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# TWO PILOT FAST TRACK NETWORKS IN THE URBACT PROGRAMME

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*The “Regions for Economic Change” (RfEC) initiative launched by the European Commission at the end of 2006 has significantly impacted the conception and elaboration of the new URBACT II programme.*

*RfEC is dedicated to discovering best practices in economic modernisation, especially in relation to projects clearly contributing to the Union’s jobs and growth agenda (Lisbon and Göteborg).*

*The Communication on the Regions for Economic Change initiative (COM (2006) 675 on 8 November 2006 and Commission Staff Paper SEC (2006) 1432) provides a list of themes to be implemented in the framework of the URBACT II programme: Making healthy communities; Integrated policies on urban transport; Developing sustainable and energy-efficient housing stock; Integrating marginalised youth; Managing migration and facilitating social integration; Achieving sustainable urban development; Re-using brownfield and waste disposal sites.*

*The Fast Track Networks are one of the tools for implementing the RfEC initiative aiming to introduce those best practice ideas in the mainstream through the Operational Programmes approved at regional level. In accordance with this objective, it was decided that the Fast Track Networks to be developed under URBACT II shall be formed by cities and their Managing Authority, working together as a pair, exchanging on an identified theme with a view to creating and implementing projects and action plans at local level.*

*The present document describes the on going experience of the two pilot projects developed within URBACT I within the framework of this initiative. A first section is dedicated to a cross-cutting presentation of these projects including the main lessons drawn from this experience. Then, each project is described in detail, highlighting the policy issues they address in relation with the main priorities defined by their partners, the methodology they have implemented so far and their work programmes for the months to come.*

# 1. TESTING THE FAST TRACK NETWORK FORMULA

The Commission and the Monitoring Committee wanted to start a new network as soon as possible to test the effectivity and methodology defined for the Fast Track Networks. It was decided to launch two pilot projects at the same time in order to have a broader field of experience. For efficiency reasons, the Monitoring Committee agreed to involve two cities which were already leading successful thematic networks under URBACT I: Venice, as lead partner of the UDIEX network on social integration, and the Greater Lyon, lead partner of REGENERA, a thematic network on urban regeneration. Both cities accepted to lead a pilot Fast Track Network and create a new network on the basis of the experience of their previous networks.

In order to experiment the organisation and working processes before URBACT II, the launch of two pilot Fast Track Networks (FTN) was approved by the URBACT Monitoring Committee in March 2007. It was decided that the preparatory phase (Development phase) of the pilot projects would be financed under URBACT I and the operational phase (Implementation phase) under URBACT II. Since then, the two pilots have been strongly monitored by the URBACT Secretariat and the Commission, in order to support them in their experimentation, and to draw lessons which could be used when elaborating the URBACT II programme.

The two pilot FTN are:

› **MILE, “Managing Migration and Integration at local level”, led by the city of Venice.**

› **URBAMECO, “The urban, social, economic and cultural regeneration of public housing estates in urban areas”, led by the Greater Lyon.**

The two pilots completed their Development phase during summer-autumn 2007 and were approved by the Monitoring Committee to enter their Implementation phase by the end of 2007. In order to draw lessons from the first phase, the lead partners have been requested to provide feedback on their experience, through an evaluation questionnaire which has been used as the basis for discussion in a meeting gathering the lead partners, the European Commission (DG Regio) and the URBACT Secretariat in December 2007. In the following are some of the major issues raised by the lead partners' answers to an inquiry.

## 2. LESSONS TO BE DRAWN FROM THE PILOT FTN DEVELOPMENT PHASE

### › MAIN INTEREST IN PARTICIPATING IN SUCH A PILOT PROJECT

As a major interest in taking part in the pilot FTN, and beyond the added-value expected from the exchange and learning process, both lead partners have underlined the development of collaborative dynamics between the cities and the Managing Authorities.

#### › MILE

- › *To develop jointly with the Managing Authorities a local action plan capable of maximizing opportunities for the urban areas. This represented the real “added-value” dimension of the project, trying to match the lack of institutional fora for exchanging ideas between different levels of government and maximising impacts of projects according to real opportunities spelled out in Operational Programmes.*
- › *To share experiences with other cities on the Immigration issue.*
- › *To experiment the innovative elements of a Pilot project within Urbact II programme in close connection with EU directorates and the Secretariat.*

#### › URBAMECO

- › *The theme of the network integrated approach in deprived areas for urban regeneration was the first interest.*
- › *For some cities it is a way to work with managing authorities. This cities hope to have more European finance if they work in this Fast track network with their managing authorities.*
- › *For some managing authorities it is a way to try to help cities (from their region) to make projects with new models or new approaches. (Training for cities).*
- › *To exchange with other cities our managing authorities to make best projects in deprived areas. (Other methods, new partnership, etc.).*
- › *All partners insist that their commitment and investment of resources-time, money, and know-how-must lead to tangible results that can be applied in practice and convince politicians as well as professionals and local communities of the added value of this investment.*

### › DEFINITION OF THEMATIC FOCUS

The Development phase gave the opportunity to define precisely the theme and subthemes of the networks, and focus on the crucial issues for cities and managing authorities partners.

