



URBAN-NET

Deliverable 4.4

A long-term programme for the transnational funding of urban research in Europe

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May 2010

Project Title: Urban ERA-NET – Coordination of the funding of Urban Research in Europe
Instrument: ERA-NET (Coordination Action)
Contract no: 031342

Start date: 01 August 2006
Duration: 4 years

Dissemination Level		
PU	Public dissemination level	X
PP	Dissemination restricted to programme participants (including EC)	
RE	Dissemination restricted to groups specified by the consortium (including EC)	

CO	Confidential, only for members of the Consortium	
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A long-term programme for the transnational funding of urban research in Europe

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A long-term programme for the transnational funding of urban research

1 Background and aim of this deliverable

The aim of URBAN-NET, when it comes to transnational funding of urban research, is to support it directly through joint calls and indirectly through influencing the framework programme and other transnational funding opportunities. URBAN-NET is coming to an end. This agenda is written in a period of transition. The future of the transnational funding of research may be the Joint Programming Initiatives, which are still at an early stage of development.

In the short term there are a number of predictable tasks connected to the research projects that are funded through the two calls issued by URBAN-NET. The funders have continued responsibilities for monitoring and dissemination. Ten research funding organisations from eight URBAN-NET countries funded the first call, also called the pilot call, launched in January 2008. The result was six 2-year research projects and five 1-year pre-research projects.

The second call was launched in October 2009 and funded by 6 funding organisations in 5 countries. Twenty one applications for mostly 3-year projects were received by the closing date in January 2010. Six projects have been selected for funding and will start late 2010.

The aims of this deliverable are:

- to form an agenda for the continued activities and responsibilities for the projects funded through the two URBAN-NET calls. According to the original plans the URBAN-NET project ends in July 2010. An extension until April 2011 is planned, and the assumption here is that this extension will be realised. The extension makes it possible to carry through activities in connection to the two calls, and a lighter version of these activities also applies more generally for new call initiatives, e.g. taken by a Self-funded Urban Network, which is sketched in the end.
- to propose a direction for URBAN-NET in view of the current prospects for funding urban research through the Framework Programme 7 including a new version of an Urban Network, and through the two Joint Programming Initiatives “Urban Europe” and “More years, better lives”, where many of the URBAN-NET partner countries participate.

Initiating, launching and evaluating calls for research projects have been described in Deliverable 4.2 Implementation Plan particularly with regard to the first and second URBAN-NET calls and will not be further discussed here.

2 Funders’ responsibilities for projects funded through the URBAN-NET calls

2.1 Evaluation of the calls

The Memorandum of Understanding preceding the launch of the first call announced a programme evaluation: “The URBAN-NET research programme will be evaluated by a European scientific panel including experts designated by the funding organisations. The scientific panel

will review the programme implementation, assess the outcomes, and improve the URBAN-NET thematic framework of urban sustainability research.”

The programme implementation covers the process from the questionnaires that were distributed to all partners in March 2007, the meetings to discuss the call, the launch, the evaluation up to the project start. So far D5.2, Experiences from the Pilot Call may be of use. It includes systematic feedback from researchers – those who were listed as potential research partners and those who actually applied. Contact persons for the call were asked for their comments and experiences, but they ought to have much more to say now. Evaluation and selection procedures are described in detail through minutes from meetings and instructions to applicants, evaluators and funders.

The outcomes of the call can be measured in many ways, e.g. the number, scientific value and the societal relevance of the applications, the outreach in terms of countries involved, funding spent, number of researchers involved, etc. The 5 pre-research projects have formally ended by now and delivered their final reports, see above. The 6 research projects will be asked to do the same.

In particular the evaluation should focus on the *added value* of transnational cooperation. This was discussed at the Stakeholder Workshop 5 in November 2009 in Stockholm, and it will be asked for in the final reports from the funded projects. But the question ought also to be put to the participating organisations. Is transnational urban research worthwhile? Are the discussions and main concepts meaningful when translated to the different European languages and local contexts?

