

EUROPEAN  
U R B A N  
INITIATIVE

# External Officer Support Service for EUI

## Terms of Reference



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# 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

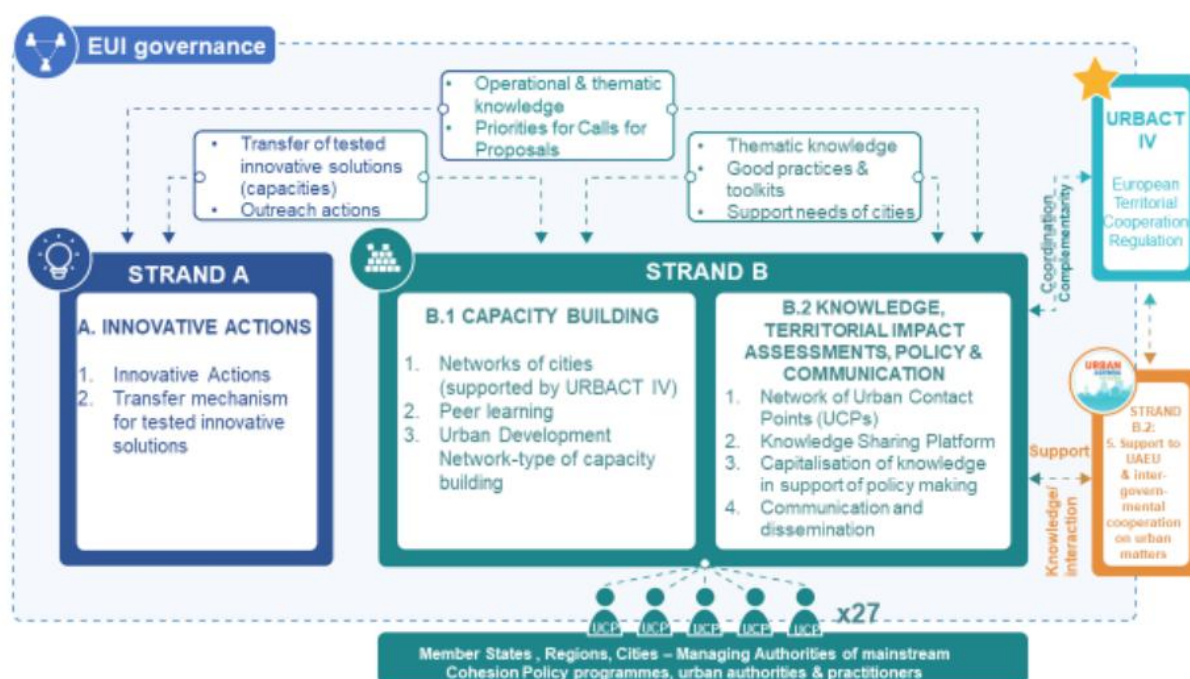
## 1.1 THE EUROPEAN URBAN INITIATIVE

The Cohesion policy legislative package for 2021-2027 includes the establishment of the European Urban Initiative (set out in Article 12 of Regulation No 2021/1058 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 on the European Regional Development Fund and on the Cohesion Fund<sup>1</sup> - ERDF/CF Regulation) – an instrument of the European Union, successor of the Urban Innovative Actions Initiative implemented during the 2014-2020 programming period and building also on activities undertaken in the URBACT III Programme and Urban Development Network.

This 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. The EUI provides different levels of assistance:

- Supporting urban authorities with up to 80% direct co-financing and up to €5M ERDF, allowing EU cities to experiment as testbeds for their innovative idea and transferring it to other cities.
- Strengthening capacities of cities in the design and implementation of sustainable urban development strategies, policies and practices in an integrated and participative way.
- Providing a knowledge environment for cities to ensure easier access to horizontal and thematic knowledge and share the know-how on sustainable urban development.
- Supporting the Urban Agenda for the EU (UAEU), and upon request of Member State(s), supporting the intergovernmental cooperation on urban matters.

