
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON LIVING SPACES PEER-LEARNING VISITS

Q1 What is the Living Spaces project?

Living Spaces is a peer-learning programme designed for local and regional authorities to learn how to plan and implement high-quality architectural policies and projects.

From July 2023 to November 2024, the programme facilitates exchanges among the European Union's cities, regions, Member States and relevant stakeholders on processes and good practices.

Funded by the Creative Europe programme of the European Union, Living Spaces is implemented by Eurocities and the Architects' Council of Europe.

To find out more please visit the Living Spaces website: <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/cultural-and-creative-sectors/architecture/living-spaces>

Q2 I want to participate in a peer learning visit. Is the country I live part of the programme?

The geographical scope of this peer learning programme is limited to EU Member States. Applicants legally residing in one of the European Member states are eligible to take part in the peer-learning visits of Living Spaces.

For any specific cases, please contact Living Spaces at clementine.daubeuf@eurocities.eu

Q3 I live in a European Member state, but I do not have the nationality of this country. Can I apply?

Yes. If you are legally residing in a European Member state, you are eligible to apply. In this case you will need to provide proof of residency.

For any specific cases, please contact Living Spaces at clementine.daubeuf@eurocities.eu

Q4 I don't live in an EU country. Can I still participate?

No, the geographical scope of this peer-learning programme is limited to EU Member States, hence only for residents of EU Member states.

Q5 Can we apply as a collective / a group?

No. Each participant must apply on their own. Maximum two participants from the same city can apply for the same visit.

Q6 How many calls for participants will be launched?

There will be two calls for participants.

The first call for participants will be open from 18 December 2023 until 18 January 2024.
The second call for participants will be open in April 2024.

Q7 I missed the first call for participants, can I participate in the second?

Yes. Participants can apply to either call. Please note that each participant can only participate in one peer learning visit.

The first call for participants will be open from 18 December 2023 until 18 January 2024.
The second call for participants will be open in April 2024.

Q8 Which peer-learning visits does the 1st call for participants cover?

The 1st Call for Participants covers the following visits:

1. Berlin, Germany: 11-13 March
2. Caceres, Spain: 20-22 March
3. Toulouse, France: 10-12 April
4. Prague, Czech Republic: 24-26 April
5. Vienna, Austria: 15-17 May
6. Grand Paris Sud, France: 5-7 June
7. Brussels, Belgium: 17-19 June
8. Bordeaux, France: 3-5 July tbc

Q9 Which peer-learning visits does the 2nd call for participants cover?

The 2nd Call for Participants covers the following visits:

9. Oulu, Finland: 11-13 September
10. Vilnius, Lithuania: 18-20 September
11. Malmo, Sweden: 9-11 October
12. Gdansk, Poland: 23-25 October

Q10 Is there any age limit to apply?

The peer-learning visits are open to individuals of a minimum of 18 years old.

Q11 What is the working language of the peer-learning visits?

The working language during the visit will be English. Participants to the visit must be able to put forward questions to the hosts, engage in conversations with other participants, and take part in workshops in English without linguistic assistance. If you need specific assistance such as sign language, please contact Living Spaces at clementine.daubeuf@eurocities.eu

Q12 What is the format of the peer-learning visits?

The visits will combine meetings with local stakeholders, site visits and workshops. Half of the time will be dedicated to introduction to the host city, of the visiting cities/regions presentations and on-site visits. The other half will be dedicated to meetings and collaborative workshops designed to stimulate interaction, collaborative learning and solution-building.

Q13 How long will a peer-learning visit last?

Each peer-learning visit will last 3 days and 2 nights. The peer-learning visit will typically begin in the afternoon of the first day (e.g. Wednesday) and end in the early afternoon of the third day (e.g. Friday).

Q14 What costs are covered for the participants?

The Living Spaces project will cover the travel to the host city, accommodation of 2 nights and meals for each participant that attends one peer-learning visit in the framework of the project.

The Living Spaces project will cover travel and accommodation costs (including breakfast) for participants from local and regional administrations in EU Member states and individual participants, as well as 2 lunches, 2 dinners and coffee breaks during the days of the visit. If you are selected, you will be contacted by our event's team to coordinate your travel and accommodation.

Q15 Are there any costs that my city/region/employer/myself will have to cover?

Any costs that are not covered by Living Spaces. That means any costs apart from your travel expenses, accommodation costs for 2 nights and meals for the 3 days of the peer-learning visit.

