



URBAN-NEXUS

Furthering Strategic Urban Research

Strategic Dialogue and Partnership Framework – Deliverable 1.2



URBAN-NEXUS

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Introduction

This document is the Strategic Dialogue and Partnership Framework (SDPF) for the FP7 funded URBAN-NEXUS project. This SDPF forms the backbone of URBAN-NEXUS. Its main task is to facilitate dialogue and the creation successful European partnerships aiming for integrated sustainable urban development. This is not happening often enough on a European scale, as barriers related to language, culture and distance discourage many initiatives. By means of this SDPF, the URBAN-NEXUS Consortium will experiment with ways to overcome these barriers in the best possible ways

The SDPF tries to accomplish this by providing a clear structure for the whole trajectory of URBAN-NEXUS (the interrelationship between the themes), as well as a method and tools for the activities within the individual themes. A clear structure of the project, with well-defined goals and a set of useful tools for meetings will help to breach geographical, cultural and language barriers. Moreover, it will enthuse stakeholders to continue to work together in partnerships beyond URBAN-NEXUS that further promote sustainable urban development.

This document is split in two parts. Part A – the theory – will discuss the overall goal of the SDPF and the issues that will be tackled within URBAN-NEXUS, by putting the various themes of the project within one common framework. Part B will elaborate more on the practical side, namely how to accomplish this. By using the concept of the learning spiral, a more detailed framework of the activities within each theme are described.

This means that the SDPF is a living document: this first version will be tested and evaluated during each Dialogue Café, and will be updated after each event. The end result will be a learning method that can benefit all actors working on shared challenges of *any* nature.

Part A – The theory

1. Meta level: problems in European cooperation

Why we need to cooperate

Initially born out of the political need and objective to build a long-lasting peace on the European continent after the Second World War, Europe's mission for the 21st Century¹ has further developed to include the following ambitions:

- Provide peace, prosperity and stability for its peoples;
- Overcome the divisions on the continent;
- Ensure that its people can live in safety;
- Promote balanced economic and social development;
- Meet the challenges of globalisation and preserve the diversity of the peoples of Europe;
- Uphold the values that Europeans share, such as sustainable development and a sound environment, respect for human rights and the social market economy.

In order to fulfil Europe's overall mission, it is crucial that cross-border and cross-regional efficient and effective cooperation takes place on all (policy) levels. From grass-roots European (research or coordination) projects to the top-level policy-making in the European Commission. Facilitating dialogue, sharing knowledge and building partnerships across borders and regions will not only strengthen Europe globally but will also help the continent deal with current and future challenges relating to economic, social and environmental sustainability.

Naturally, given the scale and scope of the EU, there are significant challenges standing in the way of effective knowledge sharing, partnership building and problem solving on all levels. The EU has 27 Member States (and 5 Candidate Countries) each bringing with them a unique set of linguistic, cultural and geographical characteristics. But how can we utilize these unique attributes in such a way that they do not become barriers to the facilitation of dialogue, the sharing knowledge and the building successful partnerships?

Three potential barriers to effective European cooperation

We identify three potential barriers to effective European cooperation: language, culture and geography.

- *Language:* The EU currently has 23 official and working languages.² Where possible documents are translated into each of these languages so as to ensure that all Member States are on an even footing when it comes to being able to access official documentation. However, in cases where there are tight time and/or budget restrictions, documents are usually published in either English, French and/or German. Looking at the project level, European consortia often consist of participants from all corners Europe. This means that for many project participants, the language of communication will most probably not be their mother tongue, making efficient

¹http://europa.eu/abc/12lessons/lesson_1/index_en.htm Accessed on 20/02/2012

²http://ec.europa.eu/languages/languages-of-europe/eu-languages_en.htm Accessed on 20/02/2012

dialogue, understanding and problem-solving a challenge. As such, language can form a barrier to effective cooperation.

- *Culture*: There are also significant cultural differences determining the ultimate success of cooperation. Cultural differences can, for example, affect how people view content, prepare and engage in meetings and participate during workshops. Not being aware or acknowledging these varying cultural paradigms can significantly hamper successful cooperation and even jeopardize European projects and programmes.
- *Geography*: Finally, the geographic scale of Europe remains a challenge for creating successful partnerships, dialogue and projects across borders. For example, tight budgets, travel issues and time constraints make it difficult to create a level playing field for all participants of a project. New technology has of course offered more possibilities for virtual/digital communication (and these instruments must certainly be used more). However, the possibility of 'meeting virtually' has not replaced the need to hold at least some face-to-face meetings and workshops.

2. Project level: URBAN-NEXUS and the art of working together

What challenges does URBAN-NEXUS tackle?

Sustainable urban development is backed by a strong political will and desire to enact change. For example, one of the EU2020 indicators relates to climate change and energy, and in that light European instruments are being strategically focused on supporting this aim. Moreover, the 2014-2020 Cohesion Policy programming period prioritises the shift towards a low-carbon economy and the promotion of climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management. This feeling of urgency is shared by the individual national governments, who have signed intergovernmental declarations from the 2005 Bristol Accord to the 2010 Toledo Declaration which repeatedly stress the importance of sustainable communities.

Bearing this in mind, consultations within the URBAN-NET consortium identified sustainable urban development as a key theme to explore further. The vast array of European research, funded through initiatives such as the Framework Programmes, has created new knowledge and produced astounding outputs. However, there remains a gap in the development of a comprehensive oversight of knowledge in the form of policies, researches and practices for those working in day-to-day urban practice. It is therefore critically important to focus on combining this knowledge into useful 'integration perspectives'. In other words, how can we promote and accomplish urban sustainability in an integrated and viable way using the knowledge we already possess?

However, the contested nature of the concept of sustainable urban development can lead to conflicting claims from local communities, from ecologists, from city planners and road engineers, or from global entrepreneurs and produce a diversity of 'sustainability agendas'. In response to these challenges, governance – the process of public interest decision-making – is in flux. The boundaries are being redrawn between market and state, between the different sectors and professions, and between different levels from local to global. Success may depend not (only) on more governance, but on new forms of governance, in which coalition and the process of forming wider social and ideological partnerships are key themes.

This suggests an agenda for 'transition' in governance, from 'organised government' with hierarchical structures and one-way communications, towards more fluid and responsive

systems of 'self-organising governance'. This is based on networks of enabling, influencing, mobilisation, coalition and relationship building, between multiple stakeholders at multiple levels, building on the following components:

- Linking territories to networks which cross multiple boundaries, with sometimes highly mobile and globalised social-economic groups;
- Multifunctional policy agendas for the urban landscape relating to energy and carbon, food, leisure, ecology, business park, retail park etc.;
- Multilevel decision making where strategic and local objectives need to be coordinated;
- Multi-sector working, which aims to realise the potential and added value from a wide range of stakeholders and 'communities of interest'.

