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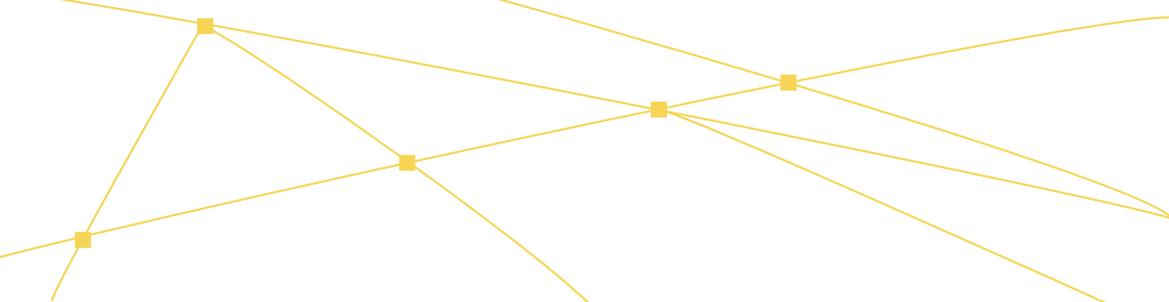
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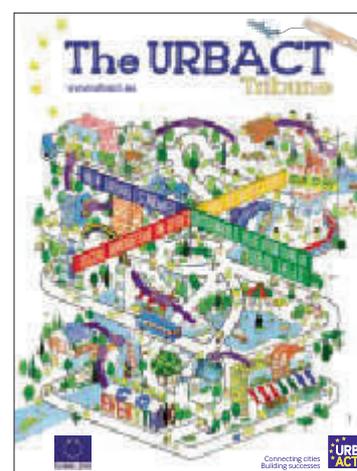


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by Darinka Czischke and Nils Scheffler

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# CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL ENVIRONMENTAL INTERVENTIONS

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BY DARINKA CZISCHKE AND NILS SCHEFFLER

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Against the backdrop of climate change, cities are facing increasing environmental challenges that threaten the quality of life and opportunities that urban environments can offer to their residents. These challenges tend to affect those living in deprived urban areas most acutely due to a variety of factors, such as unhealthy living environments, lack of green areas, derelict/unhealthy residential stock, local authorities with fewer resources to tackle these issues vis-à-vis other priorities, etc. Hence, environmental problems in cities have to be regarded in relation to social challenges.



**T**he URBACT workstream “Sustainable regeneration of urban areas” will look at these challenges and the solutions that cities have applied to tackle them through environmental interventions. We will put a particular emphasis on innovative low-carbon and energy efficiency actions.

In this article we focus on two key conditions that are necessary to achieve successful environmental regeneration practices, namely: integrating local environmental regeneration actions within wider spatial and administrative structures, and the need for societal and political commitment to achieve a long-term vision for sustainability. In addition, we will look at how these conditions can be created in practice through the example of a specific policy field: food systems and low carbon practices in cities.

### **Integrating local environmental regeneration actions within wider spatial and administrative structures**

There is a wide range of interventions aiming to deal with the environmental aspects of urban regeneration, such as the minimisation of required inputs of energy, water and food waste, heat, air pollution (CO<sub>2</sub>, methane, etc.)

## **The integration of different policy tools across spatial and administrative levels (vertical integration) and across policy fields (horizontal integration) can achieve the full potential of sustainable regeneration of urban areas.**

and water pollution, amongst others. However, it is crucial to consider that only the integration of different policy tools across spatial and administrative levels (vertical integration) and across policy fields (horizontal integration) can achieve the full potential of sustainable regeneration of urban areas.

Figure 1 shows different types of environmental interventions that can help achieve sustainable urban regeneration at different administrative/spatial levels. It is important to consider both the potential and the limitations of each level of intervention and its connections with other levels so as to achieve coordination and synergies amongst them.

While these types of measures may be technically efficient and achieve results with regards to specific objectives, the integrated sustainability of urban areas requires going beyond piecemeal, exclusively physical approaches. Technical environmental solutions necessitate their integration within institutions and social networks. One way of doing this is through a “footprint” approach to urban regeneration. Simply put, a footprint

approach gives a relative measure of resource use across different sectors at local level, which is extrapolated to the global level. It then relates global resource use to the ecological limits of the planet.

