



Urban Sustainable Environmental Actions

The USEAct Final Report



Connecting cities
Building successes





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This publication is the result of three years of project work and reflects the experiences gained by the USEAct network partners.

The Final Report is produced by the Lead Expert Vittorio Torbianelli with the support of the Lead Partner Team and contribution of Experts and Partners of the USEAct Network and URBACT Programme.

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Cover: A detail of the Italian artist Blu wall in Buenos Aires, Argentina

Edited by Maria Luna Nobile

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The URBACT II Programme

About 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 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 500 cities, 29 countries, and 7,000 active participants. URBACT is jointly financed by ERDF and the Member States.

URBACT aims to:

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 helps cities to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable and that integrate economic social and environmental urban topics.”

Further information on the URBACT webpage:

<http://urbact.eu>

Connecting cities
Building successes



USEAct Urban Sustainable Environmental Actions





The network

USEAct Urban Sustainable Environmental Actions

The themes of protection of empty land and the reuse and re-functionalization of inner urban areas are among the European key strategies for the cities' sustainable development and their growth. Particularly, the link between land consumption and models for land-use management both in cities and in metropolitan areas, with special attention to Urban Growth Management, is increasingly important. In this context the USEAct project aims at exploring the urban development interventions and new or improved settlement opportunities for people and businesses, taking up residence in existing locations without consumption of further land.

This target is expected to be met through integrated policies and tools aimed at improving the "urban growth management" planning framework coupled with implementable, sustainable urban "interventions" for the re-use of underutilized, vacant or abandoned areas of land and existing settlements, both in historic districts and more recently built areas. Such an approach is targeted at confronting the obsolescence of urban areas and sustaining the "urban change", and through city reuse, also improving the city's environmental, social, economic sustainability, to provide more urban quality to urban communities and, at the same time support the local economy in the short and long-term, to help overcome the effects of the current down-turn.

The USEACT Partners



City of Naples (Italy) *Lead Partner*



Baia Mare Metropolitan Area (Romania)



City of Barakaldo (Spain)



Buckinghamshire Business First (UK)



City of Dublin (Ireland)



City of Nitra (Slovak Republic)



Østfold County (Norway)



Riga Planning Region (Latvia)



City of Trieste (Italy)



City of Viladecans (Spain)

Observer Partner



BITMAŞ Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (Turkey)

Further information on the USEACT webpage:

<http://urbact.eu/useact>

Table of contents

7	Editorial	<i>Luigi De Magistris, Mayor of the City of Naples</i>
8	Foreword	<i>Gaetano Mollura, Coordinator of the USEAct network</i>
14	Introduction to the USEAct Network	<i>Emmanuel Moulin, Director URBACT Secretariat</i>
16	Guide to the Final Report	<i>Vittorio Trobianelli, USEAct Lead Expert</i>
17	USEAct and the participative approach	<i>Pauline Geoghegan, USEAct Thematic Expert</i>
19	1. Project Management	
20	1.1	The USEAct Project Key Issues
21	1.2	The USEAct Thematic Framework
23	1.3	Mapping our activities
24	1.4	The <i>Ad hoc</i> Thematic Experts
25	1.5	The USEAct Partnership
26	1.6	ISTANBUL / The fastest growing city in Europe is a USEAct friend
29	2. Key Messages	
30	2.1	A MATTER OF SCALE AND GOVERNANCE?
34	2.2	LAND USE MANAGEMENT
38	2.3	VISUALIZATION TOOLS
40	2.4	THE QUALITY ISSUE
		Quality: Attracting business
		Quality: Affordable Housing
50	2.5	HERITAGE
54	2.6	USEAct Local Action Plans
56	2.7	Sources of Inspiration
57	3. After USEAct	
59	3.1	Key Lessons Learnt
62	3.2	Is there a life beyond USEAct?
64	4. Available Outputs	
66	4.1	Sharing outputs
68	4.2	USEAct in numbers



We must build trust to move on. We must feed social capital to win the challenges of the future. And, whatever the times, we must move together: spreading the knowledge and favoring the exchanges between European Public servants and policy making. Dealing with complex issues as city management means learning to cooperate between Institutions. And we need to cooperate to spread the know-how and the best practices among us. That's why, we believe in URBACT, because promoting sustainable urban development implies bringing the European cities together, to work hand in hand to develop effective strategies and efficient solutions to the major key urban challenges. Union is strength, especially when it comes to build a common path, paved with trust and social capital.

Social capital is built through hundreds of little and big actions we take every day. And we have learned it the hard way, discovering how victories rely on cooperation and help.

Hence, I am very happy that the main objective of our project is the "Urban Growth Management": USEAct means to implement Urban Sustainable Environmental Action, and here and now is time to take action. Indeed, the Urban Growth Management is pivotal to my political action.

The most difficult challenge is when it comes to design a good governance for Urban Growth Management. How can we reach it in the most effective way?

In my opinion, the keystone in urban growth management is enacting urban plans which enforce simple rules, such as regenerating instead of building. Licenses to build are issued only if previous regeneration of old buildings take place. Doing so, we can curb urban sprawl and stop trends related to the peri-urbanization of our cities. But I also deem National and European Institutions should not only guide the process. They should be able to intervene in case of delays or defaults.

In order to strengthen the European Commission's governance, at both national and local levels, I advocate for a permanent roundtable joined by all the experts on the subject.

A roundtable which includes national and European professionals who are allowed to take decisions. We need to take action. We need to find a good balance between a bottom-up and a top-down approach. And we have to be sure that, when it comes to head towards a sustainable society, the "buck stops here".

In conclusion, I am very happy with the work done so far. I am particularly proud of the work done by the City of Naples. It has been a wonderful experience, from which we all learned something.

Luigi de Magistris
Mayor of Naples



The experience of the USEACT network, was oriented to discuss possible solutions for the sustainable development of cities by avoiding the consumption of land, and it has been addressed over time, starting from the initial thematic structure which identified three main themes:

- The progressive reduction of the use of new land and the environmental cost, the energy consumption, with buildings renewal, and the reduction of “urban sprawl” effects and, also the construction and management of new public infrastructures;
- The satisfaction of needs related to quality of life and the economic development always in the construction industry and real estate, this also in the owner’s interest;
- The enhancement of the urban historic heritage in its identity.

The four essential work steps of the network activity:

1. The transnational exchange network

We had 7 seminars, in various partners cities to analyze the themes about land use, and to see “on the site” the specific characteristics of the place and local development policies.

The different cities and metropolitan areas involved have a very different contexts and problems, the solutions confront the individual situations with specific topics (densification, reuse, management, refitting, use of data and visualization...)

The different topics were studied in detail in the seminars with presentation of specific cases and involving experts for each specific subject :

Didler Vancutsem: spoke about the results of the previous project “Lumasec” of URBACT II, and he talk also about the urban sprawl.

Adolf Sotoca: showed the case studies from United States and Europe, (Barcelona district 22).

Maros Finka: introduced the results of the “CIRCUSE” project and case studies of implementation in the Slovak Republic

Michael Fuller Gee: showed how the design of “quality operation of public spaces”

has a central value in the life of the city and the people in Norway.

Germana Di Falco: contributed completing the local action plans and possible opportunities for future funding.

2. The exchange between partners in bilateral and multilateral meetings , through 6 “additional meetings” to those of the network, for the study of other topics, identified by partners, forming six subgroups divided by topics:

- Real Estate Investment Trust for Housing (organized by the Partner Buckinghamshire Business First in London – United Kingdom)
- Real Estate Development based on Innovation and Knowledge Based Activities/Differentiating Interventions (organized by the Partner Viladecans City – in Viladecans - Spain).
- Urban Uses and Textures /Differentiating Interventions (organized by the Partner Viladecans city – in Viladecans Spain).
- Smart Use Data/Visualisation Tools (was organized by the Lead Partner: City of Naples in Naples - Italy).
- New Uses for Heritage(residential)Buildings (organized by the Partner City of Dublin in Dublin – Ireland)
- (Up Front) Infrastructure Financing (organized by the Partner City of Dublin in Dublin – Ireland)

3. The implementation of the Local Action Plans

Great attention has been given to the implementation of the local action plans, and to the methodology of working from an initial step, until the final phase of the project dedicated sessions (during the 5° and 6° network seminars , to funding opportunities through European and national funds , also through the participation of some Managing Authorities.

4. Sessions dedicated to “the life beyond USEACT”:

the goal is capitalization of experience of the network USEACT through the formulation of new proposals within the priority of the city and which meet the new

“call” for projects /European programs.

Some considerations on weak points and strong points that emerged during the course of the above steps to work with reference to the theme of “urban sprawl” and more in general to the USEACT network.

WEAK POINTS:

The “governance”

The objective of reducing the consumption of the land and development through the reuse of the existing heritage can only be achieved through :

- the effective integration of multiple instruments, direct and indirect ;
- coordination between local regional and national territorial policies ;
- the identification of a territorial level appropriate for urban planning integrating a “functional” urban area wider than the urban administrative area.

Europe in the fight against the consumption of land

We need stronger measures to encourage Member States to implement actions to stimulate the investment discouraging the consumption of land. In addition, the EU should have active urban development policies integrating farm policies and viceversa (also in terms of funding). For a real sustainable development of the Member States must be that Europe must have a vision “integrated” and not sectoral problems.

The ambiguity of the meaning of sustainability for Europe

In the current state, the term sustainability is all too often abused and is more ambiguous: we need to clarify what exactly is meant by sustainable with particular reference to the theme of land consumption and the type of development we want for European cities

The role of management authority in the implementation of action plans local USEAct /URBACTII

The present round of the URBACT Programme has been developed in the step towards new programming of European funding 2014 - 2020 , has had a perfect timing and could be a great opportunity to work in synergy with Managing Authorities in order to connect the local action plans with the next European funding 2014 - 2020. But unfortunately it has been yet another lost opportunity in as few Management Authorities have participated in the implementation of the plans.

STRONG POINTS:

A diversified partnership

The composition of the network has allowed us to deepen the theme declining it on different territorial scales, from Viladecans (Spain), a small town that must correlate with the metropolitan area of Barcelona, to the region of Riga, that also includes

the capital, Riga and the Østfold County (Norway), a very important and strategic agricultural area, that must be protected against the urban centers, the Baia Mare metropolitan area that comprises numerous small municipalities, the City of Naples that a recent national law has transformed in metropolitan area.

Next to these differences related to the entity of the different organizations/partner, there are the characters of individual places, the area of Buckinghamshire as well as the metropolitan area of Baia Mare and the Østfold County, which have a territorial structure characterized by a widespread urban sprawl, and in different ways are pointing to planning strategies directed at new building.

In some cases, the recurrent theme is the study of “models” and “instruments” of planning directed to restrict the consumption of new land, or in any case to a more intelligent use.

The city of Dublin, Naples, Viladecans and Barakaldo point to “reuse”, in the first two cases by intervening on the historic city and consolidated through actions of urban “acupuncture”, in the two last cases by intervening on large disused industrial areas. In Trieste and Riga, they talk about of the development of planning instruments focused on the reduction in the consumption of land and energy consumption, through precise strategies and related in a direct way to the subject.

“Bilateral/trilateral meetings” beside the thematic seminars scheduled

In the project, beside the six transnational thematic seminars, a seminar dedicated to the “capitalization” and a “final seminar” - six meetings called “bilateral/multilateral meeting” were provided, in which participated groups in restricted formats by partners interested in the study of certain additional themes often closely linked to the development of local action plans. The initiative has been very positive for both the active participation of partners which were given greater responsibility in the organization and success of the meeting, for the richness of the debate which has also allowed to imagine a continuation of the network activity to deepen the topics deal with.

The involvement of “ad hoc guest experts”, linked to the territory through the host partner. The invited thematic experts, have helped to give vitality and value-added both to the discussions and insights on the subjects dealt with and to the knowledge of the city/ state/ that has been host to the USEAct seminar.

