



UNIC

Final Outputs – Fact Sheet

June 2011



Connecting cities
Building successes



1. SHORT DESCRIPTION IN A NUTSHELL

UNIC is about change and how to address industrial heritage in the ceramic sector to build new competitive factors for a new, global knowledge economy. The path followed by UNIC is relevant for all cities depending on traditional industries that want to embark on a similar process of smart growth.

2. NAME OF THE PROJECT

DATES – (month and year only)

Project launch: **December 2008**

End of the project: **July 2011**

3. PARTNERS

- City of **Limoges**, France
- City of **Aveiro**, Portugal
- City of **Castellón**, Spain
- City of **Cluj-Napoca**, Romania
- City of **Delft**, The Netherlands
- City of **Faenza**, Italy
- City of **Pécs**, Hungary
- City of **Stoke-on-Trent**, United Kingdom
- **Sevilla Global**, Development Agency of the City of Sevilla, Spain

4. WHAT WERE THE CONCRETE CHALLENGES ADDRESSED BY THE PROJECT?

An **urban economy is weakened when one single industry prevails** or makes up the main economic activity. Subcontractors, employees and all the urban local economy that this activity involves are endangered when such sector goes through an economic decline, as it has been steadily the case with the ceramic sector. Less production in traditional sectors means jobs losses, vacant industrial areas, brownfields, less commerce, less tourism...

Many European cities host traditional and innovative economic activities. Ceramics however offer an original way of connecting a specific industry to its location, having names of cities and products interlocked. Ceramic cities have the key to link industrial innovation, cultural dynamism, attractiveness and territorial marketing, if the right policies are developed.

UNIC is a Urban Development project, designed and managed by city authorities to deal with such issues, in cities in which name, history, economy and identity are highly connected to ceramics industry.

It is a project about **change and innovation**, focused on **optimizing the heritage / innovation tandem** to reinforce the attractiveness of ceramic cities, which results are a set of action plans, with activities to be executed at local level. The principal challenge under UNIC has been to put forward local policies to revitalise cities which economy has traditionally been deeply rooted in the ceramic sectors, namely by:

- **increasing "traditional know-how"**,
- **supporting new initiatives in innovation**,
- **working on a better match between heritage and innovation** in order to offer a new image of the cities and thus to reinforce their "attractiveness" while offering living conditions, professional and personal development perspectives likely to "gain loyalty" from inhabitants and companies, and also attract new ones.

The main challenge addressed by UNIC partners has therefore been:

“How can local economic communities based on traditional industries, and in particular ceramics, prosper in the rapidly changing, increasingly open global economy?”

5. WHAT CONCRETE CONCLUSIONS DID YOUR PROJECT ACHIEVE? WHAT RECOMMENDATIONS DO YOU PUT FORWARD?

The main aim of UNIC has been to provide a **forum for mutual learning and exchange of good practices** that will allow each participating city to implement better Local Action Plans directed to its local needs, and based on available resources and circumstances, which vary significantly from city to city.

The UNIC project has defined 5 main topics for action that clearly stand out as concentrating the majority of interests and needs from the partner cities. These are:

- Towards knowledge economy through the **promotion of innovation** (Financing and evaluation of innovation)
- **Industry strengthening**, (in particular through university industry relations)
- **Urban integration** (Integrating heritage in the urban and economic fabric)
- **Cultural, artistic and tourism values** (Creating large scale dynamics), and
- **Urban identity** (City marketing and promotion)

The initial baseline study from UNIC already produced a series of recommendations for its city partners, which have led to actions in the respective local action plans:

- To develop enhanced cooperation models between research, innovation and industrial development within **centres of excellence** with the logic of cluster (Limoges European Centre of ceramics, Centre for Research in Ceramics and Composite Materials in Aveiro, Centre of excellence for Enterprise and Innovation in Ceramics in Stoke, Castellón European Centre for Innovation in Ceramics, etc)
- To improve qualifications of the **Ceramics labour force** (Stoke’s “Ceramics Skills Academy” and Aveiro’s training and qualifications plan)
- To strive for a **Protected Origin Marking** (initiatives to protect the name “Porcelaine de Limoges”)
- To illustrate the potential of **ceramics materials in the urban environment** (Castellón’s “CityLab”, Faenza’s Open Air Museum, Aveiro’s Park of Sustainability)
- To develop **more cultural attractions** and organise large scale periodic events that can exploit the city’s tourism potential (British Ceramics Biennial of Stoke-on-Trent, “Pécs: European capital of Culture 2010”, Limoges international exhibition “De terre et de feu”, Ceramics Fair “From Roman tradition to innovation” in Cluj-Napoca, Faenza’s “Argillà”, etc)
- To **bridge the gap between image and city identity** through the development of routes (map of the ceramic sector in Sevilla, Porcelain Route of Delft), the association of the inhabitants (City campaign at Pécs “Everyday Zsolnay, Exhibition of the Gyugyi collections in Pécs, Faenza’s book to record the history and the future), and innovative territorial marketing strategies (“Delft Blue”)

