

I WANT
TO START
MY OWN
USE-IT!

nice to have you in our network!



USE-IT is the quality label for no-nonsense tourist info for young people. USE-IT initiatives currently exist in around 40 cities in Europe.

They all publish free maps, most of them have a Facebook or Instagram page, some have a website, or even run an info desk for young travellers.

WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?

WHAT ARE THE PRINCIPLES?

USE-IT is **made by locals**: we don't work with travel journalists but with local people.

USE-IT is **not commercial**: nobody pays to be included on the map.

USE-IT maps are **free**.

USE-IT is **for young people**: not meant to please everybody, only a specific target group (18-35 or people who feel that age).

USE-IT is **up-to-date**: new editions are made every 18 months.

USE-IT is **not a trendy guide**, it's about the life and soul of the city.

SEE: WWW.USE-IT.TRAVEL/STYLE-GUIDE

HOW IS USE-IT ORGANIZED?

Every USE-IT is largely **independent**. Everybody finds subsidies to run the project, usually from local authorities (city, province, region). **USE-IT Europe can advise you** in this and help with tips how to talk to authorities.

USE-IT Oslo is paid with Norwegian money, USE-IT Prague with Czech money, and so on. However, **everybody shares the USE-IT principles** and philosophy and is member of the same European organisation called USE-IT Europe.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN? HOW DID IT START?

The first USE-IT brochures (not maps yet) were made in Copenhagen and distributed in an alternative youth centre called Huset. Travellers pronounced it as *use it* and that's probably how the name stuck. Nobody knows for sure, though.

USE-IT started in 1971 (in hippie times) in Copenhagen as a low-budget info desk for young travellers. Other initiatives followed later in Oslo, Rotterdam and Ghent, always with the same philosophy. **In 2005, the first USE-IT Map for Young Travellers** – as we know them now – **was developed in Ghent** (Belgium).

In 2007 an international organisation called USE- IT Europe was founded to support the current and future USE-IT initiatives, and also to protect the USE-IT principles. Since then, more and more cities have joined the network.

In 2021, the old organisation quit and a new one started in Lille, France, to continue the work. This organisation holds the current board and editor-in-chief.

WHAT DOES USE-IT EUROPE DO?

USE-IT Europe protects the quality of the publications.

Local initiatives make their own texts and design, but there are some basic communication guidelines to follow, and the non-commercial principles also have to be guaranteed. This is why the network gives feedback along the way and a final approval in the end.

USE-IT Europe replies to questions from starters and members, organises a yearly meeting, posts on social media, organises surveys and represents USE-IT on conferences and at a European level.

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CAN I JOIN?

EARLY QUESTIONS

WHO CAN START A USE-IT?

Firstly, **you have to be a local**, meaning you at least live in the city for a significant amount of time. That's the difference between USE-IT and a lot of travel guides. USE-IT believes that you cannot write well about a city if you visit it for just a few weeks.

Secondly, you have to **embrace the basic rules**: USE-IT is not-commercial, free and made by young locals for young travellers.

Thirdly, you cannot become a member as a private person. **You need an organisation** to publish your map.

SEE: ③ STARTING UP



WHO DECIDES WHERE TO START?

You. USE-IT Europe does not decide where to launch a project, it all depends on the initiative of young locals. That's why there are some maps of lesser-known cities, while some major tourist destinations are not in the network. And that's what makes it cool too.



IS MY CITY A GOOD CITY?

Probably. It does not depend on size or popularity, but on relevance for the target group. Is your city an interesting place for young international travellers to spend a couple of days? Then it's a good city for a USE-IT map.



CAN I MAKE A MAP OF THE REGION?

No. USE-IT is a city project.



AND IN A NON-EUROPEAN CITY?

Not yet. USE-IT Europe wants to become stronger in Europe first.



AND A MAP IN MY OWN LANGUAGE?

Yes, but only the English version can be published with the USE-IT label. Other versions will not be included on the website.



AM I THE FIRST IN MY CITY?

Perhaps, perhaps not. Just send a mail and ask.

