



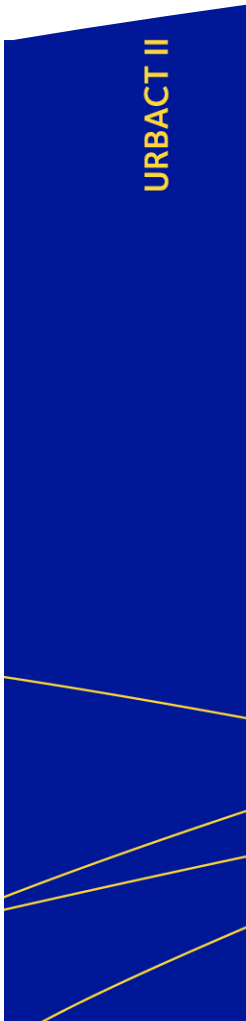
"Regions, Cities, Neighbourhoods - strong Partners"

# RegGov

Regional Governance of Sustainable Integrated Development of Deprived Urban Areas

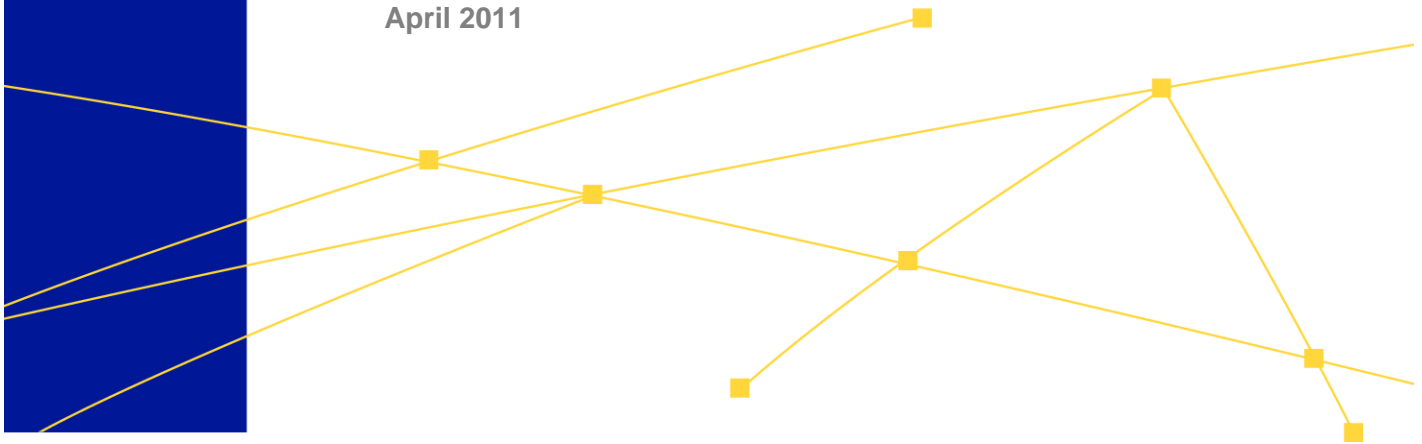
## Local Action Plan

English abstract



### City of Halandri (Athens), Greece

April 2011



Connecting cities Building successes





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## I. Description of the RegGov target area

The Municipality of Halandri is one of the biggest in the wider Athens area. It is situated in the north-eastern part of the Attica basin, covering an area of approx. 11 sq km. In this significant surface of varied relief one can travel from the quiet relaxed country-like residential zones to a bustling commercial centre and powerful entrepreneurial axes in the periphery. Nevertheless, the main land use remains purely residential.

According to the last national census of 2001, the local population has risen to 75,000 inhabitants, while it is estimated that more than 120,000 people dwell and work in Halandri.

The municipality is served by wide networks of major road axes and a diverse transportation system, which includes multiple public, and municipal bus lines as well as five metro and 2 suburban railway stations, and offers its dwellers a wide variety of social infrastructure.

