



 **URBACT**  
Driving change for  
better cities



URBACT  
COMUNIDAD DE  
CONOCIMIENTO Y PRÁCTICA

VITALITY OF SMALL  
CITIES



**European Union**  
European Regional Development Fund



# URBACT

bringing EU cities together  
as a European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) programme  
co-financed by ERDF and Member/Partner States

- ◆ **Main objective:** To promote integrated sustainable urban development in Europe
- ◆ **Target:** EU city administrations (city staff – policy makers, decision makers, practitioners)

Since  
2002



nearly  
1000  
cities



139  
Networks

# finding tailored responses with the URBACT Method



Integrated + Participative + Transnational Exchange + Expertise = 'hands on' Sustainable Urban Development

- ◆ Integrated approach > tackling different policy areas and governance levels at the same time
- ◆ Participative approach > involving all local stakeholders
- ◆ Transnational exchange > learning from peers
- ◆ Expertise > customised support provided to all networks



# 3 main strands of activities



## TRANSNATIONAL EXCHANGE & LEARNING

Cities sharing experiences, problems solutions, learn from one another, identify good practices to design & implement integrated urban policies



NETWORKS

## CAPACITY BUILDING

Enhancing the capacities of urban practitioners and policy-makers to develop integrated and participatory approaches to urban development



TRAININGS

## CAPITALISATION DISSEMINATION

Communicating urban knowledge, policy recommendations, good practices to a wider audience of policy-makers & practitioners



KNOWLEDGE  
PLATFORM





# Vitality of Small Cities

- ◆ Network led capitalisation of 3 URBACT Action Planning Networks:  
RetailLink – CityCentreDoctor – AgriUrban
  - **Reviving experiential retail to enliven city/town centres**
  - **Creating attraction through community engagement in public spaces of the city centre**
  - **Strengthening the local urban economy through developing and showcasing local produce**
- ◆ International conference in Barcelona, October 2018: 150 mayors – city officials – urban actors: report & recommendations:  
<https://urbact.eu/files/vitality-smaller-cities-conference-report>



# Vitality of Small Cities Project

Developing a Framework of Supports available for  
Small Cities in the European Union



# Small Cities Context

< 100.000 population

## **New challenges**

- Increasingly complex societal challenges (ageing, migration, climate changes, industry 4.0)
- Increasing burden of global trends on local actors
- Reduction of financial resources

## **New opportunities**

- New role for cities as field of experimentation for innovation
- New technologies changing (vertical and horizontal) relation with civil society
- Increasing availability of civil society to co-design and co-implement innovative solutions

## **New financial mechanism**

- New EU and MS framework for the period of 2021-2027
- New mechanisms to share the risk with urban authorities and local stakeholders



# Developing a Framework for Support of Small Cities in Europe

## Focus of enquiry

Challenges, needs, trends, aspirations, gaps, available tools

- **Why do some small cities succeed** to sustain vitality and other small cities don't?
- **What are the supports** that are essential?
- Which are the ones **provided by the EU Programmes?** And by **Member States?**
- **How can cities learn from each other** to improve their vitality?

