



# EFL YEAR PLAN

---

# 2022



**EFL**  
EUROPEAN FEDERATION  
FOR LIVING



## TABLE OF CONTENT

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>SUMMARY 2021</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>OUR MISSION FOR 2022</b>	<b>4</b>
The impact of the health crisis	4
Supporting residents and neighbourhoods recover, grow, and thrive	4
Housing market	5
Adapting to, and mitigating climate change	5
How we work in 2022	7
Peer to peer exchange platform	7
EFL Webinars	8
Topics 2022	8
EFL Co-creation Funds: Investments in the EFL network	8
Pathways to EU and other external funding	9
<b>PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR 2022</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>POTENTIAL FURTHER ACTIVITIES FOR 2022</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>BUDGET 2022</b>	<b>13</b>

## INTRODUCTION

**Meeting in person at project days, workshops, conferences, and study visits has traditionally been EFL's primary form of member engagement. Equally important are the in-person dinners, drinks and walks that enable EFL members to get to know each other, to explore neighbourhoods around Europe, to have in-depth discussions, and to plan collaborations. From early 2020 to late August, 2021, we responded to the COVID crisis by bringing all our meetings and activities online. We were excited to find that participation intensified, with a higher number of member organisations participating in webinars and other events than before. Within some individual EFL member organisations, more staff members took part in EFL activities that would have been the case with in-person meetings only.**

Despite the easing of lockdowns, 2022 still presents a climate of increased uncertainty for EFL. International knowledge exchange and cooperation has been impacted by the COVID-crisis, but also by the climate crisis, and the need to reduce carbon emissions. While we expect business travel to resume, we are yet to learn what new patterns of business travel will look like, or how approaches to travel may vary across member organisations.

EFL's primary goal is member engagement- stimulating and supporting members to participate actively and make the most of the opportunities we offer to add value to their work. During this time of uncertainty, it's important that we are flexible in our approach, and responsive to changing needs and priorities. During 2022, we'll return to regular in person

(onsite) events as part of a hybrid strategy to maximize opportunities for member participation. These events will focus on the quality of in-person communication and experiences, with certain parts made accessible remotely. They will be combined with regular online events, including webinars, meetings, and workshops. We'll also provide an online forum-style platform, which will support easier peer-to-peer communication between members around key topics of interest and opportunities to collaborate.

EFL will explore a new balance of online and 'onsite' events for 2022, whilst staying attuned to our members' preferences, and to emerging patterns of business travel. Where possible, we'll situate our onsite events in locations that many of our members can reach by train, from either side of the Channel.

## SUMMARY 2021

With the Covid-19 crisis still hindering international travel in 2021, all EFL meetings up until late August 2021 have taken place online. While we missed many elements of in-person events, our virtual meetings via MS Teams enabled members to participate actively – bringing forth new topics to explore and contributing to mutual learning multiple ways. Moving online not only boosted the overall number of people participating in EFL events, but it also supported new patterns of participation. With a wider range of personnel able to engage internationally through EFL than would be the case with in-person events, our online experience to date has arguably broadened participation within some member companies. The lessons learned and the

increasingly interactive formats of our meetings have intensified the exchange between members. Whatever the future will bring in terms of business travel, MS Teams meetings will remain a core part of our programme.

### **EFL in figures**

The year 2021 has been stable in terms of members and associates. At this moment we have 33 members (housing companies), 23 associates, and 17 universities and other non-profit associates.

Total number: 74

# OUR MISSION FOR 2022

The year 2022 will be characterised by continuing uncertainty around Post-COVID patterns of travel and living. Our annual plan must take into account this climate of uncertainty. While we hope that most in-person events can be resumed, we must be ready to respond to the unexpected. If meetings that are planned on-site need to be moved online, we will hope that participation will remain at a high level. We are starting to implement hybrid meetings, but it remains to be seen how these work in practice. By getting started and gaining experience, we'll figure out how to steer EFL through 2022.