Confirmation that you can have an economic growth without consumption of territory on an urban scale

Through the activation of urban instruments and appropriate measures, see the city of Trieste with the new introduction to the new “master plan” of the innovative instrument of “construction loans” for the energy efficiency of the existing built heritage.

The implementation of local action plans

The action plans of local partners, in reference to the topics dealt by USEAct, confirmed the priority of the city to invest in existing assets.

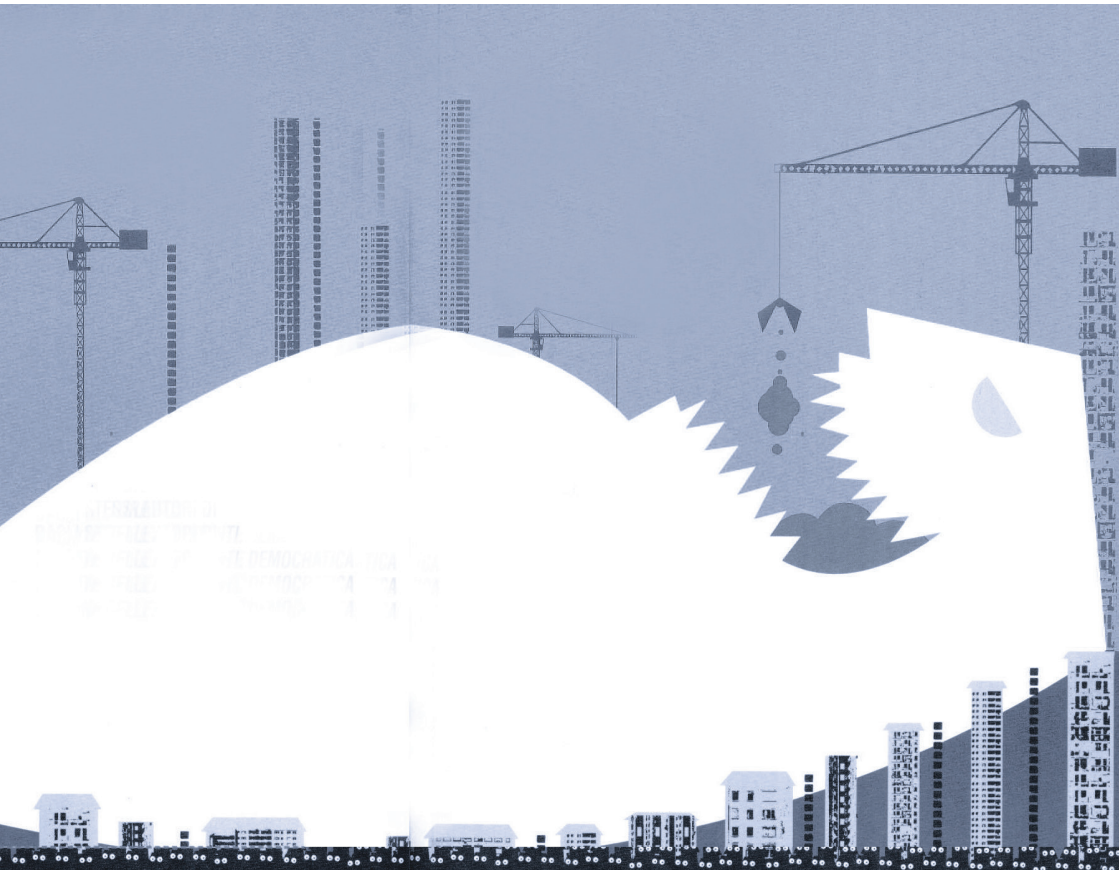
Greater availability of “stakeholders” to invest in existing heritage

The global economic crisis is a great “opportunity” for sharing on the part of the “stakeholders” of initiatives to investment in the existing city as an alternative to the further land consumption.

The richness of the debate and the active participation of partners to sessions of the seminars of the “after USEACT”.

In particular the sessions dedicated to European funding (2014 - 2020), the opportunities of URBACT III and the programs and projects in Europe (Horizon 2020, InterregIVC, etc) in a perspective of the continuation of this activity of the network with new project proposals on topics and discussions in bilateral/multilateral meetings and prioritised by USEAct partners.

All of the activity conducted and in detail contained in “ouputs” produced by the network USEAct is referred to the list of the outputs at the end of the final report.



A special thanks goes out to all partners for the active participation in the network, and, in particular, for the commitment in the implementation of their respective local action plans.

Fundamental was the support of the "Lead Expert" Vittorio Torbianelli who coordinated the scientific activity with the collaboration of the "Thematic Expert" Pauline Geoghegan and the involvement of the various "guest expert": Didier Vancutsem, Adolf Sotoca, Maros Finka, Michael Fuller Gee and Germana Di Falco.

Also thanks on behalf of the whole network to the URBACT Secretariat for its patience and support in all phases of work.

For the implementation of the local action plans, of course, we wish to thank all the "stakeholders" of USEACT partners that have made a fundamental contribution in processings the actions and the quality of the proposals and helping to enrich the exchange of experiences in the course of the transnational seminars.

A special thanks to the Administration of Naples that, through the various departments / directions /services were involved in the activities of the network.

For the completion of the USEAct activities crucial support was given by the director arch. Giancarlo Ferulano and the new director arch. Giuseppe Pulli - from the Department Planning and Management of the Territory - Site UNESCO; the productive collaboration of Mrs. Nunzia Moscovio and Mrs. Monica Vito - officials of the same departments; the concrete availability and cooperation of the arch. Renata Ciannella from the staff for Urban Policies, Urban Planning and Common Goods department, dott. Alfonso Sperandeo of the department work and Productive Activities and dott. Liliana Coppola of the U. O. Coordination Programs and Major Projects.

The results achieved were made possible with the continuous and effective contribution, of the staff of the URBACT Projects - Networks for the development of integrated urban policy, arch. Maria Luna Nobile, dott. Anna Arena, arch. Vincenzo Fusco, and for the project's first stage, dott. Cristina Fato, arch. Emilia Giovanna Trifiletti, all through the overall technical assistance from the "SOGES" in Turin.

I want give a special thanks the Mayor Luigi de Magistris, to the Councillor of Urban Policies Urban Planning and Common Goods Carmine Piscopo, the Director of Department (capo di gabinetto) dott. Attilio Auricchio, for supporting the Programme of Territorial Cooperation URBACT II, ad for asking me to manage the USEAct project USEACT and to represent the City of Naples in European Commission initiative, that has as an important target, the construction of a shared identity of Europe.

A heartfelt thanks to all.

Gaetano Mollura

USEAct Lead Partner Project Coordinator



Introduction to the USEAct Network

The USEAct project has taken the courageous decision to work on a challenge that is key but also one of the most complex cities have to deal with, notably controlling urban development through an urban policy that brings together all the operational, financial and urban development tools it has at its disposal.

Although the cities in the USEAct network find themselves in very different situations, they all have to deal nonetheless with the phenomena of more or less uncontrolled spatial growth, commonly referred to as “urban sprawl”.

The repercussions of uncontrolled urban sprawl are well known. To begin with they should be properly identified and highlighted by all the parties involved in such a way that any integrated action strategy that will be subsequently implemented can enjoy the widest possible support among the population, its elected representatives and social and economic players.

The European Commission report “**Cities of Tomorrow**” published in 2011 very aptly describes the many negative outcomes of urban sprawl. Urban sprawl makes organising services complicated; it gives rise to an increased risk of social isolation. Since urban sprawl frequently happens outside local authorities’ administrative areas, the taxation basis that funds public services cannot be matched with the geographical distribution across the area of those using the services. Given the low population density with urban sprawl, the use of private cars becomes unavoidable resulting in increased energy consumption and congestion. Urban sprawl promotes spatial segregation and social exclusion by accelerating the way that different areas of the city become differentiated socially. Furthermore for these different city areas this often brings with it a loss of their functional diversity and commercial functions, and for smaller or more economically fragile cities this can even lead to the decline of their centre. Urban sprawl contributes to the loss of agricultural land, to growth in land sealing and consequently to an increased risk of flooding in urban areas; it is one of the main reasons for the loss of biodiversity and overuse of natural resources. Urban sprawl also has a very negative impact on the quality of the surrounding landscapes, and the attractiveness of the city and its hinterland.

Strategic planning across the whole urban area is necessary (Functional Urban Area –FUA)

An initial difficulty arises from the fact that for it to be effective public action has to encompass the whole geographical area sharing the same services and the same jobs; in other words the territory covered by people making their daily journeys. This is the urban area that in almost all European countries covers territory occupied by several local authorities and so coordinated action is required from them all since the city at the centre cannot act on its own! **From 2014-2020 the European Commission will be highlighting the problems cities have with urban-rural relations,**

providing a great opportunity for action for work to be done on controlling urban spread. Joint strategy and joint spatial guidelines should be devised across whole urban areas. Natural areas and vulnerable farmland need to be protected but at the same time the real estate needed for development has to be promoted in appropriate areas with good public transport connections. To do this, the elected representatives need to have the right technical tools that will allow them to carry out observation of the territory over time and essential preliminary studies, promote dialogue between the various local authorities about the challenges they all share and prepare for consultation between all the parties involved. This is exactly the role of the town planning agencies (about fifty in total) that have been set up in France since the end of the sixties in almost all urban areas (FUA) with over 100,000 inhabitants; they could be a source of inspiration.

How this needs to link with intervention in existing urbanised spaces: urban renewal

Strategic planning that seeks to steer urban development without being closely linked to far-reaching intervention in the existing urban fabric in order to foster its renewal is doomed to failure.

Economics is the prime reason driving investors to build on non-urbanised spaces, agricultural and natural spaces, since this turns out to be a far less costly option than working with space that has already been urbanised. The cost of purchasing plots of land in an urbanised area is far higher and does not include the considerable outlay required to “recycle” them (the cost of cleaning up and rehabilitating the land etc.). Purchase procedures are very complex, the plots of land are scattered all over, buildings are occupied, consultation with the inhabitants is long and drawn-out and the regulatory framework onerous (town planning and environmental regulations, etc.). In well-located sectors, where the private investor is willing to invest because of an expected increase in land and property values, firm public control is required to supervise the private action and guarantee social mix, urban quality, public spaces and services for the population. In other sectors, to make private investment possible, public action will have to be even more proactive in its interventions, and this includes being financially proactive. There are considerable resources that are needed, particularly in Central and Eastern European cities, for the development of industrial waste land, run-down communal residential housing areas, etc.

So particularly with regard to this subject, it is clear that an integrated approach to urban development is indispensable, whether this means intervention on a territorial scale or getting everybody involved on board. It only remains for me to hope that through drawing up Local Action Plans, all the USEAct project partners will collaborate and work together effectively so that they formulate responses that fit the situation of every one of the cities.

Emmanuel Moulin

Director of the URBACT Secretariat
(in the 1st USEAct Newsletter October 2013)



Guide to the FINAL REPORT

The breadth and organization of the theme addressed by the USEAct project (the implementation of policies for reducing new urban land use and the sustainable reuse of the existing city) prompted the proposal of a final report which functions as a gateway and a sketch map of a building, as fascinating as it is broad and complex internally.

Our hope is that through the input keys provided by the “report”, the reader will gain the desire to journey through the rich output of the project (see page 62). The keywords and in particular “links” to the output are therefore the true pillars of this short final report, which has no desire to condense (impossible in any case) into a few pages not only the very broad category of the project material results but also the variety of interpretative perspectives of the topic.

Moreover, the difficulties of simplifying it perfectly reflect the complex morphology of the integrated policies for reducing land-take, and the reuse of the city. This has come to light in the concrete exchange of ideas, experience and knowledge within the USEAct partnership. Interpretative models, focuses, aims, keywords, tools, technical-legal frameworks and “geographic scales” have been outlined and discussed by partners and experts. Their diversity between local setting and partner type, have clarified the need to trace an “individual” path towards reducing land use. The wealth, and to some extent apparent incoherence of issues (and concrete practices) should to our minds be judged positively.

