



"Regions, Cities, Neighbourhoods - strong Partners"

# RegGov

Regional Governance of Sustainable Integrated  
Development of Deprived Urban Areas

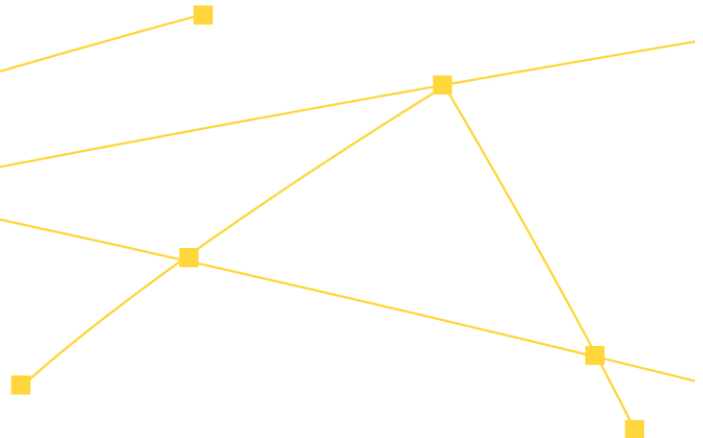
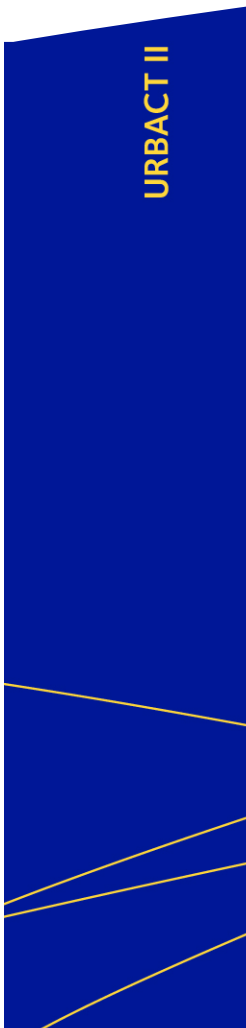
## Local Action Plan

English abstract



### City of Siracusa, Sicily/Italy

April 2011



Connecting cities  
Building successes





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## I. Description of the RegGov target area

In the city of Siracusa, the RegGov target areas have been identified in three deprived neighbourhoods: Akradina, Grotta Santa, and S. Lucia. Grotta Santa and Akradina are located in the uptown of Siracusa, while S. Lucia is located closer to the city centre and the south. However, the *Local Action Plan* (LAP) of Syracuse is the result of different and integrated actions, carried out in order to improve the conditions and quality of life of citizens living in the city itself. The LAP is the result of a general process supported by various programs, such as *Agenda 21*, the *District Plan*, the *Sustainable and Urban Development Plan* of the city and its districts. The Municipality began its regeneration process from Ortigia island, its historical city centre, and now is focusing also on these three neighbourhoods.

## II. Problems & challenges

Siracusa is marked by a high unemployment rate and by a reluctance to initiate new entrepreneurial activities. At the moment, the development of new businesses is on the increase, due to manifold attempts to set up a support network to aid economic growth.

The serious unemployment situation affects, above all, the younger segments of the population, in particular pertaining to the way in which they look for their first job. The most important problems of the neighbourhoods, in particular identified in the RegGov project, are:

- insufficient amount of appropriate housing for families;
- an extremely poor state of public space;
- a monostructure of mere housing estates with only a few social infrastructural facilities;
- high rates of unemployment;
- a high degree of micro-criminality, also of young people;
- low or almost no education amongst the socially excluded residents.

Furthermore, the number of inhabitants with a foreign background has doubled through immigration, which has caused various problems of integration. The only area that is experiencing a positive transformation is Ortigia, due to the rebuilt baroque city centre (visited by many tourists every day).

As a result of these problems, the municipality provides different economic incentives, extra services and education for young people and assistance for immigrants. There are also seven kindergartens in the area of Grotta Santa and Akradina, but there is a significant lack of continuity of different projects of the city and an insufficient public budget to help the operators who work in these areas.

An essential step is needed to bring about a cultural change in the way the young unemployed approach the job market.

The sectors in which an expansion of the workforce is needed to create higher employment levels within a short space of time are: traditional crafts, tourism and the (advanced) tertiary sector.

## III. Potentials

The potentials of the city are:

- activities of requalification of the historical and architectural inheritance and the touristic activities, respecting the productive and identifying activities of the territory through the reinforcement of the divided management between public and private partners;
- an integrated approach to physical preservation and regeneration of the centre of the towns in order to access resources for the sustained development and to promote the urban environment;
- an integrated approach toward strategies of promoting local economic activities regarding the importance of local resources and cultural inheritance, emphasizing traditional industries, touristic services, and cultural activities.



