



# Twinning Learning Programme Info pack for participants

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### Glossary

**Twinned Cities:** Pilot and Twin City/ies which have been matched to actively work together on the path to climate neutrality through knowledge exchange and collaborative problem-solving. Cities can be twinned in different ways. To simplify the reading of this document we will use the terms Pilot City and Twin City.

#### Twinning Learning Journey:

Within the framework of the Twinning Learning Programme, a comprehensive 20-month itinerary has been curated to facilitate knowledge transfer and capacity-building among the Pilot Cities and Twin Cities participating in the program. It includes a diverse range of activities, including workshops, virtual meetings, and on-site visits.

**Replicability assessment:** This involves evaluating the adaptability of a strategy or project development approach initially implemented in a Pilot City to potentially be used in a different setting. This assessment takes into account the possibility that the contextual conditions in the new setting may differ significantly from those in the Pilot City.

**Replication plan:** This is an analysis of local and regional conditions, including a series of actions to replicate the Pilot activity, and a set of recommendations.

**Pilot Activity:** This is the range of activities submitted by Pilot Cities to be tested and implemented over a two-year programme, using innovative approaches to rapid decarbonisation with a focus on systemic transformation and working across thematic areas and functional silos.

# Welcome to the Twinning Learning Programme!

This document contains all the key information you need to get the most out of this programme. It includes a description of the three modules underpinning the exchange programme, a description of the expected deliverables and practical information.

Should you have any questions about the programme, you can email us at twincities@netzerocities.eu

### Introduction

### **NetZeroCities**

NetZeroCities supports the EU's Mission of "100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030", launched in September 2021, as part of the Horizon Europe programme. The project works as a service-oriented platform supported by world-class practitioners/experts. It provides European cities with the needed support and helps them to achieve their climate neutrality goal in a socially inclusive way.

NetZeroCities has been designed to help cities overcome the current structural, institutional and cultural barriers they face in order to achieve climate neutrality by 2030.

Cities have several opportunities to get involved in the learning journey proposed by NetZeroCities as a Mission City, as a Pilot City or as a Twin City depending on their commitments, experiences, and progress on the path to climate neutrality.

### **Mission City**

112 cities have been selected by the European Commission to become part of the EU's Mission "100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities".



This diverse cohort of 112 cities with different backgrounds and geographies was selected all over Europe to lead the way on climate action and accelerate their journey to 2030 climate neutrality. These Cities are called Mission Cities.

They receive tailor-made advice and support from the Mission Platform1, managed by NetZeroCities. They also get the opportunity to engage in a Climate City Contract (CCC) process. This process enables cities to receive a broad support from local stakeholders, making their transformation more sustainable.

### **Pilot City**

The Pilot Cities are selected to test and implement innovative approaches to rapid decarbonisation over a two-year pilot programme, working across thematic areas, systemic levers and functional silos in support of systemic transformation. Pilot Cities are defined as those cities where good practice originates, i.e., is developed and implemented; assuming that this good practice is worth being replicated. As part of the Pilot Cities programme, they also committed resources and time to mutual learning and collective sensemaking activities, such as the Twinning Learning Programme. Pilot Cities are also encouraged to learn from the Twin Cities experiences (good practices and challenging experiences) and will learn from the twinning process itself, being stimulated to review and strengthen their own learnings throughout the exchange.

A group of Cities from the same country wanted to work together on a concrete project and which have been selected to become a "Pilot City" is called Multi-City Pilot City.

### Twin City

Twin Cities face similar challenges and have common needs to the Pilot City. They intend to replicate lessons learned developed across the pilot activities. They will look at Pilot Cities and, rather than "reinventing the wheel", they will capitalise on Pilot Cities achievements and experiences, to reproduce good practices. All Twin Cities are based in EU Member states or Horizon 2020 Associated Countries and can be Mission or a non-Mission City. Apart from the shared challenges, the programme team, when matching Twin Cities to Pilot Cities, also considers geography and city size. Finally, all Twin Cities will have committed to become climate neutral by or before 2050.