UNIC has also revealed the obvious synergy between cities in the network, that has resulted that a number of common actions :

- UNIC’s ambition is to create a **sustainable network of cities sharing a community of interests and goals, with a European and international visibility.**

At European level, the UNIC partners are willing to create a European Route of Ceramics, which would be built up from the coordination of local routes, linking sites, structures and events related with ceramics.

At global level, relations started with international partners: a charter creating the World Ceramics Road was signed in Limoges on June 17th, 2010, by the UNIC cities and representatives of four Asian cities (Jingdezhen in China, Seto in Japan, Icheon and Gangjin in South Korea). Moreover, the network was

represented through a common booth at the International Ceramics Fair in Jingdezhen in China in October 2009 and 2010.

- UNIC has become a **platform of initiatives** gathering local stakeholders from partner cities. An example for this is the GPRIX project co-financed by the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development, that concerns the design and implementation of SME research and innovation support programmes, in particular amongst traditional sector SMEs.

6. WHAT WAS THE ADDED-VALUE OF BEING INVOLVED IN AN URBACT PROJECT FOR YOUR PARTNERS?

— What has been the greatest added value of UNIC? The networking;

“UNIC contributed to give Limoges the international dimension that it previously lacked” – Monique Boulestin, Vice-Mayor of Limoges, Urbact Newsletter #54, May 2008

In terms of cooperation between European cities with a strong ceramic tradition there is clear a “before” and an “after” UNIC.

Before UNIC, cooperation was scarce, mainly bilateral and focused on the past, mainly covering aspects such as heritage and tradition, through activities such as museum cooperation.

After UNIC cooperation is intense, multilateral – a European Association is in the process of being created – and with a strong focus on the future, in aspects as local innovation support measures, living labs and smart cities.

— What else have city authorities gained from UNIC? A stronger link with regional funds

“Involve your Managing Authority in the project as closely as possible. It is also essential that the Managing Authority be part of the Local Support Group” – Rachel Nicholson, Stoke-on-Trent City Council Economic Officer, Urbact News, July 2010

UNIC, as all URBACT projects, is funded from the European Commission's Regional Policy with the aim to help cities to develop action plans that should then be implemented with resources from regional funds, that again could come from Regional Policy programmes. The synergy is obvious, even if the link is not always a direct one.

Involvement from Managing Authorities in the development of the Local Action Plans is crucial and the project has contributed to develop links between city authorities and regional managing authorities in charge of funding for regional development, creating new habits of cooperation and planning together for a better allocation of funds.

And even if this is still an area for improvement, as cooperation has been less intense in some cities and timing hasn't always been synchronized : when Action Plans have been presented, most regional operational programme funds had already been allocated.

— What pitfalls have been avoided? Avoid an excessive focus on ceramics and ceramic industry needs, keep a broad perspective in terms of urban development;

“More than a project to foster the ceramic industry (...) the UNIC network of cities will create a new brand image of ceramics and will reach a population of over 2 million people” – Vicent Sales, Castellón City Counsellor, cited on “El Periodic”, May 2010

UNIC, more than a project aimed at industry, is a project aimed at citizens. Albeit clear in the UNIC objectives and to UNIC partners, this message wasn't always easy to get through, especially in a downturn economic climate with an industry eager for public support. Industry involvement has been actively pursued by all partners, but all the way, they have been keen to keep the focus on urban innovation and the impact it

could have in citizens, including but not limited to, aspects as employment and economic growth through industry revamping.

— **What could have been done differently? A greater focus of Local Action Plans on materially and financially “doable”, even if less ambitious, activities.**

“Funding of our actions through projects and public programmes is essential for Aveiro to open Innovation to Local Firms” – André Cester Costa, Aveiro City Council Economic Officer, presentation at Urbact Annual Conference in Liège, November 2010

While as UNIC approaches its end, and the overall feeling is undeniable one of success and continuation, there are always lessons to extract and things that could have been done differently when looking back. One of those lessons regarding the conception of Local Action Plans and the need to focus on doable actions, within the existing means and resources. As the UNIC project was a Fast Track project, and had to deliver the Local Action Plans in a relative short time, correlation between planned activities and existing funding opportunities at local level was not exploited as in depth as it could have been.