An example of how the footprint approach can be applied to the field of urban regeneration is the One Planet Communities programme developed by BioRegional<sup>1</sup>. This uses 10 guiding principles (see figure 2 next page) as a framework to help cities examine the sustainability challenges they face and develop appropriate solutions. By applying the principles at the design, construction and long-term management stages of a development it should be possible to create places where it is easy, attractive and affordable for people to live within a fair share of our planet’s resources.

The principles of ecological footprinting have been integrated in concrete regeneration initiatives, such as in the case of “Heart of Hackbridge” regeneration (see case box 1 next page). BioRegional developed and led a partnership bid to the Mayor’s Outer London Fund to prepare the suburban local centre of Hackbridge for the challenges it will face over the coming years. The latter include major redevelopment of surrounding brownfield sites, and its new role as a district centre in the retail hierarchy of south London.

**Figure 1: Fields and types of environmental interventions and level of implementation in urban areas**

<i>Field</i>	<i>Type of intervention</i>	<i>Spatial-administrative level</i>
Energy	Renewable energy sources	Region, City
	Zero or nearly-zero energy buildings.	City, Area
	Methods to reduce the need for cooling	City, Area
	Energy conservation systems/devices	City, Area
Agriculture and urban greening	Stronger city-regional food supply chains and agricultural plots within the city	Region, City, Area
	Xeriscaping (garden and landscape design for water conservation)	City, Area
	Green roofs	City, Area
Transport	Sustainable transport	Region, City, Area
Urban Form	Solutions to limit urban sprawl	Region, City, Area
	Optimal range of building densities and typologies to respond to different climatic conditions	City, Area
Other	Sustainable urban drainage systems	City, Area

### **Technical environmental solutions necessitate their integration within institutions and social networks. One way of doing this is through a “footprint” approach to urban regeneration.**

This condition requires a change of behaviour underpinned with a coherent set of values. These relate to the second key condition for successful urban environmental interventions, which we will present in the next point.

**Figure 2: The 10 One Planet principles**

Source: [www.oneplanetcommunities.org](http://www.oneplanetcommunities.org)

### Case box 1

#### “Heart of Hackbridge” regeneration – Hackbridge, London Borough of Sutton: Preparing a suburban centre for the impacts and opportunities of major redevelopment

Overseen by a local stakeholder Project Board and working across the ten One Planet Living principles (see figure 2), BioRegional delivered a socio-economic regeneration programme including:

- ▶ Local economic development, working with 23 existing local traders to diversify their offer to prepare for the competitive challenges associated with an emerging district centre.
- ▶ Sustainable business operations, including south London’s first MSC-certified fish & chip shop, a solar-powered coffee van, and a healthier and more family-friendly menu in the local cafe.
- ▶ Community development, including running family events and facilitating a local business network.

This was underpinned with a co-ordinated programme of high-impact low-cost environmental improvements, including:

- ▶ Safer highway layout, narrowing the main carriageways and junction, with new informal pedestrian crossing points.
- ▶ Transformation of the street setting, by widening of pavements and installing new trees, seats, cycle facilities, rain-gardens, wayfinding, shopfronts and signage.
- ▶ Creation of a new “Pocket Park”, providing a positive new entrance to the Beddington Farmlands and emerging Wandle Valley Regional Park.

The outcomes of the project will be monitored in Summer 2014, but are expected to include safer roads, greater footfall and greater patronage of local businesses. Already 5 new jobs have been created in local businesses, and two new businesses have started up.

#### Key facts

- ▶ Project Funder: Mayor of London (OLF) Sutton Council.
- ▶ Project Partners: BioRegional, Sutton Council, Adams & Sutherland, Civic Engineers, Retail Revival.
- ▶ Capital / Programme Value: £1.1m / £510k.
- ▶ Project Inception / Duration: April 2012 / 2 years.

### Committed citizens, engaged politicians: a vision for the long term

Even the best technical solutions to environmental problems are not enough if institutions and citizens are not committed to behave sustainably in the long term. Thus, the commitment of citizens to environmental values and the engagement of politicians with the latter are crucial aspects to achieve a successful long-term “green” vision in a city or neighbourhood. The cases of Hamburg (Germany) (case box 2) and Växjö (Sweden) (case box 3) illustrate a long term political commitment to put residents and their

environmental aspirations at the centre of these initiatives and to have a long-term political engagement to a green vision for their city.