The Twinning Learning Programme aims to support local authorities to develop or further develop innovative approaches to rapid decarbonisation in municipalities through twinning. While this programme is aimed at local authorities participating in the NetZeroCities project, the methods used in this guideline are transferable to other cities.

The objectives of the Twinning learning programme are as follows:

- To identify factors and mechanisms within municipalities which have led to successful implementation of pilot activities to accelerate the transition towards climate neutrality by 2030 in Pilot Cities and in Twin cities before or by 2050
- To develop, or further develop, deep decarbonisation policies and pilot activities in municipalities
- To disseminate the process and lessons learnt across Europe



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The Knowledge Repository of the NZC also called Mission Platform includes a very complete overview of best practice examples from cities across Europe. The Knowledge Repository aims to inspire cities to take concrete actions towards climate neutrality in each stage of the value chains and affecting all the city systems to achieve a broader impact.

In the short term, it is expected that the twinning process among cities will enable acquisition of knowledge and know-how for the further development of deep decarbonisation pilots and policies, as well as increased capacity to implement these policies based on knowledge acquired during the twinning exchange.

In the medium- and long-term, measurable progress is expected in becoming climate neutral before or by 2050. It is also expected that the twinning programme will lead to long-term partnerships among the twinned cities and stimulate new partnerships with other cities. The knowledge and experience gained during peer learning will be widely disseminated through NetZeroCities platform, and other relevant events.

The benefits of city twinning include the following:

- **Capacity building**. Twinning can help strengthen the local authorities involved through a transfer of skills and knowledge.
- **Exchange of lessons learned**. Twinning provides opportunities to identify policies, techniques and interventions that have worked and to spread the word about them.
- **Effectiveness**. Twinning that involves collaborating on a specific initiative results in stronger and more effective programmes.
- **Networking**. Twinning can help build stronger relationships among cities and extend both cities involved in the twinning project networks
- **Solidarity.** Twinning helps to create a feeling of belonging to a broader NZC community. Cities involved in twinning are often inspired by the work of their peer partners.



# **Twinning Learning Programme**

The Twinning Learning Programme is a 20-month programme that aims to transfer knowledge and build capacities across the Pilot Cities and Twin Cities engaged in the programme. It will start at the end of September 2023 and will end in May 2025. Twin and Pilot Cities with a similar thematic focus in realising climate neutrality have been matched to actively shape each other's development through knowledge exchange and collaborative problem-solving. Relationship building as well as the mutual learning experience are at the core of the exchange.

Upon completion of the learning cycle, Twin Cities will embed the relevant learnings from Pilot activities across their city.

A range of activities are planned to advance learning between Pilot Cities and Twin Cities, including tailored online meetings, workshops and inspiring site visits to deepen the understanding of each other's challenges and find solutions together. These activities are organised into 3 modules with ongoing facilitation leaving enough room for flexibility to maximise their effectiveness.

### What can you expect?

Twin and Pilot Cities will together complete the Twinning Learning Programme roadmap, as visualised in Figure 1. The Twinning Learning Programme is organised in 3 modules (for more detailed information see the Twinning Learning Programme description).



#### Figure 1: Roadmap of the Twinning Learning Programme



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### Module I: Getting started

This module will start on the 28<sup>th</sup> of September and will last 3 months. Participants (Pilot and Twin Cities) will both need to dedicate 2 or 3 workdays to the first module. In this first module, all participating cities will be on boarded to the Twinning Learning Programme and sign a peer learning participation agreement. Twinned cities will get to know each other's local climate strategies, socio-economic and cultural context, challenges, lessons learned and learning needs. The module finishes with formulated learning objectives and core topics of interest identified in this early phase of online exchanges.