If others have started already, USE-IT Europe will bring you in touch so you can have a coffee together. **So far, there has never been any competition, only collaboration.**

IS IT FREE TO BECOME A USE-IT?

No, you pay a **yearly contribution of €1.200** to USE-IT Europe. This money needs to be part of your budget, when applying for money. SEE: ② WHERE IS THE MONEY?



CAN YOU PUT ME ON THE WEBSITE AS A WORK IN PROGRESS?

Not yet. There are a few things you have to do before you become *Work in progress* on www.use-it.travel. See the section ③ STARTING UP for what you have to do to get there.



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WHERE IS
THE MONEY
?

MONEY IS THE POINT!

CAN USE-IT EUROPE GIVE MONEY?

No. USE-IT Europe gives practical support, feedback, a network to fall back on, access to the meeting and official membership.

Not money.



WHERE DO I ASK FOR MONEY?

- From the **municipality**. Most cities get money from the city
- From **tourist info**. Are there any tourist organisations in your city that could help?
- From **the youth centre**
- From **the university**
- From **the European Commission**
- From **crowdfunding** or **sponsoring**

Or from a mix of the above. Show as much initiative as possible to puzzle your budget together!



WHY THE CITY / TOURIST INFO?

USE-IT generates profit for the city, even if it is a not-for-profit organisation. Young people are more than 20% of the travel market and spend more than ever before.

An impact study about USE-IT maps from 2016/2017 revealed that of more than 4.000 users:

- 34% has used more than one map already
- 14% stays longer because of the map
- 97% look for other USE-IT cities when they choose their next travel destination
- 63% of tourist info staff is happy because USE-IT maps can make selections that they don't.

SEE: WWW.USE-IT.TRAVEL/SURVEY_2017



WHY THE YOUTH CENTRE?

Travellers love to talk to locals to get the best tips. Some youth info centres want to reach out further than local youth and also want to help out this international target group with real inside advice. So **USE-IT can be part of an existing youth info centre**, as is the case with USE-IT Oslo.



WHY THE UNIVERSITY?

USE-IT maps are useful for exchange students as a gift in their welcome package, but also as a way of promoting the city internationally.



WHY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION?

The European Union believes in the empowerment of young people and USE-IT defends a lot of its basic values.

CHECK: WWW.EC.EUROPA.EU/YOUTH

WHY CROWDFUNDING?

USE-IT is a real European network, with many happy users and a growing recognition of the brand. It may be difficult to gain enough money using crowdfunding tools like *indiegogo.com*, but it can work if you find the right creative approach.



WHAT ABOUT PRIVATE MONEY?

Can a telephone company or a bank fund a USE-IT map? Yes, but **only if they agree to stay out of the content and design**. They cannot *brand* the product. Email info@use-it.travel if you have questions about what this means.



HOW MUCH?

HOW MUCH TO START A USE-IT?

That's hard to say, because it depends on so many things. How many maps will you need to last for a year? Will the writer and designer get paid for the work? Who will do the distribution? Do you also want to start an info desk or a summer info tent? All these things have to be sorted out first.



HOW MUCH FOR JUST A MAP?

Probably between €10.000 (minimum budget) and €20.000 (ideal budget). You definitely have to work with friends and volunteers, but why wouldn't you be paid for your work?



WHAT IS THE IDEAL BUDGET?

- **Print costs** for 30.000 maps to 200.000 maps, depending on the city's size and touristic popularity. SEE: ③ WORK IN PROGRESS

- Around €250 to send maps to some other USE-IT cities who have an info desk or **international distribution** point.

SEE: DISTRIBUTION DOCUMENT

- €1.200 **membership fee** USE-IT Europe

- **Digital street map data** (usually you can ask this from the city as part of their support)

- Proof prints, photocopies etc.

- **Distribution in hostels** and cheap hotels, with follow-up every three months

- **Travel costs** for a flight + accommodation for the yearly USE-IT Europe meeting (can be in any member city). In the past, USE-IT Europe has usually found project money to refund most costs, but it's best to put €500 in the budget anyway.