The city of Hamburg is renowned by its strong commitment to environmental sustainability as well as the showcase of a number of sustainable urban regeneration initiatives. The IBA (International building exhibition) Wilhelmsburg in Hamburg has created an impetus for sustainable, environmentally friendly, and socially balanced urban development in a problematic area over a period of 8 years in an innovative, sustainable way. Hamburg was also European Green Capital in 2011. This award credited Hamburg

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with combining comprehensive approaches, policy – commitment and the necessary funding needed to resolve these challenges. On the whole, the city has shown a sustained integrated and participative planning strategy and a strong commitment towards a “green” vision.



IBA Hamburg Credits IBA Hamburg GmbH Aufwind Luftbilder.

### Case box 2 – IBA Hamburg Participation council

The intention of the International building exhibition Hamburg 2006-2013 (IBA Hamburg; <http://www.iba-hamburg.de/en/iba-in-english.html>) was to devise and implement projects to create an impetus for sustainable, environmentally friendly, and socially balanced urban development in a social deprived neighbourhood: the Europe’s largest river island, Wilhelmsburg.

In order to involve the residents of the Elbe island in the process of planning and realising of the IBA Hamburg and the “international horticultural show 2013” (igs 2013), an own committee for civic participation was established, supplementing the already existing advisory boards for the Elbinsel area and its redevelopment.

The committee consisted of 24 residents and 8 politicians.

To become a member it was required to live or work on the Elbe island. Membership was restricted to two years to ensure that more citizens could take an active part in the participation council.

The committee supported the mutual information exchange between all persons involved in the entire process. The residents’ knowledge and experience were to help form an opinion regarding all relevant matters and decisions of IBA and igs.

Until the end of 2012, the committee held meetings every month, giving to each of the 70 IBA projects a statement, to which the IBA Hamburg and igs had to correspond how they will deal with the statement. In addition the participation council wrote 10 petitions to the IBA Hamburg and igs. At the beginning of each meeting the IBA Hamburg informed on the state of the planning and implementation of projects. As a rule, all meetings were open to the public. For supporting and counseling services the IBA Hamburg provided a certain amount of funds to the participation council.

The participation council was supplemented by various citizens dialogue events.



Participation council. © IBA Hamburg GmbH, Bente Stachowske.

### Case box 3 – Växjö, the Greenest City in Europe, both a vision and ambition

The measures within sustainable development, with focus on the environment, in the City of Växjö started in the 70s with the restoration of lakes. In the beginning of the 1980's Växjö Energy Ltd started using bio-fuel in order to make district heating. Later, in 1993, the City Council approved the adoption of an environmental policy towards long-term sustainable development. In the same year, the city committed to extensive education in sustainable development for 6,000 municipal employees.

The City of Växjö created the Fossil Fuel Free Växjö programme in 1996. The programme consists of different activities, for instance bio-mass-based district heating, energy efficient building or construction, energy efficient street lightning, environmental friendly cars

and biogas production. The share of renewable energy is today more than 56 percent. The City of Växjö was the first municipality to commit to be free from fossil fuel by the year 2030. The latest environmental programme was adopted by the City Council in 2010 and covers environmental policy on long and short-term targets. Subjects considered include consumption and waste; nature, biodiversity and lakes; energy and transport. The Agenda 21 Strategy also concerns the planning of new residential areas, mentioned as "Sustainable Housing", being constructed according to ecological and economic sustainability.

On 17 June 2014, the Växjö City Council approved a new revised environmental programme for the municipality. The environmental programme contains

visionary objectives for the 2030 and measurable goals until 2020. It is also broadening and deepening the environmental work in the municipality. In addition to continuous reduction of fossil carbon emissions, the city now also aims to work on toxins and chemicals through a chemical plan as well as make kindergartens and schools free of chemicals and toxins.

Three big new challenges lie ahead:

- ▶ Energy efficiency improvements and renovation of existing buildings.
- ▶ Transportation system.
- ▶ The water quality in the lakes.

Sources: <http://www.vaxjo.se/sustainable>; Hajdari, Valmira (2012) "A Sustainable City of Växjö: A study in policy-making". Lund University.