#### › MILE

- › *The main problem related to the theme was to identify few sub-themes that could satisfy the different partners’ needs and, at the same time, concrete financial possibilities within their Operational Programmes and other EU funded programmes.*

### › URBAMECO

*At first the topic was “The integrated approach in deprived areas for urban regeneration with a special focus on economic development and sustainable development”. The theme is now: “Using regional and city-wide growth potentials and the active support of local residential and business communities to create competitiveness and cohesion in deprived areas in the framework of integrated Neighbourhood development Strategies”.*

## › ASSISTANCE OF THEMATIC EXPERT

Both lead partners highlight the role of the thematic expert in the development phase.

### › MILE

*The thematic expert’s contribution consisted mainly in:*

- › *identification of the methodology to be developed and issues to be addressed at local and regional level*
- › *the collection and supervision of the data required from the partners*
- › *support to the partners for elaborating mappings of services and needs & in analysing the mapping reports*
- › *the realisation of a mapping of policy developments, trends and debates in relation to immigration and integration at European Union level*
- › *the coordination and elaboration of the final report of phase I and proposal for phase II.*

### › URBAMECO

*The expert worked with the lead partner and partners to define the global organisation and the methodology to be implemented, through the following items:*

- › *a methodology guide for integrated approach*
- › *a methodology guide for the feasibility phase*
- › *a Baseline study for each cities (including field visits in each partner city)*
- › *the Feasibility study for the whole project in relation with the Implementation phase.*

## › PARTICIPATION OF MANAGING AUTHORITIES

The issue relating to the involvement of the Managing Authorities in the project (which was a mandatory requirement for the FTN) has been experienced in different ways in each pilot. Nevertheless, it appears that convincing all Managing Authorities to take part has been a difficult process to implement for both projects.

### › MILE

*The first step has been to explain to the Managing Authorities their important role in such a complex challenge and the possibility to contribute to the implementation of a project idea generated by their City, potentially replicable at regional level. This action had been strongly supported by the Partner Cities themselves who,*

most of the time, managed directly the relation with the Managing Authority in terms of contacts, signature of partnership agreement, etc. The main difficulties to overcome have been:

- ▶ to identify in some cases, the Managing Authority entitled to sign the contract and the right contact person;
- ▶ to find out in which way the theme of the Pilot could find a link in the Operational Programme;
- ▶ to describe the link between the action plans produced by the Pilot and the financial possibility in the Operational Programme and the links to other programmes.

It was then planned that the Managing Authorities would act as tandem partner along with the City. The commitment of the Managing Authority in the Pilot would be to assist partners to develop local action plans focusing on migration and integration, to be included into their Operational Programmes, and to translate some of the planned actions into the mainstream programme.

#### ▶ URBAMECO

All Managing Authorities turned out to be rather interested in the project from the beginning, but different issues were raised such as the one relating to potential conflicts of interest: How to be partner in a project and “judge” with regard to this project at the same time? How to decide objectively to support or not a project if one is partner of the project?

During the Development phase, a new dialogue began between Managing authorities and local authorities. This dialogue and cooperation dynamic has required a careful balance and a new definition of roles –as a Managing Authority remains an “authority” that needs a certain kind of distance to the cities- but still needs to find forms to cooperate in a trustful relationship with them in order to improve the quality of the operational programme’s implementation and the creation of successful and speciality achievements in this process.

Another issue was raised about the way operational programmes can be organized for urban regeneration in deprived areas: organizing call for integrated programmes, or call for projects, or financing project with project. Other procedures?

And last but not least, a major issue for Managing Authorities was; How to evaluate the project and the interest for European credits?

## ▶ MAIN DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

As pilots, the two first Fast Track Networks had to face unexpected difficulties, but the main constraint was the lack of time.

#### ▶ MILE

Difficulties had to be overcome at different levels:

- ▶ **At project level**, time was the main problem: the time of the Development phase was very short for the outputs required, especially for setting up the partnership (10 signatures from Cities and Managing Authorities are not

easy to collect), identification from each Partner City of the expert for the data collection, creation of the baseline study.

› **At programme level**, some detailed information concerning the relation between the Pilot and the other FT and TN developed by the programme were missing. It would have been important to have information in order to explain to the partnership the importance to take part to the Pilot. Actually, some of them would have better understood why it was going to be more “convenient” to participate in this Pilot instead of in a Network or a Fast Track launched under Urbact II.