#### Figure 2: Overview – Module I: Getting started

This module is composed of:

- A kick-off meeting (2h): A joint meeting for all the participating Cities in the Twinning Learning Programme to present the Programme and its framework
- An online workshop "Define the learning Cycle" (3h) this meeting aims to move from the matching, based on the application form, to getting to know each other, where the Twin City and the Pilot City will co-design and elaborate the topics of exchange as defined in the application form.
- A collective sense making exercise: Twin Cities will be invited to participate in an online collective sense-making sessions (2-3 hour) with a group of up to 6 Pilot Cities or multi-city Pilot projects. This group will be clustered based on the thematic or technical areas of intervention of respective Pilot Cities. As active observers, Twin Cities will have the opportunity to learn from the Pilot Cities' presentations and followed by discussions and Q&A. This session will focus on Pilot Cities' learning objectives, as well as their progress so far in setting up their baseline assessments, governance and monitoring mechanisms, stakeholder networks, impact pathways, indicators etc. No prior preparation is required for the Twin Cities attending.



A second session of the collective sense-making will take place shortly after the first one where lessons learned in the other clusters will be shared. This second session is optional for Twin Cities as it is out of the scope of the Twinning Learning Programme.

The 4 sessions on sense-making activities scheduled in the Twinning Learning Programme will all take place according to this principle: an initial meeting with the cluster of the Pilot activity with which the Twin City has been twinned ("mandatory") and a second meeting with all the clusters ("optional"). Each of these 4 sessions will address different thematic areas (see detailed description in the TLP description).

Detailed information concerning **Module I** can be found in the Twinning Learning Programme Description.

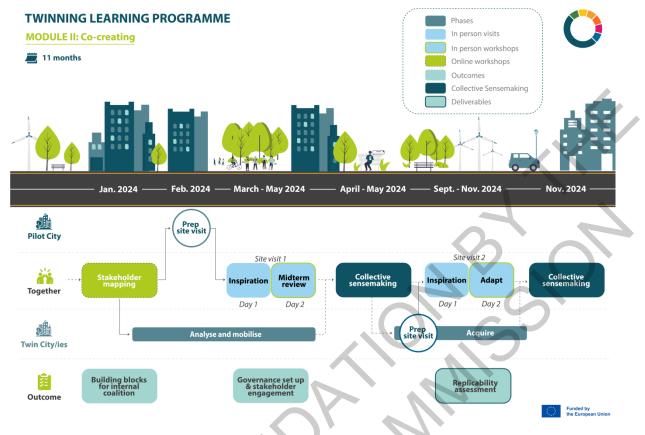
#### Module II: Co-creating

In the second module, the cities will start co-creating. In several tailored workshops the Twin City is encouraged to ensure political backing of the pilot activities, set-up an internal replication team/taskforce, deepen its knowledge of the pilot activities to be replicated by engaging stakeholders, reading policy documents and visiting the Pilot City. At the end of the module, the Twin City will have performed a replicability assessment of the pilot activities it envisions to replicate, making sure the knowledge gathered fits its local conditions and environment.

During this process, the Pilot City will share information on the solutions and lessons learned it has developed, started to develop, or is further developing related to the pilot activity, and is strongly encouraged to provide any necessary additional information learned over the course of the Pilot City Journey as well as practical recommendations. Pilot Cities are encouraged to act as constructive friends throughout the Twinning Learning Journey for Twin Cities, and the Pilot City itself may be inspired by the interaction with the Twin City through participating in online meetings and workshops, and by learning from specific good practice projects in a site visit to the Twin City.

This module will start in January 2024 and will last 11 months. It is the core of the Twinning Learning Programme. Pilot Cities will need to dedicate 14 workdays to the second module with a focus on providing information and feedback to the Twin City as well as organising the first site visit. For the Twin City, the focus of the module will be on governance as well as stakeholder mapping and engagement, with alternating phases of exchanges and work to be done individually (online and on site). This phase is the most resource-intensive for the Twin City, which should plan for 20 working days, i.e., about 2 days per month for this period of the programme.





