



# Programme Guide

## Phase II



European Commission  
EuropeAid - Cooperation Office  
Latin America Directorate

# Introduction



*Since its creation in 1995, the URB-AL programme has established itself as a key point of reference in the field of international cooperation between towns of different continents.*

*Its success comes mainly from a simple principle: pooling the experiences of European Union and Latin American local communities to allow them to unite in seeking joint solutions to the challenges of urban areas.*

*This partnership, which respects individual differences, gives each partner the opportunity to learn from the others. URB-AL has become a programme that is managed by, and for, towns.*

*Acknowledged at the 1999 Rio summit by the Heads of State and Government of both regions, URB-AL allows local communities to be the immediate actors of international cooperation.*

*This bid to open up to the towns, backed by a heritage of cultural, political, economic and human values shared by the European Union and Latin America, is full of promises; especially as these take the basic role up to respond to the aspirations of their citizens.*

*On 29 December 2000, the European Commission therefore decided to extend the URB-AL programme by expanding and diversifying its activities and providing it with extra funding.*

*This change within continuity should also enable local communities to get involved in concrete projects realization in urban areas, ensuring the continuity of exchanges of experience.*

*This will support towns in their joint efforts with civil society to improve the living conditions of urban citizens.*



G. Bonacci  
Director General  
EuropeAid Cooperation Office



# The URB-AL programme in brief

- ★ URB-AL is a decentralized cooperation programme of the European Commission that :
  - Covers the main **URBAN POLICY** fields;
  - Is intended at **LOCAL COMMUNITIES** of the European Union and Latin America, as well as **OTHERS INVOLVED IN THE URBAN SECTOR**;
  - Is **DESCENTRALISED** with activities that are all managed, proposed and implemented by the participants themselves;
  - Is **BASED** on exchanges of experience between participants, to result **MUTUAL BENEFITS**;
- ★ The participants in this programme have **FREELY** come together to explore one or more urban issues, according to their affinities ;
- ★ The programme has proven its worth since its creation, in 1995, with the participation of more than 700 local communities ;
- ★ The programme provides a wide range of **INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS** leading to lasting relationships between European and Latin American local communities; which in turn **GIVE RISE TO FURTHER FRUITFUL INITIATIVES** ;
- ★ With significant co-funding from the European Commission, the programme helps to meet a number of the priorities defined at the 1999 Rio de Janeiro summit of Heads of State and Government of European Union, Latin American and Caribbean countries and which have continually been reasserted since. These priorities include: combating poverty and social imbalances; fostering and protecting human rights; and promoting the information society.

## URB-AL objectives

- ★ To develop **DIRECT AND LASTING LINKS** between European and Latin American local communities through the dissemination, acquisition and application of the **BEST PRACTICE** in the urban policy field.
- ★ In particular :
  - To help local communities play a more active role in the social, economic and cultural development of urban areas, including by putting public amenities into operation ;
  - To develop the structural capabilities of local authorities, among others by training human resources ;
  - To promote partnerships between local communities and representatives of civil society ;
  - To increase the capabilities for action of small and medium-sized towns (SMT) within the internationalization of their relations context ;
  - To promote the “best practices” in European and Latin American local development, whilst respecting local distinctiveness.



# Organization of URB-AL

The URB-AL programme is in its second phase :

- ★ Phase one of the programme was a result of the Commission decisions of 20 December 1995 and 19 February 1998.
- ★ It was organized into the **FOLLOWING EIGHT THEMES** :
  - Drugs and towns ;
  - Conservation of historic urban contexts ;
  - Democracy in towns ;
  - The town as a promoter of economic development ;
  - Urban social policies ;
  - Urban environment ;
  - Management and control of urbanization ;
  - Control of urban mobility.
- ★ Phase two of the programme is a result of the Commission decisions of 29 December 2000 and 31 July 2001. It includes **SIX NEW THEMES** in addition to those of phase one :
  - Local finance and participative budgets ;
  - The fight against urban poverty ;
  - Urban housing ;
  - Promoting the role of women in local decision-making bodies ;
  - Towns and the information society ;
  - Citizens' safety in towns.

- ★ There is a **THEMATIC NETWORK** for each one of the 14 URB-AL programme **THEMES** ; each network is coordinated by a single local community. The thematic network includes all participants who wish to cooperate on the theme in question. The network disseminates information to its participants (members), holds periodic working meetings between participants and keeps them in constant contact. The thematic network is also the forum for a general consultation on a particular theme.
- ★ **JOINT PROJECTS** are designed and implemented within each of the thematic networks. The joint projects include those participants of a thematic network who wish to explore a specific aspect of the theme concerned in greater depth. The aim of joint projects is to put exchanges of experience developed in the thematic networks into practical application. This involves identifying solutions to problems raised by the participants **AND** adopting concrete means for implementing them with respect for their individual distinctiveness.
- ★ **THIS PROGRAMME GUIDE CONCERNS ONLY PHASE TWO OF THE URB-AL PROGRAMME.** However, a transition between the two phases of the URB-AL programme is planned for those participants who have already taken part in phase one.

