



## Call for WeGenerate Fellow Cities Terms of Reference

Is your city interested in learning more about and taking action towards realising greener, smarter, more sustainable urban regeneration projects with community engagement at the core? If so, apply to be a WeGenerate Fellow City!

### About WeGenerate

WeGenerate is a four-year Horizon Europe project (Nov 2023 - Oct 2027) designed to support local governments to realise more sustainable, low-emission, inclusive and affordable neighbourhoods in their cities. The project counts with two types of beneficiaries: Demo Cities and Fellow Cities.

Four (4) WeGenerate Demo Cities are collaborating with project experts and local stakeholders to enhance their knowledge, expertise, and capacities in the integrated areas of social innovation and participatory action, planning and digital applications, sustainable mobility, and energy in the built environment. The four WeGenerate Demo Cities are:

- **Bucharest** (2<sup>nd</sup> District), Romania
- **Cascais**, Portugal
- **Cesena**, Italy
- **Tampere**, Finland

The WeGenerate Demo Cities will co-create and implement innovative solutions to address local technical and social challenges. They will share their learnings and experience throughout the process with five (5) new partners, the Fellow Cities, as part of the project's peer-to-peer learning and exchange programme.

**Five (5) Fellow Cities** will be selected through this application process to participate in the WeGenerate project to further test the project's innovation transfer and mainstreaming potential during their own local WeGenerate Replication Roadmap process.

Successful Fellow Cities will have access to:

- early project results, lessons learnt and project innovations;
- peer-to-peer learning and exchange within a network of cities;
- learning opportunities tailored to local urban regeneration needs;
- funding for travel and accommodation to participate in eight (8) on-site visits to the Demo Cities to learn, exchange and observe the implementation measures in the urban regeneration pilots in these cities;
- support and advice from project partners to assess the replication potential of the urban regeneration solutions piloted in the project, and to align them with local existing urban development and renovation goals, financing opportunities, and key policy and legislation frameworks;

- 10.000€ in financial support for the local authority (applicant) to prepare a *WeGenerate Replication Roadmap* for implementing solutions tested by the project to be adapted to a redevelopment area or project in your city.

## Fellow City Commitment Expectations

Fellow Cities are expected to commit to the following activities as part of a subcontracting agreement through the WeGenerate project:

- Participate in eight (8) in-person Study Visits to Demo Cities: four trips in 2024 and four trips in 2026; funding is available to support up to two people to attend each Study Visit.
- Attend regular online meetings and capacity building events as part of the WeGenerate peer-to-peer exchange programme.
- Convene a Local Liaison Group to share WeGenerate learnings with relevant colleagues, local stakeholders, and professional networks.
- Work with WeGenerate consortium partners and local stakeholders to identify and assess innovation opportunities in your city's replication area.
- Develop and deliver your city's WeGenerate Replication Roadmap with advisory support from the WeGenerate project consortium experts before June 2027.

## Who can apply?

The call is open to **local authorities** (cities and regions) from all EU Member States and the 16 Associated countries to the Horizon Europe programme.<sup>1</sup> Ideal applicants are local municipalities that have demonstrated commitment to sustainable urban regeneration, have a deep curiosity for learning about the newest innovations in integrated neighbourhood (re)development, and have a specific district or existing project in mind to apply the Replication Roadmap.

The call will follow a three-staged process with each application being assessed for:

### Stage 1: Eligibility criteria

Where pass/fail requirements related to the conditions of the call are assessed by the WeGenerate consortium:

- Municipality/local authority must be within either an EU Member States or one of the 16 Associated countries to the Horizon Europe programme, at the point of the submission deadline.
- Submitted signed letter from a department head or higher (template provided)

### Stage 2: Evaluation criteria

Following an eligibility check, applications will be assessed by a WeGenerate cross-partner panel according to the following criteria:

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<sup>1</sup> Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Georgia, Iceland, Israel, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

## Experience and Commitment

- Participation in other European / International replication, peer-to-peer exchange, or capacity building programmes
- Current stakeholder engagement and participatory action approach(es)
- Demonstration of local commitment to sustainable development and sustainability
- Capacity to convene and facilitate a Local Liaison Group
- Authority to allocate the necessary resources (staff time, administration, etc.) to create a WeGenerate Replication Roadmap
- Commitment to attendance, participation, and deliverable requirements

## Motivation

- Motivation to participate in the project and create added value for an existing regeneration project or district in your city
- Interest in specific innovation domains
- Cities that previously submitted a Letter of Interest (LoI) during the project's proposal phase will receive special consideration (extra point).