Over several decades, the city of Växjö has implemented numerous environmental actions. The high environmental standards and political commitment to sustainability of the city of Växjö achieved international recognition and visibility in 2007, when the British BBC described Växjö as "The Greenest City in Europe".

The city's environmental work has become an important, if not crucial and fundamental part of the city's brand. "We must show that the City of Växjö is a city with vision, a good city to live in, a great city to start a business and expand in. (...) The City of Växjö has perhaps Sweden's most ambitious environmental programme. More and more cities luckily follow our example and it gives us both a boost competition and inspiration but we continue to be a role model", has said Anna Tenje, local politician responsible for environmental policy in Växjö.

#### **Tackling low carbon and resource efficiency through integrated sustainable urban regeneration: the case of urban food systems**

Cities across Europe are beginning to think about the impact of their local policies on



food production and consumption. In the built environment the proportion of our energy use accounted for in construction is often overestimated because of the widespread use of production-based statistics that are nationally contained. If instead we look at a consumption-based approach, we get a different picture. The food sector alone accounts for over 30% of global

**The food sector alone accounts for over 30% of global consumer energy demand and produce over 20% of global greenhouse gas emissions (FAO 2011).**

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The examples of the URBACT networks URBACT Markets (case box 4) and "Sustainable Food in Urban Communities" (case box 5) provide useful ideas of how to use the potential of local small business and community actors across the production and consumption chains to change habits and practices towards more environmental sustainable patterns. If these practices would be taken on by a larger number of cities, the accumulated effect would make a considerable impact for a more sustainable urban Europe.

## Case box 4 – Markets improving the role of the food system to introduce low carbon practices, London, partner in the URBACT Markets network

In London, partner of the URBACT Markets network, a few markets such as Borough market have successfully developed waste strategies, and encourage recycling and composting and reduction of non recyclable / non biodegradable packaging. The London farmers' markets association adheres to the "rules" set out by the UK Farmers' Retail and Markets Association, leading to the accreditation of a market as farmer market. One of the criteria is the goods that are sold in farmers markets in London must be raised, grown, produced, gathered, caught, or baked within 100 miles of the M25 ("the Region"). There are actually 13 accredited farmers' markets in London.

New Covent Garden Markets (a wholesale market in London) actively look to help people "back haul" when delivering produce to retail markets. This means that they broker relationships between small producers/ growers and freight delivery companies and promote consolidation of

deliveries. NCMA will work with them and map permit data to identify haulers within 10 miles radius and then encourage them to make contact with these haulers. Similarly local street traders that buy regularly from the wholesale market are encouraged to develop a consolidated buying group based on a cluster of local food businesses and then to buy in bulk – thereby achieving better value for money, improving logistics and reducing the number of journeys.



Borough market, London. © Nils Scheffler.

On a much smaller scale, Marky Markets is an individual who takes orders from small food companies and restaurants and then buys from large wholesale markets using public transport and hired electric vehicles. He works out of a pub in Soho, London!

New Covent Garden Market also has a Schools Project to increase young people's understanding of the food supply chain and give children direct experience of growing food. Working in partnership with

Wandsworth Council, it combined farm visits, visits to the wholesale market and a sustainable gardening competition in schools.



**MORE INFORMATION ABOUT URBAN MARKETS AS DRIVER OF LOW CARBON AND LOCAL SUPPLY CAN BE FOUND ON THE URBACT MARKETS WEBSITE**

<http://urbact.eu/en/projects/urban-renewal/urbact-markets/homepage/>

As we can see from both examples, and in particular, through the case of urban food markets, this field can bring together a variety of environmental interventions at local level while connecting these to wider spatial levels.

For example, waste reduction strategies have an impact on cleaner, healthier local environments while contributing to overall waste reduction at urban and regional level. Recycling and composting can achieve similar

impacts. Improving logistics through more rational planning of transport of goods to be sold in markets (i.e. consolidation and clustering) can also help reduce traffic and hence improve air and noise quality at local level.