## THE IMPACT OF THE HEALTH CRISIS

The challenges for the affordable housing sector are increasing all over Europe. The impacts of the COVID-19 Crisis were far-reaching, but also unevenly distributed. Despite acts of solidarity and support at scales of action ranging from national governments to local neighbourhood networks, the impacts on certain groups were severe. Neighbourhoods with large quantities of social homes showed a higher number of COVID infections. Numerous factors played a part here, including the small size of the dwellings, the larger size of households occupying many of these dwellings, and the tendency for household members to work in key jobs that can't be done remotely. With fewer private outdoor spaces and spare rooms to work or study in, many social housing residents were disproportionately impacted by the pressures of lockdowns, and in some areas, they received more fines than other residents for breaking lockdown conditions. Social landlords registered a higher demand for various kinds of support, and in some national settings, rental arrears increased.

In the aftermath of the pandemic, EFL members face a common challenge of addressing the societal impacts of the

pandemic and helping the communities and neighbourhoods they serve to recover and thrive. They have much to gain from exchanging knowledge and ideas at the international level, and from developing solutions to address this challenge.

The pandemic, which is still not over, had a profound impact on the way we live and use our built environment, with implications for the future use of housing, retail, office, and public spaces. Changing patterns of living, remote working, digitisation and resilient neighbourhoods continue to set the agenda in 2022.

## SUPPORTING RESIDENTS AND NEIGHBOURHOODS RECOVER, GROW, AND THRIVE

Homelessness and fuel poverty are growing problems in many European cities, with a growing number people unable to meet the costs for rent and energy and some unable to find a home. With state moratoria on evictions and other measures to prevent homelessness in Europe due to be phased out, in some cases, the risk of higher rates of homelessness is growing.

Moreover, despite a rebound of national economies, it will take a time to adjust our education, training, and labour markets to the changed conditions of the new post-COVID era. Issues such as providing key worker housing and adapting living environments to a higher degree of remote work and study, will require urgent action.



## HOUSING MARKET

The housing situation in Europe is worsened by a lack of new and affordable supply. Insufficient housing production due to the pandemic, combined with an increased demand for affordable housing, has led to long waiting times for both low and middle-income applicants. The housing market in many European cities is so tense, that housing prices have spiralled and the acquisition of a home has become a real challenge for many starters, middle income groups and young families.

EFL members are amongst the actors in society challenged to boost new housing production to address the housing crisis. Innovative methods of affordable construction are urgently needed to meet demand amongst both low and middle-income households. A second priority is therefore to address this topic and find experts to guide us through this challenge.

## ADAPTING TO, AND MITIGATING CLIMATE CHANGE

A third challenge is becoming increasingly prominent in organisational decision-making: climate change and the urgent need to mitigate global warming and adapt to new climatic circumstances, including patterns of extreme weather. The building sector plays a major role in greenhouse gas emissions and has a duty to reduce these emissions drastically, which means that as well as making construction affordable, we must make it far more climate friendly. Moreover, social housing estates and tenants are amongst the groups and locations most vulnerable to the impact of changing weather patterns, such as flooding and urban heatwaves.



With the greatest gains on this front realisable by renovating and retrofitting existing housing stock, EFL will give considerable attention to the decarbonisation challenge in 2022. We'll support rapid international knowledge exchange on building climate resilience by adapting living environments and buildings to a warmer, more unstable climate. Urban blue and green infrastructure such as green roofs, local rainwater capture and storage, e-mobility infrastructure, renewable energy production, techniques for passive heating and cooling will be components of a comprehensive response to climatic change within our member community. Building the digital and societal infrastructure needed to enlist the participation of residents in the response to climate change is a further challenge that is key to our members' work.



During 2022, EFL will continue to follow and comprehensively address all the above trends and issues for the affordable housing sector. Our international mutual learning, knowledge exchange and collaboration processes will enable members to stay abreast of these issues, sharing both their concerns, and their innovations. We'll continue to improve our systems for sharing information, and to encourage our members to raise new topics of interest as they emerge.