## Engagement

Multilevel + Multi-profile Partnership for assessment, analysis and validation

Baseline

Case studies

Visits & interviews

Expert views

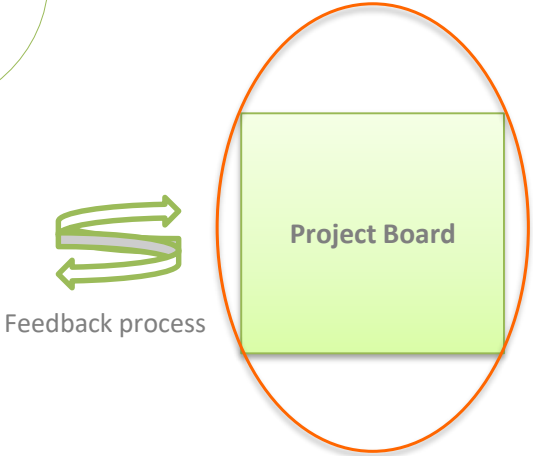
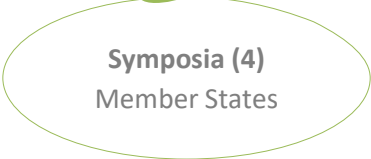
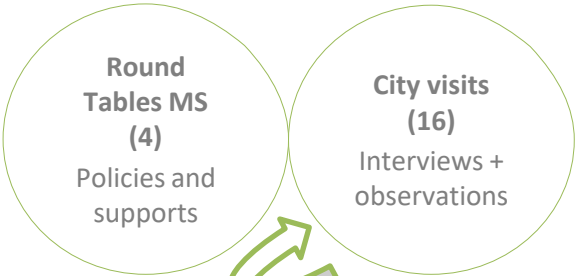
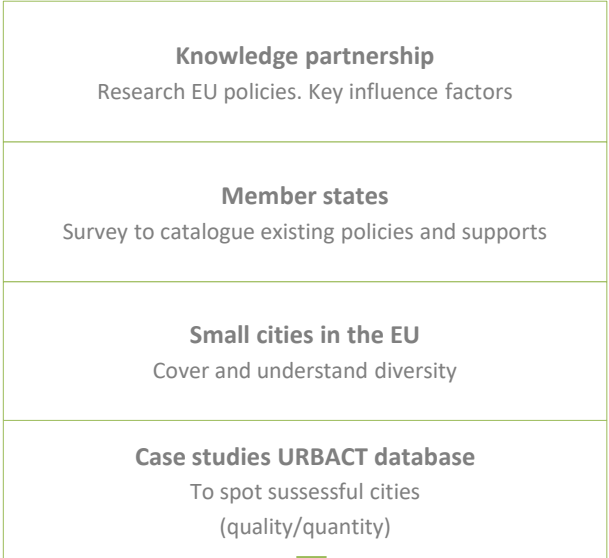
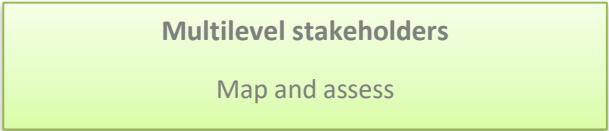
## Results

Framework of policies, tools and good practices in support for small cities' vitality

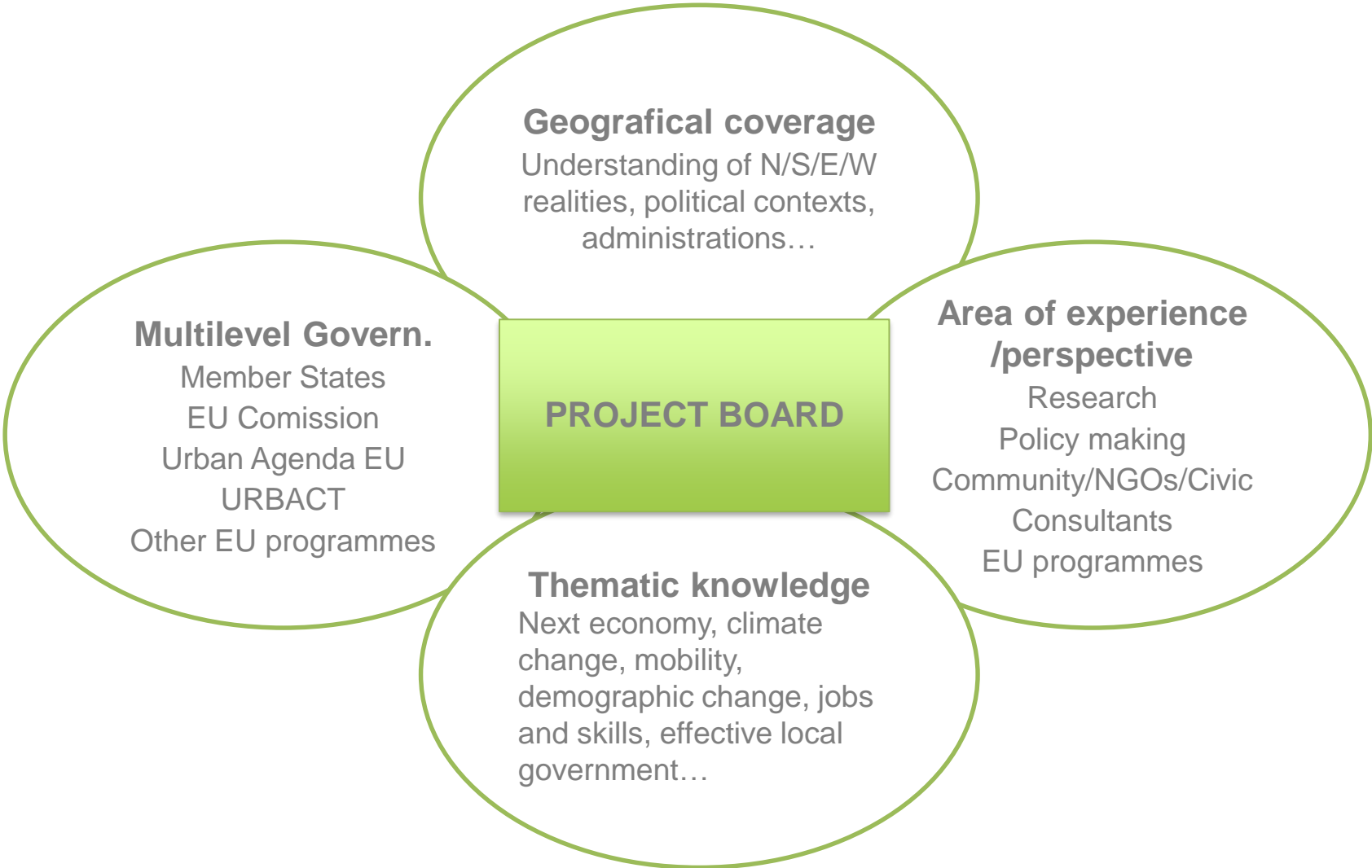
- Clearly defined **end state** regard vitality of small cities in Europe
- Vitality **health check tool** for small cities
- Selected **case studies that inspire** others
- **Catalogue of EU and member state supports**