The funding model and the amount of funding available for the researchers in different countries are crucial for the quantity and the quality of the applications. A virtual common pot was chosen, as this seemed to be the only possible alternative for all partners. This means that each partner funds researchers based in the same country. It is a restriction for the researchers when choosing co-applicants and for the funding organisations when selecting the projects for funding.

A wide or a narrow thematic scope? This was the first choice to make in the call discussion. A wide scope would have a wide transnational cooperation as its first objective. A narrow thematic scope would be chosen to dig deeper into a specific problem that needs transnational cooperation to create a critical mass of expertise. *The URBAN-NET thematic framework of urban sustainability research* is based on a broad discussion on urgent research needs, and it focuses on four main themes: climate change, sustainable land use, integrated urban management and public spaces and health. The first three of these great challenges have been underlined in the calls; but the description of them has been broad enough to capture the whole span of urban sustainability research. The applications to the calls showed a wide variety of perspectives. Themes not listed in the framework appeared. How can the framework be improved to serve future calls on urban sustainable development? The conclusions will be useful as input in a new urban network as well as in a continued Self-funded Urban Network or in the Joint Programming Initiatives.

The MoU proposes experts designated by the funding organisations – from countries participating or not participating in the call? Evaluators from the Commission reserve or experts well known at the European level could be asked.

It is important that the evaluation of the first call can be carried out within URBAN-NET’s extension, which means that the major part must be made before the research projects have finished. The evaluation will therefore concentrate on procedures and results in terms of thematic scope of the funded projects compared to the scope of URBAN-NET.

Formas will organise the evaluation.

2.2 Reports from funded projects

The call texts describe what reports to be delivered: “At the end of the full research projects the research consortia shall submit a final report in the size of a scientific conference paper in English to the organisation that funds the coordinator. This report shall sum up the project, its hypothesis, its main results, its practical application, its proposals for further research and intended target audience. In addition reports must be sent to the national funding organisations according to their requirement.” The focus on procedures and added values also needs an input from the researchers in full research as well as pre-research projects – a short summary of the benefits and also the problems encountered in the research collaboration.

The final report from the funded projects must include:

- *A scientific report as above, ca 10 pages, illustrated (only full research projects)*
- *Conclusions on the added value of transnational research cooperation, 1 – 2 pages.*
- *List of publications, conferences, dissemination events, etc.*
- *Contact details of all researchers in the project.*

The coordinator is responsible for delivering the reports to the funding organisation, which will also distribute it to the other national funding organisations and to URBAN-NET or its successor.

Differences in funding procedures mean that the start and end of funding may vary within the research consortia. The report should be delivered within six months of the end of the coordinator’s final date for funding.

The one-year pre-research projects from the first call started at the end of 2008 or beginning of 2009 and the coordinators should therefore be reminded to report now – June 2010 - by their funding organisations.

The two-year research projects also started at the end of 2008 or beginning of 2009 and will end in 2011, which means that they should report before August 2011. (They will be encouraged to report in 2010 so that their report can be included in the programme evaluation, see below).

2.3 Joint activities - cooperation between research projects

Joint activities are described in the call texts: “Each consortium will be invited to participate in joint public activities that will be organised to disseminate and discuss urban sustainability research results with stakeholders. This participation will be mostly electronic, but the attendance of one representative of the project in one conference/dissemination event must be included in the budget of the research project.”

A workshop was arranged for the projects funded in the first call after less than a year from the projects had started. Some projects used the occasion for project meetings, and more than 30 researchers from the 11 full and pre-research projects participated. This led to useful contacts between researchers and funders, to closer collaboration between some projects, and to plans for joint dissemination. This was also an opportunity to discuss the plans for the research anthology.

A kick-off workshop is planned for the funders and the researchers of the funded projects of the second call in February 2011. The aim is to promote cooperation between the teams in the projects and between the projects, and to establish contacts between researchers and partners and with stakeholders.