- At least one full week's pay for a **professional graphic designer**

- A paid part-time **researcher + writer** for two months

- A paid part-time **coordinator** for four months (for grant applications, preparations, volunteer coordination, contact with USE-IT Europe, distribution, follow-up for next year and taking care of continuity)

- **Marketing costs**



WHAT IS THE MINIMUM BUDGET?

Numbers 1 through 6 in the above list, meaning everybody gets paid except the people who put all their energy into it...



WHEN DO I PAY MEMBERSHIP?

Every year, before you publish. The process is explained on the next pages.



CAN'T WE DO IT FOR LESS?

Many USE-IT cities have done this, yes. **Then nobody gets paid except the printer, the postman and USE-IT Europe** (membership fee).

But if you create a map with the absolute minimum and only volunteers, how will you convince your local authorities that they have to give you more next year? And what will happen when the volunteers leave on a world trip? It's best to take it seriously from the beginning, because that's the best way to provide continuity.

Don't forget: you're providing a real return on investment to the city, and you deserve credit for this. Also, you can always aim high at first and negotiate with the city.

SEE: WWW.USE-IT.TRAVEL/SURVEY_2017

Many young people contact USE-IT Europe because they want to make a map for their own city.

Visit bars, collect stories, write no-nonsense texts... That sounds like a fun job. It is, actually.

Follow these five rules, and you'll get there.

SHOW
B¹ SOME
BALLS

BE²
SMART!

DON'T³
BE
PATIENT

USE
YOUR
FRIENDS⁴

TALK⁵
TO US!



Never hesitate to **talk to people who make decisions**. Drink coffee with the boss of the local youth info centre, meet the head of the tourist office, email the youth or tourism minister. They are the people who make decisions. Explain what you want to do, **show some passion and don't talk about money from the start**.



The major issue for USE-IT is **continuity**. If you're smart, you cooperate with an existing organisation to provide some structure for the future. If you do everything yourself, what will happen when you leave next year for a world trip? **Share the project**, make sure it's supported by other locals as well.



Don't expect to get your full budget from the beginning. But that should not stop you from getting started. Mapping the city is just fun to do. **In some cases, you get money more easily by showing the work that you have already done**.



Creative people are usually terrible at doing business. However, the most successful USE-ITs are those with a good mix between creativity and coordination. So if you're only interested in the content and the layout, **look for the right friend** to write applications and take care of the business side.



Don't play solo. **Other USE-IT members had the same questions** about how to select places, how to create a good layout etc. So mail info@use-it.travel or ask for feedback from the other members. And don't worry: you're not the only city where it's hard to get taken seriously as a young cool person. **Just learn from the others.**

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**STARTING
UP**

FIRST OF ALL

INTRODUCE YOURSELF

Go to www.use-it.travel/start-me-up to download a small list of questions. E-mail it to info@use-it.travel. USE-IT Europe will let you know if other people have already tried to start a USE-IT in your city and will put you in touch with others.



DOCUMENTATION

Go to the tourist info centre and hostels and **check the maps and brochures that they give to young travellers**. This is useful documentation, especially when you have to convince people to fund the project. It is important to know that **there is nothing like USE-IT already** and it is equally important to prove that you did good research.



TAKE THE TEMPERATURE

Go and *take the temperature* with possible subsidising authorities. Don't talk to them about money yet, just see if they are interested in the young target group. **Make them enthusiastic about the project and jealous of all the other cities with a USE-IT map**. What makes your first contacts easier is to show examples of existing maps. USE-IT Europe can send you a package by post.



LOOK FOR A PUBLISHER

You cannot become a member of USE-IT Europe as a private person. You always need an organisation behind you as the official publisher and USE-IT member. Sometimes this organisation is a Youth Information Centre, sometimes it's a cultural organisation, sometimes it's a new organisation created especially to publish USE-IT maps. What is important, is that the publishing organisation is different from the funding authorities, to assure your independence. If you choose to create a new organisation, do not call it USE-IT (for legal reasons). Any other name is OK.



