

JPI Urban Europe – Public Consultation Background Paper

What is JPI Urban Europe?

JPI Urban Europe welcomes anyone with a drive and concern to improve 21st century urban life. Our task is to connect public authorities, civil society, scientists, innovators, business and industry to provide a new environment for research and innovation. We offer experimental zones and long-term research infrastructures in a broad sense. Our mission is to develop knowledge, tools and platforms for dialogue on urban transitions. In the longer term, JPI Urban Europe has the ambition to become “THE platform to create, combine, discuss and make available knowledge and robust evidence for sustainable urban solutions by setting common research and innovation priorities, improving and aligning R&I instruments, moderating science-policy processes and supporting transnational collaboration for local capacity building.”

The strategy process and your involvement

The strategy process to update the JPI Urban Europe’s *Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda* takes place throughout 2018 and starts with the public consultation. The consultation aims at collecting stakeholder reflections on strategic issues related to urban transitions and European local priorities to drive sustainable urban development. The results will be considered in the *Agora – JPI Urban Europe Strategic Dialogue* on 24–25 April, Bucharest, Romania, to which you are also invited to discuss key elements of the agenda. More details on the Agora event can be found [here](#). If you want to stay informed on our next steps and results, sign in for our newsletter [here](#).

Our present Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda

JPI Urban Europe’s *Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda* was published in 2015. It responded to the urgent need for truly inter- and transdisciplinary research to improve our understanding of urban areas and support Europe’s cities in their transition towards a sustainable and liveable future.¹

Since 2015, the strategy is under implementation through a series of **calls for proposals** that resulted in a project portfolio of 65 research and innovation projects funded, many of which approach various challenges through urban living labs. In addition, workshops and conferences were (co-)organised with strong emphasis on **stakeholder engagement** to connect these projects, develop a transnational research and innovation community and facilitate science-policy-society dialogues. As the first projects are delivering their results, the implementation and exploitation of new urban approaches is of particular concern.

New knowledge and insights generated through the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda implementation process, the evolving and changing characteristics of urban challenges and the new global and European policies in place now calls for an update of the agenda.

¹ <http://jpi-urbaneurope.eu/co-creating-a-strategic-research-and-innovation-agenda-for-sustainable-and-liveable-urban-futures/>

A new policy environment

In Europe and globally we face so called grand societal challenges, challenges that no organisation or country can solve on its own. Since 2015, grand challenge of sustainable urbanisation has received much political attention, locally and globally.

In 2015, the United Nations adopted the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*², which proposes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Urban areas are key settings to address many of the societal challenges involved in reaching the goals/outlined in the SDGs. It is also recognised in the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* that urban areas play an essential role in achieving all of the 17 SDGs, not only the 11th – *Sustainable Cities and Communities*. Involvement of urban and local actors is expected to be key to fully achieve the goals.³

In support of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, especially the efforts to reach SDG 11, UN-Habitat published the *New Urban Agenda*. The New Urban Agenda is a reference for transforming cities and urban areas into inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable places. Within the EU, Member States signed the *Pact of Amsterdam, the Urban Agenda for the EU*. This agreement calls for broader stakeholder engagement of cities and urban actors in 12 partnerships on dedicated topics. Besides the new policy, numerous actors in various countries, cities, urban districts and neighbourhoods have in turn developed their particular strategies to support transitions towards a sustainable and liveable future.

All these developments constitute a significant paradigm shift for sustainable urbanisation. Urban areas and urban communities are now seen as drivers and centres of progress to tackle societal challenges. According to its mission, JPI Urban Europe is ready to support such transformation processes by providing a transnational research and innovation environment for co-creation and sharing of good practice.

² UN (2015), *Transforming our world: The 2030 agenda for sustainable development*, A/RES/70/1, < <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf> >; see also UN (2018), *Sustainable development goals*, < <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/> >.

³ SAB (forthcoming), *New Urban Transitions towards Sustainability*, Scientific Advisory Board of the JPI Urban Europe. See also Frantzeskaki, N. et al. (eds.) (2017), *Urban sustainability transitions*, New York: Routledge.; Simon, D. (ed.) (2016), *Rethinking Sustainable Cities: Accessible, green and fair*, Mistra Urban Futures, < <https://oopen.org/search?identifier=613676> >, Bristol: Policy Press.