Some indicative costs that are not cover by the Living Spaces project:

- Extra luggage
- Parking (at the airport, train station or other)
- Changes in names, places of departure, time of departure
- Travel agency fees
- Additional travel costs due to private stay
- Accommodation or travel for extra guests (partners, observers, European Commission officers)
- Internet or phone costs
- Mini bar
- Additional accommodation costs due to private stay
- Meals outside the ones provided during the peer-learning visit.
- Alcoholic beverages apart the ones that may be provided during the peer-learning visits

meals.

- Unjustified taxi fares

Q16 Who will make the bookings for the accommodation and travel?

Accommodation costs, including breakfast, will be covered for 2 nights that are compatible with the visit times. The Living Spaces project is responsible for handling the group booking. The participant will be entitled to a reimbursement of their travel expenses between their usual residential or working address and the host [city/organisation]. The maximum amount that can be reimbursed for traveling based on the original and final destination can be found here:

https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/procedures-guidelines-tenders/information-contractors-and-beneficiaries/calculate-unit-costs-eligible-travel-costs_en

If the booking exceeds the foreseen budget and the difference cannot be covered by the participant's organisation, or if the outbound and inbound are not in the same city or in the dates foreseen by the peer-learning visit programme, participants must contact the project team as soon as possible so they can go through the different options together.

Participants will send their travel plan confirmation to the consortium team, minimum one month prior to the visit. Travel plans should indicate the price of the booking and include a cancellation option. Travel by train is strongly encouraged.

Q17 How does the reimbursement work?

Reimbursement will be based on Unit Travel Costs determined by the European Commission Decision C(2021)35. The unit cost to be paid will depend on the distance between the place of departure and the place of arrival. The rail and flight calculator: https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/procedures-guidelines-tenders/information-contractors-and-beneficiaries/calculate-unit-costs-eligible-travel-costs_en will be used to calculate the unit cost.

Before and during the visit, ask for and keep all proof of expenses paid, in particular:

- Train, flight bookings and invoices
- Your flight boarding passes (for electronic boarding passes, save them or make a print screen) and/or train tickets

After the visit, fill in the peer-learning feedback form (Annex 3) and expense claim form (Annex 4) with your place of departure and place of arrival. have to present your personal expenses to your region/city first, the region/city will reimburse you according to its ordinary procedure and will later have to claim cost to Living Spaces using the expenses claim form provided (Annex 4).

- Attach all your scanned versions of your invoices (including boarding passes and all proofs of expenses paid) to the form. Do not forget to indicate your IBAN and BIC/Swift code and to sign your expense claim form.

- Send an electronic copy of the form + invoices + receipts by email to: clementine.daubeuf@eurocities.eu for validation (within the 10-15 days after the peer-learning visit) together with your report.

The payment will take place in a maximum of 4 weeks after validation of the electronic version of the form and upon receipt of the original documents.

Q18 I am not working for a local, regional, or national administration, can I still apply?

Yes, a maximum of 4 individual participants representing urban planners and architects, civil society organisations, NGOs, initiatives/projects, thematic associations, or other relevant stakeholders with thoroughly demonstrated interest and expertise in (at least) one of the topics and coming from countries other than the country of a given hosting city/region.

Q19 I work for a national administration/ministry can I apply?

Yes, you can apply but if selected you will need to participate in the peer-learning visit at cost of your ministry/administration (travel, accommodation,). Living Spaces does not cover the travel and accommodation expenses for representatives of national administrations. Maximum 5 places will be allocated to representatives of national administrations for each peer-learning visit. The allocation of these places will be based on a presentation of specific learning needs and decided on an ad-hoc basis.

Q20 Can I participate in a peer-learning visit with my own cost/budget?

No, we limit the number of participants to peer-learning visits to ensure the best learning and networking experience among the group. Only participants selected as part of this application procedure can take part in the visit.

Q21 I am a student, can I apply to the peer-learning visits?

No, the Living Spaces peer-learning visits are reserved to active professionals.

Q22 What is the selection process?

The selection will consider the following criteria:

- Quality and clarity of the application
- Match between the topic(s) of the visit and the learning needs from the applicants
- Relevance of the profile of the participants for the visit: we want to involve specialists to maximise future impacts in the cities/regions shaping the built environment
- Potential contribution from the participants during the visit, based on their professional experience and on their local challenges
- Geographical and demographic spread among participants of the 12 peer-learning visits
- Gender balance between the participants of each peer-learning visit
- Diversity of professional backgrounds and experience
- Availability and time commitment to the peer-learning visit for its entire duration
- Language skills: B2 at English recommended

Q23 What is expected from a participant?