› **For the partnership**, the main problem was the identification of the Managing Authorities, and finding out if the OP could finance the action plan produced by the project.

› **At the financial level**, the project proposal for the Implementation phase has been done without having, on due time, the necessary details for some of the budget lines, as for example the Local Support Group envelope, and the one for the Managing Authorities.

In order to improve the work of the Pilot, it appears that communication between the URBACT Secretariat, DG Regio and the Lead partner should have been enhanced. Moreover in order to improve the communication with the project partners, a web site space was needed so as to foster and support the respect of deadlines, given the short time scale of the project.

#### › URBAMECO

The main difficulties mentioned relate to the financial contract.

In such a short period (3 months), it has proved very difficult to get the agreement of the cities and the payment of their contribution (above all for cities of new European countries). The centralisation of financial management was very difficult because of the rules of ERDF (obligation for the lead partner to pay 100% of expenses and wait to be refunded by the URBACT programme at 50 %, etc.). The whole system was difficult to explain to city partners.



### 3. LESSONS LEARNT

All the partners, cities and Managing Authorities, fully appreciate this new initiative and recognise that European networking can have a concrete local impact under certain conditions. At the beginning, Managing Authorities' representatives were more reluctant; Now however, most of the representatives have recognised this too.

Strangely, many cities have not heard about the Operational Programme and the Managing Authority upon which they depend. When they did know about it, they did not know how to contact them. This denotes a lack of visibility of the operational programmes in some countries. The Managing Authorities have a "judge and jury" uncomfortable position, particularly those who organised calls for proposals and are afraid of being asked at the end of the network to finance, in Fast Track, projects which did not comply with competition rules. It is particularly true for the Operational Programme in the competitiveness area whose funds are limited.

On the other hand, the Managing Authorities from the Convergence area appreciate being able to contribute the preparation, in the Fast Track Networks, of good projects with a high added-value. All the Managing Authorities like to have the possibility of discussing with their peers issues they are concerned about: elaboration of calls for proposals, project assessment, financial processes and monitoring processes...

Concerning the modalities of managing thematic networks in URBACT II programme, the lead partners' comments are explicit. They all think that there is a great interest in conducting a Fast Track Network, but they ask for clear and steady procedures and they regret that the tight deadlines prevent them from doing serious work.

The obligation to elaborate local action plans is fully appreciated: this requirement is very inspiring, especially as there is a strong likelihood that they will be financed by operational programmes. They emphasize the importance of a permanent expert assistance: it has been decisive to establish a base line study with each partner city, to put into place the Local Support Groups and to set up the work programme.

The Regions for Economic Change initiative, and the URBACT I decision to create within the framework of URBACT I, and without waiting for URBACT II, two Pilot Fast Track Networks, have deeply modified the conception of the URBACT II Programme which was prepared in parallel.

The interest of the Monitoring Committee for this new direction has allowed us to launch two pilot projects as quickly as possible, connected to the URBACT I and URBACT II programmes.

The two pilot projects have allowed us to test in real life the importance of the link between the territorial cooperation programmes and the Operational Programmes. The setting up of the cohesion policy on declared priorities, with methodological demands and a result bond, gain in this context force and impact.

The two Pilot Fast Track Networks have now entered into phase II. The European Commission and the Secretariat will accompany them in their implementation and in the communication of their results.



## MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION

**LED BY CITY OF VENICE**




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# MILE



-  **VENEZIA**      Lead partner
-  Torino      Project partner
-  Region of Crete      Managing Authority

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# THE MILE PILOT FAST TRACK NETWORK

The pilot Fast Track Network MILE, led by the city of Venice brings together European cities and Managing Authorities to work on the theme of Managing Migration and Integration at Local Level. This pilot network has been launched under URBACT I as a testing ground for the implementation of “Regions for Economic Change” (RfEC) and the Fast Track initiative<sup>1</sup>. Building on the partnership and results achieved in the UDIEX thematic network<sup>2</sup>, it aims to assist 20 partner Cities and their corresponding Managing Authorities of operational programmes to actively address and improve local policies on issues of migration and integration within the framework of the regional operational programmes. As a result of the first phase of the project (6 months dedicated to project development), the partnership has been finalised as follows:

Partner Cities	Partner Managing Authorities	Country
Venice (Lead Partner)	Veneto Region	Italy
District of Charlois - Rotterdam	City of Rotterdam	Netherlands
Vantaa	Uudenmaan TE-Keskus (Employment and Economic development centre for Uusima)	Finland
Turin	Piedmont Region	Italy
Timisoara	General Directorate Managing Authority for Regional Operational Programme, Ministry of Development, Publics Works and Housing	Romania
Komotini	Managing Authority for Regional Operational Programme for Eastern Macedonia and Trace	Greece
Sevilla	Direccion general de fomento del empleo de la consejeria de la junta de Andalucia	Spain
Amadora	Tagus Valley regional coordination commission	Portugal
Nea Alikarnassos	Region of Crete	Greece