Other invitees are e.g. the experts evaluating the calls, representatives of urban research stakeholders, networks of cities and networks of professionals.

The workshop will be arranged by Formas within the time of the URBAN-NET extension.

2.4 Dissemination of funded research

Most of the projects include dissemination plans in terms of conferences or popular reports. Some projects are planning films. Funders use reports, websites etc. in dissemination of research results they have funded, and are of course encouraged to do the same for the whole projects.

An anthology of texts from all the projects was initiated at the workshop in November 2009. URBAN-NET organised a net-working event at the World Urban Forum 5 in Rio de Janeiro with three of the pre-research projects funded in the first call as a starting-point. This opened up for useful contacts also outside Europe. In general these two dissemination efforts have also intensified the contacts between funders and researchers and thus paved the way for further joint dissemination activities. Further dissemination events are planned for the projects funded through the second call.

If possible the kick-off workshop will be turned into a yearly cooperation and dissemination event.

2.5 Call partner network

Organisation and time budget for the monitoring and following-up of the second call was agreed between the partners of the second call in connection with the steering group meeting in Istanbul, February 2010. Representatives of the call partners form a Management Group managing a Call Network. One of the call partners is appointed to organise a yearly meeting to discuss workshops and dissemination events for funded research projects, and to initiate new calls. The responsibility for meetings and other arrangements alternate between the funding organisations. Meetings could very well be video or telephone meetings, or meetings in connection to other events and conferences. New partners will be welcome and so will new initiatives for calls.

A time budget is given in Table 1. Partner 1, the partner that funds the largest part of the projects, takes the initiative to partner meetings and monitoring, but all partners will be responsible for dissemination of research results.

Common events will be organised at a European level. Partners are also encouraged to organise events at a national level using the results produced at the European level, and taking care of the translation problems.

Table 1. Tasks and responsibilities for the funders' long-term engagement in funded projects.

<i>Tasks</i>	<i>Date (dates applying to the second call)</i>	<i>Person time</i>	<i>Responsible funding partner</i> <i>Partners in order of nr of funded research teams</i>
Organising one yearly partner meeting/ video, mail, telephone	Year 1 (Mar 2011) Year 2 (Mar 2012) Year 3 (Mar 2013)	One week One week One week	Partner 1 (Formas) Partner 2 (PUCA) Partner 3 (FCT)
Organising one kick-off for researchers	Year 1 (Mar 2011)	Four weeks	Partner 1 (Formas)
Organising dissemination events in the end/ possibly earlier	Year 1 - 3		All
Collecting the final project reports and distribute to funding partners	Within six months after the end of project funding (2013)		Partner funding the main applicant of the research project (Formas)
Evaluation of the call	Within six months after the end of project funding (2013)	Paid by all partners in relation to number of teams/funding	Partner 1 (Formas)

3 Future funding sources

3.1 Opportunities in the 7th Framework Programme

The FP7 has recently proposed two opportunities for research on urban development – one for researchers and one for organisations promoting urban research. No decision has been reached at time of writing.

The *researchers' alternative* calls for a collaborative large scale integrating project producing visions, feasible strategies, spatial scenarios and guidance tools for a new sustainable, resilient and green city model, a city model beyond today's focus on the compact city.

The *organisations' alternative* outlines an urban network of cities, municipalities, civil society organisations, SME's, etc. for exchange of knowledge. URBAN-NET is currently preparing for an application to the call through contacting (and being contacted by) presumptive co-applicants.

The new urban network could start in spring 2011 at the earliest, i.e. when the extended URBAN-NET has ended.

