

THE URBACT II PROGRAMME

URBACT II



EUROPEAN UNION
European Regional
Development Fund

Connecting cities
Building successes





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→ OBJECTIVES

Following URBACT I (2002-2006), the URBACT II (2007-2013) European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable and integrated urban development takes part in implementing the Lisbon-Gothenburg Strategy (priority to competitiveness, growth and jobs). URBACT enables European cities to work together and to develop effective and sustainable solutions to major key urban challenges. Each project brings together 6 to 12 cities or other partners during two to three years and focuses on a specific urban issue.

Specifically, URBACT aims to:

- ▶ Facilitate the exchange of experience and learning among city policy-makers, decision-makers and practitioners;
- ▶ Widely disseminate the good practices and lessons drawn from the exchanges and ensure the transfer of know-how;
- ▶ Assist city policy-makers and practitioners, as well as managers of Operational Programmes, to define action plans for sustainable urban development.

URBACT is structured along 2 thematic axes:

Priority Axe 1 - Cities, Engines of Growth and Jobs

- 1.1. Entrepreneurship
- 1.2. Innovation and knowledge economy
- 1.3. Employment and human capital

Priority Axe 2 - Attractive and Cohesive Cities

- 2.1. Integrated development of deprived areas and areas at risk
- 2.2. Social inclusion
- 2.3. Environmental issues
- 2.4. Governance and Urban planning

A commitment to fostering integrated approaches to urban issues cuts across all themes in URBACT. Efforts to promote economic competitiveness cannot disregard issues of social cohesion, and alternately slow economic growth can have a negative impact on social cohesion. Consequently, projects address one of these themes as a dominant entry point while exploring connections with the others. URBACT is also encouraging partners to address issues related to major global challenges facing European cities, particularly the consequences of the financial and economic crisis, the impact of demographic change and the mitigation of climate change.

→ BENEFICIARIES AND CO-FINANCING

The URBACT programme brings together the 27 European Union Member States, as well as Norway and Switzerland. Its beneficiaries may be:

- ▶ Cities;
- ▶ Regional authorities;
- ▶ National authorities;
- ▶ Universities, research centres and public bodies

Project partners are co-financed:

- ▶ Up to 80% ERDF for partners from Convergence areas;
- ▶ Up to 70% ERDF for partners from Competitiveness areas;
- ▶ Up to 50% national contributions for partners from Norway and Switzerland

→ THE REGIONS FOR ECONOMIC CHANGE INITIATIVE AND THE FAST TRACK LABEL

The European Commission's 'Regions for Economic Change' initiative fosters identification, testing and dissemination of good practices in the sphere of economic modernisation, growth and job creation, as well as the inclusion of innovative policies into European mainstream programmes.

The Commission grants the Fast Track Label to Thematic Networks which develop strong participation of Managing Authorities of operational programmes and address one of the seven priority areas under 'Regions for Economic Change'. Nine URBACT Thematic Networks have been given the Fast Track Label so far, among which seven are still actively supported by the Commission.





→ STRENGTHENING THE IMPACT ON LOCAL POLICIES: THE “URBACT METHOD”

Using specific means and tools, URBACT puts emphasis on the impact of transnational cooperation on urban development policies and practices.

► URBACT LOCAL ACTION PLANS

Each URBACT partner commits to producing a Local Action Plan. This concrete and operational output shall address the problems identified by the partner at the beginning of the project and draw on the results of the exchange and learning activities implemented by partners over the life of the project.

► URBACT LOCAL SUPPORT GROUPS

Each URBACT partner sets up a Local Support Group gathering the stakeholders most concerned by the issue. These groups contribute to and benefit from the transnational exchanges (elaborating case studies, taking part to seminars, etc.) and above all, they are in charge of elaborating the Local Action Plan. They have their own dedicated budget.

► INVOLVEMENT OF MANAGING AUTHORITIES

The URBACT programme strongly encourages the participation of Managing Authorities of European Operational Programmes (ERDF and ESF) in the projects' activities in order to increase the impact of these activities on local policies and link Local Action Plans to funds available in the mainstream. More than 200 Managing Authorities are currently associated with the ongoing projects.

