

ACTORS OF URBAN CHANGE

FAQs for the Open Call

Last update: July 15, 2019

1) Eligibility – Country, City, Project

1.1 Which countries are eligible to apply?

Teams can apply from **all 28 member states of the EU** as well as:

Albania	Iceland	Norway
Andorra	Kosovo	Russian Federation
Armenia	Liechtenstein	San Marino
Azerbaijan	Moldova	Serbia
Belarus	Monaco	Switzerland
Bosnia-Herzegovina	Montenegro	Turkey
Georgia	North Macedonia	Ukraine

1.2 Which topics and challenges related to urban change can be addressed?

From the program's perspective, urban change is not mainly focused on formal processes of urban planning or development, but rather on strengthening community-driven engagement for local urban development. The project you apply with needs to address a current challenge or need related to sustainable urban development in your city or neighborhood such as:

- affordable housing and gentrification
- energy and climate change
- accessibility of (formerly) public resources and spaces
- sustainable mobility and transportation
- social inclusion and cultural diversity
- circular and sharing economies
- digital solutions to shape urban change
- health, food supply and physical activity

With the aim of creating synergies with past projects, we are specifically interested in projects that link the topics above to one of these questions:

- How can **communities** be activated to co-shape their urban environments?
- How can **nature-based solutions** make our cities better places?

- How can **neglected spaces** be re-imagined as vital and conscious hubs for cities under pressure?

No matter the challenge you choose to address, your project should be relevant to the local area/neighborhood it is based in, innovative compared to other initiatives in your city, and put a strong emphasis on the involvement of the local community.

1.3 How does the program define “urban”? Where can my project take place?

Our definition of urban is first of all a differentiation from rural areas. An urban space is larger in its size, culturally more heterogeneous and more densely populated than its immediate surrounding rural areas. Furthermore, an urban area has some sort of central function for its surroundings. Actors of Urban Change, in our understanding, are actors that aim to contribute to change urban areas for the better, making their cities a better place for people to live in. This means that your project can take place in a commune of 5,000 inhabitants or in a neighbourhood of a capital with 10 million people. The most relevant aspect for us is that your project contributes to urban change in your local context.

2) Eligibility – Cross-sector Teams

2.1 How many team members do we have to be? And can we all come from the same organization?

We only accept applications from cross-sector teams: this means you have to apply as a team of three, consisting of a representative from the nonprofit, private and public sector. It is not possible to have more than one team member from the same organization—and therefore probably the same sector—participating in the program. This does not mean that you cannot integrate colleagues from your organizations within the development and implementation of your project activities at the local level.

2.2 I would like to apply with my project idea, but I do not have a team yet. Can you provide me with team members?

Please make sure you **apply as a team**, not as an individual. We cannot provide you with suitable team members in your city. We are aware that it is not always easy to find partners for cross-sector collaboration, but we believe that the program can serve as an important catalyst in the process of initiating the partnership.

2.3 Our team members come from different countries – is that a problem?

No, it is not a problem for us if members of your team come from different countries. As long as you now live in your project's city (see also question 2.4), nationality is not decisive. From the previous rounds of the program, several teams have included international team members. This can be an asset, provided everyone has good working English and sufficient knowledge of the local language.

2.4 Do we all have to live in the city in which we will implement the project?

In general, all team members should live in the city in which you are planning to implement your project. In some cases, professional or personal reasons might mean that one team member lives in a city an hour away, or commutes weekly between the project city and another city. This can prove to be a challenge when it comes to implementing community-driven local projects. However, this does not disqualify you from applying: In this case, we expect you to mention the situation openly in your application and point out clearly how you plan to handle it.

2.5 Who qualifies as an actor from the nonprofit, private or public sector?

Applicants should be employed by an organization from either the nonprofit, private or public sector. In the case of the nonprofit sector, the applicant can be engaged in an official volunteer role within their organization as long as they are able to legally represent the organization for the purposes of the grant (see question 2.7). The professional position is not crucial in terms of hierarchy, though you should consider who within each organization is best placed to implement the project at both an operational and strategic level.

- **The nonprofit sector** includes citizens' initiatives, social cooperatives and collectives, cultural organizations (privately or publicly funded) etc.. Generally, this sector has to be represented by a person from a nonprofit organization, which must have charity status according to the laws of the country in which the organization is based (see question 2.6).
- **The public sector** can mean municipal, regional, or federal administrative bodies. Generally this sector has to be represented by a person from the public sector, such as local or governmental institutions and facilities, municipalities, public bodies and institutions etc.
- **The private sector** includes small and medium-sized businesses, companies, creative industries, real estate, as well as (social) entrepreneurs and freelancers. Publicly-owned companies qualify as well. Generally, this sector has to be represented by a person from a for-profit organization.

2.6 Why does the nonprofit organization have to prove their charity status? How and when is this done?

If successful in your application, your team would receive funding to implement your project. Legally, MitOst e.V. can only transfer grant money to a nonprofit organization, making the nonprofit team member the grant holder within your team. This is why the nonprofit representative has to confirm in the application that their organization has charity status according to the laws of the country in which the organization is based.

