

EU Cities Gateway - North America (EUCG-NA) Program

Application Form for USA-Canadian Cities and Regions

Apply to join the European Union Cities Gateway (EUCG) Program for the
2025-2029 period

WHAT IS THE EUCG-NA PROGRAM?

The EU Cities Gateway – North America (EUCG-NA) is a European Union-funded program that fosters *city-to-city* and *region-to-region* cooperation between European, U.S., and Canadian cities and regions (including states and provinces), with a focus on urban and regional development, innovation, and partnership-building. The EUCG-NA enhances transatlantic collaboration by bringing local actors together to co-develop practical solutions to shared urban challenges and promote forward-looking urban transformation.

The EUCG-NA aims to connect European and North American cities and regions — and the networks within which they operate — to jointly tackle global challenges at the local and regional level, as part of the EU’s external action in key areas such as energy, climate, circular economy, and research and innovation. The EU Cities Gateway strives to deliver tangible outcomes through structured consultations, thematic networks, associated events, and support for pilot initiatives, using knowledge products such as workshops, podcasts, webinars, networking events, and study visits. Through these activities, the EU Cities Gateway fosters concrete impacts — for example, enabling cities to co-develop and test nature-based solutions, advance circular practices, strengthen local innovation ecosystems through partnerships between municipalities, academia, and businesses, implement pilot actions that reduce pollution or waste, and enhance the capacity and international profile of participating cities and regions. By promoting peer-driven, collaborative, and participatory exchanges, the EUCG-NA helps local and regional governments access innovative approaches and work together with research institutions, civil society, and private sector partners.

Capitalizing on the results and lessons learned from previous European Union-funded cooperation in North America—including the **International Urban and Regional Cooperation (IURC) program**, the **International Urban Cooperation (IUC) program**, the **Global Covenant of Mayors (GCoM)**, and the **International City Partnerships – Acting for a Green and Inclusive Recovery**—the EUCG-NA also collaborates closely with ongoing initiatives such as the **Transatlantic Sustainable Transition Initiative (TSTI)**, **Low Carbon Business Action (LCBA)**, **Arctic Urban and Regional Cooperation (AURC)**, and the **Regional Development Policy for Industrial Transition**. These past and present initiatives have created a broad and diverse network of partnerships, providing a strong foundation to build on, leverage, and consolidate EUCG-NA as a global reference point for urban and regional innovation.

The EUCG-NA is financed under the [EU Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument \(NDICI\)](#) and managed by the [Service for Foreign Policy Instruments \(FPI\)](#) in close collaboration with DG REGIO, and other relevant DGs. The program contributes to the objectives of the New Urban Agenda of the UN, the Agenda 2030 (SDGs), the Urban Agenda for the EU, in alignment with the strategic priorities set out in the EU Cohesion Policy, the European Green Deal, the European Green Industrial Deal, and the Paris Agreement."

WHAT ARE THE MAIN TOPICS OF COOPERATION?

EU Cities Gateway-NA will structure its cooperation around four specific thematic clusters, which will serve as the foundation of the program’s cooperation framework. These include:



- **Nature-based Solutions:** this thematic cluster supports cities and regions in addressing urban challenges through sustainable, green infrastructure and nature-based approaches. Its primary objective is to enhance urban resilience and foster adaptation by integrating natural systems into planning and development. Activities may include co-developing innovative nature-based infrastructure, applying ecosystem-based solutions to mitigate urban and regional risks, and supporting the energy transition through environmentally sensitive design. The cluster will also seek to engage First Nations communities in both Canada and the United States, recognizing the value of traditional knowledge, storytelling practices, and community-based approaches to sustainability. Their participation will enrich the exchange of ideas and promote inclusive, locally grounded solutions that respect cultural heritage and ecological integrity.



- **Circular Economy:** cities play a pivotal role in accelerating the shift from linear to circular models, positioning the circular economy as a key driver of urban development. This thematic cluster explores how circularity can be embedded across diverse areas of urban life—from innovative waste and resource management to green business models and local value chains. The circular economy is not only a framework for reducing environmental impact and energy consumption, but also a catalyst for urban innovation and inclusive economic growth. This cluster may also incorporate the development of resilient food systems, aligning with growing urban commitments to food justice, health equity, and access to locally produced, nutritious food.



- **Digitalization and Urban Innovation:** as cities grow more connected, and complex, digitalization and innovation are becoming essential tools for improving urban governance, service delivery, and citizen engagement. This thematic cluster focuses on supporting cities in adopting smart, data-driven solutions that enhance quality of life, increase efficiency, and strengthen resilience. Core areas of focus include ethical and inclusive use of artificial intelligence, data governance, digital inclusion, and the deployment of smart infrastructure. The thematic cluster also promotes cross-cutting objectives such as equity, transparency, and performance measurement, enabling cities to harness digital tools not only for efficiency but also for inclusive, citizen-centered innovation ecosystems.



