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# URBACT Call for Good Practices

## Open from 15 April to 30 June 2024

Fields marked with \* are mandatory.

Please fill in this questionnaire in English to submit your Good Practice in the framework of the URBACT Call for Good Practices.

### 1 Information about your city

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\* 1.1 Name of your city

City of Leskovac

\* 1.2 Population

124889 inhabitants

\* 1.3 Country

Serbia

### 1.5 Contact details of the person in charge of the Good Practice

	First/last name	Job title	Email	Phone number	Organisation
1 *	Saša Mladenović	Head of the department for social activities and economic development	sasa.mladenovic@leskovac.ls.gov.rs	+381648974099	City of Leskovac

### 1.6 Contact details of the person authorising the submission of this practice

	First/last name	Job title	Email	Organisation
1 *	Tatjana Zdravković	Executive director of Urban planning sector	tatjana.zdravkovic@uileskovac.rs	PC "Urbanism and construction"

1.7 Other contact details you think are necessary to share

	First/last name	Job title	Email	Phone number	Organisation
1	Maja Kocić	project management consultant	maja.kocic@leskovac.ls.gov.rs	+381641639806	City of Leskovac
2					
3					

\* 1.8 Interested in transferring your practice to other European cities as a Lead Partner of an URBACT Transfer Network (2025-2027)?

- Yes  
 Not sure yet  
 No

## 2 Good practice summary

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\* 2.1 Title of the practice

*This text will be used for public communication if the practice is selected*

100 character(s) maximum

Sustainable and integrated territorial development strategy – new and innovative public policy

\* 2.2 One-line presentation: please present your good practice in a sentence

*This text will be used for public communication if the practice is selected*

200 character(s) maximum

Collaborative creation of SUD strategy for releasing urban potentials (“LE-SUD”)

\* 2.3 Practice pitch: please present the essence of your good practice

*This text will be used for public communication if the practice is selected*

800 character(s) maximum

With technical support of the EU PRO Plus program, in 2022-2023 Leskovac developed for the first time a Sustainable Urban Development (SUD) according to European principles. It used the best practices collected in the JRC handbooks and support from local and international experts, to design an innovative strategy that integrates priority investments, thematic goals and different sources of funding, and is directed to the economic, ecological, climatic, social and demographic challenges. The strategy contains chapters on the approach; description of the territory and context; swot analysis and needs; vision, thematic and specific goals and measures; priority areas of intervention and strategic projects; financial resources; monitoring and evaluation; and implementation.

\* 2.4 Detailed presentation of the good practice: please present your good practice in details, any link with a city’s strategic document, important milestones, activities and outputs, results and needs addressed, and possible axes for improvement.

1500 character(s) maximum

The development of territorial strategy is part of the implementation of the Sustainable Urban Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia until 2030 (Official Gazette of the RS No. 47/2019). The post-socialist context is characterized by the dominant involvement of the public and the weaker participation of the civil sector in public policy development. A more active involvement of the private sector and academia was strengthened in order to encourage innovation and more extensive citizen participation and transparency as crucial for the public trust. The process of creating a strategy delivered on these points and important milestones include:

- political decision and development of the council for strategy and a working group;
- thematic round tables with different stakeholders;
- public forum with citizens;
- priority areas of intervention definition;
- framework for monitoring and evaluation; and
- project coordination unit establishment.

The territorial focus of the strategy is defined in the context of solving key problems and possible interventions that would use the potential and encourage development. The priority areas of intervention comprise: smart specialization zones; urban renewal areas - public spaces, brownfields, industrial and socialist architectural heritage; regeneration of deprived neighborhoods; new green infrastructure and urban mobility.

2.6 Timeline of the practice

	Start date	Finish date (if still ongoing please indicate ongoing)
1 *	28.06.2022.	18.04.2024.

\* 2.7 **Budget of the practice:** please indicate only budget for functional costs related to the practice. Instead of mentioning the staff costs, please mention number of staff needed for the successful implementation of the practice.

30 members of the interdisciplinary working group, 15 members of the City Development Council and 18 members of the national and international expert support within 15 months period

\* 2.8 **Name of organisation in charge of the practice** (in English and in national language)

City of Leskovac; Grad Leskovac

\* 2.9 **Type of organisation in charge of the practice:**

- City administration
- Local agency (public or semi-public) set up by the city
- Metropolitan authority or organised agglomeration

2.10 **Pictures of your practice:** please upload one or two pictures illustrating the good practice (for the URBACT website/promotional activities in case your practice is selected) Max 1MB per file

[38af1311-227a-4f99-a9fd-dc0487968bae/photo\\_1\\_public\\_forum.jpg](#)

[5c9984f3-f22a-433b-92f8-a0886c016419/photo\\_2\\_workshop.jpg](#)

2.11 **Supporting documents:** please upload any supporting documents/materials that give further information about the practice (optional)