## Stage 3: Strategic Selection

The final selection of five (5) Fellow Cities by the WeGenerate cross-partner panel will consider the following aspects:

- Outcome of Stage 2 Evaluation
- Geographic diversity (countries as well as climate zones)
- Cultural diversity (countries as well as socio-economic-political diversity)
- Diversity in city size
- Diversity of focus on different human-centred urban regeneration innovations or solutions the cities would like to explore and apply for their Replication Roadmaps

## Call for WeGenerate Fellow Cities Timeline

- 1 March 2024: Application deadline
- Early March 2024: Fellow City application evaluation and selection
- Mid-March 2024: Fellow City awarding and contracting
- 23-25 April 2024: Study Visit / on-boarding event in Bucharest, Romania

## Online Application

To apply, please complete this application: <https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/WGFC2024>

Applications are accepted until **1 March 2024 23:59 CET**. Applicants are encouraged to provide supporting evidence (e.g., documents, links, etc.) to support their application.

For questions regarding the Fellow City programme or application process, please contact Nina Mia Čikeš ([nina-mia.cikes@iclei.org](mailto:nina-mia.cikes@iclei.org)) or Allison Wildman ([allison.wildman@iclei.org](mailto:allison.wildman@iclei.org)).

## **WeGenerate Demo Cities**

### **Bucharest, Romania: Open Campus for Neighbourhood and Climate**

The Demo "Open Campus for Neighbourhood and Climate" in Bucharest's 2nd District represents an innovative approach to urban regeneration, focusing on sustainable energy sharing, education, and community engagement. The project aims to transform a university campus into a vibrant open space for the community, as well as address the implementation challenges of community energy sharing within Romania's regulatory landscape.

The core of the Open Campus Demo involves integrating renewable energy solutions, like solar systems and heat-pumps, with the existing university campus infrastructure (student canteen) to produce energy for an adjacent public school and the student residential building. This approach will create and test a 'rent-a-roof' solar scheme that will enable building owners' associations to lease their roof space for solar panel installations, generating both clean energy and revenue for local stakeholders.

The Open Campus Demo will also explore an Energy-as-a-Service (EaaS) model where energy is provided as a service to the community. This model shifts away from traditional energy purchasing, enabling more flexible and efficient energy usage. Increasing awareness and engaging with the local community is essential for a successful implementation. Workshops, seminars, and interactive sessions will be conducted to educate residents and stakeholders about sustainable energy practices and the benefits of energy sharing. The project will also focus on regenerating spaces by creating green spaces and facilities that encourage community activities to promote social interaction and inclusion. Finally, the Open Campus Demo will explore advanced technologies, such as smart meters, energy management systems and air quality monitoring, to monitor and optimize energy usage and increase awareness of environmental quality.

### **Cesena, Italy: Re-Activating Urban Space from City Gateway to Neighbourhood**

The Cesena (Italy) will show how the regeneration of the railway station area can be leveraged to create new social, economic, and environmental values for an adjacent deprived residential neighbourhood. The Demo area is divided into two main districts separated by a railroad corridor. On one side of the corridor, the Vigne Neighbourhood is characterised by a post-war residential character (largely built between 1957-1963) that responded to the growing need for housing. The Vigna INA Casa block specifically has an interesting planimetric composition, composed of in line residential blocks and open spaces distributed in succession (alternating pedestrian paths, inner courtyards and green areas), intermixed with disorganized parking areas and streets.

On the other side of the corridor, the Railway Station area was originally conceived as industrial buildings reuse, but today hosts key services for the city (i.e., high schools, railway station, bus station). Its central location is a regeneration focal area for Cesena Municipality, who aims to transform the area into an intermodal sustainable mobility hub and new gateway to the city's historic city centre. The work leverages project funding from the Italian National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR) and other regional or municipal sources.