- **Affordable/Attainable Housing and Innovative Living Spaces:** this thematic cluster supports cities and regions in improving livability, social inclusion, and access to safe, secure, and affordable housing. It addresses the urgent need for stable residency and innovative housing solutions across diverse urban contexts in the EU, the United States, and Canada. Recognizing that housing is a foundation for quality of life, the thematic cluster promotes integrated approaches that combine affordability, sustainability, and design innovation. Beyond bricks and mortar, the cluster also explores the social and spatial dimensions of housing. By connecting housing with broader goals of equity, resilience, and cohesion, this thematic cluster fosters urban environments that are not only functional but inclusive and just.

WHAT IS THE GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE?

The EUCG-NA's activities will be implemented with cities and regions in the Member States of the European Union, the United States and Canada.

HOW DOES THE PROGRAMME WORK?

The EUCG-NA facilitates knowledge exchange between cities and regions through a combination of *online tools*—such as webinars, thematic network-based online working groups, podcasts, masterclasses, and digital learning—and *onsite activities*, including study visits, networking events, thematic cooperation meetings, and peer-to-peer exchanges of best practices.

Cooperation is organized within a **thematic cluster framework**, which serves as the main entry point to the EU Cities Gateway-NA. These clusters define the areas of collaboration in which city and regional participants engage through a mix of online and in-person activities. While many events are delivered jointly to all participants within a given thematic cluster, cities and regions also collaborate in smaller working groups of two to four participants. These groups co-design pilot projects based on shared challenges and work together to develop innovative solutions — culminating in the creation and potential implementation of a joint **Action Plan**.

The EUCG-NA will operate over a 36-month period, starting in September 2025 and continuing through September 2028. While cooperation is driven by the participating cities and regions, it will be supported by an expert team and a tailored mix of digital and in-person activities.

Some of the planned activities include:

- **Participation in thematic clusters and networking activities:** approximately 32 cities and regions from the EU, Canada, and the USA will be selected to participate in online and onsite thematic clustering, networking, and working group discussions, events, and activities in the project's core areas.
- **Funded cooperation and study visits:** Participating cities and regions will have the opportunity to join international thematic events in 2026, 2027, and 2028 (one delegate per city/region). Additionally, up to two delegates are expected to attend a thematic network/cluster launch event scheduled for late 2025 or early 2026 (one event per thematic network). The EUCG-NA will cover costs including round-trip economy class flights, visa fees, arrival and departure transfers (where required), accommodation, and meals.
- **Targeted cooperation around pilot projects:** Participating cities will engage in active, guided peer cooperation focused on co-developing and implementing a pilot project.

Each city will:

- ✓ Participate in at least one funded study tour/visit (depending on working group size)
 - ✓ Host one reciprocal visit with their working group counterparts → Send up to **three delegates** on a five-day study visit to a city in the EU, Canada, or the USA
 - ✓ Receive a reciprocal visit from their international counterparts
 - ✓ Benefit from expert support during an advanced cooperation visit aimed at implementing a concrete pilot project
- **Additional EUCG-NA events:** other online and onsite events will be developed and implemented throughout the 2025–2028 project period.
 - **Thematic and best practice publications:** the project will produce reports highlighting participant cities' work, pilot initiatives, and key findings.
 - **Access to the EUCG-NA [knowledge library](#):** participants will have access to a wide range of global resources. In addition, a dedicated thematic manager will support each city in developing and implementing its Action Plan.

WHO CAN APPLY?

- ✓ **Cities, metropolitan areas or regions of EU Member States** with more than 100,000 inhabitants are eligible to apply.
- ✓ **Canadian and USA cities, metropolitan areas or regions** with more than 100,000 inhabitants are eligible to apply.
- ✓ **Northern/Arctic Regions** can apply without meeting the city size eligibility criteria. If this applies to your city/region, please mark in Section 1.4 below.

A virtual EU Cities Gateway – North America Network will include past participant cities & regions of EU urban/regional cooperation programs, including IUC (2017-2020), IURC I, II, or III, Global Covenant of Mayors (GCoM) participating cities in Canada or the United States and those who apply to the current EUCG-NA call and although not selected have obtained a high evaluation on their application. These cities and regions will have virtual spaces to showcase their best practices and keep active in the EUCG-NA program and can participate in a range of on-line/on-site programs and activities.

APPLICATION DEADLINE FOR CITIES: 31 August 2025

For more information check the EUCG-NA FAQ or contact the Project Team Leader, Colin Maddock at cmaddock@eucg.iurc.eu

Part A – City Profile

1. City Name:
2. State/Region/Province:
3. Please choose your country:
 - Canada**
 - United States of America**
4. What are you applying as?
 - City**
 - Metropolitan area** If yes, please describe the amalgamated area or how your metropolitan area is organized, especially related to your proposed area of cooperation.
 - Region/Province or State**
 - Northern/Arctic Regions can apply without meeting the city size eligibility criteria**
5. Total population (approx.):
6. Total area (km²):

7. Please briefly describe the general socio-economic context of your city/region and prominent urban/regional development challenges, that are relevant to your participation in the EUCG-NA.

