Proposal for URBACT Action Network Call 2026

Data Observatory of the Local Productive Sector

Max. budget: 1M€

Partnership: 6-8 partners from eligible countries

Duration: 30 months (November 2026 – April 2029)

Submission deadline: 17/06/2026

Link to Terms of reference document: URBACT IV Terms of Reference - Call for Action Networks.pdf

Local context

Getafe Iniciativas (GISA) is the Local Development Agency of the Getafe City Council (Spain). GISA is in charge of supporting the productive sector of the town through the implementation of measures aimed at promoting economic development and job creation in Getafe, as well as supporting and providing advice to local entrepreneurs.

Challenges addressed

In order to develop effective policies to promote local economic development, it is essential to understand the reality of the business sector with real and updated data. However, the information available is limited, partial and, in many cases, outdated. As a local development agency, it is critical to have a detailed view of the business sector, but for a town like Getafe, with approximately 9,500 registered companies representing a great diversity of sectors, it is highly complex to acquire detailed knowledge and up-to-date real information. Therefore, the main challenge is to **address the lack of exhaustive and quality data through the creation of a data space of the business sector at the municipal level that contributes to improving, evaluating and designing policies to support local business sector.**

Project objectives

The objectives could cover some of the following aspects:

- **Development of a data governance** system for information related to the local business sector. This would include the definition of policies for data quality and management, particularly when using external sources; data

ownership; responsibilities associated to data collection, storage and treatment, etc.

- **Identify, catalogue and structure the already existing and potential sources of data** of local businesses. This would critically address **internal and external sources:**
    - Internal sources would include existing or potential creation of databases with data that can be directly collected by the organization.
    - External sources from other municipal departments or municipal companies, business organisations, regional or national governments, chambers of commerce and other relevant stakeholders that may have access to business data at local level.

- **Establishment of data sharing infrastructure with other municipal departments and external actors** that hold relevant information of the business sector. Depending on the level of progress of each city, this could include the creation of a data lake that stores all structured, semi-structured, and unstructured data at any scale.

- **Creation of a data analysis system** with updated information to improve decision-making and public policies to support the productive sector. This would be the last and most ambitious step for cities involved, and it might include the creation of a dashboard to provide visual and graphic information to support decision-making processes at local level.

Since URBACT is conceived as a programme to foster the exchange of experiences and practices between cities, it is not necessary that all cities involved will work on the same areas. Instead, each city will focus on the aspects more relevant and adequate to their needs, depending on their level of development and a realistic assessment of their existing capabilities. Some cities may be more advanced than others and in many cases it may not seem realistic to develop advanced data analytics. Hence just focusing on developing a data governance and structuring of existing data sources would be enough for some cities. The main purpose is to learn from each other and assess different strategies to gather and analyse data in order to inform other partners and help them develop their own business data observatories depending on their circumstances.

The starting point for each city would be to **define their own specific uses of the data observatory.** This would consist of defining the needs and main purposes of

creating the observatory for each participant city and would require each city to answer the following questions:

- Why do I need the data?
- What are the main purposes?
- What type of data do I need?
- What level of accuracy is necessary to achieve my goals?

Cross-cutting elements for the development of a data observatory

Regardless of the level of ambition and capabilities of participant cities, all partners involved in the creation of the data observatory should consider the following cross-cutting aspects:

1. **Sizing the scope of the observatory**: this would address the level of detail of data, regularity of data and coverage of data from local businesses.

2. **Sources of data:**

a. Internal: surveys, evaluation of current actions, compilation of regular interactions with users and businesses, information collected from entrepreneurs, information from grants delivered to local businesses, etc.

b. External: municipality, regional/national governments, business associations, external databases.

3. **Temporary sustainability:** rather than providing a static picture, the data observatory should be updated and maintained over time. This would imply endowing it with:
    - Economic, human and technological resources.
    - Institutional backing.
    - Commitment to ensure its continuity.

    Each participant city should make a realistic assessment about the resources they have to ensure the sustainability of the observatory in the long-term.

4. **Information security:** this would address three specific aspects:

- Confidentiality: ensures that confidential information is not disclosed to unauthorised third parties, through measures such as encryption, authentication and access control policies.
- Availability: ensures that authorised users have access to systems and data when required. This is achieved through backups, hardware maintenance and redundant networks.

- Integrity: it refers to the accuracy, consistency, and reliability of information throughout its lifecycle, ensuring it is trustworthy, complete, and free from manipulation or error

The concept of information security is broader than that of cybersecurity. On one side, it encompasses all organizational, personal, physical infrastructure associated to the security of information. On the other, it also includes IT security, which is focused on protecting the infrastructure that allows information exchanges (cybersecurity would refer to this specific aspect).

Partnership

While the project would be **led by GISA**, we are looking for **local authorities, local development agencies and other municipal actors representing cities across Europe** who are interested in developing data spaces related to the productive sector of their respective municipalities.

A **technological partner (only university or research centre) specialized in data management and security** would be highly valuable, especially if it has **experience in supporting public entities**, preferably municipalities, in public data management projects.

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