As a study area for our participation in the RegGov network, the area of Patima was chosen. Patima expands across 1.155 sqkm and sits in the northernmost part of the city. It is the last area to have been inserted into the City Plan and presents some peculiarities that classify it as a rather “deprived” area in comparison to the rest of the city. From a completely rural character, the area has transformed into a luxurious suburb over the last few years. This rapid growth has created needs for infrastructure (technical and social) that could not be met by the municipality in the respective time period. This fact has created a unique situation with an area that has all the characteristics of a deprived area and the image of a developed one.

Some key figures for the Patima area are presented in the following table:

<b>Total area (Patima)</b>	<b>1.155 Km<sup>2</sup></b>
Open spaces	~ 0.039
Road network	~ 0.30
Building block area	~ 0.82
Common use	1.91 %
"Community service"	1.45 %
<b>Permanent population (2001):</b>	<b>2,395 residents</b>
City	75,000
Density (Patima):	29 residents / ha

## II. Problems & challenges

Strategic planning and social participation are the key ingredients for a successful implementation of a local action plan in accordance with the RegGov, the thematic network in which the Municipality of Halandri participates. For the municipality and the network, participation was a challenge for two main reasons. Firstly, because there was a lack of necessary experience in both areas; secondly, the target area was not “deprived” in the strict sense of the word.

The Patima area, which was the target area for implementing the Local Action Plan, is characterized by the situation that most modern Greek cities faced the last decade. The economic growth of recent years has led much of the population to search for higher living standards and often for new, more luxurious accommodations. The resulting rapid housing development transformed the deprived fields of Patima into luxurious residential areas almost overnight.

During this transition, the integration of the target area into the City Plan was limited. The absence of planning led to the incoherent distribution of the public and open spaces and the incorrect investment in the infrastructure equipment of the area.

During the last decade, Greek society realized that its active participation could be a leverage for local decision-makers towards a more sustainable city.

For the Municipality of Halandri, it was a challenge to be able to draw up a local action plan for the sustainable development of a "neighbourhood" with expected long-term results.

Environment, economy, accessibility, infrastructure and protection of the residential character of the target area were the biggest challenges tackled by the local support group in drafting the plan.

A second challenge the LSG had to deal with was the lack of culture and dialogue mechanisms at the neighbourhood level, which is reflected in the great distrust of the people toward the implementation of relevant initiatives and intentions of the administration.

Strengthening the role of public and self-governing mechanisms through the Kallikrates, the cooperation of the municipality with the relevant management authorities of the region and the Ministry of Finance will complement the opportunities presented by the upgrading of the region's press.

Threats to the external environment at this time concentrated on the involvement of financing procedures and the redirection of resources to other areas because of the economic crisis.

The main weaknesses of local government are the lack of strategic planning, diversity in decision-making by competent services and the mismatch between planning and implementation.

Furthermore, in our municipality the main weaknesses in the project are to be found in the low level of experience managing processes and consultation by elected people, low-level volunteer "traditional" clientele system, rivalries between political factions of the city council and the same lack of required resources of the municipality.

### III. Potentials

The creation of a Local Action Plan is important in two different ways:

(a) The contents of the LAP will act as a guide for the development of the area, in the attempt to close the gap within the growth of the rest of the city and also as a tool in creating a development plan for years to come.

(b) The procedure for the creation of the LAP has contributed to establishing a connection between the municipality (services and administration) and the residents of the target area. The municipality has received a lesson in how to involve citizens in decision-making, and the citizens for their part have learned how to trust the administration and be open to dialogue. This alone is a very valuable *acquis* in taking the municipality forward to the next era of sustainable administration.

### IV. Expected impact and effects on the image

The three years' involvement of the municipality and the experience gathered from our participation in the RegGov network was in every way unique yet challenging. The creation of a useful tool such as the LAP, which was prepared with the assistance and participation of the residents, is the beacon of a new era of local governance of our city. The fact that the LAP is a simple, understandable, flexible and practical guide is expected to expand its use to every facet of the administration. As a matter of fact, this experience is actually taking shape in the budgetary discussion for the fiscal year 2011.

The main challenge for local support groups, as revealed from the beginning, was the hard work that had to be done to achieve the connection of local society with the management and services of the city by creating a climate of dialogue and trust between the two parties; it is thought to have been achieved.

