

PROJECT PROPOSAL TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE URBACT IV CALL

‘AGROURBAN CITIES’

General information about the call

- **Name of the call:** Action Networks
- **Deadline:** 17 June 2026
- **Duration of the action:** 2.5 years
- **Project start:** November 2026

Entity:

The Barcelona Provincial Council is a second level local administration that supports the 311 municipalities of the Barcelona province. With a total population of almost 6 million inhabitants, the province represents the most populous territory in Catalonia. The Council promotes local development, territorial cohesion and high-quality public services by providing technical, financial and strategic support to municipalities. It has extensive experience in European projects, actively participating in initiatives related to sustainable urban development, digital transformation and social innovation. Through its long-standing international engagement, the institution contributes to strengthening cooperation networks and sharing innovative practices across Europe.

Summary of the objective of the call

The focus of this specific call is “**Action Networks**”, under URBACT IV. Action Networks allow cities to work together to identify, shape, and implement solutions to common urban challenges. Through this collaboration, cities have the space to carry out concrete actions at the local level. Using the URBACT Method—transnational exchange, integrated and participatory approaches, and co-creation—cities will develop a **tailor-made Action Handbooks** at the network level and, will implement specific actions documented in an **Action Portfolio**, developed at the local level, in collaboration with the Local Group. Ultimately, cities will improve their integrated urban policies and their on-the-ground implementation.

As a starting point, cities willing to participate in Action Networks will already have a local strategy, policy framework, or existing action plan, ensuring strategic coherence and political relevance. Cities must commit to:

1. Designing, implementing, and monitoring a limited number of specific actions that address clearly identified local challenges. The actions must be realistic in scope, feasible within the network duration, and designed to produce tangible results and observable change.
2. Ensuring a participatory approach by mobilising a URBACT Local Group (a multi-stakeholder local group) in each participating city and organising Action Labs to co-design and co-implement actions and support learning.

3. Using transnational exchange to compare implementation approaches, address shared barriers, refine actions throughout the network's life, and support the transition from tested actions to long-term urban transformation.

AGROURBAN CITIES PROPOSAL

Policy issue addressed

The European Green Deal has set the target for Europe to be carbon-neutral by 2050. We know that food systems are responsible for nearly **30% of greenhouse gas emissions**, and that it is precisely in cities where most of this impact is generated, since cities concentrate most of the population and consumers who eat, on average, three times a day. No city will be able to consider itself carbon-neutral without addressing its **food footprint**. In this European policy context, food systems have become a matter for public policy, and it is at the level of cities and local public policies where addressing this issue makes the most sense.

In the specific case of the **Barcelona Metropolitan Region**, work is underway on designing a network of “**agrouurban cities**,” which means:

- **Implementing the concept of the “Agrouurban City”** in the 10 most populated cities within the Barcelona metropolitan region, which together form the so-called Metropolitan Arc (<https://arcmetropolitabarcelona.cat/>).
An agrouurban city is a model of urban development that sustainably integrates agricultural and natural land with the urban fabric, fostering interaction between local agriculture, biodiversity, and urban life. This type of city is grounded in the principles of green infrastructure and the circular economy, following guidelines set by international bodies such as the United Nations’ 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Agrouurban cities promote integrated natural spaces, community gardens, peri-urban agricultural areas and green parks as tools to improve quality of life, combat climate change, and ensure sustainable management of natural resources, while guaranteeing social cohesion and urban resilience.
- **Implementing local food policies** (sustainable, healthy, and safe) in the 10 cities designated as “agrouurban,” where reconnection between the “urban” and the “rural” is carried out through the food system, and through proximity-based strategies, via a food strategy or the process of establishing an integrated food policy within municipal policies.

Quality and relevance of the collaboration

The **2015 Milan Urban Food Policy Pact**, signed by more than 200 cities worldwide, is visible proof of the growing interest in food policies within municipal public policy, as well as the key role cities can play in the sustainability of food systems—and, consequently, in global environmental sustainability.

The **Barcelona Provincial Council** has established a methodological framework for the design and implementation of municipal food policies and is now carrying out a pilot

project with 22 municipalities in the process of drafting their municipal food strategies. In the next phase, the goal is to launch these 22 strategies by implementing their **Food Action Plans** and creating **Food Councils**, while in parallel advancing the design of the food strategies for the 10 agrouurban cities of the Barcelona Metropolitan Arc. In these two phases, the intention is to create alliances with other cities that have similar experiences to support our cities in implementing these policies and moving into action.

Proposed network

The proposal is to create a working network that includes:

- **Cities in the Barcelona Metropolitan Region that already have a food strategy** but are currently in the implementation phase of their food action plan: partners are sought who are also in the implementation phase and with whom experiences and knowledge can be exchanged.
- **Cities of the Metropolitan Arc**, which form a large conurbation and are beginning the process of developing their food strategy: partners are sought from urban conurbations or metropolitan areas that have developed or want to develop a joint food strategy that takes peri-urban agricultural areas into account (agrouurban city model).
- **Experts in the design and implementation of food strategies:** municipal teams need training, so they acquire the knowledge and skills required for the different phases of a food strategy. Cities or urban agglomerations that have designed and implemented such training programmes are sought.