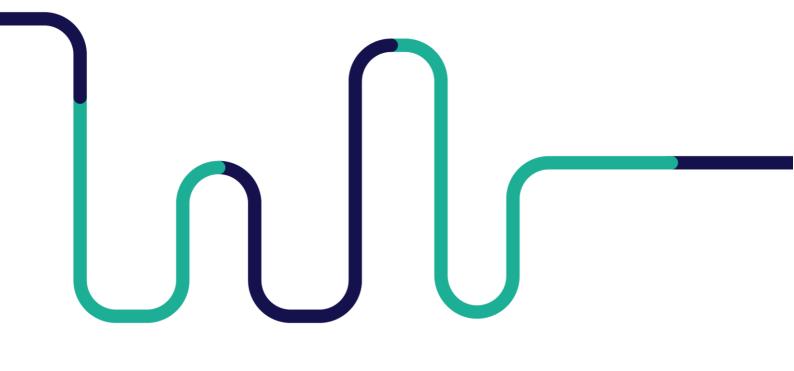# Call for Applications

for the constitution of a Panel of Assessors for the assessment of the EUI – Innovative Actions project proposals submitted in the framework of the 1st Call for Proposals for New European Bauhaus demonstrators

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1. CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

The European Urban Initiative (EUI) is an instrument of the European Union and is managed by the Commission's Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy via indirect management – the Region Hauts-de-France (France) has been designated as Entrusted Entity for the implementation of the EUI. The EUI is set out in Article 12 of the ERDF/CF Regulation. A Permanent Secretariat (PS) has been set up to ensure the management of the Initiative.

The PS shall set up a Panel of Assessors to perform the strategic assessment and rank proposals submitted in the framework of the different Calls for Proposals for the selection of the European Urban Initiative - Innovative Actions (EUI-IA) projects.

Following this obligation, the PS issues a Call for Applications for the constitution of a Panel of Assessors for the Strategic Assessment of project proposals submitted in the framework of the first EUI-IA Call for Proposals.

Depending on the number of EUI-IA project proposals received and their thematic orientation, Panel of Assessors will be composed of around four Themes Coordinators and 20 assessors on the topic of the first Call for Proposal, the New European Bauhaus demonstrators and its 4 suggested **themes** (prompts):

▷ Construction and renovation in a spirit of circularity and carbon neutrality

▷ Preserving and transforming cultural heritage

▷ Adapting and transforming buildings for affordable housing solutions

▷ Regenerating urban spaces

Depending on the number of project applications received, it is expected that around 1 Theme Coordinator and 5 Assessors will be selected for each theme. Different format might be set out and/or additional Assessors might be recruited, should there be project proposals submitted that do not correspond to the 4 above themes, as these remains indicative.

The present Call for Applications will remain open until 30th December 2022 (23:59 CET).

2. EUROPEAN URBAN INITIATIVE - INNOVATIVE ACTIONS

2.1. CONTEXT

In times of rapid urbanisation (predictions show that the share of urban population in Europe will continue to grow, and it is likely to reach more than 80% by 2050[1]), on the one hand European urban areas are increasingly facing many challenges, on the other – new opportunities emerge. To face the

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[1] "2018 Revision of World Urbanization Prospects" Population Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)

challenges and make the most of development opportunities, EU cities and towns must also keep transforming and developing their creative and innovative potential, responding to the needs of sustainable urban development. Complex challenges and transitions often cannot be solved without strong capacities and innovative thinking at all levels of policy and action, and in particular, at local level. There is also strong evidence suggesting that the nature and scale of the challenges facing urban authorities demand much more than traditional policies and services.

In this context, the Cohesion policy legislative package for 2021-2027 included the establishment of the EUI (a successor of the Urban Innovative Actions Initiative implemented during the 2014-2020 programming period). This novel Initiative is an essential tool to support cities of all sizes, to build capacity and knowledge, to support innovation and develop transferable and scalable innovative solutions to urban challenges of European Union relevance.

Through the Innovative Actions component of EUI, the Initiative will select and fund innovative urban projects in Europe. The overall ambition is to foster the deployment of proof-tested urban innovations across the EU and to provide opportunities for cities, as enablers of innovation, to take the risk to turn ambitious and creative ideas into pilot projects that can be tested in real urban settings.