### V. LSG: composition, important stakeholders, etc.

Lately, in our country, a new culture is being created by people of different political beliefs, different backgrounds and different views on solving problems, aimed at the increasingly active participation of citizens in the decision-making process.

Our partners in the RegGov network, having the relevant experience, have managed to pass on the relevant know-how by encouraging us to get closer to citizens when it comes to integrative planning.

Thus, the municipality, in an effort to implement the LAP, has applied successful practices by creating separate entities with distinct responsibilities. Also of critical importance has been the City Administration's political commitment to implement these kind of practices with a view toward promoting transparency, accountability,

equality, and as a result, the right planning which meets the needs of the city. Following these practices, the City created a simple and flexible project management scheme. The main "schemes" employed in the drafting and implementation of Local Action Plan were the Steering Committee, which was appointed by the City Council, the Local Support Group, which consisted of residents and officials of the Municipality and the planning group (Department of Planning and Development of the municipality).

For the formation of these schemes, a series of dissemination activities, including publicity and awareness campaigns, have been carried out among residents, agencies as well as officials of the municipality. Rich information material was created and distributed to residents, as well as questionnaires to gather views and opinions of as many people as possible.

The joint meetings of local support groups with the design team of the municipality constituted a novel process initiated for the purposes of implementing the Local Action Plan. These sessions not only made possible the exchange of views between the two parties involved, but also the co-production of a tool for the government: the Local Action Plan.

Since the beginning of our participation in the network, the make-up of the Local Support Group has varied from time to time; all in all, it includes 15 people.

## VI. Action fields of the LAP: brief report and strategic aims

The Local Support Group, in an attempt to underline the area's chronic problems and propose solutions for a long-term sustainable development path, has identified four major strategic aims around which the Local Action Plan (LAP) has been developed.

These aims were then analyzed according to separate actions after the consultation procedure (dissemination activities, questionnaires, public events) with the residents, with the following results:

### *(a) Upgrading the urban environment*

The improvement of urban environment and therefore of the quality of life of the citizens requires the contribution and coordinated action from all stakeholders in order to find sustainable solutions.

The proposed lines in this section can be summarized as follows:

- (1) completion / integration infrastructure
- (2) waste management / cleanliness
- (3) anti-flood protection
- (4) traffic management - urban transport
- (5) noise pollution
- (6) energy saving
- (7) beautification of the urban fabric

### *(b) Protection / rise to prominence of the natural environment*

The natural environment and its presence in the urban fabric is a key factor of prosperity for the residents of an area. The maintenance, upgrading and strengthening of environmental assets of an area should be a paramount priority for every local authority and society. Through the proposed lines of action, this priority aims to ensure the future of our children in a more sustainable city.

- (1) green areas / open space renewal
- (2) removal of non-compliant activities
- (3) promotion of environmental activities
- (4) management of the "Patima" stream

### *(c) Strengthening social cohesion*

Social cohesion is a multifaceted concept that covers many different types of social phenomena. It is a term commonly used to describe coherent links between the members of a society.

With its participation in the RegGov network, the municipality sought to broaden social dialogue, initiate active participation of residents and promote participatory processes, so as to bring decision-making closer to the citizens.

The process of drawing up the local plan created a climate of mutual trust, and the projects which were simultaneously implemented (i.e. Central Square Restoration, elementary school construction, anti-flood control projects) have benefited from the creation of a bond, since they served as proof of the intentions of the administration.

Also, great attention was given to issues such as:

- (1) enhance the feeling of security among residents
- (2) development of social structures / infrastructure
- (3) interconnection of the area with the rest of the city
- (4) public consultation procedures
- (5) supporting volunteer action

#### *(d) Strengthening local entrepreneurship*

One of the areas that has attracted the interest of our society is that of entrepreneurship as an important driver of social and economic development throughout the world. The path of local development goes through private business initiatives and the cooperation between local government and private entrepreneurs.

Proposed routes for this section were the following:

- (1) provision of incentives
- (2) interconnection with the commercial centre
- (3) employment
- (4) innovation and new technologies

## **VII. Planned projects and their objectives**

The Local Support Group, after having studied the results of questionnaires collected among the residents and after open consultation with the inhabitants of Patima, concluded with a series of actions it considers of utmost importance for the sustainable development of the area.