#### Figure 3: Overview – Module II: Co-creating

This module is composed of 2 phases: "Analyse and Mobilise" and "Acquire" alternating phases of individual work and exchanges with the Pilot City (online and on site). This allows the Twin City to progress its work and to receive regular feedback from the Pilot City. The Pilot City will reflect, revisit, refine and improve its own methodology given that "teaching is often the best way of learning".

The Analyse and Mobilise phase aims to make sure that all the pre-conditions are fulfilled for replicability to take place. Its focus is on setting up the governance model, before engaging with stakeholders.

This phase is composed of:

- A workshop (3h): In this workshop we will identify the relevant stakeholders to be engaged in the Twin City.
- A site visit (1.5 day): the Twin City will visit the Pilot City. During the visit, the Pilot City will present best practices identified in Pilot City Journey, visit sites of interest and host meetings with relevant stakeholders. The first day will be fully dedicated to visits to projects of particular interest. While the morning of the second day will be dedicated to review the work done in both cities within the framework of NZC programme
- A Collective sensemaking exercise (2-3h) (see above)

At the end of the phase, the first evaluation of the Twinning Learning Programme will take place in form of a small online survey.

**The Acquire phase** aims to gain additional knowledge on the topic of replication and to assess the replicability of the good practice in a different setting. After having set-up the governance model and identified stakeholders and their needs, it's time for the Twin City to deepen its understanding of the project to replicate. As during the phase "Analyse and Mobilise", periods of reflection and work to be done individually alternate with phases of exchange with the Pilot City (online and on site). This phase starts in the summer time and will last about 6 months with a strong focus on knowledge acquisition.



The phase is composed of:

• A site visit (1.5 day): One and a half-day of physical meeting will be arranged in which the Pilot City will visit the Twin City. This time around, the Pilot City learns from the Twin City's experiences. The first day will be fully dedicated to visits to projects of particular interest. While the morning of the second day will be dedicated to the so-called "Adapt" workshop with a focus on the replicability assessment of the Twin City. The Pilot City will present its own progress on its path to climate neutrality in relation to its pilot activity.

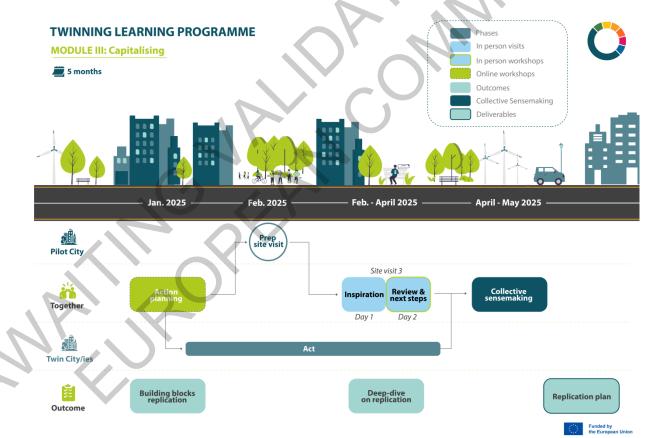
#### Collective sensemaking exercise (2-3h).

At the end of this phase the Twin City will have set up their internal governance and engaged their stakeholders. Twinned Cities will evaluate the programme by filling in a short online survey

Detailed information concerning **Module II** can be found in the Twinning Learning Programme description.

### Module III: Capitalising

In the final module the Twin City will need to identify the essential actions for replication, including a scoping of potential financing sources. A final visit to the Pilot City or to the Twin City will take place to sharpen the action plan of the Twin City with the Pilot City's advice. Participating cities will review the Twinning Learning Journey on its effectiveness, the key learnings to transfer and will ideally plan for further collaboration.