If selected, the nonprofit organization would then have to prove their charity status before we can transfer funds. In order to do this, the nonprofit team member must supply supporting documents* to prove their organization complies with the following criteria:

- The organization is of a non-business legal form ('registered nonprofit organization')
- The organization's activities are not-for-profit
- If the organization dissolves, the assets would be transferred to another nonprofit organization
- If the organization's balance is positive, it is reinvested in nonprofit activities (= no profit making)

*The proof for the above criteria is normally found in either the official registration document, statutes or annual financial report of your organization.

2.7 As the grant holder, what is the legal responsibility of the nonprofit team member?

The project funds are transferred to the nonprofit organization's bank account, making the nonprofit team member responsible for managing the project funds (including requests to access funds as well as financial reporting). Through their signature, the nonprofit team member is ensuring that the funds will be / were used for the agreed purpose and that all data that is provided is correct. As such, it is important that the nonprofit team member is able to hold this legal responsibility within their organization.

This does not mean that the nonprofit team member decides how the grants are used – this should be agreed upon within your team. This also does not mean that the nonprofit team member is the only person responsible for financial reporting – as a team you should decide how you plan to share out tasks and responsibilities.

3) Application and selection process

3.1 Is it a disadvantage if we are a newly formed team without previous project team experience?

No, teams that have formed especially for the application for the program are very welcome to apply. Previous experience working as a trio is not a requirement. If you are a newly formed team, we are curious to know how you found each other. If you have already implemented a project together, we are curious to know about your team experience so

far. In general, we want to know why you think that this team is the right team for the challenge you aim to address and what collective knowledge and experience you are bringing to your project.

3.2 How far does our project have to be developed at the time of application?

At the time of application, your project can be in the early development stages. As the focus is on co-creation, we expect the projects to develop and evolve throughout your team's participation in the program. For the application, we need you to give us a clear understanding of your long-term vision, the concrete activities that you plan to implement and the milestones you would use to measure the progress of your project. If selected, you will be asked to submit a budget, and we will support you in the further development of your project throughout the program.

3.3 Which criteria will be taken into account for the initial shortlisting and jury selection?

Besides the formal application criteria as stated in the online application, the following criteria will be applied both during the initial shortlisting and the final jury selection:

- Relevance of the project within the context of the city, community or neighborhood it is based in
- Feasibility of the suggested project
- Strength of the project in regard to citizen involvement, cross-sector collaboration, and social change
- Traceability of impacts on personal, team, and city levels
- Potential for scaling-up of your project idea
- Motivation and commitment of the team members to take part in the international exchange and qualification program
- Potential synergies with the existing Actors of Urban Change network (geographic, thematic)

3.4 What are the steps in the selection process? When will we be informed about the results?

After the deadline for applications has passed, the 40 most promising candidates will be shortlisted according to the quality of their submitted application. You will be notified of the results of this first stage by mid-October 2019. In a second step, we will ask all shortlisted teams to hand in a short video to get to know you better. We will send you questions for this video, which we will ask you to send to us until the end of October 2019. The shortlisted teams will be reviewed by an external Jury, consisting of experts on urban development and former participants of the program. In some cases, the jury might ask for clarification of certain elements of your project idea or team constellation. Of the

shortlisted candidates, the jury will select up to ten teams to take part in the program. You will be notified about the final results by mid-November 2019.

If you are selected to take part in the program, we will inform you about the next steps immediately. The kick-off meeting will take place mid-February 2020 in Berlin.

4) Participation in the program:

4.1 How much funding is available through the program? Do we have to provide own funding for our project?

Selected teams receive up to 13,000 EUR in grants. Each team is eligible for the following:

- **Activity Grant** to implement your project (including material and personnel costs) of up to 6,000 EUR
- **Capacity Grant** for expert support and consultancy of up to 4,000 EUR
- **Travel grants** for individual team members to visit and learn from other cities in our network of up to 3,000 EUR

Providing funding of your own is not a requirement. However, in order to ensure the sustainability of your project, please reflect carefully upon your budget and on potential sources of additional funding or in-kind support.

4.2 Who covers travel expenses for program activities?

Accommodation, meals and transportation related to participation in international network meetings and other program-related events are covered by the program. However, we can only reimburse costs that have been previously agreed upon and can be proven with receipts.

4.3 What is the time commitment involved in participating in the program?

Besides the time that you commit to implementing your project with your team, your participation in the program also involves attending four international network meetings. Each taking place over 3-4 days in a different European city, these meetings bring the Actors community together to exchange intensively on topics such as project management, processes for citizen participation and co-creation, advocacy and more. These meetings are a compulsory part of the program, so please make sure that your organization is aware of and supports your participation in the program and the time commitment this involves.

Other offers, such as travel grants, additional workshops and study visits, are available to each program participant, but are not mandatory.

4.4 Is it possible to participate in only one part of the program? Is it really compulsory to take part in all program activities?

Applicants apply for the entire program. In order to gain the benefit of the program on both the local and international level, you must participate in all four international network meetings. It is not possible to send another representative from your organization to act on your behalf. In some special cases, exceptions to this rule can be made, but they must be agreed upon in advance with the program management.

Further Questions

For further questions, please do not hesitate to contact:

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