These actions, as they have been prioritized based on the needs of the residents and the local support group, are as follows:

1. managing storm water drainage and anti-flooding works
2. street reconstruction or covering with asphalt
3. construction / maintenance of sidewalks
4. waste management
5. public transportation
6. traffic management / signalling
7. education infrastructure
8. rehabilitation of common and open spaces (squares / playgrounds / sports grounds)
9. construction of multi-purpose buildings (to serve as a community centre, open care centre for the elderly, citizens; services centre etc.)
10. parking
11. security
12. beautification of the urban space (relocation of the marble industries – a non-compliant in terms of the character of the area)

It is rather obvious that most of the proposed actions aim at closing the gap concerning the lack of basic infrastructure in the area, while the rest of them attempt to mitigate the “feeling of distance” from the city that residents have, due to the geographic isolation of the area.

These proposed actions have been broken down into more specific projects to form the detailed action plan accompanied with the corresponding budget.

## **VIII. Monitoring (on the selection of the target area) & evaluation (on the implementation of the LAP)**

Every action plan that is considered to be integrated needs to incorporate not just planning and implementation, but also an evaluation mechanism to help it readjust to the new circumstances.

To deploy this mechanism, the municipality used the experienced gained from the implementation of the Habitat Agenda II in the city and the creation of the urban observatory.

In this framework, a series of environmental, socio-economic and sustainable urban development indices have been employed to monitor the progress of the LAP and the impact it will have on the area.

## IX. LAP timetable

Although the hierarchy of operations, as presented in a previous paragraph, which emerged from consultations with residents and the local support group reflects their desire and is translated into a 5-year (2011-2015) implementation schedule, there are factors that could change - in part - is an absolute hierarchy.

Both the availability of own resources of the municipality and the timing for the desired call from the managing authorities of operational programs can significantly impact the development schedule.

Finally, as with any business plan, the City and the Local Action Plan for Patima may be revised and adapted to existing conditions to take into account the existing climate. Any such review may well change and the implementation schedule.

## X. LAP financing

For the successful implementation of the local action plan, acquiring the necessary funds is a prerequisite that cannot be overlooked. The hindrances that this LAP is facing concerning financing are twofold:

- (a) the current pressing economic situation that Greece is facing limits the municipality's own funds to a low level
- (b) the region of Attica has entered a phasing-out status which is translated into less direct funds from European initiatives

In such an environment, the LSG, in cooperation with the municipality, has laid out a financing plan for the LAP amounting to 36,700,000.00 euros and covering a period of five years. Of this amount, € 2,600,000.00 are proposed to be financed from the municipality's own funds (mainly concerning infrastructure projects), while the remaining € 34,100,000.00 will come from national operational programmes and European initiatives.

## XI. Impact of the transnational exchange for the LAP production

During the past few years, the participation of the municipality in various EU funded projects has left a valuable asset to the municipal services: integrative ways of thinking, planning and policy implementation.

Furthermore, the participation in the RegGov network has highlighted the importance of public participation not only in local decision-making and policy-making, but also in the sustainable development of the city. And the exchange with the partners has shown us the way to put all of the above into practice.



## Imprint

**Regional Governance** of Sustainable Integrated Neighbourhood Development – RegGov  
**RegGov** is a Fast Track Thematic Network in the URBACT II Programme.

Further information is available under: [urbact.eu/reg\\_gov](http://urbact.eu/reg_gov)

## Local Action Plan

English abstract

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Patima

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URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development.

It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal changes. URBACT helps cities to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. It enables cities to share good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe. URBACT is 300 cities, 29 countries, and 5,000 active participants. URBACT is part-financed by the European Union (European Regional Development Fund).

Integrated approaches to the development of deprived urban neighbourhoods have proved to be successful in many old EU member states over the last decades. Crucial factors for success are efficient co-operation and a high level of trust between cities and their managing authorities. The challenge is how to develop, implement and fund such policies at a broad European level. The REGGOV Network focused on making practical experiences accessible and supporting partners to develop and implement new integrated strategies for sustainable neighbourhood and urban development.

[www.urbact.eu/reg\\_gov](http://www.urbact.eu/reg_gov)



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