LOOK FOR MONEY

This is the hard bit, but remember that many people managed to get their USE-IT project funded, so you can too!

How to convince the big chiefs to contribute money to your project? There is no fixed recipe for this. The most important *stakeholder* is the local city authority and you should prove to them that USE-IT generates more money than it costs. The project is not for profit, but generates a lot of profit. Use the facts and quotes from our survey!

SEE: WWW.USE-IT.TRAVEL/SURVEY_2017

Another strategy is to create a first version of the map and show it at a meeting. It's more work, but it's also more fun and more effective. If you want to do that, mail info@use-it.travel to get a login for the USE-IT database.



BECOME A WORK IN PROGRESS

When the preparatory work is done, you can become a *work in progress* on www.use-it.travel

For this you need:

- to **have a publishing organisation** (private persons cannot become a member)

- to be sure you will get **the minimum budget**

SEE: ② WHERE IS THE MONEY?

- to be sure you will **publish within half a year**

Once the cooperation agreement with USE-IT Europe is signed and membership fee has been paid, your organisation is officially a member of USE-IT Europe for this year!



WORK IN PROGRESS

When you have become a *work in progress*, you start getting creative help from the network to create your map.



CREATE THE TEAM AND MAKE A PLAN

Decide who will be the creative coordinator in your team. This is the contact person for USE-IT Europe too. Also decide who will do what, and prepare your time schedule. Share this with USE-IT Europe and ask for feedback.

It is important to set deadlines, the more the merrier. It helps you to work together towards your goal and prevents confusion. An example of a time schedule, the one from USE-IT Oslo, is beside. You don't have to stick to this, but you can use it as an example.



JAN.

- Prepare a presentation about what you want to do for possible funders and supporting organizations.

FÉV.

- Start your research.
- Collect input from the team and possibly from the organization you work with.
- Have the designer make a draft for illustrations and ideas.
- Make a longlist of the content of this year's map.

MAR.

- The writers write the content.
- The designer produces the cartography and the illustrations, and produces a draft of the layout.

APR.

- The finishing of the graphic design and layout.

MAY

- The proofreading of the text by someone from USE-IT Europe and other people you ask to proofread.
- Placing the points on the map.
- Checking the lay-out of the text.
- Graphic design proofread: is everything in the right place, are the icons right, do the numbers match between text and map and so on.
- Sending the map to editor in chief for feedback and approval.
- Make changes according to that feedback.
- Send to print.

JUNE

- Plan a launch party.
- Contact places for distributing the map.
- Make a distribution plan.

JULY → OCT.

- Distribution.
- Making content for social media.

NOV.

- Do an evaluation of this year's project.
- Make a plan for next year.
- Apply for funding.
- More distribution.

DÉC.

- Make a report for organization and funders.

WIP WIP WIP

JOIN US ON FACEBOOK

Your whole team can join the internal USE-IT Facebook group to get to know the others better and to ask specific questions. Ask the editor-in-chief to add you!



INSTALL THE MAILBOX

Every USE-IT city has an email address like prague@use-it.travel, brussels@use-it.travel, etc. USE-IT Europe will provide this and add your e-mail addresses as a forwarding address.



USE-IT DATABASE AND DUMMY

Collect a first selection of places in the online USE-IT database. With this first selection, you can create a draft *dummy* layout to decide which part of the city you put on which side. It is important to decide this in the beginning, because it will determine the rest of the work. Send it to USE-IT Europe for feedback!



RESEARCH IN THE CITY

The real work. You can do this with one or more persons, but you usually get the best results if one person collects all the info and writes the first texts.



FIRST TEXTS

Read the Style Guide (provided by the editor-in-chief) carefully, and write your first texts. USE-IT Europe will offer feedback.



CREATE SOME BUZZ

Announce the project and generate some buzz. This may help you get more attention and extra volunteers for your team. If you create a Facebook page, make sure the page is called *USE-IT Yourcity* with USE-IT in capital letters.



STAY IN TOUCH

At every stage, stay in touch with USE-IT Europe and the nearby USE-ITs. We're in this together! **Ask us anything!**



YOUR FIRST MAP

WHEN CAN I PRINT?

