

Terms of Reference of the Urban Europe Research Alliance (UERA)

Article 1

Mission and objectives

The Urban Europe Research Alliance (UERA) is one of the initiatives of the Joint Programming Initiative Urban Europe (JPI UE). Therefore, UERA mission, objectives, activities and structure shall reflect the JPI principles.

The UERA shall become a reference interlocutor at the European and international levels to give input into and support urban policies and research.

JPI UE is a Member States initiative aiming at strengthening and enhancing research and innovation in the urban context by aligning national resources and research funds and establishing transnational cooperation. It strives to establish large scale, long term, international research and development programmes dedicated to urban development following a holistic approach to create attractive, sustainable, liveable and economically viable urban areas. According to its Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda, JPI Urban Europe aims at facilitating the transition towards sustainable and liveable urban futures.

In this context, UERA is established as an independent network, without legal personality, whose mission is to strengthen and coordinate the relations among its members in order to improve their contribution and participation in further European common initiatives in this field. As results, this effort will also strengthen the research and innovation capability of its members.

UERA aims at gathering leading research organisations and universities together and to develop a shared vision on urban research in Europe by the improvement of inter and trans-disciplinary approach on research. This new approach can be useful to understand and study the complexity of urban systems and therewith, to achieve challenge-driven solutions and innovations.

Furthermore, the UERA aims at bridging the gaps between researchers, urban practitioners and the private sector in order to understand and exchange different views and trends in society needs, scientific knowledge, know-how development, need of new facilities and infrastructures, limitations by legislation, new business models, governance structures.

Moreover the establishment of cooperation with practitioners and business partners shall offer new opportunities to develop research and innovation projects, experimentation, validation and demonstration.

Therefore, UERA shall widely represent the major players of the urban research community and support strategic cooperation among the UERA members encouraging also the promotion of joint research projects.

As a whole, all UERA activities shall take into account the need for strengthen, expand and optimize the European development of new urban research and innovation capabilities through:

- Integrating research capacities, activities, resources, national facilities and infrastructures across the EU, also in order to overcome the fragmentation that makes it difficult to optimize.
- Building a platform for scientific knowledge and research activities exchange in order to address EU policy processes to new urban research.
- Giving contribution to the strategic development of the JPI Urban Europe and the implementation of its Strategic Research & Innovation Agenda, by reflecting latest research results and achievements, defining future research needs, realizing joint projects, supporting dissemination measures and contributing to the JPI Urban Europe platform.
- Promoting and coordinating joint strategic proposals and acting as projects and programmes incubator, also encouraging its members to improve their interaction with practitioners and business partners.
- Pursuing in the middle and long terms, a relevant consistency at the European scale, and the development of an effective urban research community

In the long term objective of UERA will also to contribute to match research outcomes with industries, cities and public authorities' requests.

Article 2

Activities

Given the above stated mission, UERA shall undertake the following activities:

- Developing foresight exercises along with all the actors involved;
- Setting and defining scientific priorities to provide input into strategic research agendas and forthcoming EU projects and programmes, as well as the existing ones (e.g. EIP Smart Cities and Communities, SET Plan, Horizon2020);
- Performing as projects incubator and assisting UERA members in matchmaking partners for participating in new common projects at the European and International levels;
- Setting up ad-hoc scientific networks (or thematic working groups) on strategic issues or explanatory topics, making an effort to involve all the actors concerned;
- Promoting high level training (e.g. summer schools, European masters, fellowships);
- Strengthening the relationship between UERA members, also in order to share their expertise and well as disseminate the results achieved within joint European projects;
- Improving communication and facilitating the exchange of information among the members about common initiatives and programmes, as well as about those involving other relevant (international and European) organisations;
- Establish a dialogue between European, national, regional and local authorities; technical support organisations (TSOs); operators; professional organisations; research institutes; universities; non-

governmental organisations (NGOs); consultants, national and local stakeholders in order to develop partnership in projects which shall achieve innovative solutions and promote their capitalization and implementation;

- Engaging international cooperation actions with leading research organisations;
- Sharing research infrastructures or implementing joint (or common) research infrastructures or platforms, including urban data bases, systems of observation, case studies (e.g. observatories, living labs, urban projects) for the implementation of joint research/innovation projects or joint experimentations and encouraging cooperation among the members in carrying out studies;
- Promoting and facilitating researchers' mobility and the scientific exchange between European research institutions, organisations, and Universities also launching of new training courses and workshops/exercises according to the needs of all the various actors.

As UERA has not a legal personality, UERA can't submit to the EU any funding proposal for carrying out research and development activities. UERA can and will only facilitate member collaboration in order to submit successfully their joint projects. Apart from this, UERA members can also apply for funding projects aiming at improving UERA activities.