## Case box 5 – The URBACT network "Sustainable Food in Urban Communities": Developing low-carbon and resource-efficient urban food systems

This URBACT network focuses on developing low-carbon and resource-efficient urban food systems. The urban population tends to be out of touch with agricultural production, and the city food culture increasingly moves towards fast food, processed foods, distributed by large centralised supermarket chains that are not rooted in the life of city neighbourhoods. Many consumers, especially, those with low incomes, eat too little fruit and vegetables because of the cost but also because it is not part of their culture and habits. The current food system cannot meet growing food demand of cities' sustainably. It results in significant environmental impacts, but also social inequity in terms of access to balanced and affordable nutritious food in cities. The network focuses on:

► **GROWING** fruit and vegetable in the city, in gardens, in parks, on rooftops, on balconies, on derelict lands etc., safeguarding & improving fertility of lands.

- **DELIVERING** food stuffs in a more sustainable and less carbon intensive way.
- **ENJOYING** more sustainable food (local products, without pesticides, seasonal and fresh products, etc.) while improving diets (reducing the share of animal protein and processed foods), using products that meet environmental and sustainability criteria (certification), and preventing waste (food and its packaging).

### Key facts

Lead partner: Brussels Capital Region

Other partner cities: Bristol, Amersfoort, Athens, Messina, Ourense, Oslo, Lyon, Gothenburg, Vaslui



**MORE INFORMATION**

<http://urbact.eu/en/projects/low-carbon-urban-environments/sustainable-food-in-urban-communities/homepage/>

## Conclusions

In this article we have highlighted the importance of creating the right conditions for successful environmental interventions in local regeneration practices. Through concrete examples from cities across Europe, we illustrated how two of these conditions can be achieved: first, the integration of local environmental actions within wider spatial and administrative levels (vertical integration), and second, the long-term commitment of citizens and politicians to a long-term “green vision”.

On the first condition, we showed that a footprint approach can be a useful way to integrate local environmental actions within higher policy levels. The example of Hackbridge regeneration in London embodies this approach through a concerted approach involving a variety of local stakeholders in the process.

The second condition is tightly linked to the first, as the examples of Hamburg and Vaxjo showed: the successful integration of environmental actions across spatial and administrative levels is underpinned by a constant commitment from citizens and politicians to sustainability.

Last but not least, we showed that both conditions can be integrated in practice, looking at a specific policy field: food production and consumption chains. These are one of the most intensive CO<sub>2</sub> producers, and cities can do a great deal to reduce it. Urban

planning and regeneration has a key role to play in this, as seen through the examples shown in this article.

In the remainder of the workstream we will continue to identify good examples of environmental interventions that meet social needs and/or overcome social problems and explore some of them in more depth through case studies. ●

(1) BioRegional is an entrepreneurial charity which establishes sustainable businesses and works with partners around the world to demonstrate that a sustainable future can be easy, attractive and affordable. Their approach is called One Planet Living. For more information see: <http://www.bioregional.com/>