The URBAN-NEXUS partnership approach

As a Coordination and Support Action, URBAN-NEXUS will focus on combining existing knowledge into useful and shared '**integration perspectives**'. Through these integration perspectives URBAN-NEXUS will identify elements from various policy fields (urban climate resilience, health and quality of life, land management) that can practically be combined with elements from other policy fields, to create integrated and viable solutions for more sustainable cities. Moreover, URBAN-NEXUS seeks to promote long-term **strategic partnerships** that respond to the dynamics of self-organising governance and that act as platforms to bring forward the integration perspectives.

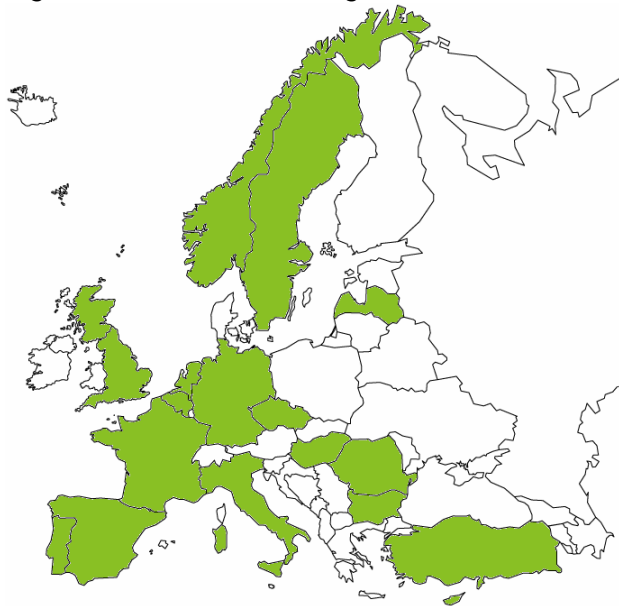
Through its scale, manifold effects and impacts across all borders, urban sustainability is an issue par excellence that needs to be confronted through multi-national collaboration, multi-level systems of governance and across a range of sectors and types of actors. While the urgency of the topic is clear to all stakeholders, real problem-solving and interaction is hampered by silo-thinking, language and cultural barriers, divergent views and vocabularies and large physical distances that even in the internet age remain a valid concern. These characteristics have led the URBAN-NEXUS consortium to formulate the following mission statement for the SDPF:

The creation of dialogue and successful partnerships that are aimed at integrated sustainable urban development, between stakeholders with various geographical, cultural and professional backgrounds.

This ambitious objective is reflected in the make-up of the URBAN-NEXUS consortium which is designed to include partners from across Europe as direct and regular participants in the proceedings of the project (see figure 1). An additional 25 members of the Strategic Partnership of URBAN-NEXUS as well as the former URBAN-NET partners are included in the process as well. Furthermore, the consortium and the Wider Stakeholder Community are comprised of different types of actors, such as municipalities, universities, national ministries, knowledge and lobby institutes and civil society organisations.

Through the diversity of actors from all over Europe that participate in URBAN-NEXUS, the project is well-positioned to structurally experiment with ways to address the barriers to collaboration. In the second part of this document, detailed approaches to overcoming these barriers on language, culture and distance will be discussed and valued for their effectiveness.

Figure 1 – Countries of origin from URBAN-NEXUS partners and affiliates



The building blocks for the development of the long-term strategic partnership are identified with the public, private and 'third' sectors. Partnership between these sectoral interests combine the innovation of the private sector, the security of the public sector, and the ethical values of the third sector. These partnerships and linkages can be classified into three basic combinations:

- Public-private linkages include various partnerships and consortiums, ethical procurement, supply chain initiatives, and much of mainstream economic development activity;
- Private-community sector linkages include local business or regeneration partnerships, social investment funds, 'mutual' or cooperative finance firms, corporate trusts and companies, consumer clubs and networks, cooperatives, community development trusts and other forms of social enterprise;
- Community-public sector linkages include voluntary sector compacts, neighbourhood partnerships, customer charters, intermediate labour markets, social trading, and other forms of community enterprise.

3. Thematic level: URBAN-NEXUS as a series of learning spirals

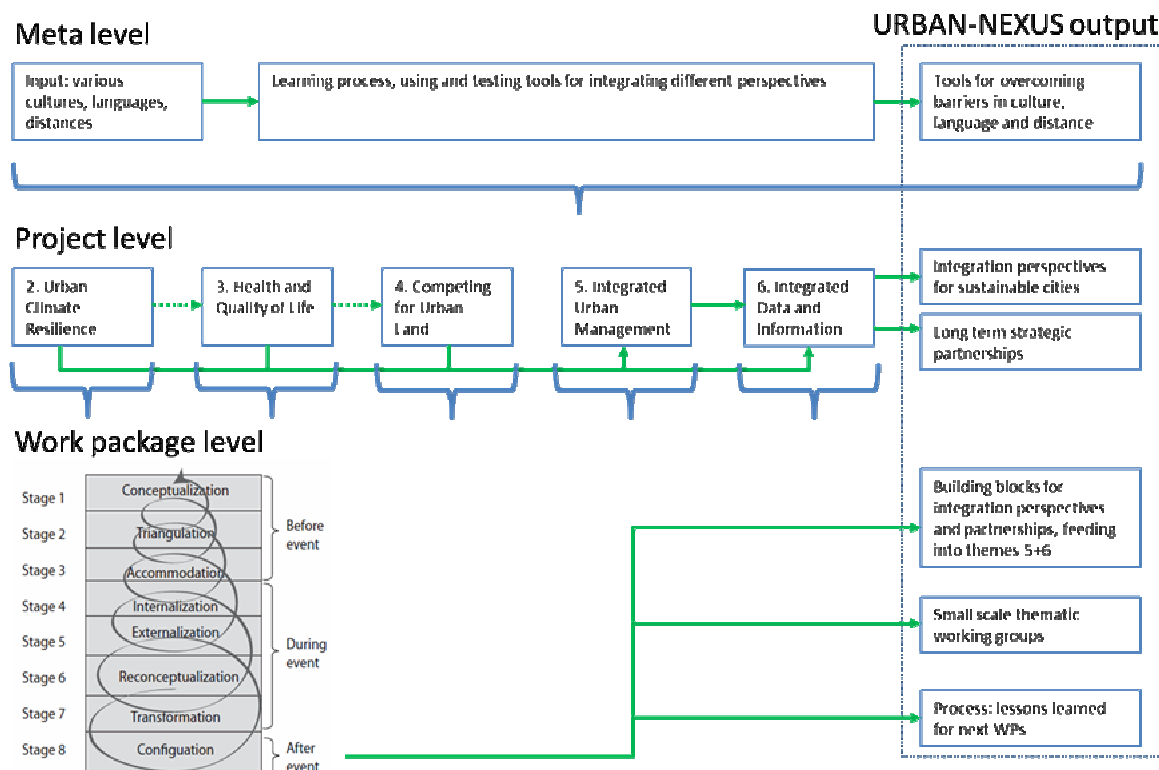
There are three levels of the SDPF. So far, we have discussed two main levels on which URBAN-NEXUS operates:

1. At the meta level, it aims to provide tools and techniques for integrating a diverse range of European stakeholders with a diversity of backgrounds.
2. At the project level, it is about delivering the content. This is the development of so-called 'integration perspectives' as well as the promotion of long-term strategic partnerships as the vehicles bring the integration perspectives forward.