Once the creative work is finished, **the Board of USE-IT Europe will approve your map.** It is important that you have this permission, because USE-IT Europe legally owns the label. **Don't worry too much about this:** if you stay in touch during the creation process, this is usually a formality. Then you send the map to the printer and have a party.



WHY DO I HAVE TO PAY A FEE?

Indeed, there is a €1.200 membership fee. USE-IT Europe runs largely on volunteers, but one part-time editor is paid to keep the network running and follow up on new initiatives.

You will get:

- feedback from USE-IT Europe on texts and design the email address yourcity@use-it.travel
- an invitation to the annual USE-IT Europe meeting
- a printable version of your map on www.use-it.travel
- your cover on the backside of other USE-IT maps
- the domain www.yourcity.use-it.travel if you need it
- access to survey results, the newsletter and all other internal communication a big network of international colleagues



CAN I JUST MAKE A WEBSITE?

No. Paper maps are the core business of USE-IT. No map, no web.



DO I PAY MEMBERSHIP FOR EVERY MAP?

Yes, your organisation pays a membership fee for every time that you publish a USE-IT map. If you don't, membership ends automatically. Of course you don't have to pay when you don't publish new maps anymore.



HOW OFTEN DO I MAKE A MAP?

Being up to date is one of the major benefits of USE-IT maps and it should always be your aim to create **a new edition every 18 months.** If you don't, the map disappears from the website and the app after 18 months. But let's hope it never gets that far!



WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I PUBLISH IT?

After you publish, **it is time to distribute your map through Europe.** For this, we refer you to the distribution document sent to you by the editor-in-chief. You send the map to some hotspots and to Belgium for our archives.

Also distribute the map in your city. Contact hostels, cafés, libraries and such to ask them if they want maps to hand out. Also make a social media plan to keep interest in your map alive!

Feel free to talk to other USE-IT cities for ideas about this, we are a network after all.



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ABOUT
USE-IT
EUROPE

HOW IS USE-IT ORGANISED?

WHO IS THE BOSS?

You are.



WHAT DOES USE-IT EUROPE DO?

- Communicate (website, social media, newsletter)
- Follow up on new members organize the yearly meeting with all members
- Represent USE-IT on conferences and meetings
- Give feedback during the creation process
- Give final approval to every map
- Manage surveys and European projects
- Look for additional funding for the app and other network improvements



SO USE-IT EUROPE IS THE BOSS?

Yes and no. **There will never be discussions about personal taste, only about the basic principles.** This quality control is necessary to protect the brand name and the network.



IS THERE A FIXED DESIGN?

There is no fixed layout, illustrations or typography for the USE-IT maps. However, a few rules are fixed: the size of the cover, the position of the logo on the cover, etc. For this, see our designer document and style guide.



IS THERE ANY FIXED CONTENT?

Yes and no. The content has to be tailor-made for young travellers, has to be non-commercial, no-nonsense, easy to read and concrete. But you select, write and design yourself. We do prefer you to include the *Act like a local* and *Five minutes of History*.



WHO WORKS FOR USE-IT EUROPE?

For the moment, only one person is paid by USE-IT Europe on a one-day-a-week basis, namely the editor-in-chief of the network. The president and board of the organisation are volunteers.

Of course, many young people work on USE-IT maps and at the info desks, but they are not employed by USE-IT Europe. The local USE-ITs and USE-IT Europe are two different things, and the sum of all USE-ITs is much bigger than the network organisation.



You still don't understand?

Then contact info@use-it.travel and shoot!

USE-IT is tourist info for young people: no-nonsense, made by locals, not commercial, up-to-date and free. Are you addicted to walking the streets in your city? Is it your hobby to discover new places and to tell everybody about them? Do you know the real stories behind the fake tourist attractions? Are you a traveller yourself, but sick of the glossy tourist brochures that list absolutely everything you were not looking for?

Let's see how we can work together.



USE-IT EUROPE
27 RUE JEAN BART
59000 LILLE
FRANCE