[8aba4e27-7223-481f-bc7f-72ddd02f319b/SM1\\_Leskovac\\_Priority\\_areas\\_of\\_intervention.jpg](#)

[5ed8d1f6-2ac8-458a-9ab9-dfbb682994ad/SM2.docx](#)

[d7c6843b-3f76-4be9-8922-e550b86a56de/SM3.pdf](#)

### 3 Relevance at European level

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\* 3.2 **Was/is the Good Practice (co)funded by:**

European Regional Development Fund  
European Social Fund  
Cohesion Fund  
Just Transition Fund  
Recovery and Resilience Facility  
A Cohesion policy Interreg programme (URBACT, Interreg Europe, Interreg crossborder, etc)  
European Urban Initiative (including Urban Innovative Actions)  
Horizon 2020  
Horizon Europe  
Life programme  
Other EU-funded projects or programmes  
A Cohesion policy programme (regional or national)  
Local resources  
None of the above



- \* 3.3 **Why do you think this practice is relevant for other European cities?** Also please specify if the practice contributes to Sustainable Development Goals, Urban Agenda for the EU, EU Territorial Agenda, etc.

*1000 character(s) maximum*

This is perhaps the first time that all lessons on SUD, brought together in JRC handbooks, is applied in a city. The goals and measures defined by the strategy contribute to improving the conditions for urban development in accordance with above-mentioned goals and agendas.

The strategy was developed with local and international expertise, using: i) multi-level governance; ii) a multi-stakeholder approach; iii) a participatory approach; iv) blending of different funding and financing sources, and c) strengthening transparency in decision-making. The strategy defines: i) the vision; ii) priority areas of intervention through generators of development, protection and development zones, urban regeneration areas, development networks (SM1 Priority areas of intervention); iii) framework for strategic projects; iv) funding and financing; c) framework indicators for monitoring and evaluating the progress of strategy implementation.

## 4 Fit with principles of integrated and participatory urban development

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- \* 4.1 **How does the practice use an integrated approach to tackling urban challenges** (tackling at least environmental, economic, social dimensions at the same time)?

*1500 character(s) maximum*

In the strategy development a multi-sector approach was applied, while supporting proposed solutions, which are place-based and integrated, thus enabling interconnected and cross-sectoral responses to urban challenges, protection and improvement of urban development. The cross-sectoral approach aims to overcome "silo structures", i.e. the traditional division of functions according to sectors or policy areas. The strategy is organized within five goals, which represent different thematic areas - 1) urban identity, 2) energy transition, green and blue investments, climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk management and sustainable urban mobility, 3) innovative and smart economic transformation; 4) social well-being, and 5) urban governance – and therefore requires cross-sectoral integration.

The strategy promotes the blending of different sources of funding and financing of urban development. In addition to local budget, the possibilities of using funds from the following sources are particularly noteworthy: Programs and incentives of ministries and agencies and loans from commercial banks. In the following period, attention is focused on the possibility of mobilizing international funds and programs: Instrument for pre-accession aid IPA, Cross-border and transnational cooperation, Multi-user IPA; EU programs; Cohesion policy and other EU funds; International financial instruments; Bilateral and multilateral cooperation, and donor programs.

- \* 4.2 **What evidence is there of a participatory approach in project development and implementation? Which stakeholders are involved and how do they work together?**

*1500 character(s) maximum*

The process encourages participation of local actors and promotes a change in planning culture towards inclusive, collaborative practices. This was achieved by applying a participatory approach through public dialogue and inter- and transdisciplinary cooperation of a wide range of actors - from different levels of administration, non-profit organizations, private companies, social groups, and academia. The collaborative process is characterized by diversity (represented institutions/participants, levels of administration, policies, disciplines, etc.), and interaction using methods of consultation and active participation.

The participatory process took place through thematic round tables and 4 workshops with members of working groups, in the following steps: swot analysis and needs assessment; creation of vision, goals and measures; analysis of sources of funding and financing; defining priority areas of intervention and strategic projects; monitoring, evaluation, implementation of the strategy and definition of governance structures (SM2 Steps in the strategy development process). In addition, a three-stage participation of citizens was carried out through: i) survey in the phase of problem and needs analysis; ii) citizens' forum in the phase of formulating the vision, goals and measures, and iii) public hearing of the draft strategy. Students of two primary schools presented their needs and vision through an art competition, with the theme: "My city in the future".

**\* 4.3 Does the practice address gender equality? Does the practice involve digital technologies?**

**Does the practice address green transition? If so, how?**

*1000 character(s) maximum*

The gender perspective is supported by a participatory approach as a form of representation of various interests within the local community, which concern daily work, economic habits, social and cultural practices and access to public services. 53% of women and 47% of men participated in the process.

Digital technologies and the green transition permeate through two thematic objectives (TO) and related specific objectives (SO). TO2 contains specific objectives on: greenhouse gas emissions, renewable energy, smart energy systems, climate resilience, nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, and smart, safe, sustainable intermodal networks. TO3 contains specific objectives, which relate to: advanced technologies, digitization, smart 4S specialization and digital connectivity (SM3 Thematic and specific objectives).