We add a third level to these two. URBAN-NEXUS is organised along five themes that together seek to deliver the shared integration perspectives and long-term strategic

partnerships. These themes (urban climate resilience; health and quality of life; competing for urban land; integrated urban management; and integrated Data and Information) have been organised within the broader scope of URBAN-NEXUS according to the theory of the Learning Spiral. To summarise, the graph below shows the output of URBAN-NEXUS on these three levels.

Figure 2 – The URBAN-NEXUS framework on three levels



The learning spiral theory

The Learning Spiral approach aims to ensure the formation of new, supported knowledge, the transition from knowledge to action, as well as the constant updating of the acquired knowledge. It does not create new knowledge, but instead focuses on reframing existing knowledge according to the needs and desires of the participating stakeholders. The Learning Spiral has eight stages for designing, carrying out and implementing follow-up activities for learning events. It takes into account the political environment where the event is taking place and requires a deliberate selection of participants to ensure a successful learning process. The World Bank has produced a book called 'The Black Box of Governmental Learning', a book in which centralizes the role of the Learning Spiral theory in learning activities for governments³, but this method is also applicable to non-governmental projects too.

The learning spiral theory has been applied in over 150 documented learning events (World Bank 2010, p.71), a process which has helped the continuous analysis and development of

³World Bank (2010), The Black Box of Governmental Learning – the learningspiral: a concept to organize learning in governments.

the concept. Furthermore, it provides both an overarching concept that encompasses a preparation stage, the central learning event and the aftercare stage, providing practical guidelines for all stages in the process. The eight stages at the thematic level in the diagram on the previous page represent the learning spiral. These are explained below:

1. *Conceptualisation*: includes the construction of a clearly defined knowledge frame, which will act as the starting set of basic for all participants during the upcoming event.
2. *Triangulation*: selecting and inviting primary stakeholders. The learning event is not about the participation of many stakeholders, but rather a 'select company' of stakeholders that are the *primus inter pares* within their field.
3. *Accommodation*: communicate the event design, the agenda, participants list and their perceived roles, communication rules etc. This will ensure a trusted learning environment.
4. *Internalization*: the participants meet for the first time during the event, and have time to internalize the knowledge frame as designed in stage 1.
5. *Externalization*: through a structured dialogue, participants share their opinions about the framed knowledge. They need to follow the communication rules put forward by the facilitator.
6. *Reconceptualisation*: the purpose of this stage is to analyse if the dialogue with the participants results in a shift of the initial knowledge frame. A new collective understanding of the knowledge may become visible.
7. *Transformation*: the reconceptualised knowledge is transformed into an action plan and/or ways how to execute this action plan
8. *Configuration*: the final stage. Here, the developed knowledge and action plan has to be summarized in a specific format, distributed to participants as well as a wider audience. The outcomes may feed back into a new learning spiral.

URBAN-NEXUS as a series of Learning Spirals

How can this be translated to URBAN-NEXUS? The project consists of a series of learning spirals which correspond to our overarching themes:

- Urban climate resilience
- Health and Quality of Life
- Competing for urban land
- Integrated urban management
- Integrated Data and Information

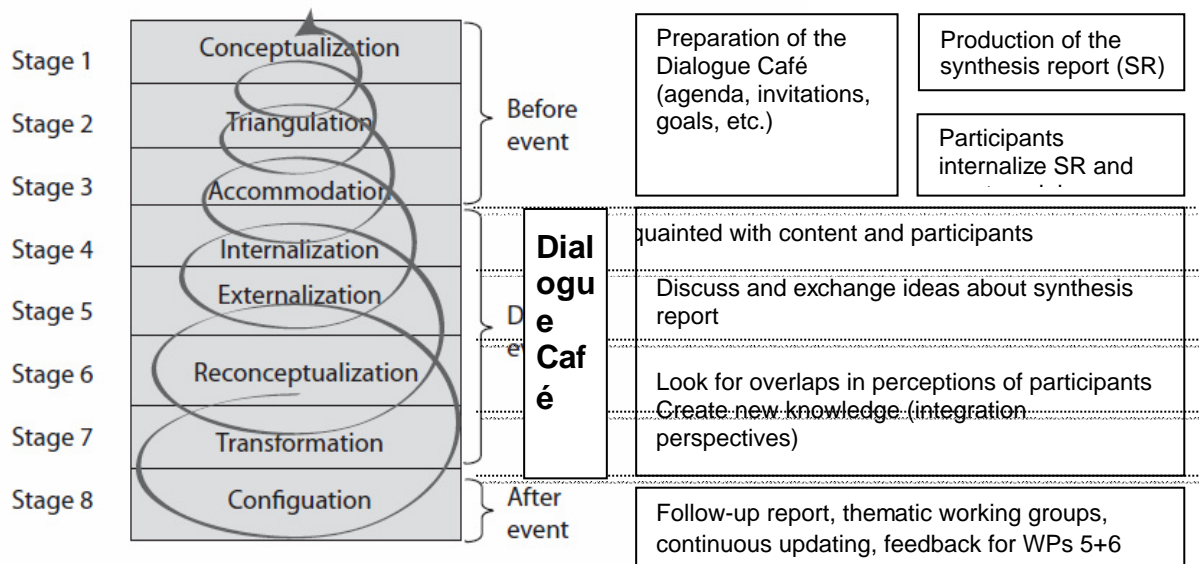
Each of these themes will follow stages 1 to 8 from the Learning Spiral (above) in order to produce the integration perspectives and to come up with ways to promote long term strategic partnerships. Central in all themes are the learning events, called Dialogue Cafés. The outcomes from these individual learning spirals will be used again for the themes directly focused on integration (integrated urban management and integrated data and information). In these integrated themes, all output previously produced will be taken together, reflected upon, reconceptualised and transformed. It is intended that through this process new integration perspectives on sustainable urban practices and insights into how to shape partnerships will gradually improve as the URBAN-NEXUS trajectory progresses.

Therefore it is essential that the output and stakeholder network of each theme is being kept up to date throughout the running time of URBAN-NEXUS. The 8th stage is essential in doing this, where we will set up small-scale 'virtual' working groups. By doing so, the persons that

participants in the learning events organised under each theme will be kept involved in URBAN-NEXUS for a long term; it will be more than just participating in one learning event. It is precisely this element that will foster long term commitment and cooperation. It is possible that the small scale working groups will lead to partnerships that focus more on the thematic aspect of one theme. However, we hope that the strong focus of URBAN-NEXUS on integrated combinations between practices between various themes within urban sustainability will lead to long term, integrated partnerships with participants from *all* thematic themes.

When the theory of the learning spiral is translated to URBAN-NEXUS, the following diagram can be drawn:

Figure 3 – The Learning Spiral related to each URBAN-NEXUS theme



Following paragraphs

The next part of the SDPF focuses on how the activities of each theme are to be accommodated in order to provide an attractive as well as a content-oriented process – the practical side of arranging the synthesis report, dialogue cafés and follow-up. These paragraphs will also deal with the various tools and techniques that are required to effectively manage a session.

