scenarios for the creation of Transfer Networks**
2. **Call for proposals for the creation of Transfer Networks**

This scenario builds on the experience of the Pilot Transfer Networks being tested under URBACT II. For this pilot experience, a call was launched inviting cities to apply with a proposal including a good practice to be transferred, a partnership including the city “holding” the good practice and cities willing to transfer the good practice.

The procedure for scenario 1 would include the following steps and timeline:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1 | Call for Proposals for Transfer Networks  Oct- Dec 2015 |
| 2 | Submission of Phase 1 Applications  Deadline: Mid Dec 2015 |
| 3 | Eligibility check & Assessment of Phase 1 Applications  Dec 2015 - Jan 2016 |
| 4 | MC approval for Phase 1  Febr 2015 |
| 5 | 6-month Phase 1  Febr - July 2016 |
| 6 | Submission of Phase 2 Applications  Deadline: July 2016 |
| 7 | Eligibility check & Assessment of Phase 2 Applications  July-Aug 2016 |
| 8 | Mc approval for Phase 2  Sept 2016 |
| 9 | 24-month Phase 2 for Delivery  Oct 2016 – Oct 2018 |

Pros & cons:

The main advantage of this scenario lies in the time frame for implementation and the possibility to align this first series of Transfer Networks with the 1st round of Action-Planning Networks that should be set up along a similar calendar (see draft terms of reference for the APN also circulated for consultation on 31/01/2015). Even though in this case, the terms of reference for the call would have to be approved through Written Procedure in March-April 2015.

The limits of this scenario have already been highlighted in previous discussions, building on the interim findings of the ongoing evaluation that is being conducted on the Pilot Transfer Networks experience. Even though this pilot exercise is still ongoing, it is possible to draw lessons for the design of the new generation of Transfer Networks (see Discussion paper on Transfer Networks, 11/12/2014).

More especially, the following aspects have been highlighted:

* Need to carefully select the good practices to be transferred, making sure that these practices have been already implemented and evaluated, and that they include elements of integration, innovation and transferability
* Need to incentivize cities to transfer the good practices in a more open and competitive way, by ensuring more visibility of the practices for partnerships being set up (to improve quality of partnerships and partners’ commitment)

The 2nd scenario below was developed building on these preliminary recommendations.

1. **Call for proposals for the creation of Transfer Networks based on pre-selected good practices**

This scenario foresees that the call for the creation of Transfer Networks be open for cities to transfer a practice from a pool of pre-selected good practices. Partner cities would be invited to choose from this pool a practice they are willing to transfer and develop a network proposal with the city “holding” the practice.

It is proposed that the selection of the good practices be carried out through a separate open call for the identification of good practices in the field of sustainable integrated urban development (20-25 good practices could be selected). Dedicated capitalisation and dissemination activities would be developed around the selected good practices (specific publications, dedicated conferences,, input for capacity-building, etc.).

The procedure for scenario 2 would include the following steps and timeline:

1. Identification of Good Practices

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1 | Call for Good Practices[[1]](#footnote-1)  May 2015 (could be launched during the URBACT City Festival in Riga) – July 2015 |
| 2 | Assessment and selection of Good Practices by panel of experts in the field of sustainable urban development  July-Aug 2015 |
| 3 | Capitalisation and dissemination activities  Oct 2015 onwards (eg Urban day during Open Days 2015) |

1. Call for the creation of up to 10 Transfer Networks

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1 | Call for Proposals for Transfer Networks  Call open Oct 2015 –Dec 2015 |
| 2 | Submission of Phase 1 Applications  Deadline: Mid Dec 2015 |
| 3 | Eligibility check & Assessment of Phase 1 Applications  Dec-Jan 2016 |
| 4 | MC approval for Phase 1  Febr 2016 |
| 5 | 6-month Phase 1  Febr-July 2016 |
| 6 | Submission of Phase 2 Applications  July 2016 |
| 7 | Eligibility check & Assessment of Phase 2 Applications  July-August 2016 |
| 8 | MC approval for Phase 2  Sept 2016 |
| 9 | 24-month Phase 2 for Delivery  Oct 2016 – Oct 2018 |

Pros and Cons

Timeframe for delivery of the Transfer Networks could be considered as the main limit of this scenario, with networks actually starting their activities in the autumn 2016. Nevertheless, this calendar would allow the programme to properly draw lessons of the current initiative and its evaluation. It could also be envisaged that this 1st call for Transfer Networks be aligned, in terms of timing, with the 1st call for Implementation that could be launched later this year.

In any case, this scenario would allow:

* a proper selection of networks that would focus on the quality of the network proposal (relevance of the partnership, better understanding of the good practice to be transferred and possible expected results from the transfer in the receiving cities, etc.);
* the identification of a number of good practices across European cities that, even though they may not all be the subject of a Transfer Network, would be provided more visibility through dedicated dissemination actions, etc.

1. Terms of reference of the call for good practices would have to be approved by the URBACT MC in March-April 2015 by Written Procedure. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)