The matter in question is a thorough instruction and not “a lack of convergence” or even less so “failure of topic focus”. The idea of “convergence” or “key words” and “certified” models, applicable to the entire European territory, is not suitable for more complex issues. Despite this premise, some common and crosscutting key-messages emerged. They serve for the most part as indicators for strategic reflection, useful to drive on innovation.

These key messages, presented on page 23, do not strive to be the quintessence of an integrated policy for reducing land use; they lend themselves to “browsing”- like an anthology – by any sensitive and open users able to choose those most suited for “cultivation” in their own territorial gardens.

Vittorio TORBIANELLI
USEAct Lead Expert



USEAct and the participative approach

Participation as a tool for enhanced collaboration between UseAct network partners

USEAct has thrown down the challenge to cities across Europe, from Norway to Turkey, passing by Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Romania, Spain and the UK, to raise awareness and explore the measures available to them to achieve opportunities for people and businesses to settle in existing locations without encroaching on further land, but also to involve citizens and all the stakeholders who make up the richness of a complex system to not only become aware but also to become actors of the future development of their cities. From its inception, USEAct has demonstrated its commitment to participation: the project's innovative bottom-up approach allowed for a number of topics to be addressed in small 'bi lateral' or 'trilateral' meetings on sub themes identified by the partners during their exchanges. The results of these meetings have been disseminated amongst the entire partnership, and have led the partners to prioritise two specific areas on which they wish to collaborate in the future in order to reinforce their work in combating urban sprawl, that is "Social Housing: innovative models and Financial Sustainability" and "Smart data and territorial planning in a participatory perspective".

Introduction

Key messages

Key Examples

Good practices

Local bottom-up decision making

The Local Support Group in each partner city enabled the project partners to create innovative participative and bottom-up decision-making processes, building mutual respect as a solid basis for the future. The participation of a wide range of local stakeholders (economic, social and environmental actors) in devising and drafting their Local Action Plan has also rooted their involvement in neighbourhood renewal, impacting on local employment, housing and environmental issues, through an integrated approach.

Improving the capacities for local actors

Local Support Group meetings have made it possible to create local networks and to build cross-partner visions of the issues and the solutions. Representatives from a number of the USEAct partners' local administrations have also actively participated in the URBACT national capacity-building seminars, in the training provided for local representatives, and in the URBACT summer university event, strengthening their pro-active participation in promoting their cities' involvement in the project and enhancing their ownership. Cooperation with university and other research centres has contributed to the local partnership in some cities.

Managing Authorities are also actors in the process

Through the active participation of certain relevant Managing Authorities in the process, partners have also come closer to understanding the opportunities and challenges of bringing their action plans to fruition through national and European funding opportunities.

Pauline Geoghegan
USEAct Thematic Expert

Project Management

1

1.2 The USEAct Project Key Issues

The initial USEAct thematic framework

Read more in the USEAct Baseline Study

Theme I	Subtheme
Planning tools and planning governance for Urban Growth Management and reusing urban areas	1.1 Implementing UGM at different administrative levels and scales
	1.2 Planning tools to manage land property fragmentation for integrated “reuse” interventions
	1.3 Taxes and financial tools for promoting and funding
	1.4 Improving social awareness towards positive effects of UGM, renewal and densification and involvement of communities
	1.5 Transportation and planning for Urban Growth
Theme II	Subtheme
Interventions to “reuse” urban areas: management, partnerships, funding, functions	2.1 Designing, managing and funding successful Public Private Partnership and proactive community participation
	2.2 Improving public administration ability on controlling and managing “high quality” and “sustainable” reuse interventions
	2.3 Inducing “local added value” in reuse interventions
Theme III	Subtheme
Refitting and regenerating inhabited buildings and areas	3.1 Integrated, “regeneration-oriented” public strategies through refitting and maintenance of existing buildings in the urban fabric: residential blocks in central areas and historic
	3.2 Involving flat-owners to join refitting integrated strategies through energy efficiency improvements

1.3 The USEAct Thematic Framework

What partners and experts have focused on

Theme1 Planning tools and governance

Territorial governance mismatch; planning at Functional Urban Area level; EU Metropolitan Governance Agenda; Role of “regional” and “metropolitan” planning authorities; Sustainable and Circular Flows Land Use Management models; Integrated Management vs Regulation; Planning tools integration at different scales; Planning within voluntary or compulsory aggregation of local entities; Joint Venture Urban Development Companies; Town Planning Schemes beyond zoning; “Transit Oriented Developments”; Planning Process and political system; Planning to support to economic growth; Transferable Building Rights and reuse-oriented incentives; Biodiversity offsetting and compensatory habitats; Urban visualisation tools and data platform for land use management and community involvement.

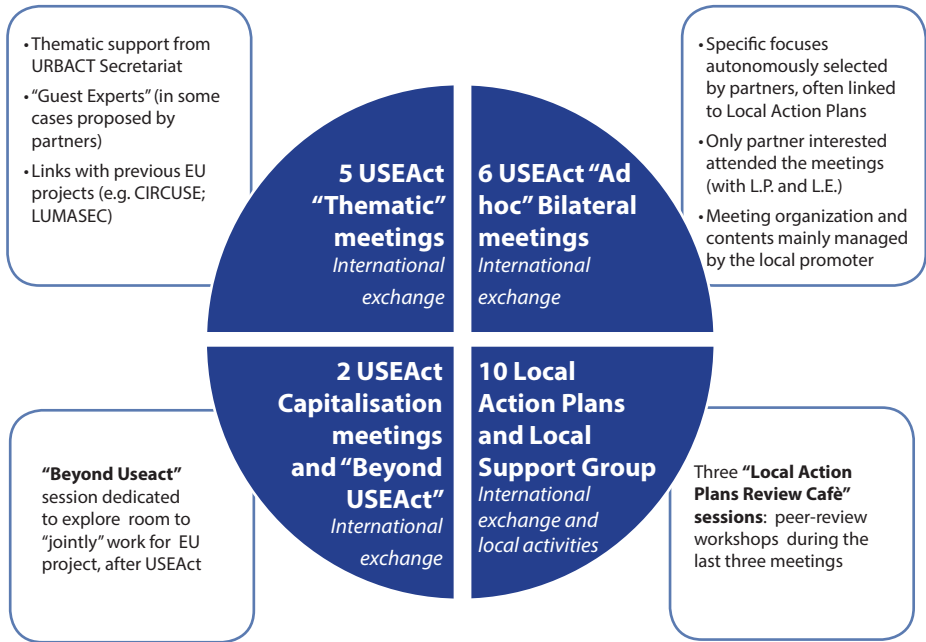
Theme2 Interventions to reuse urban areas

Strategies and tools for inner-development and urban refilling; Renovation of former or underused industrial areas; International Business Locations; Mixed-use projects; PPP between rhetoric and real possibilities; Public control of urban project outcomes and quality; Public owned “Special Purpose Vehicles” for redevelopment; Diagnostic of vulnerable areas and prioritizing interventions; Revitalizing downtowns of middle-sized cities to attract people and jobs; District and Quarter Management in regeneration programs/projects; Role of local infrastructure; Upfront infrastructure financing; Innovation in affordable housing provision and finance; Changing community attitude towards urban density in low density settings; Generating (and allocating) values in urban redevelopment projects; Vacant Site Levies.

Theme3 Refitting and regenerating buildings and areas

Refitting strategies at different urban scales; Refitting community-based programs; Adaptive Reuse potential assessment; Sociotechnical approach to refitting; Adaptive Reuse and accessibility; Programs for Adaptive Reuse of heritage residential buildings.

1.3 Mapping our activities



1.4 Ad hoc Thematic Experts



Didier Vancutsem

URBACT Thematic Expert
Focus: Land Use Management and the LUMASEC Project



Maros Finka

URBACT Thematic Expert
Focus: Land Use Management in Slovakia and the CIRCUSE project



Adolf Sotoca

URBACT Thematic Expert
Focus: Land Use Management in U.S.A. and in Spain



Michael Fuller - Gee

URBACT Thematic Expert
Focus: Quality of Urban Public Space in Norway

USEAct Development Phase
Kick off meeting

Viladecans 27-28 May

II Thematic seminar
Planning Tools and Planning Governance for UGM
Nitra 1-2 October

III Thematic seminar
Intervention to reuse urban areas
Istanbul 25-27 March

IV Thematic seminar
Intervention to reuse urban areas
Østfold 27-28 May

Bilateral/trilateral Meetings

This initiative has been very positive in terms of active partner participation - entrusted with greater responsibility for the organization and success of the meeting. Additionally there has been a wealth of discussion, which has opened up the possibility of the continuation of the network activity to further explore the issues addressed.

First BT meeting
 REAL ESTATE
 INVESTMENT TRUST
 FOR HOUSING
 London 3-4 April 2014

Second BT meeting
 DIFFERENTIATING
 INTERVENTIONS
 RESIDENTIAL/
 ECONOMIC ACTIVITY
 Viladecans
 27 June 2014

Third BT meeting
 DIFFERENTIATING
 INTERVENTIONS
 URBAN USES AND
 TEXTURES
 Viladecans
 28 June 2014

**Fourth
 Bilateral meeting**
 SMART DATA AND
 VISUALIZATION
 TOOLS
 Naples 14-15 July
 2014

**Fifth
 Bilateral meeting**
 NEW USES FOR
 HERITAGE (residential)
 BUILDINGS
 Dublin
 4-5 November 2014

**Sixth
 Bilateral meeting**
 (UP FRONT)
 NFASTRUCTURE
 FINANCING
 Dublin
 5-6 November 2014



Iván Tosics

Thematic Pole Expert
 URBACT Secretariat
 Focus: Urban Sprawl and
 Periurban Governance



Germana di Falco

URBACT Thematic Expert
 Focus: Facilitating Local
 Action Plan finalization. EU
 funding frameworks

V Thematic seminar
 Refitting and Regenerating
 buildings and areas
 Riga Planning Region 25-26 September

2015
*Capitalisation and
 Managing Authorities WS*
 Buckinghamshire
 26-28 January

**USEAct Final Event
 and LAP Exhibition**
 Naples
 22-24 April 2015

1.5 The USEAct Partnership

Read more in the USEAct Baseline Study

Partner	Country	Type of organization	Population	
Baia Mare Metropolitan Area	Romania	Associations for intermunicipal development	M.A. 220,000	
Barakaldo	Spain	Municipality	M. 100,000 M.A. 900,000	
Buckinghamshire Business First	United Kingdom	Not-for-profit public equivalent body linked to a Local Enterprise Partnership	M.A. 500,000	
Dublin	Ireland	Municipality	M. 506,000 M.A. 1.8 million	
Naples	Italy	Municipality	M. 950,000 M.A. 3,000,000	
Nitra	Slovak Republic	Municipality	M. 78,000	
Østfold County Council	Norway	County	M.A. 278,000	
Riga Planning Region	Latvia	Region	M.A. 956,000	
Trieste	Italy	Municipality	M. 202,000	
Viladecans	Spain	Municipality	M. 65,000	
Observer Partner				
Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality	Turkey	Metropolitan Area	M.A. 14 million Metropolitan Area MA Municipality M	

A diverse partnership:

The USEAct network partners' profile is highly varied in terms of their role in the territorial organization, dimension and geographic scale, and local physical, social and legal features (e.g. urban density, planning and governance framework and rules; cultural approach to land use, etc.). This variety has represented:

- a challenge: diversity of perspectives and focus towards the topic of "land take"; model and cultural diversity in the planning; diversity of specific situations;
- an opportunity: different roles and territorial scales in the "governance" of a territory, enabling a "glance" through a perspective at different scales.

