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Annual plan Financial working group
2026



Financial Working group

- The **Financial working group** explores sustainable measures related to joint investment plans, synergies between funds, reinforcement of investments and common public procurement practices to develop and implement common existing digital solutions on a large scale in the EU.
- In 2026, the Financial working group will build on the activities of 2025, further focusing on **matching the financial needs of cities and communities with the available funding tools and opportunities**, such as the *European Digital Infrastructure Consortia (EDICs)*, and the diverse opportunities provided under different programmes and initiatives of relevance to cities and regions, such as *Digital Europe*, *Horizon Europe*, and the *European Urban Initiative (EUI)*, among others.
- Involving financial experts and experts from local and regional administrations, it will continue the ongoing dialogue and analysis of the financial means, needs, challenges and opportunities of cities, regions and communities to ensure a successful implementation of digital policies and initiatives, and inform signatories on funding guides, instruments, calls and activities.

Main results in 2025 (1)

In 2025, the Financial working group focused on:

- The call for proposals "GenAI for Public Administrations" – info session on the opportunities for cities and regions and match-making, co-organised with the EC AI Office;
- The European Digital Infrastructure Consortia (EDICs) and multi-country projects – overview of latest developments, presentation of already existing EDICs and EDICs under development;
- Discussion on the role of digital transformation in the next EU budget (MFF) 2028-2034, and opportunities and challenges for European cities and regions;
- Ongoing discussions about funding synergies and financial needs for local digital transformation;
- Ongoing collection of information and feedback on cities' and communities' needs to support their digital transformation.

Main results in 2025 (2)

- Involving financial experts and specialists from the EC and the public administration, the **Financial working group organised awareness-raising, knowledge and information exchange, and match-making webinars**; shared with members **relevant funding calls and opportunities**; collaborated with DG CNECT and the Eurocities Digital Forum for the organisation of a webinar on the **GenAI for Public Administrations call**; collaborated with the Legal working group for the development of a webinar on the development of **EDICs**, among other activities.
- In line with its objectives, the financial working group built on some key activities and objectives started in 2024. **In 2026**, it will continue the ongoing discussion on funding challenges and opportunities of relevance for public authorities, identifying common financial needs, and acting as a platform for open discussions and best practices exchanges among signatories.

Lessons learned in 2025

- Exploring different funding opportunities may be dependent on **1)** the individual timelines of the different funding programmes and calls, **2)** the concrete opportunities offered under the given programme or call, **3)** the areas of Digital currently of importance and priority to signatories, as well as **4)** the availability of relevant experts to participate as presenters during the sessions. Thus, in some cases, the working group (WG) has to be able to adapt its plan flexibly.
- The concrete financial impact of some of the activities organised by the Financial WG is difficult to assess and measure, since it is expected to be realised over a longer term, as in the example of the Digital Europe programme and the EDICs.
- Similarly to 2024, in 2025, some of the activities planned by the Financial WG focused on initiatives and policy areas in their earlier stage of development.
 - The Financial WG aims to continue involving a larger number of members in relevant developments at earlier stages, to raise awareness and further enhance preparedness to participate in these initiatives once they are set up.
 - A relevant examples are the EDICs, whose practical implementation aspects will continue to be among the key focus areas of the Financial WG in 2026, and the ongoing discussions and developments of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2028-2034.
- The Financial WG will continue to discuss financial opportunities for local authorities, specifically planning activities around key funding opportunities for signatories, and exploring synergies between **1)** the different funding opportunities, e.g. in the context of the EDICs, and **2)** the different WGs, and, potentially, the Eurocities Digital Forum.

Objectives of the Financial WG in 2026

- Understanding better the different aspects and the practical implications of the **European Digital Infrastructure Consortia** for cities, regions and communities;
- Providing information and guidance on EU funding programmes and calls; providing opportunities for exchange of knowledge and match-making;
- Providing information and guidance on available sources of information about funding opportunities;
- Showcasing best practices of project proposals;
- Sharing knowledge and facilitating an ongoing dialogue on financial needs, challenges and current opportunities for local digital transformation.