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## → URBACT II PROJECTS

PROJECTS	ISSUES ADDRESSED	LEAD PARTNERS
<b>1<sup>ST</sup> CALL PROJECTS (2008-2011)</b>		
Active A.G.E.	Strategies for cities with an ageing population	Rome - IT
Building Healthy Communities*	Developing indicators and criteria for a healthy sustainable urban development	Torino - IT
CityRegion.Net	Urban sprawl and development of hinterlands	Graz - AT
CoNet	Approaches to strengthening social cohesion in neighbourhoods	Berlin - DE
Creative Clusters	Creative clusters in low density urban areas	Obidos - PT
CTUR	Cruise Traffic and Urban Regeneration of port areas	Naples - IT
EGTC	Sustainable development of cross-border agglomerations	Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière - FR
FIN-URB-ACT	Small and medium enterprises and local economic development	Aachen- DE
HerO*	Cultural heritage and urban development	Regensburg - DE
HOPUS	Design coding for sustainable housing	University La Sapienza, Roma - IT
JESSICA 4 Cities	JESSICA and Urban Development Funds	Regional government of Tuscany - IT
Joining Forces	Strategy and governance at city-region scale	Lille Metropole - FR
LC-FACIL	Implementing integrated sustainable urban development according to the Leipzig Charter	Leipzig - DE
LUMASEC	Sustainable land use management	University of Karlsruhe - DE
MILE*	Managing migration and integration at local level	Venice - IT
My Generation	Promoting the positive potential of young people in cities	Rotterdam - NL
NeT-TOPIC	City model for intermediate/peripheral metropolitan cities	L'Hospitalet de Llobregat - ES
Nodus	Spatial planning and urban regeneration	The generalitat of Catalonia - ES
OPENCities*	Opening cities to build-up, attract and retain international human capital	Belfast - UK
REDIS	Science districts and urban development	Magdeburg - DE
RegGov*	Integrated policies and financial planning for sustainable regeneration of deprived areas	Duisburg - DE
REPAIR	Regeneration of abandoned military sites	Medway - UK
RUnUP	Strengthening potential of urban poles with triple helix partnerships	Gateshead - UK
SUITE	Sustainable housing provision	Santiago de Compostela - ES
UNIC*	Promoting innovation in the ceramics sector	Limoges - FR
URBAMECO*	Integrated sustainable regeneration of deprived urban areas	Grand Lyon - FR
Urban N.O.S.E.	Urban incubators for social enterprises	Gela - IT
WEED	Promoting entrepreneurship for women	Celje - SI
<b>2<sup>ND</sup> CALL PROJECTS (2009-2012)</b>		
Active Travel Network	Promoting walking and cycling in small and medium-sized cities	Weiz - AT
CASH*	Sustainable and affordable energy efficient housing	Echirolles- FR
ESIMeC	Economic strategies and innovation in medium-sized cities	Basingstoke and Deane - UK
EVUE	Electric Vehicles in Urban Europe	Westminster - UK
LINKS	Improving the attractiveness and quality of life in old historical centres	Bayonne - FR
OP-ACT	Strategic positioning of small and medium-sized cities facing demographic changes	Leoben - AT
Roma-Net*	Integration of the Roma population in European cities	Budapest - HU
SURE	Socio-economic methods for urban rehabilitation in deprived urban areas	Eger - HU
TOGETHER	Developing co-responsibility for social inclusion and well-being of residents in European cities	Mulhouse - FR
<b>3<sup>RD</sup> CALL PROJECTS (2012-2015)</b>		
4D Cities	Promoting innovation in the health sector	Igualada - ES
CityLogo	Innovative city brand management	Utrecht - NL
Creative SpIN	Cultural and Creative Industries	Birmingham - UK
CSI Europe	Role of financial instruments (Jessica Urban Development Fund) in efficient planning	Manchester - UK
ENTER.HUB	Railway hubs/multimodal interfaces of regional relevance in medium sized cities	Reggio Emilia - IT
EUniverCities	Partnerships between cities and universities for urban development	Delft - NL
Jobtown	Local partnerships for youth employment opportunities	Cesena - IT
My Generation at Work	Youth employment with focus on enterprising skills and attitudes	Rotterdam - NL
PREVENT	Involving parents in the prevention of early school leaving	Nantes - FR
RE-Block	Renewing high-rise blocks for cohesive and green neighbourhoods	Budapest XVIII District - HU
Sustainable Food in Urban Communities	Developing low-carbon and resource-efficient urban food systems	Brussels Capital - BE
URBACT Markets	Local markets as drivers for local economic development	Barcelona - ES
USEACT	Re-utilizing existing locations to avoid land consumption	Naples - IT
USER	Involving users and inhabitants in urban sustainable planning	Agglomeration Grenoble Alpes Metropole - FR
WOOD FOOTPRINT	Local economic development through the (re)use of brownfield and buildings of the wood furniture sector	Paços de Ferreira - PT
<b>PILOT PROJECTS (2013-2015)</b>		
Diet for a Green Planet	Cooperation to align eating habits for an ecologically sustainable development	Södertälje - SE
ESIMeC II	Economic strategies and innovation in medium sized cities	Basingstoke and Deane - UK
EVUE II	Electric Vehicles in Urban Europe	Westminster - UK
Gastronomic Cities	Promoting gastronomy as a key urban development	Burgos - ES
Genius: Open	Creating innovative solutions to city challenges via an on-line collaborative platform	York - UK
Healthy Ageing	Cities' action for an active and healthy ageing	Udine - IT
PlaceMaking 4 Cities	Useful public spaces instead of nice public spaces	Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council - IE
Roma-Net II	Integration of Roma populations	Budapest - HU
TUTUR	Temporary use as a tool for urban regeneration	Rome - IT

\*Fast Track Label

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**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 II is 500 different sized cities and their Local Support Groups, 56 projects, 29 countries, and 7,000 active stakeholders coming equally from Convergence and Competitiveness areas. URBACT is jointly financed by ERDF and the Member States.**

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