Why USEAct? Main challenges and focuses	Base Line Study
Facing urban sprawl at supra-municipality level; promoting economic development through integrated metropolitan plans; Reusing Brownfields.	P. 46
Promoting adaptive reuse of existing residential building and areas; identifying prioritization and financing criteria for intervention.	P. 54
Promoting local development through innovative territorial PPP partnerships; promoting development aimed at job creation in the long term; managing natural resources as well.	P. 61
Promoting a financing adaptive reuse of vacant spaces in urban areas and of built residential heritage.	P. 69
Promoting adaptive reuse of vacant spaces in urban areas and of built residential heritage, with particular attention to historic centres; developing urban planning at metropolitan level.	P. 75
Developing downtown revitalization; adaptive reuse of brownfields and heritage buildings; improving urban planning frameworks.	P. 84
Facing urban sprawl at super-municipality level through integrated planning; meeting growing demand of affordable housings. Promoting high quality urban densification, and adaptive reuse of vacant spaces in urban areas; downtown revitalization.	P. 90
Facing urban sprawl at supra-municipality level; promoting brownfield reuse at regional level; promoting adaptive reuse of vacant spaces and residential buildings in Urban areas.	P. 97
Developing innovative planning tools able to optimize land-take and promote qualitative/energy-saving improvements of existing residential building.	P. 104
Promoting adaptive reuse of vacant spaces in urban areas, with particular attention to industrial areas with job attraction purposes.	P. 111
Developing a vision of urban growth management.	/

1.6 The fastest-growing city in Europe is a USEAct friend

Istanbul: a unique experience, where exploding growth is high on the agenda against a background of universally recognized heritage treasures.

Istanbul is observer partner of the USEAct Project and hosted a USEAct thematic meeting. Unlike many European cities, Istanbul is in full development: with a population of almost 14 million (which has grown from 1.5 million in 1965) the question of urban growth management is crucial. Placed at the intersection between Europe and Asia, the city is a key cultural and economic interface, with at its heart a unique and fragile cultural heritage which has to withstand, and coexist with, the demands of a modern city.

Integrated programs

The governance system in Istanbul is complex and fragmented. Recent reforms tried to clarify the roles of authorities and promote “programmes” to integrate their functions.

The metropolitan (municipality) authority deals with planning, transport, waste management and other urban services, and as the arm of the central government is responsible for coordination within the public sector and among private and NGOs. A special Provincial Authority serves with elected councillors for the entire province. There are elected mayors and councillors of 39 district municipalities, and at the local level (neighbourhoods and forest villages). This is based on the French administrative system evolved and still evolving in time with the influence of various factors. Regional plans are still not always connected.



Read more in the Third USEAct Seminar Report on the Theme: the theme "Interventions to reuse urban areas: management, partnerships, funding" I

Planning typology

There are three types of planning; corporate, sectoral and spatial plans. Corporate literally called 'strategic' plans.

They have to be prepared by local government, public sector institutions including local government bodies such as a special provincial authority, metropolitan authority, district municipalities (39). Sectoral plans are national development plans, sectorial policy documents are at the central level, regional plans/NUTS2 at regional level.

Spatial plans could be categorized as macro, micro and special plans. Special plans are area or sectoral based (the Bosphorus, site management, transportation, earthquake, conservation, tourism, coastal zones). Micro plans are for master plans at 1/5,000 and implementation at 1/1,000 scales, and Macro plans are at provincial level.

Difficult cultural environment for planners

The real estate development trends represent a further challenge: local structures, but with an international interest.

In Istanbul, big interest groups put pressure on individual landowners. Traditionally property shares go to children, and it is difficult to sell a small parcel of land. The local culture is that people still want to own a house. Planning is traditionally seen as a 'cost' for business parties and public planners (and architects) need to be aware of the "playing field" and of owners' real wishes and interests, and recognize that would create more realistic debates; without taking account this reality planners risk being delegitimized, with weak argumentations.

The 'Marmaray' line

The new rail tunnel under the Bosphorus can become back-bone of an intercontinental Transit Oriented Development scheme

The Marmaray line on the European side to Gebze on the Asian side of the Bosphorus, has been modernized as a commuter rail system (76 km of which 19.3km on the European side, and 43.4 km on the Asian side, and a speed of 100km/hr), formed by lines and the immersed tunnel, three new underground stations, and an overground station. The immersed tunnel length is 1.4km. The depth of the immersed tunnel below the Strait is 56.0mt. Existing commuter transport carries 10,000passengers, and the improved commuter transport will carry 75.000 passengers, with a capacity of 1.7 million.

Yenikapı Archaeo park and transportation hub

The Yenikapı Archaeo park will be located on the Marmara shores of the historical peninsula. The area of the site is 27 ha. The objectives of the project are to design an archaeological park where about 20 sunken vessels were found, together with an transportation transfer node composed of two railway stations, a sea-bus station and a bus terminal.

Earthquakes and redevelopment

In Istanbul, currently the majority of the existing buildings are not built according to earthquake standard. After the Marmara Earthquake in 1999, standards and measures tightened in construction law. If one person in an apartment building requests it, authorities can demolish and rebuild it. Designers and contractors 'create value' by creating extra space, or increased value, based on the quality of design.

Introduction

Key messages

Key Examples

Good practices

Key Messages

2

A Matter of Scale and Governance?

Europe has a 21st century economy, 20th century governments, and 19th century territorial systems.

The result is ineffective Territorial government mismatch between the real metro-scaled economy of innovative firms, risk-taking entrepreneurs and talented workers and the inefficient administrative geography of government.

The “FUA” Cooperation Challenge

Developing metropolitan governance and cooperation at the Functional Urban Area (FUA) level is a key challenge

FUA cooperation is a key factor: to avoid the negative effects of competition (investments, services, taxes) between local authorities; to integrate policies – economic, environmental and social challenges can best be addressed at once on broader urban level; to reach the economy of scale – size matters in economic terms and in services. However, functional urban areas are undefined and usually weak in administrative-political sense.

[Read more in the First USEAct Newsletter](#)

New EU “Integrated Territorial Investment” approach

EU has developed more integrated tools to improve planning integration

New elements in European policy making for the 2014-2020 period: ITI (Integrated Territorial Investment): a place-based integrated approach, potentially on metropolitan level (larger cities); CLLD (Community Led Local Development): people-based integrated interventions on local (smaller municipalities) and neighbourhood level; Horizon2020: spatially blind innovative economic actions.

Hopes from new “metropolitan governance” reforms and metropolitan tools around Europe.

After early reforms (e.g. France), new governance frameworks are developing in many European Countries along with new ways to integrate projects.

The new Metropolitan Cities in Italy: the so called “Città Metropolitana” (“metropolitan city”) concept is an Italian attempt to reform local authorities, bringing together large core cities with their smaller surrounding towns regarding economic activities and essential public services.

The aim of the “German Metropolitan Regions” is to enhance economic development of urban areas around large cities towards better European competitiveness.

In Poland EU Structural Funds are used as a carrot to create cooperation: the Government requires ITI (Integrated Territorial Investment) associations to be formed between the 16 regional capitals and the municipalities belonging to their functional urban areas.



Read more in the Fourth USEAct Seminar Report on the theme the theme: "Interventions to reuse urban areas: management, partnerships, funding" II

Learning about cooperation at metropolitan level in Europe

The Euro cities, Metropolitan Areas in Action" research (across 40 European cities) mapped different cooperation arrangements around the core city.

Analysis of the results on the FUA level (OECD) showed types of content/functions of cooperation (from loose talks through single or more functions to strong joint multi-functional planning), types of institutional form of cooperation: from no form through weak delegated council to a strong (elected or delegated) council.

URBACT and Metropolitan Governance projects

Former URBACT Projects have provided evidence on metropolitan governance issues: CityRegion.Net, Net-Topic, NODUS, LUMASEC, Joining Forces. Also EGTC (INTERACT) and Eurocities

Governance Integration and Private Sector involvement

Governance of the planning & development system can be different across countries. Looking at the UK system, through the Buckinghamshire case (USEAct partner), the role of private initiative clearly emerges.

The Buckinghamshire governance system can be described as follows. National level (Overall Policy), defining the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), with lots of initiatives to try and kick start the economy. Local governance (Buckinghamshire) is based on PPP. "Buckinghamshire Thames Valley" is the LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership) and is in fact a Public & Private Strategic Partnership. Buckinghamshire Business First is an agency and it is aimed at Private Sector Business Support Delivery. Buckinghamshire Advantage is a Public & Private Sector Property Development Company. Local authorities: 1 County Council, as Transport Planning Authority; 4 District Councils, as Local Planning Authority. ***Read more on Buckinghamshire in the First Thematic Paper***

USEAct Urban Sustainable Environmental Actions

Regional Bodies: mixing authoritative and communicative roles

The Norway experience shows that mixing authoritative and communicative role of regional authorities can improve integration at territorial level

In Norway, the County Council's roles are both authoritative and communicative, when preparing county plans with guidelines for the municipal land use-planning this presupposes stronger steering of the municipalities. It is crucial that the County Council has a communicative approach in preparing the county plan and that it makes sure that the guidelines are accepted by the municipalities. The County Council can have a more responsive/communicative role as well when advising on municipal land use planning, and an appropriate tool may be a collection of examples of "best practice". The County Council can also have an authoritative and responding role as a controller of the municipal land use planning and by supervising the national regulations. **[Read more in the Fourth USEAct Seminar Report](#)**

Governance levels and planning policy instruments in Spain

In Spain, planning Policy instruments which are relevant for reducing land take are under three main headings

- 1) Rural land custody (Landscape plans and Rural land custody);
- 2) Urban growth containment (Urban growth threshold, the National housing plan and Partial housing plans);
- 3) Low Density Urbanization issues (Neighborhoods Act, Land for regeneration and rehabilitation). **[Read more in the First Thematic Paper](#)**

Governance at metropolitan level in Baia Mare

The Baia Mare Metropolitan Area Strategy for 2010 – 2020 is the strategy for the whole metropolitan area of Baia Mare developed by the communities involved in the Association.

The Strategy aims at working on different inter-municipality themes, such as land management at territorial level, industrial and production development, transportation. In detail, the metropolitan projects are: the Baia Mare City Belt; the development of the Metropolitan Industrial Park; management of the Metropolitan Public Transportation System.

[Read more in the First Thematic Paper](#)

Introduction

Key messages

Key Examples

Good practices

Developing Transit Oriented Development through “density” policies in Ostfold County

The Ostfold County Master Plan works as a tool for coordinating the municipal planning and giving guidelines for density and reduced area-consumption linked to transport corridors

A «Transport-efficiency Model» developed by the Ostfold County is aimed at providing coordinated area- and transport planning- along with higher intensity land-use. Higher density means 15,6/km² in new development areas instead of 24 / km², with 605 m² area in towns and villages per inhabitant, instead of 701 m²: a 14 % reduction in 40 years, and an annual reduction of 2,5 m²– like today’s trend since 2000. When weighed against each other, the «Transport-efficiency» alternative provided the best goal achievement.

The County Master plan also states that «Land-accounts» or «Area-audit» should be developed as a part of the implementation of the County Master Plan, and will be used as a principal for revising. There will be a long term building limit in the plan. The “Area-pot” in the guidelines is smaller than the «possible future areas» for urban development (2023-2050). The area-pot in the 40-year perspective is common for the region. **[Read more in the Fourth USEAct Seminar Report](#)**

Land use management

In the past, steering urban land use was a simple matter of permissions and land exchange.

Today the framework conditions are changing: land issues are more interlinked and globalized in the urbanisation context. Local Authorities are responsible for delivering sustainable development for today and future generations. Cities have a huge impact on natural resource management, consumption of land and global warming, combined with brownfield land within cities and urban sprawl. Sustainable Land Use Management is an integrated process of managing use and development of land, in which spatial, sector-oriented and temporary aspects of urban policy are coordinated.