Article 3

Membership

Membership of UERA is open to all research organisations, institutions and Universities from EU Member States as well from EU Associated States, which meet the following requirements: carrying out noteworthy research on urban issues; agreeing to sign the UERA Memorandum of Understanding and to approve the present UERA Terms of Reference.

Each member representative is committed to refer UERA activities and results to its own organisation, in order to promote UERA approach and strategies within its Organisation itself.

UERA core membership is constituted by the founding members who will first sign the constitutive paper. They are research institutions, organisations and Universities from JPI Urban Europe partner countries (Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden and United Kingdom. Portugal, Romania, Spain, Switzerland and Turkey are observers, as well as the European Commission). However, UERA membership is extended to research organisations, institutions and Universities from all European countries and beyond.

There is no limit to the number of UERA members.

Membership is free of charges. However UERA can receive voluntary in kind and funding contributions from all members. UERA may mobilise public and private funds to achieve its objectives. Proposals for European funds may be submitted to support the activities of UERA. Such funds shall be managed through UERA members. However, UERA itself will not apply for research funding.

European, national, regional and local authorities, technical support organisations (TSO's), operators and professional organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), consultants, and national and local stakeholders, concerning the urban environment fields, can be associated to UERA network.

Organisation and Governance

General Assembly

The General Assembly is the decision body, which reviews and endorses the general program of the UERA as proposed by the Steering Board.

Each UERA members shall nominate one representative, so that the Assembly is constituted by the representatives of all members who have the right to vote. Each Member has one vote.

Other subjects could participate in the UERA General Assembly as observers on a case-by-case basis, but have no vote.

The Assembly can deliberate only when the majority (more than half of members) of the UERA members is present. In order to grant the General Assembly quorum, the member representative who cannot attend the meeting, can designate a substitute delegate.

The General Assembly meets at least twice a year to take decisions about:

- policies
- strategic goals and priorities
- amendments to the constitutive papers
- Steering Board members nomination
- new membership approval
- work programs approval

The Assembly Chairperson will be nominated to represent UERA as a whole.

The chairperson is elected by the general Assembly from a list of candidates nominated by the members. Any member is entitled to be elected.

The Chairperson is to stay in charge for a two-year term. The appointment can be renewed only for another two-year term.

Steering Board

The Steering Board is the UERA executive body who reports to the Assembly.

The Steering Board is constituted by 6 members. Their functions will be assigned based on the UERA strategy and roadmap.

Only one person per member organisation can be nominated by the General Assembly for a two-year term. The UERA Coordinator is nominated among and by its members.

To ensure a good coordination between UERA and the JPI Urban Europe activities and a high contribution of UERA to SRIA implementation, a regular exchange will be established between the JPI

Urban Europe Management Board and the UERA Steering Board. The UERA coordinator is a member of the JPI Urban Europe Management Board and representatives of the UE Management Board will regularly participate to the UERA Steering Boards.

The Steering Board's tasks are:

- Proposing policies, strategies and priorities
- Proposing amendments to the constitutive papers
- Evaluate requirements of new memberships applications
- Propose work plans
- Report on UERA results and UERA success development according to key performance indicators
- Plan and propose UERA meetings and Assembly meetings

The Steering Board meets twice a year (including one at the occasion of the General Assembly meeting)

In case of extraordinary circumstances, extra meetings can be solicited by the Management members.

Secretariat

The Secretariat is provided by one UERA organisation and nominated by the General Assembly.

The Secretariat is in charge of

- Organising technical meetings and General Assembly meetings;
- Providing for the internal and external communication (e.g. website, newsletter, reports, etc.).

Article 7

Accession and Withdrawal

Organisations interested in joining the UERA will submit an application request to the UERA Steering Board which evaluates the requirements (as defined in Article 1) and submit the request to the General Assembly.

The Assembly, in its turn, shall approve it by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting.

Each UERA member has the right to withdraw from this network any time by sending official communication to the UERA Steering Board giving at least a three-month notice of its withdrawing will.

Article 9

Adoption, Amendments and Entry into Force

These Terms of Reference shall come into force after the signature of at least three members and shall remain in force for an initial period of two years from that date.



They may be extended thereafter by agreement of the General Assembly members.

These Terms of Reference may be revised and amended at any time by the General Assembly upon the request of one or several UERA members.

The reviewed ToR will be ratified by a two-thirds majority at a quorate meeting

These Terms of Reference shall be adopted by the UERA Steering Board

The Terms of Reference shall be made public after their adoption by the UERA Steering Board.