Part B – Practice

1. The goals within each theme

URBAN-NEXUS revolves around five main themes that build on each other: Urban Climate Resilience, Health and Quality of Life, Competing for Urban Land, Integrated Urban Management and Integrated Data and Information. Knowledge and stakeholders from these themes will be brought together in order to promote integration within as well as between the themes. Central element within each of these themes is the learning event, called Dialogue Cafés.

The trajectory of each theme, as well as the whole URBAN-NEXUS trajectory itself, can be characterized by using the ‘game metaphor’. This means that participants need to overcome internal differences in order to work and gain something together. All participants need to pass the stages of the learning spiral, and need to find a solution to integrating the multiplicity of dimensions related to sustainable urban development together. Thus, each theme should be seen as a game, in which the eight stages of the learning spiral are essential elements to reach agreement and continued cooperation. Moreover, such a framework provides the necessary structure to make the process exciting and motivating. By doing so, each URBAN-NEXUS theme indirectly helps to fulfil the overall goals of the SDPF, namely to overcome overarching barriers in culture, language and geography.

The following goals should be pursued within the themes:

- The first goal is to generate integration perspectives, i.e. elements from various policy fields (urban climate resilience, health and quality of life, land management) that can practically be combined with the aspects from other policy fields to create integrated and viable solutions for more sustainable cities.
- The second goal is to identify ways to promote long-term strategic partnerships that respond to the dynamics of self-organising governance, and that act as platforms to bring forward the integration perspectives with tangible impact on the urban environment.

Some practical examples....

Both goals probably raise some discussion about what 'integration perspectives' and 'ways to promote partnerships' exactly are. Basically, integration perspectives come down to making tangible combinations between the themes of URBAN-NEXUS. For instance, which climatic threats can be tackled by effective urban land use policies? And which land use practices have the most impact on urban health and liveability? But most importantly, which measures would tackle most of these issues at the same time? What knowledge is needed to define integrated solutions? The Dialogue Cafés stimulate specific outcomes to these questions. These outcomes is what we call integration perspectives, essentially 'essentially innovative policy combinations and ways to work together'?

Partnerships can cement these building blocks together and build on these perspectives. At the end of each Dialogue Café, some characteristics of possible future partnerships will be identified. This would include a range of stakeholders that could become a partner (and possible tasks) and some objectives/themes that this partnership will focus on.

The following paragraphs focus on the three main phases of each theme: the preparation phase before the Dialogue Café (stage 1-3 in the learning spiral), the Dialogue Café itself (stage 4-7) and the phase after the Dialogue Café, where feedback is given and results need to flow into the following theme. Each of the stages is followed by a table with tools and techniques that should be implemented. During the course of URBAN-NEXUS, these tables will gradually change, as some tools prove to be more successful than others in overcoming the various barriers in language, culture and professional background.

2. Dialogue Café Preparation

In the context of URBAN-NEXUS, five specific themes have been identified (calling upon and updating earlier work by the URBAN-NET Consortium) which all will be explored through stakeholder engagement events we call Dialogue Cafés.

In preparing for these Dialogue Cafés, we will set the scene of the available knowledge, research, policy and practice through Synthesis Papers that are written around each theme. In developing these papers, several key institutions are directly approached and solicited for a contribution, while other institutes or individuals can send in their input through a template published (on several locations) on the internet. These stakeholders are mentioned in the communication plan. In these stages, various stakeholders from a range of backgrounds are to be invited and motivated to join.

Conceptualisation

The conceptualisation stage includes the construction of a clearly defined knowledge frame, which will act as the starting set of basic for all participants during the upcoming event (see p.9).

- **Start: lots of ideas and the SDPF document as a guide!**
- At the outset a Synthesis Paper is produced that forms the basic input for all participants. The synthesis paper will clearly frame the state of knowledge, and proposes first drafts on integration perspectives and ways to promote partnerships. It will also include information on the other URBAN-NEXUS themes.

- An important element of the Synthesis Paper is that it will address a certain sense of urgency and inspire stakeholders to attend the coming Dialogue Café. This includes proposing various questions or matters to be discussed during the Dialogue Cafés.
- **Result: a clear knowledge frame with a sense of urgency for all participants of the Dialogue Cafés, including topics to be addressed in these learning events.**

The table below shows the tools and techniques that can be applied for this stage. During the course of URBAN-NEXUS, the content of the table will gradually fill – **all partners are invited to add tools and descriptions!** The feasibility of the tools in overcoming barriers in language, culture and distance can only be judged fully when the project of URBAN-NEXUS is coming to an end.

Table 1 – Tools for the Conceptualisation stage

Tool	Description	When to use this tool for this stage?	Feasibility in overcoming barriers in language, culture and background
Website	Communication tool to promote the meaning of URBAN-NEXUS and the specific themes. The website should contain all relevant information about the upcoming Dialogue Café	Refer to this tool when stakeholders want to know more background information on the project.	To be filled in during the course of the project...
Factsheet	Basic sheet with the characteristics of the project	To communicate the essentials of URBAN-NEXUS. Can be send as attachment to email when asking for input for the synthesis report, and is included on the website	
E-mail	Personal message to send out invitations, goals of the Dialogue café & synthesis report, and acquire the subscriptions.	Personal message, ideal way to ask a stakeholder to provide input for the synthesis paper and for stakeholders to respond	
Social media	This allows organisations to send out messages that can be picked up by multiple stakeholders without much effort.	The same goal as email, but allows you to reach a broader public with just one mouse click.	
E-library	Database in which essential documents can be stored for reference or future use	Interesting documents that deliver input for the synthesis paper are to be stored here, by both facilitator and other stakeholders.	
Roadmap	Sketch of the future course of URBAN-NEXUS. Basically, this SDPF performs this role.	This tool helps to relate the synthesis paper to the wider goals of URBAN-NEXUS. To be used when focus for the synthesis paper is hard to find	

Triangulation

This stage concerns selecting and inviting primary stakeholders. The learning event should not focus just on the participation of many stakeholders, but rather a group of people that represents a cross-section of stakeholders.