► PROJECT PHASING

The creation of projects is a two-step process, including a phase for project development and a phase for the implementation of planned activities. The approval of the Monitoring Committee is required to enter both phases:

1. Development phase: 6 months for Thematic Networks/ 4 months for Working Groups are dedicated to project development (completion of partnership; production of a baseline study, considering both the European level and the partners' situation, with a focus on urban policies, concerning urban development policies; definition of themes and related outputs, etc.).

2. Implementation phase: once they have been approved, projects start with exchange and learning activities, production of outputs, dissemination, etc.

→ BUILDING UP PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE FOR EUROPEAN CITIES

Building on existing experience, producing new knowledge and disseminating it in such a way that it can be of use to the widest audience - these are the goals of the capitalisation and dissemination process that lie at the core of URBACT.

► EXPERTISE AND LEAD EXPERTS

Each project can benefit from the support of experts in terms of methodology and thematic input. The experts are to be chosen from the pool of experts who have been qualified for URBACT (list of experts available on www.urbact.eu).

Projects appoint a 'Lead Expert' to provide thematic and methodological support throughout its entire duration and to participate on its behalf in programme level activities, particularly regarding capitalisation and dissemination initiatives.

► THEMATIC POLES

Thematic Poles and their activities are the key pillars of the capitalisation process at programme level. They provide a platform for exchanges of knowledge, good practices and methods. They also represent the main URBACT tool for improving both the effectiveness and quality of exchanges and learning at project level.

Within these poles, URBACT projects focusing on similar or complementary issues identify and share their results and knowledge acquired (case studies, practical tools, policy recommendations, etc.) in view of consolidating this knowledge and make it useful and accessible to the wider community of urban practitioners and policy-makers all over Europe.

► NATIONAL DISSEMINATION POINTS

To have a wider impact upon urban practitioners, URBACT disseminate programme and project news and results on its website www.urbact.eu as well as on 20 national partner websites in their national languages.

→ EXCHANGING AND LEARNING ON SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

URBACT Projects focus on key urban issues. They enable cities and other public authorities to meet and exchange experiences, identify and transfer good practices, build new local policies, draw lessons and recommendations to disseminate to urban policy-makers and practitioners. While operating at local level, URBACT Projects are also working at programme level, within three Thematic Poles. Within this framework, they contribute to sub-thematic clusters in order to share their results and build up practical knowledge on issues that cut-across several projects.

Cities, Engines of Economic Development and Job Creation

Cities are increasingly recognized as the “motors” of economic change in modern knowledge-based societies. However, they also concentrate a large share of social and environmental challenges. Both facts have taken cities out of their traditional role of purely physical and land planning into exploring new ways of intervening in social and economic fields as part of the urban sustainable development. The current downturn has reinforced this necessity for cities and local authorities to develop integrated policies to foster employment and support firms.

URBACT II projects in this Pole are working in 2 thematic clusters related to these challenges:

- ▶ **Innovation and Creativity:** How to stimulate innovation and creativity as drivers of sustainable urban development (with a focus on medium-sized cities).
- ▶ **Human Capital and Entrepreneurship:** How to untap the human potential of disadvantaged social groups and neighbourhoods, especially through the promotion of entrepreneurship and demand-led workforce.

Cities, Active Inclusion and Governance

To tackle urban problems, European cities have developed some of the most sophisticated and concerted policies and practices aimed at promoting social inclusion and managing diversity. Despite these strengths, the response is uneven and has varying success. The recent economic crisis also put these policies to the test.

Partners involved in URBACT have chosen to improve their local “performance” with regard to:

- ▶ **Active Inclusion:** how can specific groups such as young and older people, women and migrants be included both in the labour market and in wider society.
- ▶ **Quality Sustainable Living:** How to generate a better living environment for (and with) urban citizens and communities (with a focus on housing and health issues).

Governance issues are a core cross-cutting challenge for most European cities today. Within URBACT as well, a number of partners are sharing experiences and working together to improve their governance structures and processes:

- ▶ **Metropolitan Governance:** How to develop integrated solutions across a metropolitan or city territory in which governance is fragmented because administrative units do not correspond to modern functional city regions or polycentric groupings of smaller urban areas (including cross-border governance).