# Creating a multilevel and multi-profile partnership

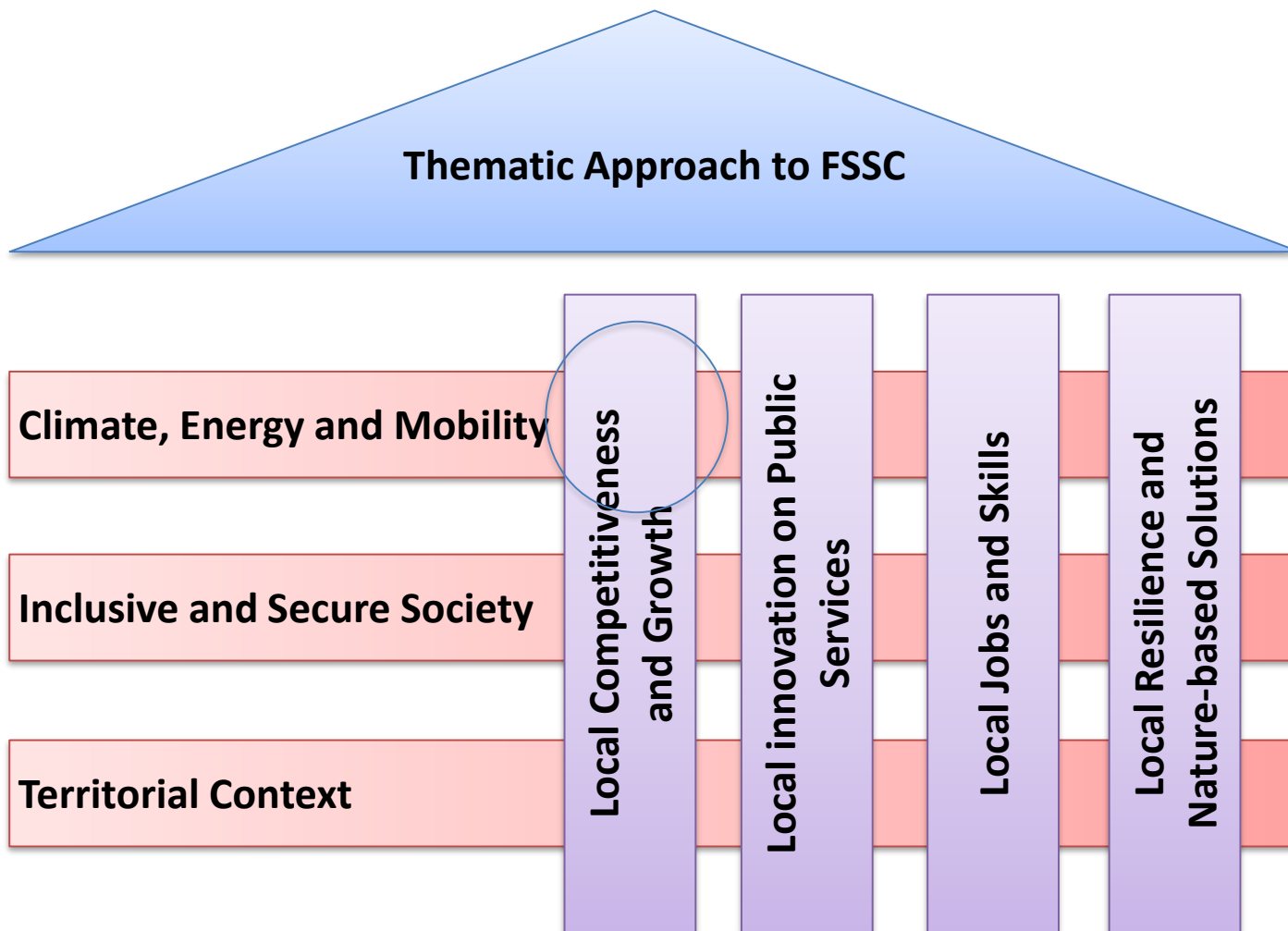
## Intervention logic and key role players