#### Figure 4: Overview – Module III: Capitalising

This module will start in January 2025 and will last 5 months. The aim of this Module is to deep dive on replication and reflect on collaboration and the skills and knowledge acquired during the peerexchange. Twin Cities will finalise its replication plan. Pilot Cities will need to dedicate a minimum of eight workdays to the third module with a focus on providing information and feedback to the Twin City



as well as organising the third site visit. For the Twin City, the focus of the module will be on the replication plan and concrete actions to be developed. For this phase, the Twin City will need to plan 11 working days i.e., about two days per month for this period of the programme.

This module is composed of:

- An online Workshop "Action planning" (3h): In this workshop the objective for the Twin City is to outline all actions that will be put in place to replicate the good practice, including financing.
- A site visit (1.5 day): the third site visit will take place to the Twin City or to the Pilot City. This meeting will be based on the needs of the Twin City and the stage of their replication plan. The first day will be fully dedicated to visits of project visits to projects of particular interest. While the morning of the second day will focus on presenting the replication plan, reviewing the Twinning learning Journey and ideally planning for further. After the site visit, an evaluation of the Twinning Learning Programme will take place in form of a small online survey.
- A Collective sensemaking exercise (2-3h) (see above)

Detail information concerning **Module III** can be found in the Twinning Learning Programme description.

### Making the most of it

The benefit of the programme depends largely on the efforts you are able to invest in the programme. Nevertheless, here are some tips and tricks to make this experience as impactful as possible. Also, we, the Twinning Learning Programme team, are always here to support you.

# Dedicate specific time to work on the Twinning Learning Programme

We all have a busy life and often deprioritise learning and professional development in the face of our never-ending to-do lists. Nevertheless, countless studies have shown that small but regular efforts multiply learning and growth over time.

Therefore, we recommend you make interacting with the Twinning Learning Programme a part of your weekly routine. Half day a week over 20 months programme should be planned to take full advantage of the benefits of this programme.

### Set goals, prepare and review

Formulate clear learning or mentoring goals before starting with the programme. Goals are essential as they remind you why you joined the programme and align its outcomes accordingly. They also serve as a guide to formulate meaningful questions for your peer and others. Checking in and adjusting goals is almost as important as setting them in the first case. So, add it to your routine around the Twinning Learning Programme. Sometimes, you might even realise that one of your goals is no longer relevant or another needs rephrasing. That is okay and a sign that you progress in your overall learning as you gain more clarity on what you want to achieve.

Preparation and review for online and on-site meetings are essential to the Twinning Learning Programme success. This includes.

- Take the time to familiarize yourself with the programme by reading carefully all the documents
- Think about what you would like to learn and fix it
- Prepare questions and issues you want to discuss for each meeting (online and on site)
- Document meetings by taking notes and pictures
- Review meetings before continuing your work on the programme

### Be (pro)active

The city you are matched with cannot necessarily know what you need, so it is crucial that you prepare for all the activities planned in the Twinning Learning Programme and actively participate - ask questions, propose solutions/ideas or share concerns. Also, all participants of the meetings are a great



resource - check in with them, actively listen when they ask questions or share experiences, and don't hesitate to contact them again if needed.

Being proactive in a peer city learning relationship also means reaching out to your peer whenever you need support while respecting their time and capacities. It is really up to you to make the most of it. Keep a learning mindset, but also choose which feedback and advice are relevant and which you gratefully set aside.

These tips apply equally to Twin cities and to Pilot Cities even if the learning experience will differ depending on the learning needs and the rule of the city engaged in this exchange.

Teaching is often the best way to learn and to check that the path we've embarked on is the right one and that the tools we've taken with us are the appropriate ones for achieving our goals.