Financial WG: Activities and Results (1)

Activity	Results/ expected outcome	How does it contribute to the WG objectives in 2025?	Link to the other working groups and/or other stakeholders	Scheduled	Activity leader
Develop working group work plan	Finalised work plan for 2026, published on the Financial WG space of Living-in.EU	Establishing a structured framework for the WG's activities throughout the year, until the end of the project	All Living-in.EU working groups	Q1	Eurocities
Webinar on the European Urban Initiative (EUI)	Raising awareness about EUI. Explore the main aspects, challenges and opportunities for cities under the programme	Providing information and guidance on EU funding opportunities, and possibility for matchmaking	All Living-in.EU working groups	Q1/Q2	Eurocities
Webinar on the European Digital Innovation Consortia	Identification of main aspects of the EDICs, projects and funding opportunities for public authorities	Providing information and guidance on EU funding opportunities, and possibility for matchmaking	All Living-in.EU working groups	Q2/Q3	Eurocities
Webinar on relevant calls under programmes like Digital Europe and Horizon Europe	Explore the main aspects, challenges and opportunities for cities under the programme(s)	Providing information and guidance on EU funding opportunities, and possibility for matchmaking	All Living-in.EU working groups	Q2/Q3	Eurocities
Evaluation of 2026 work plans and results	Assessment of the activities of 2026	Ensures continuous improvement and adaptability in achieving the WG's objectives	All Living-in.EU working groups	Q3	Eurocities

Schedule of meetings or events

Date	Meeting/ event	Who is it for?	Contact person
Q1	Development of the working group work plan	Signatories	Ana Georgieva
Q1/Q2	Webinar on the European Urban initiative (EUI)	Signatories	Ana Georgieva
Q2/Q3	Webinar on the European Digital Innovation Consortia (EDICs)	Signatories	Ana Georgieva
Q2/Q3	Webinar on relevant calls under Digital Europe and/or Horizon Europe Programme	Signatories	Ana Georgieva/ Gabriela Ruseva
Q3	Evaluation of 2026 work plans and results	Signatories	Ana Georgieva

Cross-overs activities and partnerships

Activities	Together with other working group/ project/ partnership/...	Who is it for?	Contact person
Development of the working groups work plans	Joint activity, co-organised by all Living-in.EU working groups	Signatories	Respective WG leads
Webinar on the European Urban Initiative (EUI)	European Urban Initiative. Potentially: Legal Working Group of Living-in.EU; other working groups of Living-in.EU	Signatories	Ana Georgieva
Webinar on the European Digital Innovation Consortia (EDICs)	Legal Working Group of Living-in.EU; other working groups of Living-in.EU; potentially: Eurocities Digital Forum (TBC)	Signatories Eurocities Digital Forum members*	Ana Georgieva/ Gabriela Ruseva
Webinar on relevant calls under Digital Europe and/or Horizon Europe Programme	Legal Working Group of Living-in.EU; other working groups of Living-in.EU.	Signatories	Ana Georgieva/ Gabriela Ruseva
Evaluation of 2026 work plans and results	Activity, implemented by each Living-in.EU working group	Signatories	Ana Georgieva

Risks and measures

Risk	Measure	Owner
Involving EC representatives and EU funding experts to provide contributions during webinars	Leverage the wide Living-in.eu network by calling for interested experts to contribute on a structural level.	Financial working group
Producing outputs for the activities	Involving cities, regions, and communities (and their experts) for production of the output, ask support from the SB/Go Li.EU! Project.	Financial working group
Limited capacity from signatories for peer review activities	Living-in.eu communication, Digital Public Buyers communication, and individual partner networks to collaborate for wide and timely dissemination of invitations.	Financial working group

Support needed to execute the workplan

What does this working group need to achieve results?

Activity	What is needed? (e.g., expertise, resources, comms)	By when?
Develop working group work plan	Policy expertise; communications and dissemination	Q1
Webinar on the European Urban initiative (EUI)	Policy expertise (EUI team); communications; potential contributions from signatories who have participated in the initiative and are interested in upcoming calls	Q1/Q2
Webinar on EDICs	Policy expertise (DG CNECT/LDT; CitiVERSE EDIC; other existing EDICs and EDICs under development), communications	Q2/Q3
Webinar on relevant calls under Digital Europe and/or Horizon Europe Programme	Policy expertise (DG CNECT; other relevant DGs); financial expertise; communications; contributions from signatories who have applied for/participated in EU programmes	Q2/Q3
Evaluation of 2026 work plans and results	Communications and dissemination, editorial support	Q3