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

- Move towards high quality public services in all neighbourhoods, and less reliance on regeneration programmes that “shore up poor public services in a few areas”.
- A set of actions and interventions that could stimulate (further) economic development in the neighbourhood, in combination with the social and physical field.
- More investment in the neighbourhood by public and private partners.
- More residents and companies that find the neighbourhood attractive (lively, safe, well connected).
- More new residents and companies in the neighbourhood from other parts of the city and region.
- One or more projects to be submitted to the ERDF programme.
- A strategy on how to translate the European experience to other neighbourhoods in Syracuse and exchange experiences from our city with other cities in Sicily.
- Changing Culture and Reducing Bureaucracy: increase flexibility through change within central government.

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

The draft and editing of this LAP has involved different actors in order to better define its strategy. However, this matter has been one of the most complicated to carry out, due to the “top down” approach usually practiced by the public sector and administration in Italy.

The level of collaboration with the local stakeholders can be listed as follows:

- City level: Municipal local authority and Department of Social Services;
- Neighbourhood level – city district level (Akradina, Grotta Santa and S. Lucia). It is still essential that these levels work as closely together as possible, each contributing to the other in order to improve the “bottom up” approach in the city.

- There are specific proposals and funding programmes to support community groups and local activists/social entrepreneurs (Community Chests and Community Development Venture Fund). Involvement of voluntary and community sectors is strongly emphasised in the Action Plan.

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

The central goal of the action plan is to stimulate the economic development of the city of Syracuse. This affects the development of the neighbourhood as a whole, along with the competitiveness of Sicily itself and the south of Italy.

The Local Action Plan targets three main pillars:

- new policies, funding and targets to tackle problems such as unemployment, crime and poor services;
- effective drivers of change at local and community levels; and
- regional and national leadership and support.

In order to achieve these three goals, the Local Action Plan supports 15 strategic projects which in turn support 9 pilot projects and actions among them.

- Strategic Project No. 1 - Coastal Park.
- Strategic Project No. 2 - Urban renewal in S. Lucia.
- Strategic Project No. 3 - Waterfront Porto Piccolo.
- Strategic Project No. 4 - Urban Research Center and Center for Environmental Education.
- Strategic Project No. 5 - Waterfront Main Harbour.
- Strategic Project No. 6 - Cycle path “Pantanelli”.
- Strategic Project No. 7 - Cycle path “Anapociane” - Maddalena Peninsula.
- Strategic Project No. 8 - Maddalena Natural Park.