Innovative Actions pillar of EUI provides two levels of support:

▷ **Funding for the testing** (piloting) innovative solutions and preparatory activities for transferring of piloted solutions. Each EUI-IA project can receive up to a maximum of EUR 5 million ERDF co-financing. EUI-IA co-finances up to 80% of project's activities. Project implementation must take place within a maximum period of 3,5 years.

▷ **Capturing, sharing and transferring the knowledge** that projects are generating. EUI is interested in understanding what worked in the implementation of the innovative solution and what did not work, in order to draw lessons, capture the knowledge and share it with urban policymakers and practitioners across Europe. Therefore, following the implementation of the innovative actions, EUI collects and shares the results from the experimentations of the projects. This also feeds into transfer activities, with the aim of fostering innovation capacities and knowledge building for all EU urban areas and to mainstream innovative solutions in sustainable urban development.

EUI has a total ERDF budget of around EUR 450 million, out of which indicatively 75% will be allocated to EUI-IA projects which will be selected through Calls for Proposals on one or more topics proposed by the European Commission.

Specifically, EUI supports projects that are:

▷ **Innovative**.

Projects should be new, bold, creative and experimental. The proposed project must go beyond the present state-of-the-art and business-as-usual. Building on research and benchmarking, urban authorities should demonstrate that the proposed project has not been previously tested and implemented on the ground in the urban area, in the Member State where the urban area is located or elsewhere in the EU. Urban authorities can propose solutions (products, services, processes) that have evolved over time based on lessons learned from experience (evolutionary approach where the innovation lies in the new elements added to the idea) or completely new solutions never tested before in the policy field concerned (revolutionary approach) in the EU. As

sustainable urban development projects are normally a complex set of actions, it is important to demonstrate that the innovative elements included are the central components to the solution proposed.

Urban authorities, as exclusive eligible applicants to the EUI-IA, should not be the mere intermediaries of innovative solutions conceived and tested mostly by other actors. They must play a key role in the proposed project, by leading a local partnership aimed at achieving medium to long-term goals defined for their cities and/or being actively involved in an experimentation offering the best from the green and digital transitions to their population.

The innovations proposed should finally be relevant to achieve Cohesion policy goals, and to the ERDF in particular, as prime source of funding for EUI-IA projects. Projects should have the potential to inspire the use of mainstream programmes in urban areas once successfully tested, and possibly to benefit from these programmes for their upscale and replication throughout the EU.

▷ **Of good quality**.

Projects should meet key quality standards such as clear and logical interrelation of objectives/activities/outputs, evidence of preparatory work, realistic ambitions, effective management structures and procedures, good value for money.

▷ **Participative**.

Urban authorities should seek to benefit from sources of external expertise from their local innovation ecosystems such as academia, industry, civil society and other levels of government both in the design and in the implementation of the project. To ensure the participative approach they need to define effective mechanisms of consultation, coordination and co-design.

▷ **Measurable**.

Urban authorities should be able to clearly explain what the changes are that they want to achieve in the local context as a result of their projects. They need to demonstrate how any change in the local situation is directly attributable to the new solution developed and how the results can be measured, quantified and evaluated.[2]

▷ **Sustainable and scalable**.

Urban authorities should be able to anticipate and explain how the solution will be sustained and scaled-up once successfully tested through the identification of adequate sources of public and/or private funding, including from Cohesion policy and/or project partners own resources

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[2] URBACT has published the guidance "Applying the result framework to Integrated Action Plans" that could prove useful to design monitoring and evaluation strategies and tools. It is available at http://urbact.eu/library-contents

and/or embedded mechanisms of financial self-sustainability (e.g. revolving funds, crowdfunding, revenues).

▷ **Transferable**.

Solutions developed in the framework of the projects should be applicable and replicable by other cities across Europe, possibly by making use of the Cohesion policy funding available to them. Based on their experience, urban authorities should be able to explain the conditions (legislative, technical, etc.), resources needed (human, financial, etc.) and potential challenges to overcome, that other urban authorities should consider in order to adapt and possibly replicate, in full or in part, the proposed solutions in their local contexts. When applying, cities should demonstrate that they have identified other European urban areas that could benefit from replicating the proposed solution; how the most suitable Transfer Partners will be identified and specify potential Transfer Partners, if already identified, together with the underlying motivations/rationale.