#### Commitment related to the programme

In this paragraph we present some binding elements related to the Twinning Learning Programme:

- **Participation in the twinning exchange** (by signing a peer learning agreement in late September). This is a two-way exchange in which **both Pilot and Twin Cities** commit to completing and participating in the steps as outlined in the twinning roadmap and both visit and host at least one visit by another city in the project to which it is twinned.
- **Preparation of a replicability assessment.** On completion of the twinning exercise, the **Pilot and Twin Cities** are expected to complete a replicability assessment of other learnings, good practices and/or policies that could be taken up in their own context.
- **Preparation of a replication plan.** On completion of the twinning exercise, the **Twin City** is expected to write a plan on some feasible actions that could be taken to implement innovative approaches to rapid decarbonisation in their own city. This report should include:
  - a statement of the problem and the likely solutions;
  - o an assessment of the feasibility of the project in their local context;
  - an action plan for developing or further developing a similar pilot activity (at least partially) as in the Pilot City
- Complete three short surveys for monitoring and evaluation purposes of the Twinning Learning Programme.

### **Twinning Learning Programme support**

To make the exchange experience as great as possible, Cities engaged in the Twinning Learning Programme will be supported by the TLP Team and a dedicated facilitator. For a better interaction, the functionalities of the NZC Portal can be used as describes below.

### The Twinning Learning Programme Team

This Team designed and developed all the components of the Twinning Learning Programme. The Team is responsible for the monitoring of Twin Cities' progress in achieving their objectives and moving towards concrete outputs. You will be contacted almost six-monthly to provide feedback concerning the programme (June 2024, December 2024 and June 2025)

### Facilitator

The facilitator of the twinning exchange, who is part of the NetZeroCities consortium, will coordinate the twinning learning exchange and stimulate cooperation between Twin and Pilot Cities. This will be done primarily by encouraging open and constructive discussions during the online meetings, workshops, and site visits between Cities, while easing the involvement of Pilot Cities in guiding the replication efforts of Twin Cities.

The facilitator will:

- Enhance the knowledge transfer between Pilot and Twin Cities
- Organise the online meetings and workshops between Pilot and Twin Cities (excluding the kick-off of the programme and collective sensemaking workshops)



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- Provide templates supporting the Twinning Learning Programme such as replicability assessment template, replication plan template
- Function as your contact point for all matters

The facilitator will NOT:

- Act as a trainer and provide technical expertise to the Twin and Pilot Cities
- Write the replicability assessment and the replication plan
- Put together the agendas of the meetings between Twin and Pilot Cities

### **NetZeroCities Portal**

To maximise exchanges between Cities participating in the NetZeroCities programme, an online platform has been developed. A brief description is presented below. Pilot Cities and Twin Cities will use the NZC portal for working together and developing their Twinning Relationships. A portal discovery tour will take place this autumn to present the portal and its functionalities.

The NZC Portal (netzerocities.app) is the online home of the NetZeroCities Community, providing a secure space for the individuals and cities at the forefront of the climate neutral transformation of cities. Its primary purpose is to facilitate connection, exchange, collaboration, and mutual learning among the NZC Community. The defining feature of the portal is its ability to unite like-minded individuals who are committed to and actively advancing the collective goal of climate neutrality in cities. Consisting of different modules that meet the specific needs of each member of the NZC Community.

The portal serves as a central hub where they can access critical information, updates, and projectrelated data. One of the platform's key strengths is its ability to reinforce connections between cities. By providing a dedicated space for cities to interact, they can exchange best practices, discuss challenges, and work together toward common goals. City representatives can engage in real-time discussions, forums, and virtual meetings, transcending geographical barriers and promoting a sense of community and solidarity.

#### Who

The NZC Community is highly diverse. The main target audience consists of individuals directly leading the transition to climate neutrality in the Mission Cities, including municipal staff from over 100 cities across Europe, regardless of their size. The Portal provides a platform to coordinate their efforts, share experiences and learn from one another in a spirit of solidarity. Other community members include experts and specialists from the project's 30-strong consortium who offer expertise and support to the cities. Researchers, corporates, startups, NGOs, civil society organisation that are committed to the objectives and spirit of the NZC Project connect to the Portal to support cities achieve climate

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### How does it support climate neutrality in cities?