- **Start: a clear knowledge frame with a sense of urgency for all participants of the Dialogue Cafés, including topics to be addressed in these learning events.**
- The next step is to define and invite the stakeholders to join the Dialogue Café. The focus will be on the creation of a group that represents various backgrounds and voices, is knowledgeable on the topic, and can positively contribute to the dialogue and collaborative environment. Many stakeholders are mentioned in the Communication Plan.
- The invitations should be sent on a personal note, but institutions can apply through the website as well. When inviting participants, it is vital to communicate the following aspects:
 - ✓ The sense of urgency: the reason why specifically they are to join the Dialogue Café.
 - ✓ The overall scope of URBAN-NEXUS as well as the goals of the specific themes (see p.11).
 - ✓ Attach the Synthesis Report and encourage all invitees to prepare themselves by reading and internalizing the Synthesis Report. They will be asked to perform a preparatory task (e.g. SWOT analysis) prior to the Dialogue Café in order to let them judge the document in a coherent way.
- Managing the applications can be done through the special feature of the URBAN-NEXUS website. This means responding quickly, acknowledging their participation and making them feel welcome even before the event has started.
- **Result: a list of participants that have acknowledged their participation, and that have received and reviewed the necessary input.**

The table below shows the tools and techniques that can be applied for this stage. During the course of URBAN-NEXUS, the content of the table will gradually fill. **All partners are invited to add tools and descriptions!**

Table 2 – Tools for the Triangulation stage

Tool	Description	When to use this tool for this stage?	Feasibility in overcoming barriers in language, culture and background
Website	Communication tool to promote the meaning of URBAN-NEXUS and the specific themes. The website should contain all relevant information about the upcoming Dialogue Café	Refer to this tool when invitees want to know more background information on the project.	To be filled in during the course of the project...
Factsheet	Basic sheet with the characteristics of the project	To communicate the essentials of URBAN-NEXUS. Can be send as attachment to the invitation.	
E-mail	Personal message to send out invitations, goals of the Dialogue café & synthesis report, and acquire the subscriptions.	Use this tool to officially invite stakeholders and attach necessary documents (factsheet, SWOT methodology). Ideal way to respond to an invitees' response to the invitation.	
Social	This allows organisations to send	Allows the organiser to post a	

media	out messages that can be picked up by multiple stakeholders without much effort.	general message with a call for participants.	
SWOT analysis	The SWOT process explores the four basic questions of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.	Provide all invitees with a small description of this tool within the invitation email. Urge them to use this tool to judge the synthesis report before the Dialogue Café starts.	

Accommodation

This stage is about delivering the event design, the agenda, participants list and their perceived roles, communication rules etc. This will ensure a trusted learning environment.

- **Start: the synthesis report and a list of participants that have acknowledged their participation, and that have received the necessary input.**
- Of course well before inviting the participants the facilitators will have some ideas about how to give the Dialogue Café shape, since this SDPF gives them a clear structure to work with.
- In terms of designing the event itself we have developed a pre-defined checklist which includes the following elements:
 - ✓ Prepare the agenda of the meeting by using the guidelines for Dialogue Café stages en choosing which tools to use (see the next paragraph);
 - ✓ Divide people into working groups on beforehand so that you are sure each group is mixed and colleagues/fellow countrymen will not be all in one group;
 - ✓ Make a task division between people: who is/are facilitator(s), who takes the notes?
 - ✓ Arrange the location and catering, audio-visuals, seating arrangements and preparatory documents and presentations.
 - ✓ Establish clear goals that you want to achieve with each element of the Dialogue Café, and clearly instruct the facilitator on this.
- Also think about the relation between this Dialogue Café and the other themes of URBAN-NEXUS. It is vital that the various themes of the project are dealt with in an integrated way. Again, the following stages provide clues on how to do this.
- **Result: A detailed programme of the upcoming Dialogue Café, in which the various URBAN-NEXUS themes are interwoven.**

The table below shows the tools and techniques that can be applied to lay the groundwork for the Dialogue Cafe. During the course of URBAN-NEXUS, the content of the table will gradually fill. **All partners are invited to add tools and descriptions!**

Table 3 – Tools for the Accommodation stage

Tool	Description	When to use this tool for this stage?	Feasibility in overcoming barriers in language, culture and background
SDPF	This SDPF provides guidelines in developing well-structured Dialogue Cafés, as well as relating them to the wider URBAN-NEXUS context.	This tool is necessary when developing the structure of the Dialogue Café. It helps to set the goals, to give structure for the event (through the learning spiral) and relates the event with the other URBAN-NEXUS themes.	To be filled in during the course of the project...

Checklist events ⁴	Allows organisations to design an event in a more practical way .	A very practical guide for checking the essentials of working sessions themselves. Elements like catering, audiovisuals, seating arrangements etc. are mentioned here.	
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3. The Dialogue Café

The Dialogue Café is probably the most important stage for the development of the cooperation principle of URBAN-NEXUS. In order to stimulate the participants to work together and continue to do so after the learning event, it is vital that the provided input, the output as well as the process itself is of high quality. A large part of these elements have already been taken care of in the previous stage (the designing of the event, the distribution of the synthesis paper and the instructions that come with it). During the Dialogue Cafés, the role of the moderator is of prime importance. The moderator will ensure that the goals and process are carried out as planned. At the same time, the Dialogue Café should be more than just following a prescribed process. It should be an entertaining event as well, with a diversity of participatory and engagement strategies to make the event lively and entertaining, as well as interesting and informative.

The stages of Internalisation, Externalisation, Reconceptualisation and Transformation concern the process within each Dialogue Café itself. It is the task of the moderator to make sure that participants continue with process until a result has been realised. Within the structure of the Dialogue Cafe there is freedom to choose between different elements – the tools and techniques or group-working which will generate discussion, debate and consensus-building. This will allow participants to take ownership of the process and generate a wide diversity of dialogue and outcomes.

The goals of these Dialogue Cafes are twofold. The tools and techniques will facilitate both goals at the same time. First, at a practical level it should answer the goals mentioned in the first paragraph of part B: to generate integration perspectives and ways to build partnerships. Second, the aim of each Dialogue Café is to produce ‘lessons learned’ for the following learning event. This means the event should be analysed afterwards by both the URBAN-NEXUS project partners and participants. How can the goals be achieved more efficiently? Which tools and techniques worked in adding to the content and breaking down barriers between language, culture and distance? This will lead to a continuous evolution of the instruments that are available for the Dialogue Cafés in order to improve both the content and the process of cooperation between stakeholders from various backgrounds.

Internalisation

During this stage the participants meet for the first time during the event, and have time to internalize the knowledge frame as designed in the conceptualisation stage.

- **Start: all participants arrive in a ‘strange’ environment, they have questions about the goals of the Dialogue Café. However, some of them will have read the synthesis report while others have not.**

⁴ The checklist can be downloaded here ([link](#)), available at page 77.

- Before the event, all participants ideally should have prepared themselves by reviewing the synthesis report through a SWOT analysis. The facilitator should promote participants to do this when sending out the invitations.
- When the event starts, the facilitator should make sure that all guests feel welcome and get acquainted to each other. It is important to sketch out where all participants come from and their views on the importance of this meeting.
- After all welcoming elements, the facilitator should once again explain the goals of the Dialogue Café. The expectations of the participants need to be included as well. Are there large gaps between expectations and the predesigned goals? Then the session should dissolve these gaps. This stage should be done as a plenary session, so that everyone can introduce his/herself to all the Dialogue Café participants. Participants are able to ask final questions, in order to eliminate any ambiguities.
- Following this, the key points of the synthesis report need to be discussed, since some participants will not have read it. The main conclusions need to be communicated in order to hook these participants on. This is essential, since the following sessions gain if all participants start with the same level of basic knowledge.
- **Result: participants feel welcome and recognized, understand the goals of the Dialogue Café and have the same basic knowledge about the Synthesis report.**

The table below shows the tools and techniques that can be applied to lay the groundwork for the Dialogue Cafe. During the course of URBAN-NEXUS, the content of the table will gradually fill. **All partners are invited to add tools and descriptions!**