The EUI is managed by the EC's Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO) via indirect management. The EC has designated the Region Hauts-de-France (France) as Entrusted Entity, for the implementation of EUI. The EUI Permanent Secretariat has been created to assist the Entrusted Entity and to ensure the day-to-day management of EUI.



<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 on the European Regional Development Fund and on the Cohesion Fund: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32021R1058>.

## 1.2 EUI COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

One of the objective of EUI is as indicated in the [Description of the Action](#) is 'to increase awareness of urban policymakers and practitioners at all levels of the EUI, of its support tools and knowledge available in the area of sustainable urban development, and to communicate and disseminate effectively the outputs and results the EUI is producing'.

The EUI Permanent Secretariat implements a range of activities to meet this objective under the Communication and Dissemination Strategy. These include the development, management and continuous improvement of online platforms that support all EUI activities, as well as the monitoring of these platforms and their connection with other communication tools (such as social media and newsletters).

The EUI online platforms are:

- The EUI website
- The Urban Agenda for the EU website
- Portico website

## 2.1 SCOPE OF THE SERVICE REQUIRED

The aim of the current call is to recruit one External Officer for communication specific missions:

- (1) support to EUI and UAEU web activities
- (2) support to EUI monitoring activities

**The External Officer will support the European Urban Initiative Permanent Secretariat (EUI PS) in implementing its communication efforts.** This support includes administrative, technical and operational tasks linked to digital communication, online platforms, monitoring and reporting, and supporting on internal and external user helpdesk.

The External Officer will be contracted by and report directly to the EUI PS, while working in close collaboration with EUI service providers, the knowledge and communication unit teams, and relevant other EUI PS staff and relevant partners.

Shortlisted candidates who are not selected for this specific contract may be offered the opportunity to join the EUI pool of External Officers, should additional needs arise, and if they are interested in being considered for future opportunities.

## 2.2 TASKS OF EXTERNAL OFFICER FOR COMMUNICATION

Indicatively, the External Officer will perform tasks as follows:

### 1. Task 1: Support to EUI monitoring activities

- Monitoring EUI online platforms performances.
- Monitoring social media performance linked to the EUI, UAEU and Portico platforms.
- Monitoring newsletter performance across the EUI, UAEU and Portico platforms.
- Collecting, organising, and presenting monitoring data in dashboards or regular summaries for internal use.

### 2. Task 2: Support to website development, maintenance and update

- Providing support for the development, management and maintenance of the EUI and/or UAEU and/or Portico websites.
- Supporting publication workflows and quality checks before content goes live, updating and maintaining website content.

- Following up on online developments and completing reception and system validation phases.
- Ensuring accuracy, accessibility, and editorial consistency of online content.
- Supporting basic content integration (text, media, metadata), including SEO optimisation and tagging aligned with the Portico taxonomy.
- Coordinating with technical providers to report issues, test fixes, and follow up on developments.
- Act as an internal and external user EUI helpdesk of all our digital platforms.

### **3. Task 3: Support on the design, development and implementation or additional digital solutions**

- Defining the EUI PS needs and use cases for specific online tools or digital solutions e.g. EU AI chatbot based/from EU.
- Identifying the available tools and providing a comparative assessment
- Setting up the tools selected by EUI PS.
- Pilot testing the tools and training them with EUI data and information.
- Documenting procedures, limitations, and human-review requirements to ensure responsible AI use.
- Support on the development of user guidance to operate the tools.
- Support on benchmarking of any other digital solutions that might be relevant for EUI activities.
- Participating in the AI working group or other working group on digital tools at the GECOTTI level.

## **COORDINATION**

Coordination between the external support officer and the EUI PS be based on:

- Regular coordination meetings External Officer with the Knowledge and Communication unit referent.
- Assisting to online meetings with EUI service providers and EUI PS staff when required.
- Participation in ad-hoc meetings as required by task timelines.