2.2. BENEFICIARIES

Urban authorities are exclusive eligible applicants, and the following authorities may apply for support to undertake the EUI-IA:

▷ **First category**: Any urban authority of a local administrative unit defined according to the degree of urbanisation (DEGURBA) of Eurostat as city, town or suburb (corresponding to DEGURBA code 1 or DEGURBA code 2 of Eurostat) comprising at least 50 000 inhabitants.

▷ **Second category**: An association or grouping of urban authorities with legal status of organised agglomeration composed by Local Administrative Units, where the majority (at least 51%) of inhabitants lives in Local Administrative Units defined according to the degree of urbanisation (DEGURBA) of Eurostat as cities, towns or suburbs (corresponding to DEGURBA code 1 or DEGURBA code 2) and where the total combined population is at least 50 000 inhabitants.

▷ **Third category**: An association or grouping of urban authorities without legal status of organised agglomerations where all the urban authorities involved (Main Urban Authority – hereinafter: MUA, and Associated Urban Authorities – hereinafter: AUA) are Local Administrative Units defined according to the degree of urbanisation (DEGURBA) of Eurostat as cities, towns or suburbs (corresponding to DEGURBA code 1 or DEGURBA code 2) and where the total combined population (MUA and AUA) is at least 50 000 inhabitants.

2.3. THEMATIC COVERAGE

EUI-IA Calls for Proposals are dedicated to topics aligned with the Urban Agenda for the EU, the European Union's priorities, such as the green and digital transitions, and contributing to the vision of sustainable urban development as presented in the New Leipzig Charter. **The New European Bauhaus is the topic of the first EUI-IA Call for Proposals opened on 10th October 2022.**

More details on the topic of the 1st Call are available on the [EUI website](#) and in the 1st Call's [Terms of Reference](#). Candidate Assessors interested in the present Call for Applications are strongly recommended to read the detailed description for the topic, as well as about [the New European Bauhaus Initiative](#) as such.

The first EUI-IA Call for Proposals is not prescriptive with regard to the nature of expected proposals. However, cities are invited to consider the four themes indicated in Chapter 1 of the present document, which have the greatest potential to generate innovative solutions, create a **clear demonstration effect to inspire the use of Cohesion policy in urban areas**, and/or could mobilise concerned funds for their uptake, in particular investments from the ERDF under the specific objectives listed in the 'Cohesion policy targets'.

2.4. SELECTION PROCESS OF EUI-IA PROJECTS

As stated above, EUI-IA projects will be selected through Calls for Proposals, each focused on a limited number of topics proposed by the European Commission. Eligible urban authorities (please see section 2.2) are requested to submit their project proposals in the form of an Application Form.

Applications Forms received within the deadline are subject to a selection process organised along the following steps:

1. Eligibility check

2. Strategic Assessment

3. Operational Assessment

Upon closure of the Call for Proposals, an assessment is carried out by the PS as to the compliance of the received Application Forms and their annexes with the formal **eligibility** criteria listed in the Terms of Reference of the Call for Proposals.

Application Forms that are declared eligible will be subject to a **Strategic Assessment** carried out by a Panel of Assessors. The Strategic Assessment accounts for 70% of the weighting given to the overall project assessment and consists of the following criteria:

▷ **Innovativeness and relevance (30%)** - To what extent is the applicant able to demonstrate that the project proposal is a new solution that has added value in relation to the topic of the Call? To what extent is the solution relevant to the local context and to Cohesion Policy objectives?

▷ **Partnership and co-creation (12%)** - To what extent is the Partnership relevant and solid to implement the proposed solution and achieve expected results. To what extent the proposal allows meaningful participation and co-creation from stakeholders, target groups and citizens?

▷ **Measurability of results and impact (12%)** - To what extent are expected results specific and realistic, and reflecting project expected impact on the local context, as well as beneficiaries/end users?

