EURO CITIES ACADEMY

Onboarding session: summary

Thursday, 26 June 2025 – 16:00–17:30 CEST

The onboarding session marked the official launch of the 2025 edition of the Eurocities Academy training on **Urban Digital Twins (UDTs)**, delivered in partnership with the **Barcelona Supercomputing Center**. The meeting brought together participants from cities and researchers across Europe to:

- Introduce the objectives and structure of the training programme.
- Begin identifying the specific urban challenges each participant will work on.
- Launch the collaborative process that will lead to the development of city-specific Action Plans.
- Get a first overview of participants' priorities and expectations.

This first session aimed to create a shared understanding of the proggramme, and prepare participants for the upcoming training sessions, both online and in person.

1. Programme objectives

The session opened with an overview of the Eurocities Academy training on Urban Digital Twins (UDTs), which aims to:

- Support cities in making **strategic, evidence-based use** of UDTs for improved decision-making and urban planning.
- Provide a **clear understanding** of when and how UDTs create value for city administrations.
- Offer **practical guidance** on aligning UDT initiatives with governance, data, and infrastructure capacities.
- Help cities navigate **technical, legal, and organisational challenges**.
- Learn from real city use cases and develop a **co-created Action Plan** tailored to each city's needs.

2. Programme overview

The 2025 edition of the programme includes:

- **Three online sessions**:
  - **26 June**: Introductory meeting (onboarding)
  - **25 September**: Peer exchange on city challenges and use cases
  - **16 October**: Preparatory session for in-person training
- **In-person training in Barcelona (6–7 November)**, focused on:
  - Co-creation and stakeholder engagement
  - Working with UDT providers and data infrastructure
  - Action Plan development and lab sessions
- **Follow-up session in December** to present Action Plans and gather final feedback.

New elements for 2025:

- Online thematic sessions (e.g. on UN-Habitat's people-centred smart cities)
- More space for peer exchange and networking
- Updated resources, including guidelines for policymakers

The final version of the programme and the resources for the training will be available by the end of July.

3. Participant roundtable: key challenges and needs

Participants shared initial reflections and the challenges they would like to address through the programme:

Oostende (Annelies Vandenbulcke)

- At the beginning of their UDT journey.
- Keen to understand how UDTs can support decision-making and deliver value to residents.
- Interest from policymakers is high.
- Needs support developing a roadmap and concrete outputs.

Kalamata (Georgios & Kostas Vlachodimitropoulos)

- UDT efforts linked to the city's **Net Zero** strategy.
- Currently using an environmental dashboard.
- Aim: develop a standardised platform for applying AI to decision-making.

Glasgow (Pierre Jablon & Maria Quintas Zon)

- UDTs already used in the city's environmental strategy, and want to expand it to other policy areas.
- Challenges: opening up platforms to the public, usability of heavy datasets, and transitioning from static (as their current digital twin pilots are) to dynamic models.

The Hague (Jitka van Riet)

- The technical foundation largely in place.
- Focus: developing a roadmap for which solutions to focus on or prioritise, and identifying gaps in data integration.
- Strong interest in producing a robust Action Plan.

Sant Boi de Llobregat (Jordi Rodríguez)

- Evaluating whether further investment in UDTs is justified.
- Wants to explore UDTs' potential for **informed decision-making** and **climate resilience**, particularly in relation to extreme weather.

Vilnius (Žygimantas Pagalys)

- City has many strategic plans and seeks to align and track them effectively.
- Interested in using UDTs to **structure an adaptable master strategy**, e.g. for building permits management.

Università Mediterranea di Reggio Calabria (Alessandra Barresi)

- Academic focus on the link between UDTs and urban planning.
- Interest in conceptual and planning frameworks.

4. The Action Plan

Each participating city will develop a **tailored Action Plan** during the training. This working document will:

- Identify the specific urban challenge the city wants to address.
- Serve as a structured space to explore objectives, data needs, stakeholder roles, and governance issues.
- Be developed progressively, informed by the training sessions and peer feedback.
- Be adaptable to each city's context and level of maturity.

The template Action Plan is already available on the course's [e-learning platform](#).

5. Next steps for participants

1. **Submit invoicing details** to Eurocities.
2. **Proceed with payment** within 10 days of receiving the invoice.
3. **Book travel** to Barcelona for the in-person training (6–7 November).
4. **Access the online platform** and training materials. The course's e-learning platform is accessible [here](#), following the instructions [here](#).
5. **Start drafting the Action Plan**, beginning with sections 1 (city information) and 2 (a vision for the digital twin).
6. **Review the final programme and updated documents**, which will be made available by end of July.