Part B – Contact Details & Authorization

8. First Name, Last Name:
9. What is your function/job title:
10. In which division or department do you work?
11. Email address:
12. Telephone number:
13. Who is likely to be your city/area main contact and coordinator for the EUCG-NA program and what is their role within the city/area?
14. I confirm that my city/area has a strong commitment to international cooperation at the level of the governance leadership and further confirm that I am officially authorized by the city to submit this application. I also confirm that the team allocated will be fluent in English Yes/No.
15. Please share the name, title and department of the person who has authorized this application

Part C – Motivation, Commitment & Capacity

16. Why are you interested in participating in the EUCG-NA program?
17. Please briefly describe international cooperation experiences and /or projects which your city is currently or has been involved in that would be relevant to your participation in the EUCG-NA.
18. *Only for former IURC/ECP-AGIR, World Cities, and GCoM participants:* Please mention the countries/cities/ thematic clusters you were involved /paired with in the previous EU funded programs.
19. *Only for former IURC/ECP-AGIR, World Cities, and GCoM participants* Please provide an update on your status regarding the previous project or involvement. Are there any ongoing activities with your counterparts? Have you achieved any concrete outcomes after the end of the previous phase?
20. Please outline the resources that your city/region can commit to the EUCG-NA program (e.g. financial resources for ad hoc costs associated with hosting the study visit, self-financing of extra delegates to join potential missions, small scale actions...).
21. What experience and expertise related to sustainable urban development does your city/region **wish to share** with other cities and showcase at an international level?
22. *Additional Information: Only for former EU financed urban program participants:* Is this experience or expertise a continuation of your previous participation in an EU funded initiative?

23. What does your city/region **expect to achieve** from cooperation with other cities/regions within the EUCG-NA program? What are the expected outcomes from your side? Please be as concrete as possible.

24. Do you have any preference of a city or region with whom you would like to cooperate, within the eligible EU Member States, Canada or the United States.

Please consider questions 21 & 23 as essential to assign you to the concrete thematic clusters

Part D Past or Current Involvement in EU/International/National Initiatives/Programs relevant to your proposed area of cooperation

Are you involved or running an ongoing project or have been involved in a project financed or co-financed by the EU or other international/national fund/program?

Please describe your project and or experience next to the relevant fund/program in the table.

Program/Initiative	Briefly describe projects and/or experience
⇒ International Urban and Regional Cooperation (IURC-NA) or International Urban Cooperation (IUC-NA) or World Cities	
⇒ International City Partnership – Acting for a Green and Inclusive Recovery (ICP-AGIR)	
⇒ Low Carbon Business Action (LCBA)	
⇒ The Arctic Urban-Regional Cooperation (AURC)	
⇒ Regional Development Policy for Industrial Transition initiative	
⇒ Urban Agenda for the EU Partnership	
⇒ Covenant of Mayors/GCoM	
⇒ URBACT	
⇒ EUI - European Urban Initiative (Innovative Actions)	
⇒ INTERREG	
⇒ INTPA-funded initiatives	
⇒ Horizon 2020 (other)	
⇒ 5 EU Missions	
⇒ Any other International Networks	
⇒ Other National Networks	

Part E – Preferred Thematic Areas of Cooperation

25. Thematic Network Clusters are the entry points to the EUCG-NA cooperation framework 2025-2028.

The EU Cities Gateway will allow you to apply for one thematic cluster, in addition, you may select an alternate thematic cluster.

Please drag the thematic clusters to your preferred order, placing your preferred cluster at the top and your alternate cluster below it.

- Nature-based Solutions:** Green Infrastructure, energy transition, disaster risk reduction, sustainable food and agricultural systems, climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Circular Economy:** Waste and recycling; water management; waste management; construction & built environment, GIS/BIM Smart City (buildings).
- Digitalization and Urban Innovation:** Smart mobility, digital infrastructure, citizen engagement, sustainable urban planning, use of data analytics and AI for urban management.
- Affordable and Attainable Housing and Innovative Living Spaces:** Innovative affordable/attainable housing models, inclusive and participatory community housing design, economic accessibility/financial innovation for attainable housing, habitability, shared living spaces, sustainable building materials and energy efficient design.

The EUCG-NA will focus on multi-country thematic cooperation (within the aforementioned four *Thematic Clusters*), and you will have cities or regions from 1 to 3 other countries.

26. Please add any other supporting information, specific information on your area of cooperation or comments in the text box below:

Part F – Relevant Sustainable Urban / Regional Development policies / Multilevel governance / Stakeholder Engagement

27. Does your city/region have a Sustainable Urban/Regional Development Strategy or similar Strategy/Plan in which the experiences you want to exchange are aligned? **yes/no**

If yes, please give a brief description

If no, please tell us if you have a similar integrated strategic plan which covers the whole city/region.

28. Is your city/region able to involve other levels of governments in your region/country regarding your preferred themes (refer to Part E)? **yes/no** Briefly explain.

29. The EUCG-NA attempts to engage a wide range of stakeholders, including post-secondary institutions, business community or civil-society. Is your city able to involve stakeholders: business, academia or civil society depending on the relevance for your preferred themes? **yes/no**.

If **yes**, please give concrete example(s) of how your city's experience of multi-stakeholder engagement in projects/programs is relevant to the EUCG-NA.

30. Please include any **other relevant information** or comments that you consider useful for the application.

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