## URB-AL participants

- ★ **LOCAL COMMUNITIES**, i.e. towns, urban areas, provinces and regions whose authorities have been democratically elected.
- ★ **OTHER BODIES** (external members) which are not local communities but which work in, or with, the urban sector. They include associations, foundations, universities, business firms, unions and NGOs.



#### WHICH

- ★ Geographically relate to one of the following countries:
  - In the **EUROPEAN UNION** (15 countries): Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom.
  - In **LATIN AMERICA** (18 countries): Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela.

## Brief review of phase one of the URB-AL programme

- ★ URB-AL, in which there have been **MORE THAN 1200 CASES OF PARTICIPATION** to date (a single local authority is allowed to participate in several of its activities), provides an unrivalled opportunity for exploring contemporary urban issues.
- ★ Its participants have gone beyond sharing experiences to forging strong trans-regional relationships between European and Latin American local communities, giving rise to a host of different types of exchange.
- ★ The eight thematic network coordinators for phase one of the programme are:
  - Santiago de Chile (Chile) – “Drugs and towns”;
  - Province of Vicenza (Italy) – “Conservation of historic urban contexts”;
  - Issy-les-Moulineaux (France) – “Democracy in towns”;
  - Madrid (Spain) – “The town as promoter of economic development”;
  - Montevideo (Uruguay) – “Urban social policies”;
  - Malaga (Spain) – “Urban environment”;
  - Rosario (Argentina) – “Management and control of urbanization”;
  - Stuttgart (Germany) – “Control of urban mobility”.
- ★ Below are just some of the fifty joint projects in progress:
  - Drug information system;
  - Manual for municipal managers on the impact of tourism in historic centres;
  - Accessibility and mobility in historic environments;
  - Consultation as a mechanism for enhancing urban democracy;
  - Creation of democratic and participative schools for young people;
  - The city as promoter of exchanges between Latin American and European SMEs;
  - Transnational employment agencies;
  - The mutual aid economy: a growth sector;
  - Promoting health: a means for active citizenship.



# New activities

- ★ Over its five-year term, phase two of the URB-AL programme will carry out two activities: **THEMATIC NETWORKS** and **JOINT PROJECTS**.
- ★ **A BUDGET** of 50,000,000 Euros is available.

## Thematic networks

- ★ For phase two of the URB-AL programme, six new thematic networks will be created on the six above-mentioned themes.
- ★ **A CALL FOR PROPOSALS** will be published in the Official Journal of the European Communities; following that, six local communities will be appointed to coordinate the new networks.
- ★ Each theme will be the subject of a **SINGLE** thematic network and will be coordinated by a **SINGLE** local community.
- ★ A thematic network will include a **MAXIMUM OF 200 PARTICIPANTS**.
- ★ The local community coordinating the thematic network will be responsible for:
  - Organizing the thematic network, i.e. creating:
    - **A COORDINATION CELL** responsible for leading, managing, exchanging experiences and informing network members, as well as promoting the network's activities to the outside world ;
    - **A GROUP OF EXPERTS** which shall draw up a **BASIC DOCUMENT** setting out the general thinking on the network's theme and provide thematic network members with the necessary technical support ;
    - Holding an **INTRODUCTORY SEMINAR** to start off the thematic network's activities and for holding **TWO ANNUAL MEETINGS** thereafter, to enable the participants to meet and draw up proposals for joint projects.
- ★ **COMMUNITY FUNDING** for coordinating each thematic network shall cover a maximum of 70% of network coordination costs, up to a ceiling of 500,000 euros. It shall cover a **PERIOD OF THREE YEARS** (year one: introductory seminar; year two: first annual meeting; year three: second annual meeting).
- ★ The coordinator must therefore pay at least 30% of the costs of coordinating the thematic network.