This was also the result of a lower involvement from Managing Authorities in some regions, and also by some lack of definition regarding the “Fast Track” status itself, as some or most cities were in the impression that due to this status, funding of actions within the LAPs would be easier than it actually turned out to be. In spite of this, the level of implementation of Local Action Plans so far is quite satisfactory, in spite of all the budget constraints that municipalities face all across Europe.

— **What final benefits for the “man in the street” in a partner city? An increased quality of life**

“We like to use URBACT/UNIC to fill the gap between ‘image’ and ‘identity’, because it’s not only about ceramics, but much more about an urban transformation of the old historic city into the 21st century. It is about innovation, about ‘creation history” – Paulus van Uythoven, Cultural Heritage Department of the City of Delft

Finally, the added value of UNIC in the end will be what it represents in increased quality of life for the “man or woman in the street” in any partner city.

Thanks to the cooperation between cities that took place in UNIC, the passerby in Porcelain’s capital Limoges and the jogger in Aveiro “Park of Sustainability” will soon be able to walk, or run, in a street which is actually made - at least partly - of ceramics, as it is already the case with most of the boardwalks in Castellón, contributing to create a sense of belonging with the city and its heritage and a greener environment through recycling of industrial waste.

Former workers from shut down industries may have a second chance and become entrepreneurs within the new incubator in the new Zsolnay Cultural Quarter in Pécs, as they have before done at Delft Technical University, or at Limoges’s Ester Technopole, incubators.

Fine arts enthusiasts from Aveiro, Limoges and Faenza may attend large scale cultural events under the ceramics topic, as they have been doing every two years at the British Ceramics Biennial at Stoke-on-Trent. And this is only starting, as implementation of Local Action Plans is still at the beginning in most cities.

7. WHAT ARE THE CONCRETE SOLUTIONS DEVELOPED BY PROJECT PARTNERS?

Limoges: Limoges is the first economic and demographic point in the Atlantic Centre West of France. The city is known all over the world for its firecrafts, amongst which the famous porcelain masterpieces. Its know-how and its creations have made the name of ‘Limoges’ a luxury brand which is appreciated throughout the whole world. Currently, Limoges faces major challenges related to the consequences of international competition, which has impacted various sectors of its industry (such as ceramics and textiles). The Limoges Local Action Plan (LAP) addresses these challenges by aiming at ambitious forms of innovation, namely in terms of promotion of its identity and development of technology transfer.

Aveiro: South of Porto, a few kilometres from the coast, Aveiro is renowned for the azulejos that adorn many of its buildings. It is also a very important industrial centre, marked by a ceramics sector that has significantly

contributed to the region's economic development. The town is home to one of the most famous porcelain plants, Vista Alegre, founded in the 19th century. Besides, Aveiro is known as the city of innovation, thanks to the projects that have been developed in the area of Information Society.

The Local Action Plan of Aveiro addresses the challenge of competition on international market with actions that aim at introducing more innovative processes through R&D in the ceramics cluster.

Pécs: Pécs is considered to be the economic and cultural centre of south-west Hungary. Its industrial development in the 19th century built its reputation, with flagship products such as Littke (sparkling wine), and ceramics production, closely linked with the Zsolnay factory.

The city was European Capital of Culture in 2010, and its Local Action Plan is closely connected with this event, focusing in particular on the actions linked to the development and promotion of the Zsolnay Cultural Quarter. The Plan includes a series of actions aimed at revitalising the well-located flagship building that will share cultural functions (the Puppet Theatre of Pécs, the Cultural Centre, the Gallery, Museums and University units) with commercial and catering functions.

Delft: Delft is famous for its ties with the Royal House of Orange and the painter Vermeer, as well as for its blue 'Delftware'. Although ceramics production has declined, ceramics continue to be a major tourist attraction, as well as an important part of the city's heritage and identity.

The core of Delft's Local Action Plan is a large project to establish a Delftware Centre, which is expected to become the centre of all local activities around ceramics, including an urban development programme called "Delft Ceramic City". Besides the technology, Delft focuses on cultural and marketing innovation by displaying its historic collections, together with contemporary pieces from 'artist-in-residence' and scientific applications of ceramics.