The NZC portal has several features that support learning, exchange and connection between cities as they progress towards climate neutrality: - Open social network: A space where community members share their stories, ask questions, and exchange valuable knowledge. - User directory and chat: Enables like-minded practitioners to connect and exchange knowledge. individuals similar challenges Cities can find who face or are in proximity. - Private groups: Allow for more in-depth and structured interactions on specific topics. Groups can be created to host online meetings, workshops and webinars, and to share resources. - Knowledge repository provides the community with the latest case studies, tools and guidance to help them their journey to climate neutrality. on - City profiles: Showcase how other cities are making progress towards their net zero targets and inspire other cities - Events and Calendar: Organizing and hosting events using the portal's embedded videoconferencing system. The calendar feature helps promote NetZero Events.



Portal?

does

### NET ZERO CITIES

#### How

work?

Anyone can join the NZC Community by registering to the Portal. Those affiliated with or working for Mission Cities can immediately connect with other cities.

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For those not connected to the NZC Project, joining the Community implies agreeing to actively support cities achieve climate neutrality in a spirit of not-for-profit collaboration.

### **Budget for site visits**

3 site visits are planned during the 20-month exchange programme. You will find below detailed information on the maximum amount of these expenses covered by the project and the reimbursement terms and conditions.

### Travel and subsistence budget for attending site visits

You can cover the reimbursement of travel, accommodation and subsistence expenses for the participants of NetZeroCities Twinning Learning Programme as actual costs, following the guidelines below:

- Travel: Most direct and economic route. If available, travel by train is strongly encouraged.
- Accommodation: Actual costs. The number of nights must not exceed the number of event days +1.
- Subsistence: Actual costs for local transport and meals.
- Max. amount covered: Actual costs up to 800 EUR.
- Supporting documents: The Expense Claim Form must be accompanied by supporting documentation: Flight/Train Bookings,
- Boarding Passes/Train Tickets, Hotel Invoice obtained after Check-out, and original receipts for local transport and meals.
- The Expense claim Form may be signed electronically.
- If (part of) the supporting documentation was issued on paper, rather than electronically,
- the Reimbursement Form and all original supporting documentation must be submitted via email to: meline.gonzalez-piloyan@eurocities.eu

Please find the reimbursement claim in Annex 1.



# Annex 1

# NZC reimbursement procedures

1. Before and during the visit, ask for and keep all your invoices, in particular:

- Ask for an invoice when booking an external meeting room or ordering catering.
- Local transports: Keep all your invoices and tickets.
- In case of electronic tickets where an invoice is not provided, please take a screenshot of the incurred payment.
- For hotels/accommodations: do keep your booking confirmation, the proof of payment, and ask the hotel/accommodation for an invoice after the check-out.

2. After the visit, fill in the expense claim form (in annex) with all your expenses. The maximum amount you claim should not overcome the reimbursed amount (€800).

- Fill one form per person if the expenses were incurred personally.
- Fill **one form** for the organisation if the organisation incurs your expenses directly, (specifying details of participants in the form).
- Expenses must be filled in **EUR**. If you used another currency, expenses should be converted into EUR by using <u>InforEuro</u> with the conversion rate of the month of the expense.
- The form needs to be printed, signed and scanned, OR signed electronically through a valid e-signature, by the person who will be reimbursed.

3. Attach all your invoices (including any tickets) to the form.

4. Send a signed **electronic copy** of the form + invoices and scans of original tickets by email to the Project Coordinator meline.gonzalez-piloyan@eurocities.eufor validation within 10 working days after the finalisation of the in-person meetings, for validation.

5. Once you have received validation, send the **original** expense claim form and paper invoices by postal mail to Meline Gonzalez Piloyan, Eurocities ASBL Square de Meeûs 1, 1000 Brussels. (For electronic payments, the invoices sent via e-mail are enough).

6. The payment will take place within 2 months after validation of the electronic version of the form.