# Joint projects

- ★ Joint projects (the second URB-AL programme activity) allow an issue of joint concern to participants to be explored in greater depth within a thematic network, by envisaging concrete **SOLUTIONS**.
  - ★ Since they are developed and implemented as part of a thematic network, joint project themes must therefore **DERIVE** from those of the network to which they belong. Participants are allowed a great deal of **AUTONOMY** in choosing which joint projects to implement.
  - ★ The achievements during phase one of the URB-AL programme amply demonstrate that **EXCHANGES OF EXPERIENCE** between the participants of a joint project lead to the development of **LASTING SOLUTIONS** to their various problems, which can subsequently be applied in the field.
  - ★ The number of participants in a joint project may range between five and 15. However, specific conditions ensure a geographical balance between participants from the European Union and Latin America.
  - ★ There are now two types of joint project:
    - TYPE A** joint project.
      - These joint projects aim to develop exchanges of experience between participants and to allow the dissemination of best practices.
    - They correspond *-mutatis mutandis-* to the joint projects implemented under phase one<sup>1</sup> of the URB-AL programme.
- TYPE B** joint projects.
- Type B joint projects are a **NEW ELEMENT** in the URB-AL programme. They are designed to turn the results of exchanges of experience into tangible outputs that benefit one or more local communities. They include a strong element of **VISIBILITY** for the local populations concerned.
  - It is **COMPULSORY** for type B projects to ensue from:
    - A joint project from phase one of the URB-AL programme whose activities are completed;
    - A type A joint project from phase two of the URB-AL programme whose activities are completed;
    - Experience gained in coordinating a thematic network from phase one or two of the URB-AL programme.
- ★ The following table lists the principal characteristics of type A and B joint projects.

<sup>1</sup> The joint projects that will emerge from thematic networks 4, 6, 7 and 8 of phase one of the URB-AL programme (second and third calls for presentations) shall be governed by the conditions applying to phase two of the URB-AL programme.



Joint projects	Type A	Type B
ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES (non-exhaustive list)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exchanges of personnel for training purposes;</li> <li>• Training seminars or seminars for exchanging experiences between experts and/or local authority officials;</li> <li>• Development and implementation of training programmes for local authority personnel;</li> <li>• Diagnostic missions and feasibility studies;</li> <li>• Measures to enhance the visibility of municipal initiatives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Putting into operation services (e.g., social service specialized in counselling and assisting over-indebted families) and public amenities (e.g., urban amenities for preventing delinquency by installing proper lighting in certain neighbourhoods), of common interest to the project members;</li> <li>• Implementing a pilot project that can be replicated in other local communities participating in the joint project (e.g., creation and implementation of a training module for municipal officials which disseminates existing best practices in this field);</li> <li>• Carrying out joint activities to restore cultural resources of common heritage values;</li> <li>• Transferring and adapting local community open management systems (e.g., registry office, land registry, urban maintenance, local finance, etc.).</li> </ul>
THEME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linked with the network to which the project belongs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Either linked to the results of a joint project from phase one of the URB-AL programme or to the results of a type A joint project from phase two, whose activities are completed;</li> <li>• Or linked with the theme of a thematic network whose activities are completed or have been under way for at least two years.</li> </ul>
PARTICIPANTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 to 15 members of a thematic network from phase two of the URB-AL programme;</li> <li>• Of whom at least two participants must be from the EU and three from LA;</li> <li>• From at least four different countries (including at least two EU countries and two LA countries);</li> <li>• Possibility of including one external member for every five participants (i.e., a maximum of three external members) – which cannot be the coordinator;</li> <li>• A geographical balance between EU/LA, with the aim of 1/3 – 2/3 respectively.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 to 15 members having participated in a joint project from phase one of the URB-AL programme, or in a type A joint project from phase two, or having coordinated a thematic network<sup>2</sup>; (when the type B joint project is linked with the activities of a thematic network, the members of this network can participate even if they don't participate in a joint project from phase one of the URB-AL programme, or in a type A joint project from phase two).</li> <li>• Of whom at least two participants must be from the EU and three from LA;</li> <li>• From at least four different countries (including at least two EU countries and two LA countries);</li> <li>• Possibility of including one external member for every five participants (i.e., a maximum of three external members) – which may not be the coordinator;</li> <li>• A geographical balance between EU/LA of 1/3 – 2/3 respectively will be searched.</li> </ul>

2. Participants in a type B project do not necessarily all have to be from the project to whose results it is linked.  
When evaluating the proposals, the Commission will nevertheless take into account coherence in the composition of the type B project.



Joint projects	Type A	Type B
COORDINATOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local community belonging to a thematic network from phase two of the URB-AL programme.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Either a local community that has coordinated and/or participated in a joint project from phase one of the URB-AL programme or in a type A joint project from phase two, whose activities are completed ;</li> <li>Or a local authority having coordinated a thematic network whose activities are completed or have been under way for at least two years.</li> </ul>
METHODOLOGY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collective development of a joint project, with the support of the coordination cell of the corresponding thematic network and under the responsibility of the coordinator of the joint project ;</li> <li>By definition, activities take place in all of the participating local communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collective development of a joint project, under the responsibility of the coordinator of the joint project and, where appropriate, with the support of the coordination unit of the corresponding thematic network ;</li> <li>The activities can be concentrated primarily in a single local authority, <b>PROVIDED THAT</b> the other participants in the joint project are fully involved in implementing them and that such activities clearly have a common objective.</li> </ul>
CO-FUNDING FROM THE COMMISSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximum 70% of the total costs of the joint project up to 250,000 Euros.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximum 70% of the total costs of the joint project up to 800,000 Euros.</li> </ul>
ROLE OF THE COORDINATOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinates the activities of the joint project ;</li> <li>As legal beneficiary of the grant, the coordinator is accountable to the Commission and to the other joint project participants for managing it ;</li> <li>Signatory of the grant contract with the Commission.</li> </ul>	
CO-FUNDING FROM THE PARTICIPANTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 30% of the total costs of the joint project;</li> <li>According to a breakdown to be jointly agreed by the participants.</li> </ul>	
TOTAL NUMBER OF JOINT PROJECTS COORDINATED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A single local authority may coordinate a maximum of three joint projects belonging to different thematic networks or two joint projects if it is already coordinating an operational thematic network.</li> </ul>	
TERM	Maximum two years.	