Stoke-on-Trent: Located in the Midlands, Stoke-on-Trent was a major industrial centre producing coal, steel and ceramics. It was hard hit by the decline of the traditional industry, but still remains a reference in the ceramics sector, with such companies as Wedgwood and Minton. The city also offers tourists a variety of sites to visit (factory stores, museums, etc). The ceramics industry in Stoke-on-Trent already works as a successful cluster across a broad range of industries.

The UNIC Local Action Plan further encourages and enhances the innovative partnership currently underway with a package of measures which are focused specifically on Stoke-on-Trent and on the upgrading and growth of its ceramics cluster. The goal is to increase its GVA by 50% over the next 15 years.

Castellón: Castellón de la Plana, located about 75 kilometres from Valence, based the development of its economy on tourism, agriculture – in particular citrus fruit – and on the ceramics industry. The Valencian Region produces 90% of Spain's total ceramic output (specially concentrated in Castellón). Castellón has a very competitive industrial sector, and a dynamic higher education system focused on supporting it.

Castellón's Local Action Plan will target two areas : the improvement of the cooperation model between research and industry on the one hand, and the development of its image according to its economic development (use of ceramic tiles on the pavements and in buildings) on the other hand.

Faenza: This city of art located in North-Eastern Italy gave its name to faience, and has been reputed since the 12th century for its ceramics production. Over the centuries, this traditional production has enabled craftspeople and artists to develop original and lasting relations with the world of industry, business and design. Although today pottery has become less important in the city's economy in terms of crafts and industry, the local ceramics sector does boast a dynamic network of agencies and services, a part of which is located in the Arts and Sciences Park Evangelista Torricelli – Faventia.

The Faenza Local Action Plan aims at strengthening the relationship between local players, and duly focuses on networking activities, such as conferences, events and publications.

Cluj Napoca:

The third-largest city in Romania by its population, Cluj-Napoca is considered to be the historic capital of the Principality of Transylvania. Cluj-Napoca is a city with a dynamic social and cultural life largely due to its student-town status and it is home to foreign investment. But the city has some difficulties to preserve its cultural and economic heritage traditional sectors – such as ceramics – having practically disappeared from both the economic scene and from the city social, cultural and architectural life.

The Local Action Plan of Cluj Napoca will aim at a mix of services, infrastructure and events to support an emerging sector of creative industries, building on the local university of Art and Design and on the infrastructure of the former IRIS Ceramics Factory.

Sevilla:

Capital of Andalusia, Sevilla has a rich tradition in ceramics dating back to the Moorish period but it also has an industrial tradition expressed in factories such as Pickman, started in 1841. Sevilla is also resolutely turned towards the future and innovation.

The Sevilla Local Action Plan, to be implemented by Sevilla Global, an agency for the promotion and development of the city, will aim at the touristic and entrepreneurial promotion of the ceramics cluster, involving craftsmen. It includes the realization of a “Ceramics Map” and the support of renovation works in the city using ceramic materials. Concomitantly, the plan will promote technological cooperation between industry and the well known university, and associated technological sectors.

8. AVAILABLE OUTPUTS

UNIC Baseline Study (http://urbact.eu/fileadmin/Projects/UNIC/outputs_media/Baseline_study.pdf) : The main output from the project development phase, with an assessment of local policies and practices, methods and tools which could be implemented by partner cities or could be suggested to the partner cities, and definition of the organisational and content framework for the programme;

Beating the crisis with UNIC - Highlights from UNIC Local Action Plans (<http://urbact.eu/en/projects/innovation-creativity/unic/our-outputs/>): A communication oriented document including the most relevant actions included in the 9 Local Action Plans that have resulted from UNIC.

UNIC Local Action Plans (<http://urbact.eu/en/projects/innovation-creativity/unic/our-outputs/>) : The 9 Local Action Plans from the 9 UNIC cities, presenting the actions inspired by UNIC collaboration and intended for implementation in each city.

UNIC Brochure (http://urbact.eu/fileadmin/Projects/UNIC/documents_media/unic_interieur_bdef.pdf) : The UNIC project, its cities partners, objectives and activities in a nutshell.

UNIC Meeting reports including Thematic Reports on the 5 working groups (<http://urbact.eu/en/projects/innovation-creativity/unic/our-outputs/>): overview of the case studies, working groups conclusions and common projects achieved within UNIC

URBACT II

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 challenges. It helps them 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

www.urbact.eu/unic



EUROPEAN
PROGRAMME
FOR
SUSTAINABLE
URBAN
DEVELOPMENT