Cities and Integrated Sustainable Development

Integrated approaches to urban development are increasingly recognized as offering a more efficient response to the growing complexity of our urban societies. In order to address contemporary urban challenges, policies combining physical, social, economic, cultural and environmental dimensions have steadily replaced policy models primarily targeting physical regeneration. A series of URBACT projects are currently working on the following topics:

- ▶ **Regeneration of Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods:** How to develop integrated and sustainable regeneration of deprived areas, ensuring that people are at the centre of policies that connect physical development with tackling worklessness, school drop-out, drugs, crime and other problems in the areas.
- ▶ **Low Carbon Urban Environment:** Most greenhouse gas emissions emanate from the world's major urban areas. Therefore the response of cities to the climate question will be of prime importance in seeking to achieve sustainable and environmentally responsible urban futures. Partners involved in URBACT are currently working on strategies and concrete interventions as part of the drive towards the energy neutral city, with a specific focus on transport and sustainable housing.
- ▶ **Cultural Heritage and City Development:** How to design and implement integrated policies for the management of heritage in cities (whether it is historical, industrial or military heritage), allowing not only for the preservation but also for the development of historic urban areas and the city as a whole.
- ▶ **Port Cities:** How to create opportunities for port-cities seeking to diversify their activities, plan for delocalisation of port activities, develop new and attractive water front or re-use port heritage in innovative and sustainable development policies.