Three Pillars of Integrated Land Use Management

Key focuses of any integrated Land Use Management (LUM) strategy should be: Spatial patterns, Governance, and Capacity Building

SPATIAL_PATTERNS

Focus should be on land, land use, land value, including brownfields, sprawl, etc. GIS mapping tools can play important role. Development of a strategic integrated vision and a strategic plan for the territory, including territory outside the borders; controlling growth without sprawl and compliant with environmental and other EU procedures, taking into account the actual trends in demography, climate change, economy, social changes and energy. Controlling spatial patterns requires combination of the strategic plan with strong rules including fiscal instruments like land taxes, land banking as well as consideration of the added value of development for public interest.

G O V E R N A N C E

LUM strategies require: building up a culture of cross-sectoral working between the different levels of administration and developing structures for the integration of multilevel partnerships in land use processes: public, private and citizenship; developing leadership in territorial land use policies to achieve vertical and horizontal integration of stakeholders; combining long- and short- term interests in the processes; developing financial engineering techniques for long-term land use strategies to establish integrated urban strategies.

CAPACITY_BUILDING

LUM requires active communication of land use tasks to stakeholders and citizens by sensitizing them to the land as resource and not as a "tool". Building up co-operations with existing participatory networks like e.g. the Local Agenda 21 to establish two-way learning processes is required. Considering public administration and other stakeholders as target groups in addition to the involvement of citizens is another key point. Education and training of institutions and people in order to develop skills should complete the action framework.



Read more in the First USEAct Seminar Report on “Planning Tools and Planning Governance for Urban Growth Management”

No more town master plans with LUM?

Urban Land Use Management (LUM) may require different approaches compared to traditional planning. Cities could decide to substitute traditional planning tools (such as master plans) with innovative LUM frameworks

The City of Munich has no master plan. The process is a continuum. More effort is needed from the administration which is always producing documents. There were 12, now 16, principles, illustrated with actions and projects. For example principle no 5 is „compact- urban-green“. The city had to build on brownfields and for example an old railway has been re planned and integrated into the urban structure. The land use plan is integrated with the process. A new land use tax was decided for the realisation of green spaces: part (20%) of the plot development must be a green space: this can also include green space on the roof. Also further cities in Europe adopted target-oriented “processes” instead traditional masterplans.

Read more in the First Thematic Paper

Learning from the LUMASEC Project

USEAct Project explored outcomes of previous EU Projects about Land Use Management, also through inviting the Lead Expert of the, “Lumasec” Project, an URBACT Project dedicated to the Land Use Management.

The Lumasec Project proposed to focus on different categories of integrated tools. a) “Good governance” tools; actions by local authorities (internal management structures, networking city-region, information system, capacity building, tax systems,...); b) New generation financial tools oriented to future governance structures (EIB Programmes, innovative PPP structures); c) Land Banking and Land Accounting Systems.

Conclusions and recommendations of LUMASEC included policy implications for European cities: multi-level approach coordinating land use policies on horizontal and vertical levels of governance; knowledge before action (e.g. local land market); elaboration of land use policies between strategic planning and opportunities (public regulation, direct land acquisition, private involvement by initial public investment, local taxes).

USEAct Know How

The Ostfold County Conflict Map

In Ostfold, a 'Conflict-map', was drawn up to show challenges for land-use: all the different values and interests and created a conflict-map. The darkest brown colours show places where there are many interests that «on top of each other», like food-production/farmland, biodiversity, landscape values, cultural heritage sites and so on. These are naturally in and around the same places as where most people live- these were the places where people settled in centuries past and where towns and villages evolved.

Read more in the Fourth USEAct

Seminar Report

Introduction

Key messages

Key Examples

Good practices

“We Need Management!”

“We don't need ideas, we need actions”... i.e. how to get there: we need “management”. The regional planning framework is limiting strategies; we should be able to go far beyond regional strategy; we donot know how to implement regional strategy, why it is often very rigid.”

Read more in the Fourth USEAct
Seminar Report

Land Use Management in U.S.A.

A case study on the LUM strategy developed by the Oregon Metropolitan Authority shows how flexible LUM frameworks can be developed to reduce land take and densify urban areas

The Oregon Metropolitan Authority Metro is responsible for managing the Portland Metropolitan area's urban growth boundary and is required by state law to have a 20-year supply of land for future residential development inside the boundary. Every five years, the Metro Council is required to conduct a review of the land supply and, if necessary, expand the boundary to meet that requirement. This is called the urban growth management process. When undertaking this review, Metro also considers needs for future jobs in the region during this same 20-year period. The current urban growth boundary encompasses approximately 400 square miles. As of 2012, about 1.5 million people lived within the urban growth boundary. The strategy is to promote multifamily housing so that future urban policies (not only refill) will have a wider impact in a smaller territory. All new developments where the Metro is participating are multifamily. Multifamily dwelling (MFD) refill rates are generally expected to increase across the region, potentially reaching an overall MFD refill rate of nearly 70% for the region given current policies.

[Read more in the Third USEAct Seminar Report](#)

Visualization tools

Despite the emergence of town planning games which encourage the democratisation of the town planning process, town planners tend to control quite tightly information and modelling tools which would allow different communities of interest to play a strong part in 'place shaping' and town planning. Little or no evidence is often put forward for the amount of development land, vacant commercial stock, or duration that that stock has been vacant. In response to these issues, and to improve land use management on a long-term sustainable development perspective, developing GIS based visualization tools, including 3-D modelling tools at a community, level can be a solution. *Jim Sims*

Developing Visualization tools: some basic principles

Developing effective visualization tools to be used in Land Use Management strategies require an integrated approach

An integrated visualization concept, with related tools and applications, can be developed (with remarkable economies of scale) for many different purposes and for different geographical scales. Many functions and data should be integrated on locally driven platforms that are not single-purpose, but work as integrated service providers. This is a challenge also for local authorities interested in implementing such kind of platforms: heavy integration among departments (and with other subjects/bodies) and broad strategic visions are essential, to avoid "platform multiplication" with high risk of cost-inefficiency and low quality outcomes. [Read more in the Naples Bilateral meeting report](#)

New drivers for visualization tools

Relevance of GIS related outcomes for public interest purposes is increasing in relation to new social and technological "drivers" that, together with diffusion of new software applications, allow GIS to be integrated into innovative strategic frameworks facing cities.

New drivers are: the "Smart City" construct, the "Big Data" challenge (and opportunity), the Public Sector driven "Open Data Initiative (ODI)", along with tight public sector finances, opportunity for 'triple-helix' collaborations and need to 'democratize' urban decisional processes. Further room for innovation is also linked to the opportunity to develop feedback loops to incentivize residents and encourage behavior change, such as to the need to 'shift' procurement models away from traditional tendering processes and to move towards creation of more integrated 'platforms'.



Read more in the Naples Bilateral meeting report on the theme: "Smart data and Visualization Tools"

Urban Sprawl visualization to manage urban sprawl in British Columbia

To effectively plan new buildings and communities, the township of Langley, British Columbia, uses GIS tools with 3D extension to "manage" and "communicate" about urban growth.

Located in the heart of British Columbia's (BC) Lower Mainland, the Township of Langley is 45 minutes east of Vancouver. For a community that is used to a landscape of farmland and single-family housing, new proposed pockets of urban growth that include higher-density apartments and condominiums can be a bit "jarring". "Since 1995, the township has used "Esri" technology to manage land information across its enterprise and enable geographic applications in various departments, including planning, finance, engineering, and protective services". To effectively plan new buildings and communities, the township uses GIS tools with 3D extension. This includes remotely sensed 'Lidar' data that provides highly accurate geographic positions of properties and assets. This data is being used to create a 3D model that will provide a current baseline against which the township can visualize alternative growth scenarios. While GIS uses layers to subdivide datasets, layering systems in architectural design typically reference material components and a language of line-weights, colors, and textures.

Read more in the Second USEAct Seminar Report

Innovating Business Models for visualization

Organizations need to learn to collaborate and to think in a cross disciplinary way (energy, planning, land use etc.). New Business Models, based on PPP and horizontal cooperation; can be developed to delivery visualization tools able to support local development

The Public Sector specifically needs to link these developments to service transformation models. Geo-visualization tools can play an important role in service transformation. The Private sector that invests in technology is also called on to innovate models: business models often need a strong 'invest to save' approach and organizations need to identify use cases with strong cost/benefit returns and to find ways of monetizing peoples interaction with these new systems.

Horizontal cooperation between different subjects of local/regional governance system, based on a "open" approach, aimed at building the base data layer mainly through collaboration, is the option adopted in the Buckinghamshire County, to develop the so called "Buckinghamshire Virtual Model.

Read more in the Naples Bilateral meeting report

The Quality Issue

What kind of quality we really need at a “community” level? Quality is not an absolute concept: it depends on what we want to receive and on how much we agree to pay for. Trade-offs are recurrent: density/densification is widely perceived, for instance, as a reduction in quality. Since 2008 no houses have been built in Dublin City and now 80,000 people are on the waiting list for housing. In Buckinghamshire, the “Green Belt” issue contributed to the undersupply of new residential settlements, with upward rents as a consequence. Local politicians face clear and present lobbying from current residents with fears while future generations and employees have no voice. We have to be aware about trade-offs and the long term perspective and paying attentions to all different interests.

Quality Planning and town-center revitalization in low-density areas.

In most Norwegian areas, because of deeply rooted cultural reasons, the “detached house” approach is still dominant. However, negative impacts get even stronger, in particular for new generations. This leads to focusing on opportunities provided by “villages” and towns centers. The phenomenon is not limited to Norway, but is common to many low density areas

“Vote With Your Feet: it is generally a waste of your time to try to change your town. You can get far better personal results by moving to another town that has the qualities you are looking for (see <http://www.votewithyourfeet.com/>). As Frank Sinatra said: “I want to wake up in a city that never sleeps”. There is layer upon layer of action: housing, work places, shops, entertainment, schools, parks, civic facilities and co-housing” to enhance social contacts and, at the end, more happiness but also more attractivities for families and business. The “Village Planning” strategy is to concentrate as much development and activities within a defined area. “Village planning” requires focus and discipline. Places must wish to renew themselves – and make it happen. The town centre must be more concentrated, higher, more child-friendly and full of people (Mayor Einar Halvorsen , Arendal).”

Read more in the Fourth USEAct Seminar Report

Quality requirements and inter-municipality competition

“Difficulties arise (at County Planning Level) when treating planning applications at municipality level: if too many formal quality requirements are imposed by the municipality, investors will go to another municipality. The role of the municipality is not so much as controller, but more as a partner: the County role is also supporting them, to give and to take (Østfold)”.

Read more in the Fourth USEAct Seminar Report



Read more in the Second Thematic Paper on “Interventions to reuse urban areas: management, partnerships, funding”

Controlling Project quality: Municipality-owned development companies in Germany

Delivering high quality urban projects can be achieved through different approaches and several PPP approaches. Maintaining a strong control on project design and project delivery by the local authority, through public owned companies, can lead to effective results, as German experiences show.

German case studies (Stuttgart, Hamburg, etc.) highlight the role that a long long-lasting “in-house” approach (municipality-owned real estate company) can potentially play in urban reuse to guarantee project quality standards. But further conditions are needed: a) a sound and market-oriented asset-play capability (selling/renting, etc.) also to reinvest the earned money into the project; b) contractual PPP frameworks able to guarantee the desired “quality – also through specific tools (as the “exclusive option period” adopted in the “Hamburg Hafency” case); c) effective “local” support, e.g. within a “quarter management” framework. in particular in case of numerous private (small) players to be engaged. In conclusion, PPPs can be arranged by public administrations through different tools also where strong direct control of the intervention is maintained, as is the case of real estate investment fully developed by companies owned by public administration.