> **Sustainability and up scaling (8%)** - To what extent will the project provide a durable contribution to address the identified challenge? To what extent the proposed solution will be self-sustainable beyond its end date and has the potential to be up scaled if proven successful?

> **Project's transferability (8%)** - To what extent will the project have the potential to be transferable to other urban areas across Europe?

The object of the present Call for Applications is to select and recruit experts for the Panel of Assessors to carry out described above Strategic Assessment of eligible Application Forms received in the framework of the first Call for Proposals for EUI-IA projects.

As a result of the Strategic Assessment, the Panel of Assessors elaborates on the assessment of the applications and ranks them based on their **Strategic Assessment scoring**. In agreement with the European Commission, shortlisted applications in the overall ranking move forward to the **Operational Assessment**. Applicants are notified at the end of the Strategic Assessment process of the decision regarding their application (going forward or not). In order to agree on the applications short-listing for the Operational Assessment, a **Consensus Meeting** will be organised.

The **Operational Assessment** is carried out by the PS and accounts for 30% of the weighting given to the overall project assessment.

The main objective of the Operational Assessment is to assess the quality of the proposal, based on the following criteria:

> **Project Design and Logic (12%)** - To what extent are Work Plan elements (activities, deliverables, outputs, indicators) complete, realistic, consistent and coherent? To what extent will the proposed project design lead to the achievement of objectives and expected results?

> **Project feasibility and operational readiness (8%)** - To what extent the proposal demonstrates to be feasible (to be implemented within the given time-frame) and operationally ready?

> **Organisational arrangements and operational capacity (5%)** - To what extent are management and communication activities appropriate and supporting the overall implementation of the project?

> **Budget (5%)** - To what extent is the budget coherent and proportionate?

After the Operational Assessment, a Selection Committee comprised of the PS, the Entrusted Entity and the European Commission will meet to make the final selection. The European Commission provides the final agreement as to which projects are selected.

2.5. PROFILES AND TASKS OF THE PANEL OF ASSESSORS

The Panel of Assessors will only intervene in the framework of the Strategic Assessment, based on the criteria listed above.

The Strategic Assessment includes the following tasks:

Tasks for each Assessor:

▷ **Individual assessment and scoring of eligible and admissible Application Forms**. Each Application Form will be assessed by two different Assessors, allowing for cross-analysis and cross-scoring of each proposal. A lead Assessor will be nominated for each project and will be responsible to draw up a consolidated assessment report. The PS will allocate the Application Forms to each Assessor on the basis of the specific thematic competences. Assessment will include detailed (for each criterion) and overall scoring, as well as comments and recommendations for each sub-criterion (please the EUI-IA Guidance, Chapter 3.2.2 Strategic Assessment for the detailed list of all the criteria and sub-criteria). This will be done following individual assessments and an exchange between the two nominated Assessors assessing the project.

▷ **Submission of the final consolidated assessment report** for each project proposal through the Initiative's online system.

▷ **Liaison with the Permanent Secretariat and Theme Coordinators** to ensure quality check and the consistency of comments and scores.

Tasks for the Theme Coordinators:

▷ Reading all the applications submitted under a given theme (depending on the number of project proposals received, this can be up to 60-70 applications; in case of a big interest regarding one or more of the themes, PS might increase above number or appoint more than one Theme Coordinator per theme).

▷ Liaising on a regular basis with Assessors.

▷ Coordinating and following up the assessment process.

▷ Ensuring the consistency of comments and scores given by the Assessors at the consensus stage.

▷ In case of discrepancy between Assessors, become the third reader of the proposal.

▷ Liaising with the PS.

▷ Presentation to the PS, the Entrusted Entity and the European Commission during the Consensus Meeting and submission of a related paper on the main policy trends found in the proposed projects. The paper will be published in the EUI website once the assessment of the 1st Call for Proposals has been completed.

Joint activities and tasks for both Assessors and Themes Coordinators:

▷ **Participating in the kick off meeting** with all members of the Panel, the PS, the Entrusted Entity and the European Commission to define the methodology for the Strategic Assessment, develop a shared understanding of the assessment criteria and define a detailed calendar for the delivery of the expected deliverables.