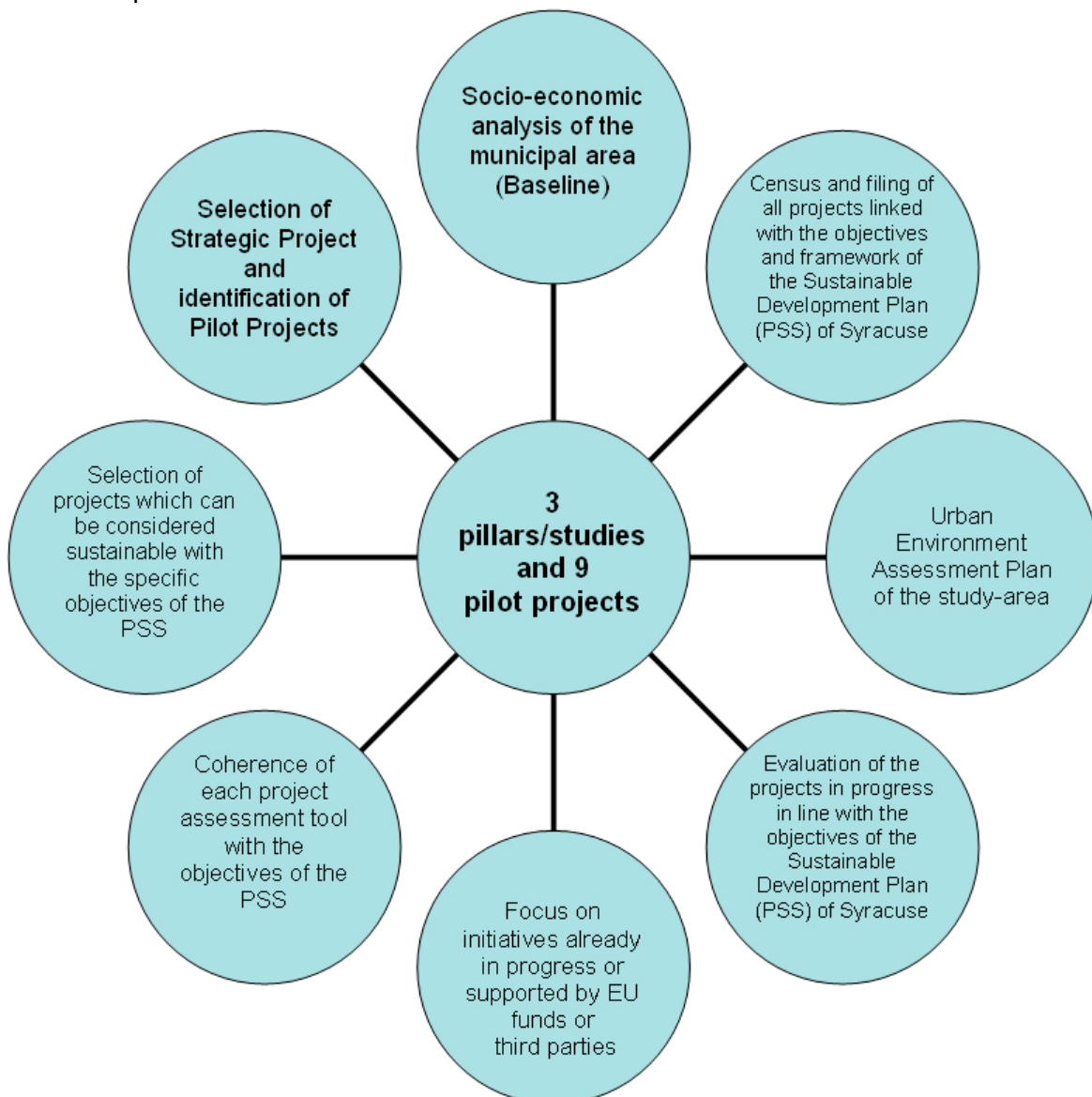
- Strategic Project No. 9 – Highway 124, Ermocrate-Bears intersection: rebuilding of the functional road junction.
- Strategic Project No. 10 – Improvement of the public transport system.
- Strategic Project No. 11 - Introduction of flexible transport services.
- Strategic Project No. 12 – Improvement of the accessibility of Ortigia Island: parking system and bus connection to the city centre.
- Strategic Project No. 13 - Balancing the main route plan: measures of functional intersections systems.
- Strategic Project No. 14 - Cycle path on disused railway: Santa Panagia - Capuccini.
- Strategic Project No. 15 - Cycle path on ordinary roads and redesign of the railway centre: Capuccini - Piave.

## VII. Planned projects and their objectives

All the LAP's strategic projects implement the following:

a) a common vision:

- stop and reverse the process of wholesale decline of deprived neighbourhoods;
- acceptable conditions and services for people on low incomes should be comparable with expectations of the rest of the population;
- all neighbourhoods to be free of fear and a place where people can envision a future for their family;
- no neighbourhoods where so many people's top priority is to move out.





- b) long-term goals:
- lower joblessness; less crime; better health; better skills; better housing and physical environment in all the poorest neighbourhoods;
  - narrow the gap with these measures between the most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of the city.

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

This process is still ongoing.

### IX. LAP timetable

From 2010 to 2020

### X. LAP financing

- In general, compared with investment costs of about 67 million euros, in addition to management costs of about 4.36 million euros, the 15 projects are able to generate an income stream of 11.32 million euros as a one-time amount (the induced yards) and 9.1 million euros per year, counting also saved money thanks to the improvements of the road network and the replacement of private transport with public transport.

- The local Strategy has identified the most important projects within each theme (and baselines); actions to be taken; associated funding and sources; target outcomes (“narrowing the gap”).

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

From our international experience in the RegGov Project we have, in particular, learned that:

- the following is important: strong-willed people and a strong team – striving for vital coalitions;
- the public- private partnership is a challenge;
- we must get the business community involved and committed to the development of the district;
- an independent chair from the business community for the economic neighbourhood board?
- use the quality of public space as an opportunity;
- study/assessment/monitoring of data to provide a learning curve;
- a total approach geared towards the problems in the neighbourhood;
- tie employment potential in the neighbourhood to jobs in the neighbourhood and surrounding areas.



## 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

**RegGov partner city:**

City of Siracusa, Sicily/Italy

**RegGov target area:**

Akradina, Grotta Santa, Santa Lucia, Ortigia

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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)