

Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda update 2018

SRIA 2.0 outline

JPI Urban Europe Management Board

National consultations for the SRIA 2.0

The JPI Urban Europe *Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda* (SRIA)¹ is refurbished during 2018. Some may have noticed the open public consultation.² Others the *Agora* event in Bucharest, April 2018. JPI Urban Europe now launches national consultations to better hone in on priorities and approaches under development. These consultation are managed by the member states participating in JPI Urban Europe.³

The SRIA update is made with a view to issues and concerns in the wake of international policies such as *UN Agenda 2030* SDG 11, *UN-Habitat New Urban Agenda*, and *Urban Agenda for the EU*. In this light, JPI Urban Europe has so far identified a need to foreground dilemmas in certain areas and wicked issues emerging in their pathways. It also identifies a need to revise and sharpen the thematic priorities in the loose (epistemological) community emerging around the *Urban Transitions Pathways Symposium* (UTPS).⁴

The national consultations are intended to pursue the following aims:

- Perform a ‘reality-check’ of the identified priorities and key implementation measures with key stakeholders
- Raise awareness for the strategy in the national urban R&I communities, related sectoral policy fields and in cities, if possible going beyond those actors already involved in the programme and projects

¹ See <<https://jpi-urbaneurope.eu/app/uploads/2016/05/JPI-Urban-Europe-SRIA-Strategic-Research-and-Innovation-Agenda.pdf>>.

² See <<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/sria2>>.

³ See <<https://jpi-urbaneurope.eu/governance/governing-board/>>.

⁴ See UTPS 2017 <<https://jpi-urbaneurope.eu/news/a-community-of-practice-to-enhance-urban-transformations-in-between/>> and UTPS 2016 <<https://jpi-urbaneurope.eu/connecting-the-dots-by-obstacles-friction-and-traction-ahead-for-the-sria-urban-transitions-pathways/>>.

- Support alignment with national R&I strategies and programmes as well as urban policies and cities' strategies
- Prepare national actors for joint implementation measures

Update of the thematic priorities

The thematic priorities in the SRIA will be updated by way of a dilemma-driven approach. Urban transitions and sustainable urban development usually comprise many different (sub)goals and often result in a set of strategies or actions pursued in parallel or disconnected from each other. While some of these targets are supporting each other, others compete or conflict across administrative departments, sectors, or societal groups. To successfully achieve change, urban transition pathways need to anticipate such divergent targets and/or wicked issues created by the portfolio of urban implementation actions. Hence, we use dilemmas as focal points for research and innovation.

Digital transitions and urban governance

Digitalisation offers potential for economic development and innovative urban planning, and digitalization and related technologies are implemented in an accelerating pace across Europe and in many parts of the world's urban areas.

Digitalisation enables more connections to citizens and empowers and engages them to shape their urban environments through digital democracy. It improves social policies, presents major opportunities to support sustainable solutions, while data sovereignty is clear and regulations are in place.

However, it comes with the risk of increased inequalities and exclusion in European cities and urban areas. Since not all people are able to access services in the wake of digitalisation, transitions may solely benefit the already successful citizen.

Urban governance may also risk implementing suboptimal technical solutions unless city administrations work with capacity building in public innovation governance and integrated urban planning to expand the current policy scope in many urban digitalisation efforts to include issues such as poverty, education, and marginalised neighbourhoods.

Liveable and functional urban areas

Technological inventions and solutions and their standardisation bring the potential of economies of scale and drive change. These relate primarily to areas and issues around efficiency, housing needs, environmental impact, infrastructural development, the large technical engineering oriented solutions to contemporary sub-optimal urban functions.

However, increased urban functional development does not necessarily contribute to its liveability. It many times neglects the characteristics of cities and their specific needs, and hence risk implement the ‘wrong’ functionalities. In the quest for affordable and systemically working cities, the aesthetic and other place-making values stand down to practicalities.

Urban robustness and turbulence

Cities and urban areas drive sustainable urban development and realise green agendas, as well as tackle climate change and safeguard urban eco-economies. A widespread recognition of good practice, rewards and awards, and business models that fully address social and environmental targets is central in this respect. As long as e.g. climate change action entails an integrated approach to adaptation that facilitates more liveable cities for people, and a good balance between mitigation and adaptation measures, urban resilience can be in synergy with overall well-being and robustness.

Hence, they need to ensure that various actions to secure urban robustness and resilience, understood in a wide sense, does not lead to further or new inequalities.

For instance, climate change mitigation may risk de-prioritisation as climate change adaptation dominate in city authorities’ responses, which could leave cities and urban areas in various kinds of turbulence generated by climate change.

Land-use and urban infrastructures

Cities and urban areas in general attract people and create positive effects out of agglomeration, density, and diverse and intersecting infrastructures. These positive effects of urbanisation are underpinned by integrated urban planning and management by public administrations and across diverse public and private actors. Particularly public engagement and participation in decision-making relating to land-use management, flows of people, flows of information and resources, place-making, and impact on existing settlements and environs affected.

Although there are also consequently risks involved and currently increasingly wicked problems around e.g. congestion and accessibility, loss of identity or demand/waste of natural resources. Furthermore, urban areas may succumb to conflict and clashes between powers, existing tensions may intensify and severely delimited progress towards sustainable urbanisation will ensue. Added to this, increased spatial and social inequalities between city centres and suburbs might be caused by increasing economic polarisation, segregation and gentrification dynamics, suburban sprawl, and shrinking cities in functional regional contexts.

Public spaces and inclusive urban neighbourhoods

Public spaces are ideally attractive to all, these are spaces for wellbeing and health (stimulate people to move), increasingly green public and shared places for people, not cars, where citizens control their streets and shared spaces. Urban development can be used to increase urban quality of life by design, public space management and e.g. walkability. Public spaces may also retain and emerge as second living rooms (as housing living areas gets smaller).

Although this requires balance by different needs by different groups and how to cater for safety/security concerns without widening exclusive spaces. Furthermore, strategies and policy to progress and enhance city status and attractiveness does not always support liveability. Hence, public spaces risk being dragged down in (Orwellian) security concerns, autonomous cars occupy public space, generate fences, no more privacy in public space, and a diminishing exposure to green areas for urban dwellers.

Implementation approaches

Building upon the experiences of current SRIA implementation it is proposed to continue along the main guiding principles of

- Joint investments in urban research and innovation building upon the current portfolio of instruments for R&I projects, innovation actions and alignment of national projects.
- Continued 'labbing' – taking Urban Living Labs to the next generation/phase and fostering capacity building in science, policy, public administrations, and society at large
- Co-creation and science-policy cooperation throughout all activities and instruments
- Strategic partnerships with major European (and international) initiatives and networks
- International cooperation
- Strategic synthesis to strengthen programme management, dissemination and exploitation
- Proposing two to three urban missions to Horizon Europe