▷ **Participating in the Consensus Meeting** with all members of the Panel, the PS, the Region Hauts-de-France and the European Commission to share the consolidated assessment and scoring for all eligible Applications Form and rank the project proposals. Theme Coordinators will be

expected to put together PowerPoint presentations providing an overview on the main policy trends found in the submitted project proposals.

3.   SELECTION OF ASSESSORS FOR THE PANEL OF ASSESSORS:

3.1.   SELECTION CRITERIA

Selection of applicants will be done along the following criteria:

▷   PhD degree in one (or more) of the fields such as: urban studies, spatial planning, local/regional development, geography, environmental studies, sustainability studies, cultural studies, heritage studies, social studies, architecture, housing, revitalisation, urban planning/design, or other relevant for the 1st Call for Proposals topic (New European Bauhaus demonstrators) **OR** Master degree in one (or more) of the fields and at least 10 years of professional experience.

▷   In-depth knowledge (academic and/or based on practical experience) of urban topics of relevance for the first Call for Proposals for EUI-IA and a minimum of 7 years of experience on the topic(s).

▷   Excellent understanding of the concept of New European Bauhaus and how its key principles (sustainability, inclusiveness, and aesthetics) are relevant to urban innovation.

▷   Excellent understanding of challenges for integrated sustainable urban development in Europe as well as of the potential for experimentation of innovative solutions in the urban topics of relevance for the first Call for Proposals for EUI-IA. As part of the assessment will entail checking the degree of innovation, excellent knowledge of pre-existing practices is essential.

▷   Understanding of the urban dimension of EU policies and of Cohesion Policy in particular.

▷   Proven track record (at least one experience) in similar work: assessing applications of urban and/or European projects, applying scoring systems, making recommendations for selection or similar.

▷   Independence from cities (declarations of conflicts of interest will be requested upon signing the contract as Assessors cannot have worked in the past two years with an urban authority or a partner organisation who is applying in the current EUI-IA Call for Proposals).

▷   Fluent in English (written and spoken, C2 level).

▷   IT literate.

▷   Excellent communication skills (written and verbal).

▷   Ability to work in a team, under pressure and to tight timeline.

In addition to the above, for the role of Theme Coordinator applicants must fulfil the following criteria:

▷   Demonstrable experience in facilitating group work and reaching consensus.

- ▷ Capacity to manage a group of experts from different nationalities.

- ▷ Ability to ensure the consistency of scoring and comments produced by the group of Assessors.

Please note that: The Panel of Assessors shall be balanced in terms of thematic expertise in order to cover the four themes of relevance for the first Call for Proposals for EUI-IA. In addition, the Panel shall be geographically and gender balanced and it shall ensure that the territorial diversity of the Union's urban areas is taken into account. If made possible by the range of applications received, the Assessors should be of different nationalities.

As a result of the assessment process, a short list will be defined for each of the four themes.

The final decision concerning the number of Assessors selected for each theme will be taken after the deadline for the submission of project applications (19/01/2022), when the number of project applications for each theme will be known.

3.2. APPLICATIONS

Experts interested in applying in the framework of the present Call for Applications **shall submit** the following:

- ▷ **A detailed CV in English**

- ▷ **A filled in Application Form** including the following statement:

  "I hereby certify that I do not have any professional relation with actors potentially involved in proposals for the European Urban Initiative – Innovative Actions to be assessed nor any interest in projects that could be developed by urban authorities and other public authorities within the framework of the call for proposals for European Urban Initiative – Innovative Actions. In case there should be any change in my personal situation with regard the above-mentioned elements, I commit to inform immediately the Director of the Secretariat the European Urban Initiative."

  If selected, experts will be asked to provide the Permanent Secretariat with a list of EU urban authorities they have worked with in the last year.

The deadline for receipt of the applications is 30th December 2022 (23:59 CET).

Applications shall be sent by the deadline via email to the Permanent Secretariat at the following address: experts@urban-initiative.eu

3.3. SELECTION PROCEDURE

The selection of applications for the Panel of Assessors will be performed by the PS and an external service provider selected by the Entrusted Entity through an open call for tender.