Before the visit:

Participants will liaise with the Living Spaces consortium to plan their trip to the host city/region. They will share arrival and departure dates and times.

All working documents (“participants pack” including agenda, maps and directions, background paper, participants’ list, information on experts and reimbursement guidelines) will be sent to participants prior to the visit. Participants should acquaint themselves with all the materials before the visit.

During the visit:

Participants will be introduced to the host city/region local context and the successful practices related to architecture and the built environment. Participants will get useful information and ideas for improving their existing local projects, initiating new ones, or transferring some key elements of the presented practices. Our peer-learning methodology is designed to stimulate interaction, collaborative learning and solution-building. Participants are expected to actively participate in the activities and to ask a lot of questions!

Follow-up and post-visit evaluation:

After the peer-learning visit, hosts and participants are requested to report on the success of the visit, the level of participation and the main learning points (“take-aways”) in their feedback form. The template is provided in Annex 3.

Reimbursement of costs will only be agreed upon once the feedback form have been sent by participants. Participants are expected to submit all their reimbursement requests as foreseen in the “REIMBURSEMENT PROCEDURE”, of this document.

Q24 Where can I apply?

You can apply by submitting your application here by 18 January:
<https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/Living-Spaces-peer-learning-visits1>

Q25 When will I know if I have been selected for a peer-learning visit?

Selected participants will be informed of the results by the Living Spaces consortium no longer than 45 days prior to the peer-learning visit.

Q26 Can I participate in more than one peer-learning visit?

No, each participant can participate only to one visit.

Q27 What happens if I have to cancel?

In case of cancelation, participants should inform the Living Spaces consortium at least two weeks in advance. Otherwise, the participants will have to bear the costs. If the person that booked to participate in the visit cannot take part in it anymore, then another colleague from their team can take their place. In this case the participant/administration will have

to bear all the extra costs from this change.

Q28 Can a colleague from the same city/region attend another peer-learning visit?

Yes, another person from the same city/regional administration can attend another peer-learning visit.

Q29 How many participants from the same city/region can attend each peer-learning visit?

Maximum two participants from the same city/region can attend the same peer-learning visit.

Q30 Until when can I apply to participate in a peer-learning visit?

The first call for participants will be open from 18 December 2023 until 18 January 2024.

The second call for participants will be open in April 2024.

Q31 Can I choose the peer-learning visit that I would like to participate in?

In the application form, applicants can indicate two choices in order of preference. However, Living Spaces cannot guarantee that those preferences will be satisfied. Living Spaces will reach out to selected participants and inform them of their allocated peer-learning visit. Participants will then have the opportunity to accept or decline their participation.

Q32 How did hosts cities or region got selected?

All 12 hosts are part of the Living Spaces Catalogue of good practices on high quality architecture and the build environment. The host cities/regions got selected through a call for hosts.

You can find the Living Spaces Catalogue here: <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/cultural-and-creative-sectors/architecture/living-spaces/catalogue>

Q33 I didn't get selected in the first call of participants, can I apply in the second call?

Yes, you are welcome to apply in the second call for participants for the Living Spaces peer-learning visits.

Q34 There was a technical bug when I sent my application, I am not

sure if it was successfully submitted. Did you receive it?

If your application is successfully submitted the following message will appear on your screen after you have pressed the 'submit' button on the EU survey platform:

✓ Application successfully submitted

Thank you for your application! Please note that you will not receive a confirmation email. We will contact you at least 45 calendar days prior to the peer-learning visit you applied for, should be selected or not.

If you did not see any message of submission, it means that your application was not successfully submitted. For technical support you can use the EU survey help button.

Q35 What does 'force majeure, or grave personal circumstances' mean?

It means that due to exceptional circumstances you cannot participate in the peer-learning visit, as initially planned.

These exceptional circumstances can be any of the following:

- renewed national restrictions on freedom of movement related to COVID-19 or another health crisis (or in case of infection)
- war/major political crisis
- natural disaster
- unexpected family obligations (pregnancy, death, major illness)

Q36 Will peer-learning visits take place in person?

Yes. Peer-learning visits will take place exclusively in person.

Q37 Can I participate online in a peer-learning visit?

No. Peer-learning visits will take place only in person.

Q38 Can a person with disabilities apply to participate in a peer-learning visit?

Yes. The Living Spaces peer-learning visits are open and accessible/welcome to all people no matter their abilities. Please specify your accessibility needs in the application form.

Any more questions? Please contact the Living Spaces consortium at clementine.daubeuf@eurocities.eu and ermioni.chatzimichail@eurocities.eu