→ URBACT II PROJECTS

PROJECTS	ISSUES ADDRESSED	LEAD PARTNERS
CITIES, ENGINES OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & JOB CREATION		
Creative Clusters	Creative clusters in low density urban areas (diversifying local economic base; using cultural activities as catalysts for development; setting up physical, social, educational environment to attract and retain talented people in "the creative city"; etc.)	Obidos - PT
ESIMEC	Economic strategies and innovation in medium-sized cities (workforce development and demand-led skills initiatives to ensure a sustainable economic recovery, growth and resilience in medium-sized cities)	Basingstoke and Deane - UK
FIN-URB-ACT	SMEs and local economic development (support systems for SMEs and innovative/high-tech projects; pathways to partnerships between cities and Managing Authorities; communication on support schemes, etc.)	Aachen - DE
OPENCities*	Opening cities to build-up, attract and retain human capital (identifying factors of "openness" and their impact on city attractiveness; increasing and promoting city openness to attract international migrants, etc.)	Belfast - UK
REDIS	Science districts and urban development (integrated policies for the development of science/knowledge districts; multi-level governance issues; etc.)	Magdeburg - DE
RUnUp	Strengthening endogenous potential of urban poles (improving local governance of innovation; promoting triple helix partnerships for local economic development; setting conditions for the stimulation of knowledge-based activities, etc.)	Gateshead - UK
UNIC*	Traditional industries and innovation (strengthening local industries and promoting innovation in the ceramics sector; promoting ceramics traditions as a driver for urban renewal; promoting cultural and industrial heritage, etc.)	Limoges - FR
Urban N.O.S.E.	Urban incubators for social enterprises (fostering inclusive development policies; consolidating inter-institutional partnerships; connecting local authorities and the Service sector, etc.)	Gela - IT
WEED	Women at work (improving working conditions, promoting/supporting entrepreneurship, fostering employment in IT and scientific/knowledge-based sectors, etc.)	Celje - SI
CITIES, ACTIVE INCLUSION & GOVERNANCE		
Active A.G.E.	Strategies for cities with an ageing population (supporting employment; improving long-term and home-based care services; fighting social exclusion and insecurity; fostering inter-generational solidarity as a driver for elderly-sensitive urban development policies; assessing the impact of ageing in urban planning; etc.)	Roma - IT
Building Healthy Communities*	Urban factors influencing health (indicators and criteria for a healthy sustainable urban development; healthy sustainable lifestyles; use of structural funds in addressing health issues)	Torino - IT
CityRegion.Net	Urban sprawl and development of hinterlands (planning tools and financial schemes for a sustainable city-hinterland development; cooperation at regional level)	Graz - AT
EGTC	Sustainable development of cross-border agglomerations (local and multi-level governance systems)	Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière - FR
HOPUS	Design coding for sustainable housing (governance for the implementation of design coding; quality standards for urban and architectural design, etc.)	University La Sapienza, Roma - IT
Joining Forces	Strategy and governance at city-region scale (spatial planning; mobility and transports; environmental issues; development of knowledge-based economies; attractiveness and competitiveness; social inclusion, participation, empowerment; governance mechanisms, etc.)	Lille Metropole - FR
LUMASEC	Sustainable land use management (managing urban sprawl; fostering attractiveness; strategies for local decision-makers, etc.)	University of Karlsruhe - DE
My Generation	Promoting the positive potential of young people in cities (transforming passivity and alienation into positive personal and professional aspirations; fostering active transitions from education to work; holistic coordination of youth related initiatives, etc.)	Rotterdam - NL
NeT-TOPIC	City model for intermediate/peripheral metropolitan cities (managing urban identity; governance issues; fighting urban fragmentation; regeneration of brownfields, military sites, etc.; transforming a mono-functional city into a multifunctional city)	L'Hospitalet de Llobregat - ES
Nodus	Spatial planning and urban regeneration (improving coordination of area-based regeneration and regional/metropolitan planning; integrated policies, etc.)	Generalitat de Catalunya - ES
OP-ACT	Strategic positioning of small and medium-sized cities (sustainable, efficient financial and economic structures to face demographic change, advanced de-industrialization and the effects of the crisis)	Leoben - AT
Roma-Net*	Integration of the Roma population in European cities (access to key services, active inclusion into the labour market through education, and development of self-help initiatives)	Budapest - HU
Suite	Sustainable housing provision (economic viability and social mix; environmental quality standards, etc.)	Santiago de Compostela - ES
TOGETHER	Developing co-responsibility for social inclusion and well-being of residents in European cities (Integrated strategies to foster cooperation between public authorities, citizens and private stakeholders, and indicators for the management of such strategies)	Mulhouse - FR
CITIES & INTEGRATED SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT		
ACTIVE TRAVEL	Tackling transport problems by promoting walking and cycling in small and medium-sized cities (Integrated strategies for cities to promote environment-friendly means of urban transport and improve energy efficiency)	Weiz - AT
CASH*	Cities' Action for Sustainable Housing (Solutions for sustainable renovation of social housing and the provision of affordable housing units in urban cities)	Echirolles - FR
C.T.U.R.	Cruise Traffic and Urban Regeneration (physical and environmental regeneration of port-areas; cruise traffic and port-heritage as drivers for economic and social development; planning and management of cruise development, etc.)	Napoli - IT
CoNet	Approaches to strengthening social cohesion in neighbourhoods (area-based and integrated approaches to neighbourhood development; new governance structures for the integration of socio-cultural, educational and economic dimensions, etc.)	Berlin - DE
EVUE	Electric Vehicles in Urban Europe (Integrated, sustainable strategies and leadership techniques for cities to promote the use of electric vehicles and to improve their attractiveness)	Westminster - UK
HerO*	Cultural heritage and urban development (revitalization policies; protection of visual integrity; integrated systems for the management of cultural heritage)	Regensburg - DE
JESSICA 4 Cities	JESSICA and Urban Development Funds (design and implementation of funding schemes; territorial evaluation and diagnoses; city projects and Operational Programmes, etc.)	Regione Toscana - IT
LC-Facil	Implementing integrated sustainable urban development according to the Leipzig Charter (tools for the definition, implementation, monitoring of integrated policies for urban development; testing the "Sustainable cities Reference Framework" developed by the Group of Member States and Institutions)	Leipzig - DE
LINKS	Old European cities as a key for sustainability (Integrated strategies to improve the attractiveness and quality of life in old historical centres, foster sustainable housing, while preserving architectural identity and cultural heritage)	Bayonne - FR
RegGov*	Governance in integrated urban development (long-term integrated policies and financial planning for sustainable regeneration of deprived areas; monitoring progress and achievements; sustainable partnerships; city-region governance; neighbourhoods at risk, etc.)	Duisburg - DE
REPAIR	Regeneration of abandoned military sites (socio-economic regeneration of abandoned military heritage sites as a driver for sustainable urban development)	Medway - UK
SURE	Socio-economic methods for urban rehabilitation in deprived urban areas (enhancing sustainable growth through diversification of local economies in deprived areas of medium-size cities)	Eger - HU

*Fast Track Label

→ THE URBACT II PARTNERS



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