Table 4 – Tools for the Internalisation stage

Tool	Description	When to use this tool for this stage?	Feasibility in overcoming barriers in language, culture and background
Ice breakers	Let's participants introduce themselves. With ice breakers, participants introduce themselves within a fixed format, for example by answering a specific question For example: Have participants introduce themselves and explain one thing they have learned the hard way about the topic you are covering. Post the learning on a flip chart and refer to them throughout the session.	At the opening of sessions, when participants feel reluctant to say something or introduce themselves	To be filled in during the course of the project...
Exercises and group activities	To let participants get to know each other better in a fun way. Social dinners are an example that don't serve an content related purpose but are there for bonding.	If the facilitator has the feeling that participants need more 'quality time' together in order to get acquainted. This would not fit in the regular day time schedule, but can be done in the evenings (dinner or drinks afterwards).	
Opening with purpose	For the opening and welcome of the session. The goals are specifically stated by the facilitator: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the context • Describe the focus • Describe the foreseen end results • Acknowledge the different groups present and their potential contribution 	To open a session whilst decisively state the goals of that session. This tool can also be used to discuss the key elements of the Synthesis Report.	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the process – introduce yourself, roles, tasks and ground rules • Find the fit with the purpose. 		
Expectations	<p>Clearly explain the purpose of the session. Then invite each participant to state their expectations, and display them either on an overhead or a flipchart. It is also important that you are honest and clear. When they are all listed, go through the list and state which expectations you believe the session will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • go a long way to achieving • partially meet • just touch upon, and/or • not be working on at all in this program/session. 	In relation to the previous one, but this one involves the expectations of the participants as well.	

Externalisation

In this stage, participants start sharing their opinions about the framed knowledge, i.e. the Synthesis report. They need to follow the communication rules put forward by the facilitator.

- **Start: Participants feel welcome and recognized, understand the goals of the Dialogue Café and have the same basic knowledge about the Synthesis report.**
- This is the first part where participants share their views about the synthesis paper and discuss their opinions. Focus is kept on the first goal mentioned at p.11: which clues does the synthesis report provide for realising the integration perspectives? The ideas for long term strategic partnerships will be dealt with in the Transformation stage.
- This stage should be done working groups. This allows everyone to express him/herself better and it should lead to better dialogue between persons from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Moreover, it allows for better facilitation as well, if each group is led by one facilitator.
- The role of the facilitator is very important here. Basically, the following rules should be followed:
 - ✓ The facilitator is 'enabling' and allows everyone to speak equally and not let speakers get interrupted. Facilitator should support the more hesitant participants to speak as well;
 - ✓ Whenever a participant expresses criticism, the facilitator should encourage this person to come up with something constructive/positive too;
 - ✓ It is always good to ask *why* participants make a certain comment. In this way, the background can be understood for all participants.
- **Result: Participants have learned from each other and discussed the merits (and deficiencies) of the synthesis paper, and gained ideas on how to use elements of the synthesis paper to come to integration perspectives.**

The table below shows the tools and techniques that can be applied to deliver the steps that are just mentioned. During the course of URBAN-NEXUS, the content of the table will gradually fill. **All partners are invited to add tools and descriptions!**

Table 5 – Tools for the Externalisation stage

Tool	Description	When to use this tool for this stage?	Feasibility in overcoming barriers in language, culture and background
Brainstorming	A brainstorm will allow the participants to equally and shortly share their opinions. A brainstorm is very open, therefore participants may pick up certain elements from the other participants. Basic rules however is that everyone is able to speak freely, without interruption or judgement. Facilitator should invite all participants to speak.	For an open discussion, where everyone's input is necessary and participants' first insights/ intuition are considered valuable	To be filled in during the course of the project...
SWOT analysis	The SWOT process explores the four basic questions of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. This allows for a more balanced discussion and arguments that are more thought about compared to the brainstorm.	For a more nuanced based discussion, when all participants are to judge elements on both their merits and deficiencies. This can be done individually, but also in a group setting	
Mindmapping	Can be combined with brainstorming. Ideas and criticism can be written down in a tree-like structure. Mind maps allow for greater creativity when recording ideas and information, as well as allowing the note-taker to associate words with visual representations. At one glance it can be made clear which elements of a specific topic lead to more input from participants.	Mind mapping can be used to extend regular brainstorming, but drawing participants' input in a tree-like structure allows them to better build their comments upon each other. It can be used to see with which elements participants have the most 'feeling' and ideas.	

Reconceptualisation

The purpose of this stage is to analyse if the dialogue with the participants results in a shift of the initial knowledge frame. A new collective understanding of the knowledge may become visible.

- **Start: Participants have learned from each other and discussed the merits (and deficiencies) of the synthesis paper, and gained ideas on how to use elements of the synthesis paper to come to integration perspectives.**
- The focus on this stage should be purely on the integration perspectives, ideas about the partnerships are for the following stage. The first part of the stage is to be done in a plenary session. The facilitator(s) from the previous stage should reconstruct the input of the previous stage and propose overlaps in the group's opinions.
- After this plenary feedback, new working groups continue to further develop (or reject and propose new) integration perspectives, with the overall purpose of support by the majority of participants. The topics of the other URBAN NEXUS themes should be included as well. For balanced outcomes, each working group should have participants that together has experience with these themes.

- Active role for the facilitator: he/she should search for overlaps in participants' perceptions and give ample space for the reasons why participants have a certain opinion. Discussions are to be focused on the content, since the process towards realization is topic of discussion in the next stage. Also, the focus on integration with the other themes should be maintained by the facilitator.
- The conclusion should once again be plenary and define a new frame of knowledge. The large majority of the participants should of course endorse the outcomes, although room for small plenary discussions is of course possible. Here, differences between language, culture and backgrounds can come to the fore more prominently than in the previous stages. After all, everybody will mostly envision perspectives that are in line with his/her mindset. This is the reason why the facilitator needs to fulfil an important role, and dialogue is important to set aside these differences.
- **Result: shared integration perspectives, i.e. aspects from the particular URBAN-NEXUS theme in question that can practically be combined with aspects from the other URBAN-NEXUS themes, in order to create integrated and viable solutions for more sustainable cities.**

The table below shows the tools and techniques that can be applied to deliver the reconceptualisation steps. During the course of URBAN-NEXUS, the content of the table will gradually fill. **All partners are invited to add tools and descriptions!**

Table 7 – Tools for the Reconceptualisation stage

Tool	Description	When to use this tool for this stage?	Feasibility in overcoming barriers in language, culture and background
Brainstorming	A brainstorm will allow the participants to equally and shortly share their opinions. A brainstorm is very open, therefore participants may pick up certain elements from the other participants. Basic rules however is that everyone is able to speak freely, without interruption or judgement. Facilitator should invite all participants to speak.	For an open discussion, where everyone's input is necessary and participants' first insights/intuition are considered valuable	To be filled in during the course of the project...
Mindmapping	Can be combined with brainstorming. Ideas and criticism can be written down in a tree-like structure. Mind maps allow for greater creativity when recording ideas and information, as well as allowing the note-taker to associate words with visual representations. At one glance it can be made clear which elements of a specific topic lead to more input from participants.	Mind mapping can be used to extend regular brainstorming, but drawing participants' input in a tree-like structure allows them to better build their comments upon each other. It can be used to see with which elements participants have the most 'feeling' and ideas	
Focus groups	This basically resembles an interview. Five or six questions should be prepared and answered by the group (6-10 people). Each participant should have time to develop his/her answer, before a group discussion can start to formulate shared new	Allows participants to focus on specific elements, depending on the nature of the questions. To be implemented when a deeper focus on one or more elements is necessary.	

