

## Discussion paper 1: How to successfully run a Partnership

*This discussion paper serves to guide the discussion of the break-out session of Day 1 of the Coordinators' – Action Leaders' meeting 2021. The discussion elements presented in this paper are based on the analysis of the results of the 14 surveys "Your multi-level governance experience" shared with Partnerships' members and reflections from the Technical Secretariat in supporting the 14 Partnerships.*

### Composition

The **multi-level governance dimension** around which the Urban Agenda for the EU Partnerships are built is the key feature of their composition and functioning. The presence and interaction among cities, regions, Member States, European institutions and EU representative bodies is a fundamental factor for the success of the Partnerships. In this context, **diversity and variety** within the Partnership members is to be sought, in order to ensure that multiple and different views are taken into account. A **balanced representation** of stakeholders of **all governmental levels** is of key importance for the composition. Involvement of cities of different sizes, regional authorities, social actors and civil society is to be ensured in the Partnership's work, as well as commitment of Members States ministries. Moreover, another important element is the engagement of the European Institutions, for example Commission's DGs, especially those related to the priority theme of the Partnership. Nevertheless, the Partnership should be of a 'workable' size, in order to ensure that the work is duly carried out in a coordinated manner. Partnerships may have one or multiple Coordinators, however preferably not more than two – and always in the spirit of multi-level governance.

### Working methods and functioning

A Partnership is only successfully functioning once true partnership and trusted relationships are formed. This is why the following elements are deemed important:

- **Agreement on vision and objectives** among all Partners.
- **High level of commitment** of all members and **ownership** of the Partnership's work from different players. Strong coordination is obviously important but coordination also needs to be inclusive and engaging and willing to focus on developing a cohesive approach.
- **Clear allocation of roles.** Coordinator(s) should steer the work of the Partnership, while ensuring collaborative work and cooperation among all Members. Dedication and leadership skills of the Coordinator(s) are key to manage the Partnership in an inclusive manner.
- **Balance top down and bottom-up coordination.** Having Coordinator(s) providing strategic guidance and direction, while encouraging Action Leaders and other Members to take ownership of the Actions.

- **Open dialogue** and a **continuous feedback loop** between Partners, in order to ensure transparent and constructive exchanges.
- **Efficient use of the available resources.** The well-functioning of the Partnership is ensured by an efficient use of the support and resources, made available by the Commission (i.e. support of the Secretariat, travel budget and expertise days) as well as by the Partners themselves.
- **Clear and sound workplans.** Organise programme management per phase (initiation, implementation, scaling and communication) and carefully designed and well-planned and realistic timelines for the Partnership's work and activities.
- **A compact set of reinforcing Actions.** Successful Partnerships manage to focus their resources on a concise number of Actions, which are complementary and reinforcing each other.