### **EFL's European and international scope**

EFL is primarily focussed on affordable housing and neighbourhood development within Europe. Through our partnerships with Housing Europe, the European Network for Housing Research, Housing Initiative Eastern Europe (IWO) and our communication with the EIB, the IUT and other important European bodies, we stay informed of key policy and regulatory developments that affect our sector, such as the development of the European Green and Social Taxonomies, the Renovation Wave, Social Housing Bonds, and other frameworks for impact Investment Impact investment. During 2022, we'll continue to network with cities and European Partners around key developments that impact our work and the lives of our residents.

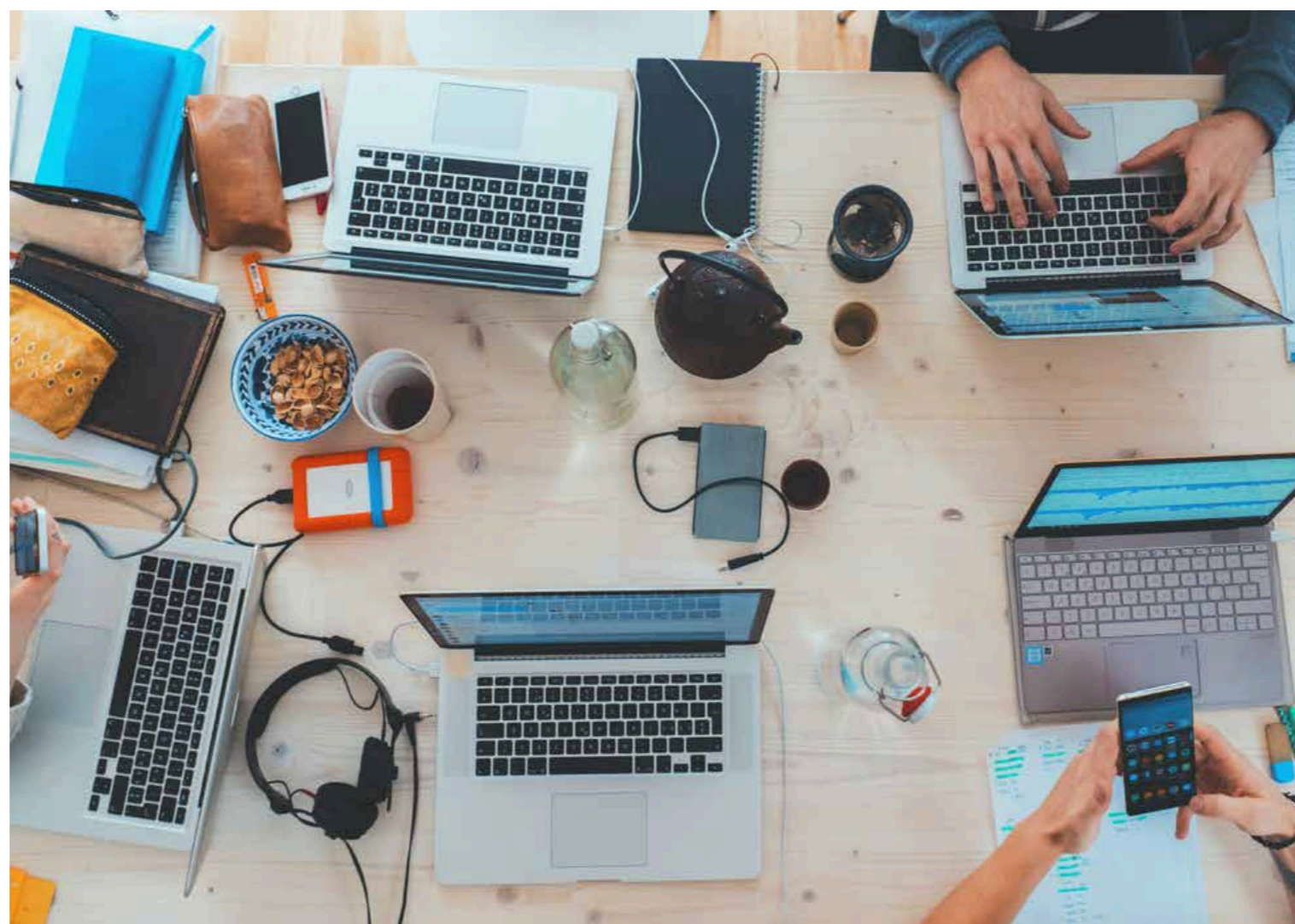
Over the last few years, EFL's networks have extended beyond Europe. For quite some time we are affiliated with a US/ Californian based organisation for (rural) social housing. More recently, EFL signed a cooperation contract with the French network organisation Le Réseau Habitat et Francophonie. This network, RHF, is comparable with EFL and has members in the French speaking world. Next to France and French Belgium, also Canada and African organisations are represented. International exchange with partners from Asia (Korea, Taiwan, Singapore) and Australia are also foreseen around topics of high transferability such as digitalisation.