Individual day-to-day support will also be provided to the External Officer in the implementation of their tasks.

## **2.2 DURATION OF THE SERVICE**

EUI PS estimates that, in order to appropriately fulfil the tasks requested an External Officer will need approximately 60 to 100 days of work per year to support EUI PS on communication depending on workload peaks and the complexity of tasks. Nevertheless, there will be periods with more workload and periods with less workload and EUI PS might decide to select multiple External Officer for the same activities, which will need to work cooperatively.

Through the present Call, the EUI PS will secure one External Officer in the frame of the EUI communication and dissemination strategy to support its implementation from January 2026.

The contract to be signed by the External Officer will initially span a period of 1 year, and it will include the provision for annual extensions.

## **2.3 OUTPUTS EXPECTED**

The outputs delivered by the contracted providers can be for internal use (shared with EUI PS and EUI providers or partners) or for external use (shared with the general public). All outputs will remain in the ownership of the EUI PS.

## 2. APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

### 3.1 APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Candidates are invited to apply to the present call for External Officer by respecting the procedure indicated in this document and the [application form](#).

Because EUI is indirectly managed by the European Commission, which involves numerous actors and processes, it is important to know that External Officer are expected to be cooperative and flexible in the implementation of the contract, report regularly and concisely about the activities, to accommodate for the changes naturally emerging within the general framework.

The application form will allow the EUI Permanent Secretariat to assess the candidates' eligibility and suitability for the External Officer role.

Besides mentioned above, candidates are requested to describe the main experiences, skills, knowledge which individual provider would bring to the role and provide evidence of their experience while respecting the word limit in each question box.

In addition to the application form, all applicants are required to submit a CV of maximum 5 A4 pages in Europass format, maximum 25 MB size, detailing your qualifications and work experience. The duration in months along with the start date and end date must be provided for any previous relevant employments. Examples of previous work can be included as hyperlinks or annexes to your CV in the same single document to be uploaded on the application platform. Any examples of previous work must be limited to relevant examples to support the knowledge and skills required in the framework of the present Call.

Applications must be submitted to the EUI Permanent Secretariat by the deadline indicated in the timeline table below via EUI website.

### 3.2 SELECTION PROCEDURE

The selection of applications for the External Officer roles will be performed by the EUI PS and an external service provider selected by the Entrusted Entity through an open call.

The selection procedure will be undertaken in two stages: (1) eligibility evaluation and (2) quality evaluation.

#### Eligibility evaluation

During the eligibility assessment, in order to be selected for the External Officer role, the following criteria will apply:

- Fluency in English (written and spoken, C1 level certificate<sup>2</sup> required from non-native speakers)
- University degree in any field linked to the tasks of the contract and work experience (communications, digital media, or web management):
  - Bachelor's + 4 years of work experience OR
  - Master's + 2 years of work experience OR
  - PhD + 1 years of work experience
- IT literacy

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<sup>2</sup> Non-exhaustive list of accepted certificates: TOEFL®, IELTS, PTE Academic, Cambridge English Qualifications, EFSET, Duolingo English Test, Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), Business English Certificate (BEC), Integrated Skills in English exams (ISE). Candidates without a certificate will be required to pass an online English test organised by EUI. Tests are expected to take place the week of 25 September – 2 October 2023.

Please note that the employees of the organisations which are EUI providers are not eligible to apply for this call.