Read more in the Third USEAct Seminar Report, Lead Expert presentation

The Italian AUDIS “Urban Quality Protocol”

AUDIS is an Italian not for profit association aimed at promoting adaptive reuse of underused urban areas. AUDIS has developed an Urban Quality Protocol to support local administrations to focus on the quality issue when redevelopment projects are planned and carried on

The quality issue is a very sensitive matter for planning and development schemes aimed at urban “densification”. The capacity to control the outcomes (specifically when key roles are played by private bodies) and the ability to set-up appropriate guidelines/procedures/etc. for reaching specific qualitative targets (from potentially very different points of view, such as energy sustainability, users’ perceptions of the quality of life, economic development targets, etc.) appear as an essential conditions for implementing effective urban growth management policies. From 2009 to 2012, the AUDIS Charter developed a prototype system of evaluation for the quality of complex urban projects that aims at defining a Urban Quality Protocol, in support of sustainable development of cities by bringing the quality of project planning to a verification of feasibility, while also assessing the economic and social impacts of project interventions. The Urban Quality Protocol presents itself as a process of evaluation for complex urban projects that integrates the most advanced principles of sustainable development, the results of which can generate a Certification of Qualities.

Read more in the Fourth USEAct Seminar Report

Introduction

Key messages

Key Examples

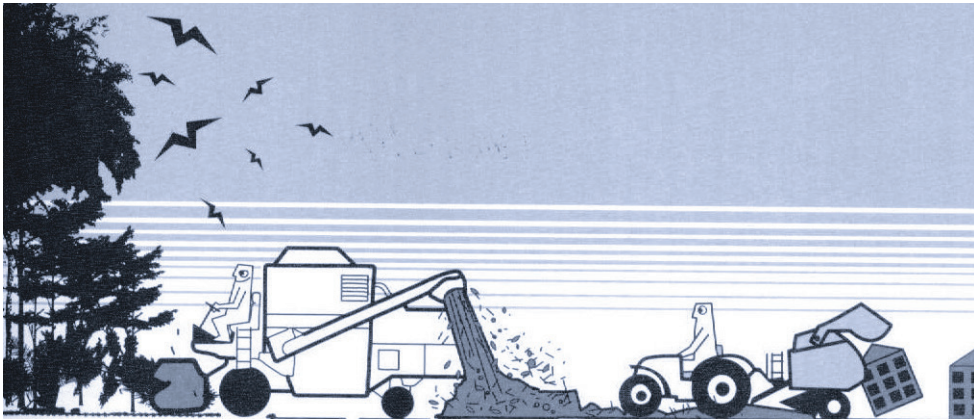
Good practices

Public Sector and Private Sector Roles in Urban Redevelopment: from theory to practice

Discussing the “quality of urban reuse projects” issue, opposing processes led by public sector to those giving more autonomy to private entities is very common. Yet, the true problem is that in many settings the “social obligation” of residents and owners is neglected, as the Spanish case clearly demonstrates.

With reference to urban redevelopment, there is some ambiguity in defining PPP, since many (and very different) forms of PPP are possible. Yet, if we look to the reality, in most settings the role of public sector is essential in urban regeneration and many PPPs are successful condition on that public sector is able to address the process in depth. But, on the other side, addressing the process should not mean paying everything with public funds. The only possible urban regeneration intervention is the one that comes bottom-up (with the primary private owner’s involvement in all aspects), where the public administration helps to manage, to take decisions and to ease the management. The Spanish Legislation recently stated this principle unmistakably, but its actual implementation is problematic. A bottom-up cultural, mental and – as a consequence, institutional - change is undoubtedly required: being an owner implies more than paying a mortgage since it implies (or should imply) assuming the duties of maintaining private and public facilities.

Read more in the Second Thematic Paper



“Qualities” and spaces for attracting business

In many European cities, developments and redevelopments schemes were characterized by huge investments in retail and/or housing sectors, without any consideration about long term economic sustainability. Housing bubbles and saturated retail markets often are the legacy of these past decisions. In the European context, which is still facing a protracted economic downturn, paying attention on how to “restart” production activities within urban areas is a fundamental issue.

Do you know your “attracting business” potential?

The KPMG’s Guide to International Business Location Costs (2014 Edition), entitled “Competitive Alternatives” shows very clearly which are the main drivers of business attraction for cities, within the current global competition environment.

A first message of the KPMG’s study is that costs are still a key variable for attracting business. Are cities or local communities carrying on any benchmarking research to monitor their city’s positioning within the “cost ranking” global (or national) scenario? Are potential competitors clearly identified? Is there a clear “target-costing” strategy, as a component of the whole urban marketing strategy aimed at attracting production activities? What is the level of “facility costs” – and of other real estate related costs – which could be (or actually are) affected by the “redevelopment decision framework”? What other location costs are (or could be) under control of local authorities? Are they fully known and monitored, or considered as a possible tool of an integrated attraction policy? What (and how relevant) costs are specifically related to urban reuse targets (e.g. soil rehabilitation, etc.). Are they compatible with the “market requirements”? What about further planning related potential constraints or duties (e.g. urban uses)? What is the role played by other non-cost related factors and what could be the importance of further “quality” features of new developments (e.g. industrial parks, urban design, etc.). All the above issues are a clear example of how any “urban reuse” policy aimed at reaching ambitious but fundamental targets (such as attracting business) should be soundly assessed and deeply integrated into broader strategic policy and marketing frameworks.

[Read more in the Second Thematic Paper](#)

Industrial Parks in Baia Mare

Baia Mare Metropolitan Area, through specific tools, tries to develop a strategy to promote Industrial Parks in the region.

Possible facilities and support for investors are the following ones:

- tax incentives for the agricultural land transformed into industrial area only after obtaining the industrial park certificate;
- tax incentives for technological & industrial park development offered by the local councils from the metropolitan area;
- advantages offered to investors by the local administration, by facilitating land procurement or rental;
- other public facilities legally offered by local administration. **[Read more in the Second Thematic Paper](#)**

Downtown revitalization to attract businesses along with people

Quality of life, more specifically, quality of urban living spaces are a key factor, for workers and companies, when they decide to locate in areas that are able to provide attractive places to live.

As other Buckinghamshire cities, Aylesbury is focusing on “how to attract value” onto its territory. So far, Aylesbury has started to manage a regeneration process of some deprived areas of the city centre, paying specific attention to the urban quality issue, as an opportunity to enhance values and guarantee a long term success for the intervention. [Read more in the Fourth USEAct Seminar Report](#)



[Read more in the Second Thematic Paper on “Interventions to reuse urban areas: management, partnerships, funding”](#)

Promoting industrial opportunities through regional web-based visualization tools

Attracting business can be supported, at regional level, by initiative aimed at visualizing sites to be redeveloped for business purposes, as done by Riga Planning Region

Riga Planning Region established a general framework for data management, starting from definition of “statistical areas” and development of a Regional statistical area database pilot project. This system allows visualizing them on a free of charge “Google Maps” cartographic base and elaborating pictures in pdf format. Since data can be used as marketing tools with the aim of promoting potential investment areas, a specific tool, called “Investment platform of the RPR local governments”, to integrate information related to each local government, was developed. The tool allows visualizing areas with industrial redevelopment potentials.

[Read more in the Second Thematic Paper](#)

Re-starting a former industrial area in Viladecans paying attention to public spaces

Viladecans City Council started to deal with the lay-out design of the “Industrial polygon” located at the urban fringe, to explore general lay-out solutions able to better fit the “innovation and knowledge activities” attraction policy.

The research focused on the lack of public space problem and the role played by the structure of open spaces in the transformation of the urban environment. The study identifies the main features of the existing spatial/economic setting of the “polygon” (mixture of different sizes of business, originally small plots but with some very large properties today, type of activities and functions located), and the main constraints and problems (low integration within the urban fabric, insufficient public spaces – only 15% of the total surface -, presence of unused spaces within large plots). Specific attention is paid to identify the current ongoing processes sprawling of new small businesses and retail; etc.)

Quality: Affordable Housing

Current forecasts indicate that housing demand in many metropolitan areas (particularly in the better performing regions) outstrips supply, with a private rented sector which has largely blossomed. In addition, the current economic climate is combining with demographic changes across Europe (particularly the ageing population) to result in an increase in demand for intermediate and social rented housing. In these segments, the total need for new “social and affordable housing” is again outstripping supply. Truly sustainable land use management approaches should not fail to recall the need to face the housing issue, as it is a key factor for long term social and economic development. However, innovating social affordable housing provision and financing models is a priority.

Innovating rules and complying with market

What can be the model for “innovating” and “restarting” social and affordable housing provision is a key question. However, it is clear that independently from the model, it is important that dwellings fit current demand expectation.

Formerly 20% of new housing had to be set aside for social housing in Dublin, but this maybe a deterrent to investment, and may undermine the policy of mixed use. There is also a demographic issue: different typologies are needed for a different mix of housing. The ‘market’ wants 3 bedroom, 2 storey housing. Apartment blocks have a bad reputation, being expensive to run, and with poor management, so they need to be overhauled to ensure quality.

[Read more in the London Bilateral meeting report](#)

Aggregating “debt” to finance social and affordable housing in UK

Innovative social housing provision is not only a matter of market organization but also of funding innovation. The UK setting, based on small housing associations, shows how joining forces (and financial risk) can lead to new instruments to finance housing

The THFC (The Housing Finance Corporation) is the foremost aggregating funder of the Housing Associations sector in UK. REITs imply, for the investors (e.g. Insurances or pension funds), to be involved, through shareholding, in the “development business” risk, while THFC operates only as a “bank”, without involving the lenders into the development business risk, which is born by Housing Associations only. The “debt aggregation” function provided by THFC allows individual (small scale) Housing Associations to get “affordable” housing finance.

[Read more in the London Bilateral meeting report](#)



Read more in the London Bilateral Meeting Report on “Real estate Investment Trust for Housing”

Potential role of non profit bodies The UK “Housing Association” model

The UK, with its aptitude to involve not for profit bodies, is an interesting setting to discuss the potential of different approach to social and affordable housing provision

The affordable housing provision system in the UK, is rather dynamic at present, as the UK developer community is probably more active/mature than in other settings. The reason for this is because, in addition to the traditional private sector players, they also have an active Not-for Profit Sector, in the form of ‘Housing Associations’ or ‘Registered Providers’. Municipalities have been encouraged to transfer what housing stock they did own to Housing Associations, in return for a capital receipt and a potential Right to Buy ‘kick back’ when these residents bought former council homes. In addition to these Housing Associations, commercial house builders are active in the development of large ‘New Build to buy’ estates, which the UK government now mandates must include a target of 40% of Social Housing which are supported by ‘Developer Contributions’

Read more in the London Bilateral meeting report

A National “Housing Bank” within the Ostfold ULSG

In Norway, a National Housing Bank is established to finance local housing initiatives. This Bank joined the USEAct project as a member of the Ostfold ULSG

The Østfold County USLG is formed by planners from six towns, plus the international department, the county governor’s office, and the National Housing Bank.

The National Housing Bank is a national housing finance institute, and is the main implementation agency for housing. Its policy is for ‘adequate housing’, and one of its main roles is to implement quality housing that is user friendly and energy efficient. Their priority is social housing, working with other public and state agencies. The County does not have the competence for social housing. Municipalities have now formed a social housing network. In order to build social housing, there are conditions. The municipalities deal with housing management, including rental for private owners. In general, it is difficult to get ‘affordable’ housing, since this is only available for the very poor. On the other hand it is expensive to buy a house.

Read more in the London Bilateral meeting report

“Real Estate Investment Trusts”: a fresh approach to fund social and affordable housing

Real Estate Investment Trusts are quoted companies that own and manage income-producing property, which provide a way for investors to access property assets without having to buy property directly.