# When and how to participate

- ★ The proposals for coordinating the **SIX NEW THEMATIC NETWORKS** from phase two of the URB-AL programme must reach the Commission on deadline and comply with the rules in the **CALL FOR PROPOSALS** published in the Official Journal of the European Communities (ad hoc forms; detailed terms of participation).
- ★ The Official Journal of the European Communities also specifies the procedures for submitting proposals for **TYPE B JOINT PROJECTS LINKED WITH PHASE ONE ACTIVITIES** of the URB-AL programme.
- ★ The proposals for **TYPE A JOINT PROJECTS AND TYPE B JOINT PROJECTS DIRECTLY LINKED WITH PHASE TWO ACTIVITIES** of the URB-AL programme will be created under the six new thematic networks to be established. They are to be presented through **CALLS ON A SET DATE**, for which the procedures are specified in the Official Journal of the European Communities.

## Evaluation and selection of proposals

- ★ The European Commission is responsible for designing, developing and monitoring the URB-AL programme. It **DECIDES** on the allocation of grants and ensures that all of the activities take place in compliance with the legal instruments governing their proper execution.
- ★ When Commission departments receive proposals for thematic networks and joint projects, they check whether they comply with the **REQUIRED CONDITIONS** (minimum number of participants; geographical origin, etc.).
- ★ Proposals declared **ELIGIBLE** following this examination are then **EVALUATED** by Commission departments, on the advice of a **GROUP OF INDEPENDENT EXPERTS** responsible for issuing recommendations on the technical content and methodological coherence of the proposals.
- ★ The Commission decides on the last instance which proposals to select.
- ★ Finally, a grant contract is concluded, for signature by the Commission and the coordinator of the thematic network or joint project, as the case may be.



# Summary of the main changes

	Phase one	Phase two
BUDGET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14.000.000 euros</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50.000.000 euros</li> </ul>
DURATION OF THE PROGRAMME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 years</li> </ul>
THEMATIC NETWORKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 thematic networks ;</li> <li>• Community co-funding of a maximum of 70% of costs up to a ceiling of 350,000 Euros per network ;</li> <li>• Minimum 50 members - maximum 150 members ;</li> <li>• Term : 3 years.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 new thematic networks ;</li> <li>• Community co-funding of a maximum of 70% of costs up to a ceiling of 500,000 Euros per network ;</li> <li>• Maximum 200 members ;</li> <li>• Term : 3 years.</li> </ul>
JOINT PROJECTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A single type of joint project for exchanges of experience and disseminating good practice ;</li> <li>• Minimum 5 members (2 EU &amp; 3 LA) - maximum 25 (10 EU &amp; 15 LA) ;</li> <li>• Preference for geographical diversity ;</li> <li>• Term : Maximum 3 years ;</li> <li>• Community co-funding of a maximum of 50% of costs up to a ceiling of 100,000 Euros per joint project .</li> </ul>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p><u>Type A joint projects</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They correspond, <i>mutatis mutandis</i>, to the joint projects from phase one of the URB-AL programme.</li> </ul> </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p><u>Type B joint projects</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They aim to materialize the exchanges of experience obtained into tangible outputs (public amenities, put public services at disposal, pilot project,...)</li> </ul> </div> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum 5 members (2 EU &amp; 3 LA) – maximum 15</li> <li>• From at least 4 different countries (2 EU &amp; 2 LA)</li> <li>• Term : maximum 2 years</li> <li>• Community co-funding of a maximum of 70% of total costs.</li> </ul> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>• <u>Type A:</u> Maximum 250.000 Euros as Community co-funding</p> </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>• <u>Type B:</u> Maximum 800.000 Euros as Community co-funding</p> </div> </div>



# For more information

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## REFERENCE PUBLICATIONS :

“URB-AL programme – Guidelines for Thematic Network Grant Applicants”

“URB-AL programme – Guidelines for Joint Project Applicants”



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