3.2 Joint Programming Initiative (JPI) – *Urban Europe*

This is a broad and large-scale initiative to pool national European funding for urban research. It is coordinated by the Austrian Ministry of science and research. It involves a number of related initiatives including URBAN-NET. The transport technology oriented first proposal now incorporates a broad view on sustainability, thanks to the URBAN-NET influence. At a meeting 4th May in Brussels the main research areas were presented as *Social Cohesion and Integration, Sustainability and Minimization of Ecological Footprint, Innovation Hubs and Living Labs, Intelligent intra- and inter-urban Transport, Logistic and Communication Systems*. The main points or objectives are described as *An integrative perspective, Creating feasible tools for European policy makers, Learning community – Increasing research on EU level in efficiency and comprehensiveness*. This is in line with the scope of URBAN-NET. The calls are meant to be parallel and coordinated national calls. There will be common transnational themes but also national themes. The transnational dimensions have not yet been much elaborated. URBAN-NET could assist in organising the transnational communication on research funding and exchange of knowledge.

Among the 9 “proposing countries” 5 are URBAN-NET countries, and so are 3 of the 13 “interested countries”. If this joint programme initiative is realised it will take over the national funding of urban research in these countries and it will certainly replace the national funding in the transnational calls of URBAN-NET.

According to a preliminary time-line the work with a strategic research agenda and implementation structure will start in the autumn 2010 and the JPI Urban Europe will be launched in spring 2011. This means that the extended URBAN-NET will be busy influencing the development of the JPI and may end up just in time for the launch of the JPI.

3.3 Joint Programming Initiative – *More years, better lives*

Demographic change is the theme of another JPI of great interest for URBAN-NET. It aims to explore the aspects of life connected to the aging population in most European countries, i.e. aging in relation to health, social welfare, work, education and housing. It points out that aging is not only a challenge but also a chance that needs to be looked at as an intergenerational process. Demographic aspects have not been put forward in URBAN-NET’s research strategy or calls, et demographic dynamics are very important aspects of urban planning and management. One of the projects in the second call focuses on children’s outdoor environment in compact settlements. Connections to demography could be made in most of the other funded projects too. Therefore it is important that the development of this JPI is included in the scope of URBAN-NET coordination work.

3.4 A Self-funded Urban Network

TÛV has elaborated a plan for a *Self-funded Urban Network* that could take over when the URBAN-NET in its present or extended form ends, and when the above alternatives have not yet started, have been delayed or even failed. The main responsibility of this network would be to promote urban research at the national and European level; to initiate and organise transnational

calls; and to expand and renew the network by incorporating new partners. A Call Steering Committee would take the lead on call activities similar to the role of the Call Partner Networks described previously.

The tasks of the *Self-funded Urban Network* would include:

- Involving more funders
- Involving public bodies and SME's as project partners
- Exploring different approaches, e.g. options of a focused theme, and common pot etc
- Updating call procedures
- Harmonising regulations in national programmes
- Trying different application procedures, e.g. two-step procedures
- Monitoring calls and secure the quality of jointly funded research
- Ensuring a learning process between the funded research projects to capitalise on possible synergies
- Organising dissemination events and facilitate publication of results through various media.

4 Conclusion

The Extended URBAN-NET will not only enable activities in connection with the two calls, but prepare for more elaborate and efficient cooperation between partners around calls, and around knowledge exchange activities, in relation to the joint programming or to the national programmes and academia, together with the organisations of cities and federations of practitioners.

The URBAN-NET activities have shown that European coordination of research funding is useful to transmit research inputs from one national context to another and to realise European platforms for research which can become references for all European countries. The challenge now is to manage the transition between the different institutional forms, so that the new forms can benefit fully from the work already done.

Table 2. Overview of future funding opportunities as they are perceived at the end of May 2010.

Organisation	2010		2011			2012				2013				2014		
	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2
	Extended URBAN-NET															
Call Partner Network First call	Evaluation															
Call Partner Network Second Call			○	Kick-off and dissemination work-shop, CPM ○ (Workshop, CPM) ○ (Workshop, CPM) Final reports, conf. ○												
Urban network FP7	Application Evaluation.			New Urban network starts?												
JPI Urban Europe	Influence Programme			JPI takes over funding of urban research?												
Self-funded Urban Network				Fill gap to FP7/JPI ...or carry on as self-funded												