### **Human Resources**

The EFL organisation is largely based on the principle of active membership. The EFL staff members track emerging housing issues, promote mutual cooperation, and initiate projects and exchanges. An important part of the income is therefore available for human resources. Yet alongside the staff, active members who contribute ideas, suggest

initiatives, and do some of the work required to implement these initiatives are essential for the proper functioning of EFL. The staffing is focused on managing these processes, but less on their implementation. This has enabled us to keep staffing levels limited for years. We work with a highly motivated and professional staff team that is able to further shape the ambitions of the members. Co-creation remains the key to continued success in 2022. The staff is as follows:

- General management/ Managing Director  
The daily management of EFL is performed by a full-time managing director.
- Communication  
Daily digital communication is key for EFL. One staff member will be employed to help structure the online communication with the member community and be of support in the organisation of meetings.
- Researching sectoral developments, programming thematic content, moderating and teaching meetings and educational events and collaborating with universities remain key activities for EFL. The deployment of the academic coordinator is envisioned to continue in 2022.



### **HOW WE WORK IN 2022**

EFL has a range of possibilities to stimulate knowledge exchange and collaboration. In 2022, we will continue to provide both digital and in-person opportunities to learn and foster collaboration among members. Our topic groups, which have years of experience in independently preparing and conducting meetings will continue to function. The EFL staff will programme conferences, peer to peer exchange and webinars and, conditions providing, EFL will work with a partner on another international study visit in 2022. The list of topics below will be discussed during the year, and our newly developed EFL Exchange Forum, which can be reached through the members' area of the website, will make it increasingly easy for members to put new topics on the agenda. Where interest is both high, and sustained, there is also the potential to create new Topic Groups. The active participation of our members is our highest priority, and by supporting this participation, we aim to achieve outcomes that add value to their businesses and societal roles.



### **Peer to peer exchange platform**

Dating back to before the COVID crisis, EFL members expressed interest in a forum accessible from the website that would enable direct peer-to peer communication. While our online events have been well- attended, these large group meetings differ from the spontaneous, in-depth, and interactive communication that occurs at onsite events. Member feedback has shown that small-group, and one-to-one interactive conversations are particularly valued where people are communicating in a language other than their own first language. It's our priority to ensure that all members have options to participate actively in EFL, both onsite and online.

As well as resuming our in-person events, EFL is developing an online forum during 2021 into 2022 to support direct peer-to-peer communication between our member organisations. Forum users will be able to use the EFL Exchange to post and respond to invitations to share knowledge, and best practices on specific topics. A pilot online knowledge exchange on neighbourhood level interventions to build community resilience is successfully underway in the Social Domain Topic Group and findings will be shared via the forum, which will enable users to post images, videos, and other files.