	ideas		
Thinking hats	A method to ensure that all points of view are included. Let people play a certain role (one neutral role, one optimistic, one criticaster, one creative) and try to create integration perspectives that are shared by all.	A discussion in which contradictions between participants are exacerbated. This tool is ideal to test if they are able to still come up with shared ideas	
Drivers, Pressures, States, Impacts, Responses (DPSIR)	This tool can help to identify the impact of certain practices on other thematic areas. This helps to come up with integrated solutions.	Ideal to move discussions towards the integrative aspect that URBAN-NEXUS promotes: what are the impacts and subsequent responses of solution A on themes X, Y and Z?	
Card games	Let participants write down their ideas about integration perspectives and let them cluster all ideas afterwards.	Card games are ideal for clustering participants' ideas, if a multiplicity of insights makes it difficult to maintain oversight	
Voting and ranking	A simple method for the plenary session at the end, where the input of multiple working groups is to be ranked. Which (elements of) integration perspectives count on the most support?	Easiest way to test if a majority of the participants is in favour of or against an idea.	
PMI (plus, minus, interesting)	Also a tool to support decision making in selecting certain elements of integration perspectives. The outcomes of each working group can be weighed by listing positive, negative and interesting things.	More refined and analytical way of finding out which ideas are best, opposed to the simple vote and rank method.	

Transformation

Within this stage, the reconceptualised knowledge is transformed into an action plan and/or ways how to execute this action plan.

- **Start: participants have agreed on the content, now it is time to develop ways to bring this further.**
- Participants should think about how to translate the new knowledge into actions. Since URBAN-NEXUS is about creating partnerships, this stage should focus on *how* these possible partnerships should be created and what their scope should be. Thinking should be done outside the scope of the Dialogue Café : how can the knowledge be carried further? Which channels of partnerships (public-private, private-community, public-community) can be of use?
- The first step could be for each participant to consider their possible role in such a process. This approach does right to the background of each participant, and doesn't force them into a certain role. Once participants have stated their potential contribution, links *between* participants and other stakeholders in the field can be identified. A possible partnership is starting to grow... When these links are identified, it is likely that gaps will remain. These can be solved by integrating stakeholders from the other themes –participants from the other Dialogue Cafés– so therefore it is useful to include perspectives from the other thematic work across URBAN NEXUS.
- Another element is to distinguish the possible focus of the partnership, and the barriers this partnership will face. The partnership with most ambitions and the least barriers is the most promising.

- The facilitator should stimulate the process of ‘coming together’. Maybe he/she could pair opposing participants to each other and try to get them together. Also the facilitator should continually look for overlaps and ways in which participants can strengthen each other in order to build potential partnerships
- This stage should also promote continuous joint learning outside the Dialogue Café, also in relation to the other thematic themes, as a preparation for the last stage after the Dialogue Café: the configuration stage.
- **Result: potential roles for each participant in future partnerships, and links between participants that are mutually strengthening them.**

The table below shows the tools and techniques that can be applied to deliver the steps that are just mentioned. During the course of URBAN-NEXUS, the content of the table will gradually fill. In the Annex this tables is further elaborated. **All partners are invited to add tools and descriptions!**

Table 8 - Tools for the Transformation stage

Tool	Description	When to use this tool for this stage?	Feasibility in overcoming barriers in language, culture and background
Stakeholder mapping	Strategic stakeholder mapping is a graphic way of highlighting who your fellow stakeholders are, and how they are positioned in relation to the participants. This is partly done in the communication plan, but participants can add or remove certain institutions	To identify very simply which are the common stakeholders of the participants, without taking into account to goal of the partnership. It can be used for each participant to map his/her role in a future partnership.	To be filled in during the course of the project...
Alignment Influence and Interest matrix (AIIM)	It is often used in a workshop setting and works best when it involves a diverse group of project partners – each with insights into different actors or parts of the policy landscape. AIIM can be used to help clarify where the main target audiences and targets stand in relation to its objectives and possible influencing approaches.	Opposed to tool above, this tool does take into account the goal of the partnership. If idea X is to be realised, which stakeholders are needed on board? And How does this influence end users, the EU and cities? An interesting tool to see what barriers there are.	
Thinking hats	A variation of the thinking hats as mentioned in the previous stage. Here, different participants can take on the role of different stakeholders (as identified in the communication plan) and try to work out a potential partnership ‘in small’.	By giving participants opposing roles, this tool operates like a game. The goal is to reach consensus and make up a viable partnership, taking elements from the tools above into account.	
Stakeholder mapping	Strategic stakeholder mapping is a graphic way of highlighting who your fellow stakeholders are, and how they are positioned in relation to the participants. This is partly done in the communication plan, but participants can add or remove certain institutions	To identify very simply which are the common stakeholders of the participants, without taking into account to goal of the partnership	

Tools for enhanced facilitation

The previous paragraphs mentioned tools for the generation of specific content during specific stages of the Dialogue Café. But of course there are more generic tools imaginable for good facilitation, to be implemented at any stage. These are mentioned below. **All partners are invited to add tools and descriptions!**

Table 9 – Tools for enhanced facilitation

Tool	Description	When to use this tool for this stage?	Feasibility in overcoming barriers in language, culture and background
"Acts of God"	Participants can get bogged down and unable to find a direction. Generate a list of complaints/concerns that are important to the group members (using brainstorming technique) but allow for some quiet thinking time for each participant. as the opportunity to contribute all their complaints.	Throughout sessions, when a group is focussing on negative comments, and losing energy. It is also an effective and often invigorating session for initial goal setting.	To be filled in during the course of the project...
Review and reflection	Applying this provides an important opportunity to reflect on sessions. It enables participants to express what they have learned and how they will tackle future issues	At the end of sessions.	
Closing with purpose	This enables the facilitator to provide basic conclusions and to steer the group in the same direction for the next steps. It includes the following elements: Sum up achievements, reflect on the process, acknowledge contributions of specific individuals/ groups	At the end of sessions.	
Opening with purpose	For the opening and welcome of the session. The goals are specifically stated by the facilitator: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the context • Describe the focus • Describe the foreseen end results • Acknowledge the different groups present and their potential contribution • Describe the process – introduce yourself, roles, tasks and ground rules • Find the fit with the purpose. 	To open a session whilst decisively state the goals of that session. This tool can also be used to discuss the key elements of the Synthesis Report.	
Expectations	Clearly explain the purpose of the session. Then invite each participant to state their expectations, and display them either on an overhead or a flipchart. It is also important that you are honest and clear. When they are all listed, go through the list and state which expectations you believe the session will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • go a long way to achieving • partially meet • just touch upon, and/or • not be working on at all in this program/session. 	In relation to the previous one, but this one involves the expectations of the participants as well.	