The selection procedure will be undertaken in two stages:

- ▷ Eligibility Assessment

▷   Quality Assessment

The eligibility assessment will be done by the external service provider. A long-list of candidates will be presented to the PS on the basis of the assessment of received applications. The quality assessment will be done by the PS. Quality assessment will consist of two steps: (i) quality assessment of the received application documents and (ii) interviews with the short-listed candidates. Short-listed candidates will be interviewed by the PS in order to establish a final consolidated list. **Interviews will take place <u>online</u>.**

4.   CONTRACTUAL DETAILS

4.1.   CONTRACTUAL MANAGEMENT

The external service provider, in charge of the eligibility assessment of the received applications will be also responsible for the contractual management of the selected Assessors.

A contract will be signed between the external service provider and each selected Assessor included in the Panel of Assessors.

The PS will coordinate and support the activities of the external service provider. Only PS is responsible for the quality control of the activities and deliverables of the members of the Panel of Assessors.

4.2.   FEES

The daily rate of experts is fixed at **EUR 750, VAT included**. The payments will be financed in the framework of the EUI.

In addition, travel and accommodation costs will be covered by the EUI according to the refunding conditions communicated to the Assessors in advance and after reception by the external service provider of the declarations of expenses form and justifications of payments.

4.3.   DURATION OF THE CONTRACT

Depending on the number of project proposals received, the number of days to be allocated to each Assessor is around 20.

The assessment will be carried out consecutively in a period of around 3 to 4 weeks, therefore Assessors should ensure they do not have other commitments at that time. For the first Call for Proposals, the Strategic Assessment shall be carried out between the end of February and the end of April 2023.

The indicative breakdown of the days is as follows:

▷   Kick-off meeting (1 day)

▷   For Assessors: Assessment and submission of consolidated assessments (depending on the number of the projects received, foreseen: 20 days; 0.75 day per application assessed)

- ▷ For Themes Coordinators (around 25 days)

- ▷ Consensus Meeting (1 day)

An additional allocation of days (up to additional 20%) for Assessor may be commissioned by the PS in case of a complaint procedure related the strategic assessment. This will be done on an ad hoc basis through specific purchase orders.

4.4. INCOMPATIBILITY WITH THE POSITION OF EUI EXPERTS IN SUPPORT TO INNOVATIVE ACTIONS PROJECTS

Each EUI-IA project approved in the framework of a Call for Proposals will be supported by an EUI Experts.

EUI Experts will be selected through a specific Call for Applications, to be launched following each Call for Proposals for the selection of EUI-IA projects.

Experts selected as members of the Panel of Assessors will not be able to apply for the position of EUI Experts to support projects assessed by the Panel in the framework of the same Call for Proposals.

4.5. EUI POOL OF EXPERTS

For the entire duration of the EUI, a pool of EUI Experts will be set up. The EUI pool of experts will gather experts who will be cooperating with the PS to support capitalisation or capacity-building activities or solicited for ad-hoc expertise upon need of the Permanent Secretariat and for the support to the Urban Agenda for the EU. Within the pool of experts, the PS can launch specific calls for interest, to which experts or teams of experts can answer and be selected.

Selected assessors will be invited to join the pool of EUI experts to be involved in future relevant EUI activities (taking into account the exclusion mentioned in section 4.4). Assessors selected in this Call will have a chance to take part in the upcoming calls for interest and then being contracted for the given activity.

4.6. CALENDAR OF THE ACTIVITIES

The strategic assessment of the project applications received in the framework of the first Call for Proposals shall be carried out according to the following calendar:

- ▷ **Kick off meeting (in-person in Brussels or Lille): end of February 2023**

- ▷ **Individual assessment of the received project proposals: from end of February until the end of April 2023**

- ▷ **Consensus meeting: end of April 2023**

5. USEFUL RESOURCES

Under the following link interested applicants can find all the first Call for Proposals resources and information. Interested applicants are especially invited to read the following documents:

➢ Terms of Reference for the 1st EUI-IA Call for Proposals

➢ EUI-IA Guidance

➢ Application Form – Courtesy Working Document

6. CONTACT

For questions regarding the present Call for Applications for the constitution of a Panel of Assessors, you can contact info@urban-initiative.eu.