Our members and associates will also be able to use the EFL Exchange Forum to network around opportunities, such as collaborative projects seeking partners, joint funding proposals, and even EFL Co-Creation Funds, which we talk more about in our plans for 2022. We'll launch this forum at our Autumn conference and conduct a workshop with members on peer-to peer knowledge

exchange within EFL to gather ideas and feedback. Within our member community, efforts are also underway to develop agreements and protocols for international staff placements and internships. In 2022, these can also be integrated into the EFL Exchange Platform.

### EFL WEBINARS

Being responsive to new suggestions is part of our role. During 2022, you are welcome to contact EFL staff to discuss how a webinar session might be able to support your interest in a particular topic. EFL webinars are moderated sessions of maximum 1 hour 15 minutes around a focused topic. Providing that your topic is of broad enough interest to our member community, we can structure a session around your participation that enables you to explore it with international peers or academic partners.

### TOPICS 2022

Some of the topics that will guide our content and activities for 2022 include:

- Decarbonisation of existing properties
- Making homes and neighbourhoods more climate resilient
- Circular construction and waste prevention
- New energy efficient homes – NZEB
- Managing digitalisation in our field, including smart homes and neighbourhoods
- Predictive maintenance – harnessing the powers of A.I.
- Sustainable Finance/ Green Bonds/ EU Green and Social Taxonomies
- Mobilising social impact investment for eviction prevention and neighbourhood services
- Neighbourhood level strategies to build social resilience and cohesion, address loneliness and social isolation, and promote well-being
- Human Resource Policies and key roles in affordable housing and regeneration
- Housing specific needs groups: key workers, people with support needs, older people
- Housing shortages and boosting new construction
- Housing policies & governance
- Innovation in housing design, delivery, and provision

### Plans and Resources for 2022

For 2022 we envision to increase investments in EFL. Here you find the most ideas and changes in comparison with previous years. Because we have experienced that financial planning in uncertain times also leads to uncertain outcomes, we are more flexible now with regard to the use of financial resources. This means that a different spending pattern may arise on different budget lines, while we still remain within the total budget.

### EFL CO-CREATION FUNDS: INVESTMENTS IN THE EFL NETWORK

#### *What are they and why are we providing them?*

One consequence of the COVID-crisis has been that some funds that EFL would normally invest in onsite meetings and events have accumulated. Our business model is based on reinvestment to meet the needs of members and add value to their work. During 2022, EFL will make some of these funds available to **support collaborative projects between members**, starting with 10,000 Euro and another 10,000 Euro for hiring consultants dedicated

to European funds application. Furthermore the board has decided to commission a research consultancy to undertake a research project on a topic to be agreed by the members. For this research project, which should benefit the whole member community, an amount of 25.000 Euro is available. The focus of this project needs to be decided by our member community.

EFL Co-creation Funds are separate from the general EFL 2022 budget for activities to benefit our member community, including the 2000 Euro made available to each topic group. It is our hope that making funds available in this way helps to stimulate participation as we recover from the COVID crisis. We also hope that the ability to apply for project funds through EFL and engage internationally, will add value to memberships by providing opportunities for the professional development of our member companies' staff, including young and early-career personnel.

#### *How will they be administered and used?*

On the EFL exchange, a proforma will enable members to propose projects and apply for small amounts of funding (from 500 Euro to 5,000 Euro). Projects can be short in duration and should not last longer than one year.

Funds can be used for a variety of purposes, such as:

- commissioning a consultant to do part of the research or design for a collaborative project
- covering the costs of a speaker or facilitator for an event such as a seminar or design charrette
- software or website development to support, or realise a collaborative project
- venue costs for an event
- design, layout and, where required, printing of a report or publication
- in limited cases, travel costs of members to enable them to meet, run an event, or conduct a study visit

EFL staff can support projects by contributing ideas and feedback, chairing meetings, programming relevant webinars, and helping to network them. However, it is not the role of EFL staff role to carry out projects. Initiatives that receive EFL Co-Creation Funds should be led and carried out by members, except in cases where additional funds are provided for specific additional services by EFL staff.