4. After the Dialogue Café

When the actual Dialogue Café has taken place, the next and final stage is the configuration. Within the configuration-process the deliverables of the website, communication-plan as well as the follow-up report play an important role. It is of crucial importance that the gathered knowledge remains up-to-date, as this information functions as the input for the next activities and subsequent Dialogue Cafés. As this is a long-term process (covering 36 months in total), it is critical to update earlier work (e.g. synthesis papers) as the project continues.

In addition to this process of updating and refinement, in the configurationstage, we will also update the instrument/approach of the SDPF (this document). Questions that need to be answered are for example: What is the added value of certain (combinations of) group-working and collaborative elements within the context of language, culture and distance? What are (dis)advantages? And how should those advantages be put to the best use? The evaluation of the Dialogue Cafés, by the participants as well as the URBAN-NEXUS partners themselves, is the key mechanism to do this. Directly after each Dialogue Café, the partners will come together in special meeting to discuss these issues.

Configuration

The final stage. Here, the developed knowledge and action plan has to be summarized in a specific format, distributed to participants as well as a wider audience. The outcomes may feed back into a new learning spiral.

- **Start: an enthusiastic group of participants we hope to connect to URBAN-NEXUS for the remainder of the project and beyond.**
- First of all, the results of the Dialogue Café are translated into a follow-up report which summarizes both the outcomes of the meeting (the integration perspectives and partnership approaches) as well as the implications for the following themes. This report is to be distributed to the participants of the Dialogue Café as well as the wider network of URBAN-NEXUS (partners, wider stakeholder group, participants from previous Dialogue Cafés)
- Evaluation of the Dialogue Café, by two means:
 - ✓ Feedback from the participants themselves: did they learn something? Was the goal of the Dialogue Café and URBAN-NEXUS in general clear? Are they willing to stay involved? And, important to breach barriers between culture, language and background, what tools did they think worked to best to overcome these barriers? Standardized forms are widely available⁵.
 - ✓ Internal evaluation within the URBAN-NEXUS partnership directly after each Dialogue Café. Detailed criteria on how to structure these discussions will be set up in a later stage, but focus should be on What Worked Well (WWW) and What Could Be Improved (WCBI), and the way the meeting promoted overcoming intercultural barriers.
- The facilitators should promote further development of peer-to-peer initiatives (potential partnerships) that have evolved in the Dialogue Café, by creating and promoting working groups with online tools like Yammer. Input/questions from other URBAN NEXUS themes should act as a way to keep the participants working

⁵The Nicis evaluation forms can be used as a guide

together (or at least keep in touch). Their answers can then be of use for the other themes too, thus stimulating the integrative nature of URBAN-NEXUS.

- When the cycle of the next theme begins, the facilitator should invite all participants from ‘their’ Dialogue Café to join the next one. Most importantly however are thematic areas of ‘integrated urban management’ and ‘integrated data and information’. For their Dialogue Cafés a set of participants is expected from all previous Dialogue Cafés.
- After these final two Dialogue Cafés, URBAN-NEXUS plans to organise a final conference. Here, all the results are to be presented, including the definitive ways to promote future forms of collaborations: the long-term strategic partnerships. Again, all participants are to be stimulated to visit this final conference.

The table below shows the tools and techniques that can be applied to deliver the steps that are just mentioned. During the course of URBAN-NEXUS, the content of the table will gradually fill. **All partners are invited to add tools and descriptions!**

Table 10 – Tools for the Configuration stage

Tool	Description	When to use this tool for this stage?	Feasibility in overcoming barriers in language, culture and background
Evaluation form	Via email, all participants should be approached to fill in such a form. This form should relate to the content, the process and an analysis of the various tools.	After the Dialogue Café, to be distributed and returned via email	To be filled in during the course of the project...
Online platforms	These form the main focal point on which continued cooperation between participants will be stimulated. New information on following themes, with implications for the previous one, are to be shared here, providing a continuous stream of new information.	To raise discussion directly after the Dialogue Cafés, and when information becomes available for the next URBAN-NEXUS theme. When persons have questions for other participants, this tool is ideal for continued communication.	
News-letter	These act as ways to share overall results and information of URBAN-NEXUS with the participants, and should stimulate them further to stay connected to the project.	Throughout the project on a six month basis. The results of the Dialogue Cafés will be published here too.	
Website	Communication tool to promote the meaning of URBAN-NEXUS and the specific themes. The website should contain all relevant information about the upcoming Dialogue Café	Refer to this tool when invitees want to know more background information on the project. Results of the Dialogue Cafés will be published here.	
E-mail	Personal message to send out invitations, goals of the Dialogue café	Use this tool to report back to stakeholders and attach	

	& synthesis report, and acquire the subscriptions.	necessary documents (follow-up report). Ideal way to pose or respond to a specific question to a specific participant.	
Social media	This allows organisations to send out messages that can be picked up by multiple stakeholders without much effort.	Allows the organiser to post a general message with a call to participants. The outreach of the results can be improved with these tools.	

Conclusion

We think the SDPF provides a well-defined backbone both for the way URBAN-NEXUS as a whole is organised, as well as the organisation of the individual themes. However, it must be noted that the SDPF should be considered a 'living document'. Although Part A –the theory– will not be subject to significant change throughout the URBAN-NEXUS trajectory, Part B – the practical organisation – will. This 'roadmap', from the synthesis report via the Dialogue Cafés and follow-up report to the next theme, will change as new insights and experiences are gathered with each theme. Therefore, Part B of this document should be considered as a first (but nevertheless very important) step towards the final roadmap. Tools will be deleted and added, according to their relevance and output. The tables in the annexes will therefore be the main items subjected to change throughout the project, and the last columns of the tables will be filled in over time. Therefore, on the long run we will be able to decide which forms of cooperation are better than others in overcoming barriers in language, culture and backgrounds.

Important to mention in this conclusion is something referred to already in the introduction of Part B – the game element. The SDPF hopes to adhere to this by providing clear guidelines in the form of the learning spiral in combination with specific tools and techniques. These guidelines help to develop and stay focused on the main goal, and a clear goals in turn help for the development of an exciting and motivating process, not only for the direct project partners but also for the other future stakeholders. Precisely these four elements (a selection of players, specific focus/goals and clear guidelines, within a motivating environment) validate the use of the game metaphor. Only by making URBAN-NEXUS a serious game that needs to be won together through following a clearly defined pathway, can we make this project have a lasting contribution to sustainable urban development, and can we help to overcome the barriers in backgrounds between different stakeholders.

Even while we expect that this process will not be perfect after URBAN-NEXUS is complete, the lessons learned and partnerships forged will be of critical importance for continued collaborative working. Our aim is for this outreach process is not to use the SDPF within the framework of URBAN-NEXUS only, but to create a tool that can and should be used on the European level to further improve European cooperation on a certain theme.