Whilst many of the housing development schemes rely on ‘State’ or ‘Institutional’ funders, there has been a growing interest in recent periods on whether additional opportunities exist to develop affordable housing by securing funding from retail (individual) investors, including businesses. Not only do retail investors provide a potential new source of finance for the Housing Sector, but the returns that retail investors potentially want are less than Institutional Investors.

One of the most under-developed tools for securing funding from retail investors, which is attracting interest across Europe are Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITS). Different countries are developing REITS programs (included Spain and Italy) to finance housing developments, but there are still many constraints and issues to be overcome to improve effectiveness of such a tool.

[Read more in the London Bilateral meeting report](#)

Introduction

Key messages

Key Examples

Good practices

Social and Affordable Housing Issues in Spain

Concrete issues, such as those related to specific legal frameworks and path dependency, have to be faced in many countries to “adopt” new instrument for social housing. Spain is an example.

Concerning REITs (Real Estate Investment Trusts) in Spain, this is only available for rental housing, in the UK for rental and ownership. REITs only work up to 1000 units, due to the management of the funds, so there is a mis-match between Spanish regulations and what can be done. In Spain there are only 15 REITs, mainly formed by family groupings who wish to invest. Social housing is only thought of as a marginalised issue. Affordable housing cannot rely only on public authorities: involving real estate finance etc. maybe revitalizing previous frameworks, such as building cooperatives for example: get investors to the people concerned, for example link with social services where the disabled are concerned, could be solutions. The social system of the whole city should be involved.

Read more in the Fourth USEAct Seminar Report

22% of the current population claim affordable and social housing

A recent study developed in 2013 by Naples Chamber of Commerce in cooperation with associations and Italian Real Estate Association showed that in Naples there is a potential demand for “social housing” about 22.3% of the resident population and four categories, in particular, would need social housing of developments: pensioners, unemployed, young people (working age) and migrants. According to experts, a reinforced social housing development policy could be also a driver for local economic development.

Heritage

“Regeneration is a ‘growth industry’ and heritage assets can play a central role in achieving successful regeneration – they represent an opportunity rather than a constraint.” “The economic, social and environmental advantages of including heritage assets in regeneration schemes can provide added benefits over and above the creation of new development and floorspace” (HeritageWorks - The use of historic buildings in regeneration - A toolkit of good practice, English Heritage, UK, 2013)

Retrofitting: not an easy task

Adaptive reuse of heritage building requires, among other, building efficiency improvement, to be achieved through refitting, In general – independently on the heritage nature of a building - refitting is not an easy task.

Retrofitting is not an easy task and evidences demonstrate it well (failures are frequent!). Existing incentives are fragmented and do not always get successful results. Main challenges can be summarized as follows. Right predictions and right «refitting packages» are required, with improvements of «in use» implementation on broad areas. Very high local-case customization is required, but broad scale (city level but also governmental one) is definitely strategic – integrating different levels. Paybacks remain a problem: strong public involvement is still required. A Socio-technical approach is needed, through community based retrofitting programs; understanding “disruption” is important. Financial markets are not fully ready for the challenge: innovation (and time) is required to “connect” financial operators with the *issue (assessing risks, etc.)*. *Structural systemic «transition» (long term!) is needed to get more substantial targets at city level and at financial level.*

Read more in the Fifth USEAct Seminar Report

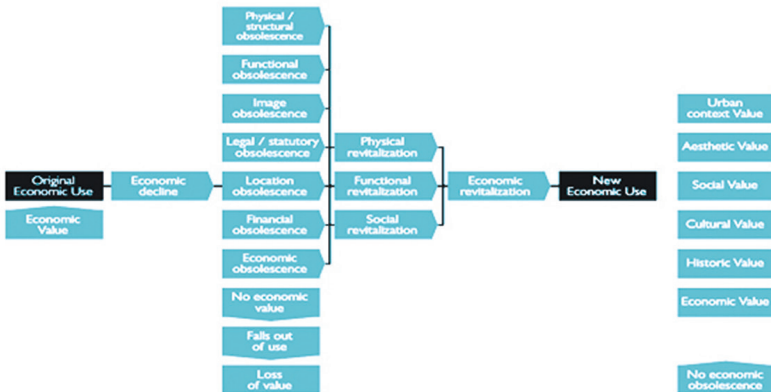


Read more in the Third Thematic Paper on “Refitting and regenerating buildings and urban areas”

Adaptive Reuse “Obsolescences” and values in Heritage Buildings

Within Adaptive Reuse strategies, the need to take into consideration different “obsolescence” facets to acknowledge different value categories, is widely recognized, as showed in a recent UK “guideline” on adaptive reuse of historic buildings.

Read more in the Third Thematic Paper



The process of economic growth, decline and growth

Source: *HeritageWorks. The use of historic buildings in regeneration. A toolkit of good practice, 2013*

Facing Heritage Building Adaptive Reuse through integrated programs: learning from Dublin

The study on “South Georgian Dublin Townhouse Reuse” in Dublin, represent a brilliant example of how to approach, from an integrated perspective, the issue of adaptive reuse of heritage residential buildings.

The study on “South Georgian Dublin Townhouse Reuse”, carried out by Dublin City Council, is an important initiative to confront the apparent anomalies between a history of continuous and diverse occupation of the Dublin Georgian townhouse (comprising the full plot), and, today’s regulatory and economic context which appears to be limiting the potential for re-use. For example, the introduction of Disability Access Certificates has raised a number of conflicts between conservation objectives and compliance with accessibility regulations, and associated implications. Within the general “adaptive reuse” target of Dublin Georgian Houses, one specific challenge is to make these heritage buildings accessible to everyone. Accessibility is one important variable of the “reuse” matter, not only for technical and market reasons, but also for “social” ones. On the other side, after the recent downturn, the situation has moved from a severe fall-off in demand for property to a gradual revival and the South Georgian core is emerging slowly from a low-value base. Pilot projects, identification and testing of “replicable” smart solutions, guidance, and in depth analysis of opportunities to comply with (national) regulations through “practicable” approaches are, in conclusions, strategies that can be stimulated and promoted by local authorities, but that require, at the same time, very punctual – site by site – activity and efforts, with involvement of high profile professionals.

[Read more in the Third Thematic Paper](#)

Introduction

Key messages

Key Examples

Good practices

Free Riga: a web-platforms to rent empty houses

Re-using residential buildings not always requires deep restructuring. Sometimes, “lighter” approaches could be sufficient.

Riga City Central areas are undergoing a “shrinking city” process, with a remarkable amount of empty houses resulting in the city area, included the historic core. To deal with this challenge, a bottom-up and “market based” answer has been proposed. The initiative, called “Free Riga”, based on a web-portal, provides tools to facilitate renting empty and unused houses. Maps and information on un-occupied residential units are visualized, together other useful information and “networking” occasions. **[Read more in the Dublin Bilateral meeting report](#)**

**Heritage issues:
a topic which
challenges the
economic model?
How this has
been handled in
USEAct.**

Light and Shadows of reusing Industrial Heritage in Nitra

In Nitra, some recent interventions tried to reuse industrial heritage buildings, but some questions about important areas remain open

The "Mestský pivovar" (City Brewery), an industrial XIX century building, is currently being reused, thanks to a Master plan. Kasárne (Military Barracks) is the most relevant heritage building in Nitra that could benefit from a deep adaptive reuse process. Built at the end of the 19th century for the military garrison force, it is without any function. Regeneration of old structures and of the park is required, but many questions should be answered. Is creative industry a solution for the site? What has to be carried on a brownfield regeneration? Is there a room for PPP, and if yes, how? URM (Sustainable development of cities). Let us imagine that there is the possibility of funding the project with 18-20 millions Euro, but questions still remain unanswered.

[Read more in the Third Thematic Paper](#)

2.6 USEAct Local Action Plans

Partner	Title of the Local Action Plan	Keywords
Baia Mare Metropolitan Area	Effective land use policy in Baia Mare Metropolitan Area	Land use policy Effectiveness Efficiency Sustainable development Metropolitan area
Barakaldo	3R Act, neighborhood to neighborhood	Regeneration "PESEC" Physical Environmental Social Economy Cultural
Buckinghamshire Business First	Stimulating the regeneration and sustainable development of Buckinghamshire's key urban conurbations	Development Finance Employment Growth in key sectors Affordable & Intermediate Housing Leadership and Partnership Alignment 'Smart' Infrastructure
Dublin	Red Line Inner City	Regeneration Communication Participation Sustainability Transferability
Naples	Development strategies for the "core" of the city: LAB Porta Medina – LAB Porta Capuana – LAB Porta del Mercato	Smart renaissance Urban identity Creativity hubs Reuse Economic attractors
Nitra	Functional City Centre	City Centre Spatial reserves Pedestrian zone Quality of public spaces Traffic solutions Urban safety
Østfold County Council	More growth-less sprawl; Sustainable cities in Østfold	Networks Tools Quality Empowerment Understanding
Riga Planning Region	Urban transformation action plan of Riga Metropolitan Area	Metropolitan area, Urban Growth Management Transformation, Cooperation platform Planning
Trieste	Innovative tools for urban regeneration and energy retrofit of public and private estate: from citizens engagement to local economy reactivation	Energy-efficiency Volumetric credits Eco-districts Revitalization of local economy Job opportunities
Viladecans	Transformation on the industrial zone "Center"	City Center Renewal Mixed Uses Competitiveness-Ris3 Smart City Zero Energy District

Mission

The Baia Mare Metropolitan Area Association has developed a Local Action Plan targeting the effective land use within the Baia Mare Metropolitan Area by creating a land use policy - part of the urban development policy - which aims to maximize the socio-economic development of urban land use.

The Barakaldo LAP's general mission is the development of the tools and analysis mechanisms for future PPP in sustainable and integrated urban regeneration interventions. The research project results and experts proposals that have taken part in the ULSG, have resulted in the definition and adaptation of two methodologies for urban regeneration intervention that can be applied to different building typologies and urban areas.

The overarching goal of our LAP has been to develop a shared understand; and improve the alignment between the high level 'Spatial Planning' goals of the major economic development partners; the natural environment partners; the social partner; and local residents.

The Dublin's genral mission is to provide interventions that revitalise the LUAS Red Line Public Transport Corridor with a variety of uses and increase the residential population, employment and cultural activity in the area.

The general mission is to activate solutions for the *smart renaissance* and *creativity*, to reuse the existing assets and the economic development of the infrastructure nodes of the "core" of the city.

Increasing the quality of the city centre from the perspective of function, mobility, service offerings, spatial reserves potential, quality of public spaces and urban safety and thus to contribute to the sustainability of the urban development in Nitra.

Our target is to reduce area consumption in and around our cities through transformation of former industrial areas and high quality densification projects. With a higher population and business density in our city centers we hope to make them more active and attractive. We want to give our inhabitants a better quality of life by creating attractive city centers and preserving farmland, areas of natural beauty and recreational areas.

The general goal of the LAP in Riga is to enhance cooperation, develop joint platform and understanding of common UGM necessity for Riga Metropolitan Area, and to initiate planning and transformation processes of pilot areas in a participatory way.

To provide an innovative strategy of urban renewal at different urban scales: from the upgrading of entire parts of the city to ordinary interventions of building renovation, with the aim to improve the energy-efficiency and to support the re-activation of local economy

The main mission is to lead and guide the transformation of the "Centre" industrial zone to turn it to a Zero Energy District with a high level economic activity located within the new City Centre boundaries.