To apply for Co-Creation Funds, EFL members will need to fill in a simple proforma thought our EFL Exchange Forum that makes clear the proposed timeline, the aims of the project, and its value to our member community. It's also important that they make clear what 'in-kind' resources will be committed, such as member company staff hours and potentially, budget for travel or other shared costs.

Decisions to allocate the funds will be subject to a viability test based on the value of the proposed project to the member community, and the balance of member company resources ('in-kind' or other), and resources from EFL. Once a funding decision is made, the participating member companies need to sign a Memorandum of Understanding that commits the time of a designated project leader and the provision of any other in-kind or monetary resources.

### PATHWAYS TO EU AND OTHER EXTERNAL FUNDING

In the first part of 2021, EFL set up an application consortium of 24 organisations, mainly EFL members and associates, to apply for a Horizon 2020 European Grant. The resulting project 'BRAVE', focussed on decarbonisation strategies, was not accepted funding, yet offered valuable experience in developing a proposal. Although it has become clear that EFL itself is not in the position to fulfil the role as lead partner for European funds, this position can be outsourced to our academic partners who are well established to do this. In 2022 we will continue with investigating European funding options and, in cases of proven interest, initiate new consortia. As outlined, the budget provides an amount for hiring a grant expert.



# PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR 2022

- **Semi-annual conferences:** The planned conferences in 2022 will be conducted in Paris (Spring) and Glasgow (Autumn). These conferences will be kindly hosted by Paris Habitat & Polylogis and the Wheatley Group respectively. During the Spring conference, a part of the meeting will be organized with a group of Asian housing professionals, so we can expand our learning curve beyond Europe.
- **Spring Co-Creation Event** at our new co-working premises in the centre Amsterdam: a fun meeting to showcase developing projects, progress them together and connect out members with experts and funding opportunities in their fields of interest
- **Study visit** - conditions permitting: Following the highly successful trip to Riga, we are planning again a study trip with our partner IWO for 2022! EFL will consider all ideas, including another trip to Eastern Europe. One option is Poland, where ambitious plans for new affordable housing construction in collaboration with the private sector are being rolled out.

- **EFL Exchange:** As mentioned, the EFL website will be equipped with an additional forum style tool, accessible through the members area. Members will be able to use the Forum to progress collaborations, apply for EFL Co-Creation Funds, and access opportunities for European and other external funding.
- **EDUCATION:**
  - **Summer School for young housing professionals:** After a period of two years during which no Summer School was able to take place on location, we are confident that it will be possible again in 2022. Nevertheless, the digital Summer School from 2021 was a successful edition, and this format, or a hybrid format, could be considered again. The fifth edition of the Summer School, which we will once again be run in Bochum (Germany) with our partners EBZ, Housing Europe and IWO, is scheduled for July or August next year. The theme of the Summer School has yet to be determined.



- **EFL Academy:** Online learning via EFL started in 2021 via our website. With four courses currently available, the intention is to expand this further. However, we will regularly monitor demand within the member network to ensure that we deploy our resources accordingly. To date, participation in the courses available has been somewhat lower than expected.
- **International staff exchange and internships:** Currently a group of our members is working on a pilot international staff placement scheme for EFL that will provide opportunities for talented early and mid-career staff to develop their skills and professional profiles abroad. Access to this scheme offers value to our members, by enhancing their attractiveness as an employer. As one of the forms of collaboration offered through EFL, this scheme will be accessible through the Exchange Forum from 2022, with international internships and job offers to be integrated progressively.

- **Joint EFL Research Project**

The EFL Board has decided to set up a research project which should support the members in tackling some of their greatest challenges. It is planned to dedicate this research to an external research institute. The research questions will be formulated at a special workshop during the Autumn conference in Stuttgart. A budget of 25,000 Euro is made available.
- **Webinars**

During 2022, EFL will continue to programme regular webinars, once or twice a month. To maximize their relevance and value for the community, we have allocated funds in the budget to hire some exciting expert speakers

from beyond our network. This will provide for some high-quality sessions that bring in new ideas. Webinars that bring together speakers from our member community will be designed to promote interaction. To this end, we will ensure that they are thematically integrated with collaborative projects being progressed within EFL. More than just events session to watch, these webinars will be interactive discussions that clarify key issues and support EFL Co-Creation projects.