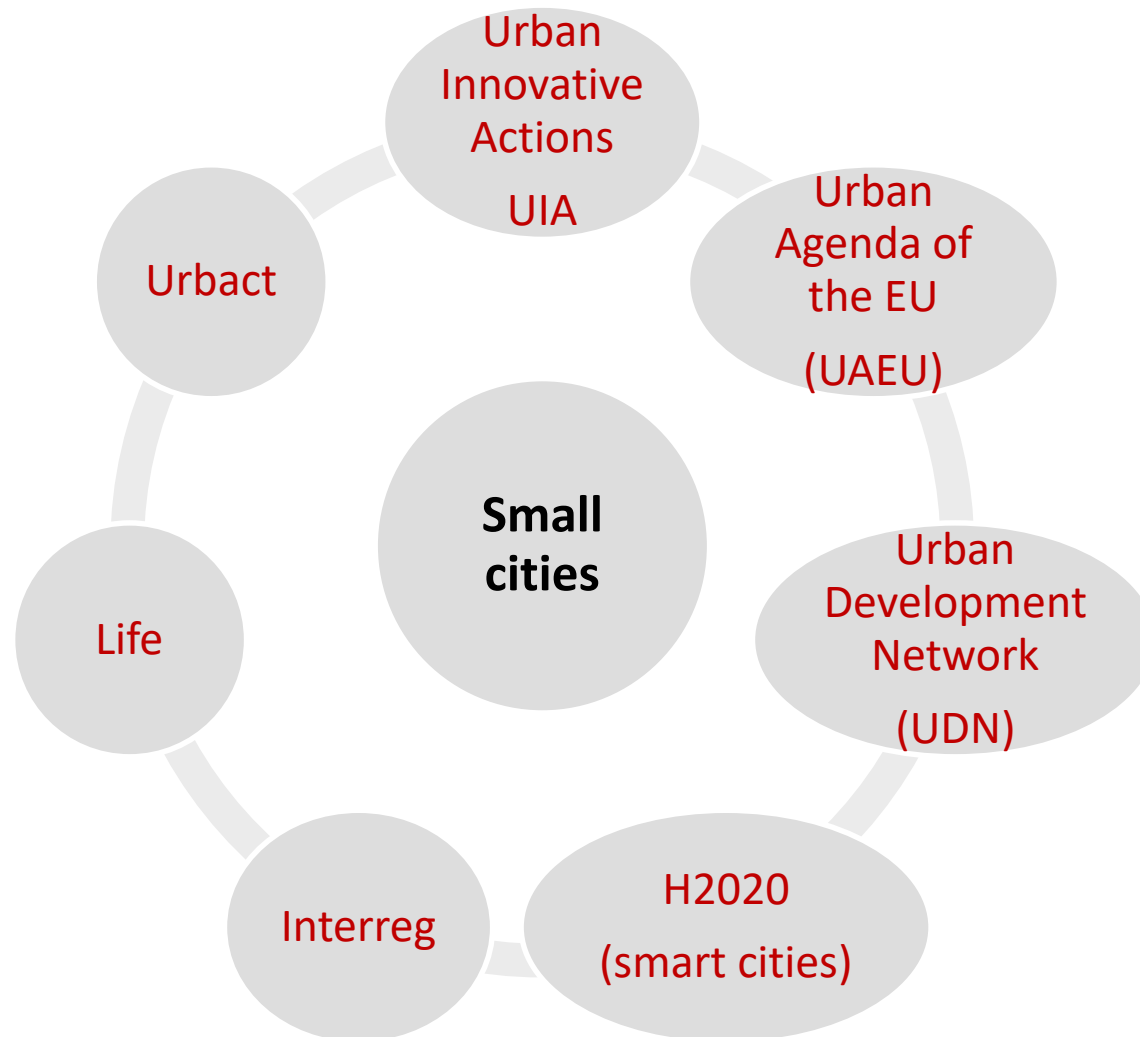
Project Board to advise the  
EU Framework for Support of Small Cities



# Thematic Approach



# Increase synergies & coordination between EU operational programmes to support cities





## Framework support for smaller cities

- ◆ Develop **health check tool** for cities to assess ‘vitality’
- ◆ Produce inspiring **case studies** from URBACT cities and beyond
- ◆ Work with **MS, EU and** partners to map support mechanisms
- ◆ **Pilot action** looking closer at 4 country frameworks
- ◆ Phase 1 underway; Phase 2 in 2020 (if approved)