2.7 Source of inspiration

Read more in the USEAct Case Studies Catalogue

Partner	Case studies from the partners as a source of inspiration
Baia Mare Metropolitan Area	Baia Mare “Integrated Development Plan” as an instrument to develop regeneration and revitalization of urban settlements.
Barakaldo	Developing a diagnostic study, together with local institutions, on the indicators to be used to assess priorities of regeneration in the city.
Buckinghamshire Business First	A joint venture ‘Urban Development Company’, Buckinghamshire Advantage has been established. Five Local Authorities and Buckinghamshire Business First (development agency) are the members of the company.
Dublin	Joining adaptive reuse programme of Georgian towns with development of cultural initiatives/exhibition centre on the past life in the area.
Naples	“NaplEST” is a committee formed by entrepreneurs interested in undertaking development projects in the area. The committee aimed at promoting and revitalizing the area, is formed by of 16 entrepreneurs engaged into real estate development plans.
Nitra	Local application of the “Urban Intervention” format, an open platform to propose solutions for unused spaces and places within the city and its surroundings.
Østfold County Council	Developing a participative and expert-supported process to implement Regional strategies in Local Land Use Planning, managing conflict with municipalities.
Riga Planning Region	Supporting a web-based initiative to promote adaptive reuse of industrial areas (at regional level) and of “empty building” in Riga
Trieste	Co-designing, along with stakeholders, regulations for implementing an innovative transferable building rights framework, defined in the newly adopted general town planning scheme, to support refitting.
Viladecans	Starting from an Open Space and local accessibility design study, to redevelop an industrial area into a mixed use area.

After USEAct

3

Conclusions and Key Lessons Learnt

Reducing Land take cannot be reduced to an emotionless science, nor to rigid, unified “policies”! It is a social practice, subjected to real constraints, just as when we prepare food. Each region or city has its “usual” ingredients and recipes, but also each person or family can have specific needs, tastes or constraints (e.g. economic problems) in deciding how to prepare the daily meal. However, as in a healthy diet, prohibition – “no more land take”, as a principle, is in fact a secondary aspect of the solution, while a “positive, practicable and acceptable” diet, a metaphor for building sustainable developments, is at the core.

Planning Tools

- **Rationalization of land use** and therefore the potential reduction of land-take is optimized in the event of “metropolitan” governance systems at Functional Urban Area level.
- Even without external regulations, **innovative forms of “voluntary” supramunicipal organization of land management processes** are possible, including those based on PPP models between institutions and associations united by the goal of local development.
- **Regional authorities may play an important role** in coordinating the choice of land-use by municipalities - often in conflict with higher-level planning - via active strategies for the support and direct involvement in planning, and not only the outlining of constraints.
- **Innovation in traditional planning tools** is one of the possible components of land take reduction strategies. The use of plans that go beyond the traditional concept of zoning or apply tools such as transferable development right, offer opportunities even if often the actual market conditions or guidelines could pose potential implementation difficulties.
- The need to consider the reduction of land-take in **an integrated long-term perspective** is taken on board. It should be orientated by a management philosophy as opposed to a planning one whereby wider goals of prosperity, social wellbeing and quality of life govern - beginning with job creation.
- Aiming in theory towards **the reduction of land-take as an “environmental” goal**, approaching the subject from ideological perspectives and “top-down, using traditional planning tools, is not consequently perceived by local

authorities as a winning strategy nor often feasible in the technical and policy plan.

- The goals of **environmental preservation can be usefully “balanced” with other primary objectives** such as job creation, with the opportunity to offset any environmental resources consumed with suitable models of compensation.

Intervention

- In general, the **re-use of existing urban spaces and buildings** is perceived as the primary component of land-take reduction strategies; the attention of local bodies will concentrate primarily on the need to intervene in specific spaces and areas (or categories of spaces and areas).
- There is a real need in different areas, to satisfy the demand for new residential dimensions, in particular **“affordable housing”**. It is not only connected to the social protection needs of vulnerable groups but also the fundamental need to support the supply of labour and consequently processes of local development. To launch investment in the “social/affordable housing” sector to cope with the real housing demand, local authorities are interested in working on innovative models of finance and governance for the sector.
- In contexts with “small centres” and a low degree of departure, the **“densification” of the centre and the rejection of the “sprawl” model** of individual housing can play an important role towards providing a better quality of urban life. It can have indirect positive social effects (e.g. attracting families and “human resources”); the policy of revitalizing the “centres”, at all urban dimensions, via a mix of public and private interventions to improve the quality of urban life is deemed a priority strategy.
- Urban areas, regardless of size, offer significant potential for densification through refilling. However, the actual ability to exploit these potential cracks can be traced to the ability to launch - propelled by the public sector - **integrated management systems** for the entire process: from the mapping of sites and their potential to their commercialization and even up to the support of the executive phase.
- The **quality of the project**, particularly in areas where the density must be increased, is an important factor. Intervention models whereby local authorities supervise the project quality, i.e. through public companies (German model) and partnership with the private sector based on advanced models of procurement – constitute a good practice model.
- In general, **the integrated and multi-process management of**

georeferenced data is an essential tool to support efficient processes of land use to increase community involvement.

- The game of partisan interests and pressure on political decision-makers, favoured by traditional methods of “administrative” planning, often leads to socially inefficient models of land use related to them. It can be broken by developing, also outside the institutional system, open tools of “urban visualization” based on open databases and big-data, able to create value for the users by stimulating the “**democratization**” of **land-use management**.
- Attracting specific business to the territory, or target areas, requires a prior professional conditions analysis required by the “**business location**” **market** at global level for each particular sector. Particular attention must be paid to cost levels, available services and possibly adequate promotion platforms.
- Ability to **activate innovative financing models** for redevelopment also depend on the capacity of individual parties to aggregate projects (and relative risks): also aggregation initiatives driven by developers (e.g. Coordinators of social housing at municipal level) can help these debt and risk aggregation processes.
- **Legislation and national support frameworks** – such as adequate frameworks for REITS – are important for the success of alternate financing actions; supranational initiatives at union level are possible since not all national contexts can cater with appropriate conditions.
- “**Value**” **creation** (and therefore availability to pay) **in urban reuse projects**, connected also to the renewal of up-front infrastructures and utilities network, is an opportunity also at a diversification level of levies and more generally the funding sources of the very interventions.
- The need to target scarce public resources on projects with a greater potential, requires **diagnostic and appraisal systems of the potential effects** of interventions on an urban scale.
- The **innovation of financial instruments** related to the urban regeneration and redevelopment sector is a potentially important component to encourage investment in existing structures, but still requires deep structural changes in the system (e.g. Risk assessment approaches).

Refitting and Regenerating

- The **adaptive reuse of heritage buildings in historic centres** is perceived

as an important element of strategies to enhance the centres and also for the reduction of sprawl. The planning frameworks needed at local level need to work on two levels: “general model” and “individual case”. They should technically and precisely address the problem of the technical-economic retrofitting of the buildings and resolve the constraints imposed by regulations of a varying kind through balanced safeguarding/reuse solutions.

- The need to target scarce public resources on projects with a greater benefit potential, requires “**diagnostic**” and “**appraisal systems**” of the expected effects of interventions, able **to be applied to the “urban scale”**.
- In the sphere of upgrading existing buildings, the energy refit offers possibilities but is by nature a complex goal in terms of break-even point and technological choices. In any case, for its implementation on a relevant scale, it requires **integrated programmes able to manage a significant amount of data on the heritage** and the high capacity for modelling and the technical-economic organization of the interventions.
- The role of **PPP**, involving businesses geared towards facility-management, is a **great opportunity in refitting programmes** with good examples of success.
- There must be a minimum **suitable neighbourhood scale of concrete intervention to carry out the refitting**. In addition there should be high levels of inhabitant engagement, paying attention to all the “socio-technical” aspects of the interventions and the employment of professional competences and know-how suited to the specific context (integration with capacity building programmes is essential).

Is there a Life Beyond USEAct? Some funding opportunities:

Interreg: only one strand is ready: 'Interreg Europe'. A possible project would be good under measure 1.2 'research on, social innovation in public policy'. 100% EU funds (50% for Norway) and with partners in at least 4 Member States.

Horizon 2020: under the call on 'Overcoming the Crisis'. Under the pillar 'Societal Challenges' three topics: Smart Cities, New forms of Innovation and Overcoming the Crisis. Horizon funds different types of projects: RIA Research and Innovation Action (main actions are research, could use cities as testers), Innovation Action (no research) to adapt /adopt something developed elsewhere, CSA, Coordinating and Support Action, only for public bodies, and ERA-NET, funded 50% by Horizon and 50% by national funds (usually ministries), includes a call on 'urban futures'. Horizon 2020 is a wider programme than FP7.



Read more in the Sixth USEAct Seminar Report

Look at inspirational projects: for example the **ERHIN project** concerning housing maintenance, especially for no-profit organizations managing housing blocks, funded by CIP (DG Enterprise), which has now become COSME, especially for SMEs.

SHE: Sustainable Housing in Europe, represents another possibility, on energy and environmental efficiency, funded under the **LIFE programme**. Housing First Europe, at the end of FP7, dealt with affordable housing, focusing on the homeless, i.e. for a dedicated target group. OPEN HOUSE, was also funded by FP7: managing 69 apartments. Intelligent Energy Europe programme has been replaced by the Climate Change programme under LIFE. In the LIFE programme transnational partnerships are not so encouraged.

The Erasmus Plus 2014 – 2020 programme is about emerging skills, youth policy, sport, non-formal training... and smart city coaching: for example seek 500 000 over two years to test and train people to act as facilitators for urban development.

A city is like a dream:
it is made of wishes and fears



Available Outputs

4



Sharing USEAct Outputs

The objective of the USEAct outputs is to identify and organize the themes and activities, in order to promote the project's results and the widest dissemination of knowledge from the network. We have produced our outputs working in two directions: towards the transnational and network activities in order to enhance the potential of USEAct project themes - land use and tools for urban growth management- and dissemination of project's results in the public and scientific sector; and towards local communication activities at partners level.

Special attention has been paid to the interview to the politician of the Partners involved in the project, mayors, councillors and other representatives, in order to underline the point of view of the elected members. This interviews are included in the USEAct project Newsletters.

The USEAct project aims to *achieve urban development and new or improved settlement opportunities for people and businesses taking up residence in existing locations, without consumption of further land and at the same time developing the construction and real estate economies.*

To fulfill these aims, the USEAct project works through various communication tools (formal and informal) and outputs. Clear channels of communications between the project partners themselves as well as with the wider community play a crucial role in the success of the project.

Here folloe all the outputs produced during the life of the USEAct Network, enjoy your reading!

Online Outputs:

USEAct Baseline Study
USEAct brochure



USEAct Newsletter #1st Issue
USEAct Newsletter #2nd Issue
USEAct Newsletter #3rd Issue
USEAct Newsletter #4th Issue
USEAct Newsletter #5th Issue
USEAct Newsletter #6th Issue
USEAct Newsletter #7th Issue



USEAct Seminar Report 1/Viladecans
USEAct Seminar Report 2/Nitra
USEAct Seminar Report 3/Istanbul
USEAct Seminar Report 4/Ostfold
USEAct Seminar Report 5/Riga
USEAct Seminar Report 6/Buckinghamshire
USEAct Report 7/Naples



USEAct First Thematic PAPER
USEAct Second Thematic PAPER
USEAct Third Thematic PAPER



USEAct First BT meeting REPORT
USEAct Second BT meeting REPORT
USEAct Third BT meeting REPORT
USEAct Fourth BT meeting REPORT
USEAct Fifth BT meeting REPORT /Dublin
USEAct Sixth BT meeting REPORT /Dublin

useact.wordpress.com

USEAct Case studies Catalogue

Final Outputs:

USEAct Thematic Booklet
USEAct Final Brochure
USEAct Final Report

USEAct in Numbers

10 USEAct
Partners

7 USEAct
Seminars

10 Local
Support Groups

6 USEAct
**Bilateral
meetings**

10
**Local
Action
Plans**

150 ULSG
meetings

**more
than 500
active participants**

**7 USEAct
Newsletters**

**1 case studies
catalogue**

**3 Thematic
papers**

**1 Thematic
booklet**

**8 spot-life
news**

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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 500 cities, 29 countries, and 7,000 active participants. URBACT is jointly financed by ERDF and the Member States.

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