- **EU funding**

During 2022, EFL will continue to cover major European funding opportunities and network bids within our member community. A project section of the EFL Exchange Forum will support easier communication and dissemination of grant opportunities.
- **ELENA:** in 2021 EFL formed the first consortium to jointly apply for ELENA funds. ELENA is an EIB financing facility aimed at co-financing sustainable renovation projects. Unfortunately, Brexit has meant that UK members no longer have access to these funds. However, we will intensify cooperation with the EIB in 2022 and once again offer our members the opportunity to use the ELENA budget.
- **Publications:** Early in 2022, a publication on our Summer School curriculum, Managing Digitalisation: Issues for Social Landlords will be delivered and EFL will continue to deliver reports on key topics
- **Topic Group Meetings and Activities**

During 2022, our Topic Groups will continue to programme regular meetings and activities, both in-person and online. Where possible, we will steer the content of the Topic Group meetings towards the bigger challenges as described in previous sections.

  - *Construction:* leadership Eric Danesse (Vilogia)
  - *European Digitisation Group:* leadership Oliver Falk Becker and Roman Riebow (Gewobag)
  - *Social Domain:* leadership John Stevens (Clarion Housing)
  - *Finance and Investments:* leadership Hendrik Cornehl (Dr. Klein WiWo)



# POTENTIAL FURTHER ACTIVITIES FOR 2022

The following ideas have been raised by EFL members or staff. During 2021 and early 2022, we'll seek further input to decide which ones to carry forth, as well as listening out for new ideas.

## THE IMPACT OF THE HEALTH CRISIS

- **Design Challenge:** In 2021, our Summer School on managing rapid digitalisation in social housing envisioned some exciting ideas for digital applications that could be used productively in our field. Within our European Digitisation Group, there is also a continuous process of innovation on this topic. The Amsterdam Academy of Applied Sciences, one of EFL's new academic associates, hosts a 'Digital Society School' where companies can challenge students to respond to design briefs. We propose an EFL Design Challenge that asks their students to realise one or more our member community's ideas for digital applications that could support sustainable and independent living and well-being in social housing homes, estates, or neighbourhoods.
- **English language terms for affordable housing and presenting in English:** Our members have expressed interest in practicing their skills presenting in English, as well as learning key vocabulary specific to the field of social and affordable housing development, and phrases for engaging in discussions. These resources could be made available via the Exchange Forum and the EFL Academy. Online sessions every couple of months with a qualified English teacher to practice presenting skills in a small group are also a possibility.

# BUDGET 2022

EFL's 2022 budget focuses on investing and further increasing the value of membership. The reserves built up over the years will be reduced to an acceptable safety level in the coming years. For 2022, the investments in staff, projects and our events will lead to a budget deficit. This financial investment includes amounts that can be used to hire external expertise and high quality key note speakers. The outcome- a deficit- is considered acceptable in order to prevent further growth of the financial reserves and to be able to develop sufficient activities.

In terms of income, we depend on the number of members and associated partners. That number fluctuates and may be higher or lower than expected. In the event of a reduced number of members, action will also be taken at an operational level, in particular to limit variable costs. A deficit of approximately 100,000 euros is forecast for the coming year.

© EFL, October 2021

## NOTES

## NOTES



EUROPEAN FEDERATION  
FOR LIVING

**CONTACT INFO**

European Federation for Living

Official Postal address / P.O. Box 67065 / NL-1060 JB Amsterdam

E: [info@ef-l.eu](mailto:info@ef-l.eu) / W: [www.ef-l.eu](http://www.ef-l.eu)