The application of digital technologies was also achieved in the process - the website of the strategy was created (see 5.2).

## 5 Impact at local level

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**\* 5.1 What impact has the practice made at local level?** Please provide details about the impact, added value (what needs/problems the practice addressed), results achieved, number or percentage of people having benefitted from the practice, evidence about the situation before the practice and after the practice implementation.

*1500 character(s) maximum*

The impacts are seen through the transformations made possible by the participatory approach: i) change of existing relationships and formation of new ones through formation of the Working Group, the Council for Development and the Project Coordination Unit (PCU); ii) recognition of new priorities that derive through interaction, such as priority areas of intervention; and iii) change of existing perceptions and values, as well as connecting planning with financing and implementation.

The City applied to a public call for financing within the EU PRO plus program. The projects "PRO WASTE INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS" and "Pre-study of recultivation of the closed solid waste landfill" were approved. For the first time, the city participated and managed to form networks on public calls: "URBACT call for Innovation Transfer Networks" and "Restricted call Q&A and networking" (Interreg Europe).

The positioning of governance as a separate thematic goal can be seen as an added value. It comprises supporting of multi-level governance, a multi-stakeholder approach and participatory approach, blending of funding, and transparency.

The Strategy was adopted by the city assembly, and the formation of the PCU is in progress.

Within the territory about 124,889 inhabitants live. With the adoption of the strategy, an innovative approach to the planning and implementation of sustainable and integrated urban development was accepted for the first time.

**\* 5.2 How is the practice documented?** Please consider uploading or sending links of relevant outputs /studies/reports. If no independent evaluation has taken place please explain how the practice was monitored.

*500 character(s) maximum*

Information is available on the website: <https://novi.gradleskovac.org/izrada-strategije-razvoja-urbanog-podrucja-gradaleskovaca/>

Data relate to:

- Resolution on the strategy development
- Decision on the Strategy Council and Working Group
- Citizen survey
- Public forum
- Email address: [sudleskovac@gradleskovac.org](mailto:sudleskovac@gradleskovac.org)
- Draft Strategy
- Call for public hearing
- Form for submitting objections
- Report on the public hearing.

5.3 Please upload any evaluations, reports or studies about the practice (optional)

## 6 Transferability

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**\* 6.1 Is the practice linked to any specific national governance/legislative context?** Please explain if /how this impacts on the potential of transfer to other cities

*500 character(s) maximum*

Applied methodology and broad participation are not legal obligation, although the strategy development is foreseen in the Law on Planning System. Relying on EU and national policies, the strategy pushed for synergy of integrated urban development and smart specialization. The process is transferable to other cities. Its' realization, together with 11 other cities (EU PRO Plus program), is part of the creation of a national model for Integrated and Sustainable Territorial Development.

**\* 6.2 Is there scope to amend the practice to suit other city contexts?**

*500 character(s) maximum*

JRC manuals (Handbook of Sustainable Urban Development Strategies, 2020 Handbook of Territorial and Local Development Strategies, 2022) and technical support given by international and national experts are the basis for the applied approach to strategy development. They guided the process while adapting to the local institutional setting and capacity development. The adaptable and participatory approach can be modified and contextualized to other urban contexts.

**\* 6.3 What do you think it is needed for the practice to be transferred to other cities?**

*500 character(s) maximum*

Collaborative governance initiatives encounter resistance, and it takes time to bring about changes. External incentives and peer to peer exchange give such governance initiatives a tailwind. These can be platforms, networks and the like, which support innovation and open expression of the problems and successes they face in practice.

**\* 6.4 Have you already transferred your practice in a way or another? If so where and how?**

*500 character(s) maximum*

The experiences of creating the Strategy have not been transferred, but they were presented:  
- Sustainable and Integrated Urban Development Strategy of the City of Leskovac, Salon of Urbanism, November 8th 2023 in Niš, Town Planners Association of Serbia;  
-The paper SUSTAINABLE AND INTEGRATED TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF THE CITY OF LESKOVAC URBAN AREA - A NEW CHALLENGE FOR LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENTS was presented at the "Summer School of Urbanism" in Novi Pazar (Serbia), in May 2024.

## 7 Before submitting your application...

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**7.1 Would you like to share anything else about your practice?**

*1000 character(s) maximum*

The link to the website of the creation process of the strategy is: <https://novi.gradleskovac.org/izrada-strategije-razvoja-urbanog-podrucja-grada-leskovca/>

By submitting this application, I confirm the accuracy and correctness of the information provided.

I accept to share the above contact details and information with the URBACT Secretariat, European Urban Initiative and European Commission's DG Regional and Urban Policy.

## **Useful links**

[More information about the Call \(https://urbact.eu/get-involved\)](https://urbact.eu/get-involved)

## **Contact**

goodpractices@urbact.eu