WeGenerate will advance the regeneration process beyond the status quo by integrating innovative technological, social, and aesthetic actions with the existing plans. In particular, the project proposes to develop an integrated regeneration methodology based on a co-creation process with the local community that:

- valorises Vigne’s green space system by reconnecting the neighbourhood to the railway station and the city centre (15-minute City) while simultaneously improving neighbourhood outdoor socialization and recreation spaces. A Digital Twin will help evaluate different building retrofit options and facilitate the decision-making process with the community;
- strengthens the vision for the Railway Station area to become an innovative sustainable mobility hub, serve as a new 'Gateway' to Cesena city centre, as well as create inclusive and accessible green open spaces for commuters, students and the local community.

Key actions to support the Demo transformation works in parallel on three related topics: (1) **integrated and multi-modal mobility** - particularly by raising awareness about “active mobility” through workshops, roundtables and contests with local stakeholders, and by implementing a specific parking solution for the Park & Ride facility near the train station; (2) **climate-adaptive open spaces** - by experimenting with and evaluating the environmental impact of small-scale greening interventions co-developed with the local community, and by creating a user-friendly and citizen-targeted blog as an urban digital platform; (3) **renovation of the built environment** - in particular, by using a Digital Twin to support the decision-making process for building refurbishment of the Vigne INA Casa block.

### **Cascais, Portugal: Social Neighbourhood as an Active Energy Community**

Cascais aims to develop a Decarbonisation Living Lab and citizen energy community through a governance model that actively engages socially diverse residents. Existing energy communities around Europe involve mostly moderate to higher income households. This Demo will develop an inclusive approach to enable all residents – regardless of social or economic status – to participate in the energy community. By doing so, this Demo will open a new energy transition pathway for neighbourhoods in Cascais and the wider Lisbon Metropolitan area. Energy poverty is a particularly challenging social problem in Portugal, affecting 20% of the population. This approach accelerates progress towards urban decarbonization and a cleaner energy transition, thereby contributing to the larger European goal of a just and sustainable future.

Cascais has different urban centres along the coastline in continuous urban area. The city has a comprehensive sustainability and climate action policy, articulated in the Local Sustainable Energy Plan and the Carbon Neutrality Roadmap 2050. The Cascais Demo neighbourhood ‘Alcabideche’ is a diverse urban area, including a social neighbourhood called ‘Bairro de Alcabideche’ with many public facilities, such as a sports centre, four primary and secondary schools, a daytime elder care centre, and a cultural centre for art and community events. The district also has a common urban typology that can be found repeated in neighbourhoods throughout the city: a block of social housing with direct access to a public school. WeGenerate sees this ‘social housing block + local school’ typology as an ideal foundation to create an active Local Energy Hub for the community.

The Cascais Demo seeks to find the right recipes for making this happen and the challenges include i) finding a cost-optimum technology combination that will fully harness the potential of renewable energy and the setting of this typology; ii) develop a financing and operation concept for the Local Energy Hub; iii) engage social housing residents and the school community in a participatory planning process.

### **Tampere, Finland: Human-Centric Walkable City**

The Demo ‘Human-centric Walkable City’ seeks to answer a question grappling many local governments: how to revitalise a declining city centre to bring back people and businesses? Instead of merely transitioning to pedestrianisation, which is a growing trend in cities around the world, this Demo will regenerate the city centre based on a sustainable, people-centric and attractive Walkable

City concept. The overarching objective of the Tampere Demo is to enhance the accessibility, walkability, attractiveness, and safety of urban spaces for everyone, with a particular focus on vulnerable communities. These groups, including elderly people, people with reduced mobility, persons with disabilities and people struggling with substance use, will be invited to take part in the co-creation process with an aim to map out their special needs and barriers in the city centre. Their engagement will be realized through collaboration with dedicated organisations who have experience working with these specific populations.

The Demo aims to utilize the latest digital technologies, including Digital Twins and Metaverse, to stimulate citizen participation and enhance decision-making by allowing citizens to visualise what proposed changes will really feel like and to provide valuable feedback. Open and reusable digital assets can be extended to support further development far beyond the scope of the Demo, e.g., by adding new multi-layered data to the models. The XR demos in the project will (to the best extent possible) leverage existing city IT infrastructure and digital solutions, such as city's data lake and IoT platform. The goal is not to simply create new urban spaces but, more importantly, create conditions that encourage citizens to willingly leave their cars at home and adopt more active and sustainable forms of mobility.