### Quality evaluation

For the quality evaluation the following criteria will be applied:

- Formal education - University degree(s) with additional relevance for the tasks of the contract (beyond the eligibility criteria).
- Language competences: Fluency in English is essential. Fluency in 1 or 2 additional EU languages is highly desirable, as it facilitates communication with a diverse range of stakeholders.
- IT skills: Proficiency in Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) and content management systems (e.g. Drupal), as well as experience in website maintenance, basic SEO optimisation and data visualisation tools (e.g. Tableau, Power BI), are highly desirable. Basic knowledge of HTML/CSS or other programming languages such as Python will be considered a strong asset in the evaluation.
- Knowledge on and experience regarding the specific tasks of the contract: Demonstrated ability to manage and update web content, ensuring the accuracy, consistency, and accessibility of the content. Experience in monitoring communication channels such as social media, newsletters, and websites.
- Experience in project management: Proven ability to manage communication-related projects, particularly in website development, content updates, and platform management. This includes experience in coordinating teams and stakeholders, managing timelines, and ensuring the successful execution of communication tasks.
- Demonstrated ability to work both independently and collaboratively: Candidates should demonstrate initiative in managing their own tasks while also collaborating effectively with EUI PS staff, especially in cross-functional teams for web and communication projects.
- Attention to detail and organisational skills: Candidates should be able to demonstrate a strong capacity for maintaining accurate records, tracking changes, and ensuring the timely completion of tasks.

Quality evaluation will be carried out by EUI PS for candidates listed as eligible. A shortlist of the candidates with the best applications will be invited for an interview. A proof of English language skills at C1 level will be required from shortlisted candidates prior to the interview unless English is listed as the candidate's native language. A language test can be organised at the expense of EUI if needed, but for those applicants owning a proof of language it is highly recommended that they upload it in the application form. The proof of English level must be provided according to the indicative timeline.

Following the interviews with shortlisted candidates, the EUI Permanent Secretariat (EUI PS) will then select individuals for the role of External Officer. The EUI PS is supported in this process by an external contractor.

### 3.3 INDICATIVE TIMELINE FOR THE CALL

The indicative timeline for this call is detailed below. The applicants are required to ensure their availability for an interview, and the kick-off meeting on those indicative dates – all of which will be organised online.

|  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| Launch of call for External Officer      | 22 December 2025           |
| Closing date for receipt of applications | 8 January 2026 (14:00 CET) |
| Eligibility assessment and provision of: | 15 January 2026            |

|  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• list of eligible candidates to EUI PS with evidence of C1 level English language proficiency</li> <li>• List of eligible candidates with the need for English language testing</li> </ul> |                        |
| Quality assessment and shortlisting of candidates  | 22 January 2026        |
| Shortlisted candidates are informed and invited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• choose a date/time for interview</li> <li>• Take the English language test (if needed)</li> </ul>                                     | 23 January 2026        |
| English language test (if required)  | tbc                    |
| Interviews take place online   | 30 January             |
| Informing the selected External Officer candidate  | 6 February             |
| Indicative kick-off meeting for the External Officer   | 12 February            |
| Start of the work for the External Officer   | After kick-off meeting |



### 3. CONTRACTUAL DETAILS

#### 4.1 CONTRACTUAL MANAGEMENT

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

A contract will be signed between the external service provider and each selected External Officer. Shortlisted experts selected for the External Officer role will be informed in due time after the interviews.

The EUI PS will coordinate and support the activities of the External Officers. Only EUI PS is responsible for the quality control of the activities and deliverables of the External Officers.

#### 4.2 FEES

The daily rate of External Officer (all tax included) are fixed at:

|                  |                                    |
|------------------|------------------------------------|
| External Officer | EUR 450 / day (all taxes included) |
|------------------|------------------------------------|

The payments will be financed in the framework of the EUI.

#### 4.3 TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION

The delivery of this service does not require traveling to Lille (France) and to other locations in the EU to work with the EUI Permanent Secretariat and other partners.

In the event this would be required, travel and accommodation costs will be covered by the EUI according to the refunding conditions communicated to the External Officer in advance and after reception by the external service provider of the declarations of expenses form and justifications of payments.

#### 4.4 CONTACT

For questions regarding the present Call for External Officers, please contact [communication@urban-initiative.eu](mailto:communication@urban-initiative.eu). In case of technical issues with the online application, please contact us before the closure of the call.