The reader will find here information on the project, the activities implemented so far during the *Development phase*, the issues identified as a priority to work on during the exchange and learning activities and the work plan for the *Implementation phase* to come<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>More information on this initiative is available on the “Regions for Economic Change” website: [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/cooperation/interregional/ecochange/index\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/interregional/ecochange/index_en.cfm)

<sup>2</sup>The UDIEX thematic network was developed under the URBACT I programme on the theme of social inclusion, with a focus on specific groups such as immigrants, young people, etc. More information and all the UDIEX outputs are available on the URBACT website: <http://urbact.eu/projects/udiex-udiex-alep/home.html>

<sup>3</sup>This note builds on the MILE report completed by the project’s thematic expert, Haroon Saad, as an output of the Development phase: MILE Managing Migration and Integration at Local Level – Cities and Regions - End of Phase I – Final Report – October 2007. This report include a detailed presentation and analysis of the mapping exercise. All documents related to the project are available on the URBACT website.

# 1. Setting up the project: Objectives and outputs of the Development phase

The first phase of the project, also called Development phase, was to be dedicated to the preparation of the Implementation phase to be submitted for approval and achieved within the framework of URBACT II. This implied finalising the partnership (up to 10 cities along with their Managing Authorities), realising a baseline study on the network's topic (landscape at European level and local situation in each partner city), refining the issues to be addressed through the project and defining the work programme for the exchange and learning activities. To realise this overall aim, MILE organised its Development phase around the following activities:

- ▶ 1. Extension of the partnership
- ▶ 2. European and local mapping of trends, realities and needs in the field of integration
- ▶ 3. Analysis of the results of the local and EU mapping
- ▶ 4. Development of the proposal for the Implementation phase
- ▶ 5. Completion of all contractual requirements for the project to proceed with submission of application for the Implementation phase

Along with completing the partnership, and especially convincing all Managing Authorities to join the project, the realisation of the baseline study was a major piece of work to develop during this first phase. Labelled "European and local mapping" in the case of MILE, it has been achieved by the project's thematic expert, Haroon Saad, and has been key in the definition of the issues to be addressed in the project. The main outcomes of this exercise are presented below, as they were crucial in the development of the project.

## ▶ 1.1 MAPPING EXERCISE AT EUROPEAN LEVEL

The mapping of main policy and databases in relation to immigration and integration at the **European Union level** was aimed at providing partners with a brief overview of why the issues of Immigration. Integration have moved higher up to the EU agenda and with an overview of policy development, trends and current databases in relation to immigration and integration. The purpose was to connect the partners with the European context of this pilot project.

This exercise has allowed to embed the project in a wider policy context, by casting light on a number of contextual factors relating to the theme that underpin the MILE project:

- ▶ Until recently, most migration in Europe was either local or was linked to the colonial history of former European empires.
- ▶ However, many EU-15 countries – such as Spain, Portugal or Greece – remained countries of emigration, and the last country to move from emigration to net immigration was Ireland in 1996. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, many of the new EU Member States have also themselves been experiencing inward flows of migrants, from both the East and the West.

- Migration flows in Europe have changed in several ways over the past three decades:
  - First, there has been an increase in intra-EU mobility. The creation of an area of free movement within the Union has deregulated migration within the EU-15 and separated discussions on this type of mobility from larger, more contentious, national immigration debates.
  - Secondly, there has been a rapid increase in the diversity of migrants as results of a more interconnected world. The increase in the number of “sending” countries has resulted in a new “super-diversity” in Europe, with many disparate communities composed of small groups of many different nationalities. This poses new challenges for integration. In addition to the second and third generation migrants, policy-makers must devise ways to integrate smaller and sometimes more fragmented communities of newcomers.
  - Finally, the flow of migrants has become more complex, both in terms of their movements and their legal status. “Return” and “circular” migration have become more commonplace, with cheaper travel and communications encouraging greater mobility.
- Similarly, the successful integration of third country nationals is a key component of achieving the overall Lisbon Objectives in terms of employment, enterprise and social cohesion. Indeed, the labour market needs of the EU economy can only be addressed with gather immigration and thus the need for a more effective way of ensuring the integration of third country nationals.

## ➤ 1.2 MAPPING EXERCISE AT LOCAL LEVEL

In order to assess the current situation faced by each city/region, a mapping exercise of local services and priority needs has also been undertaken at city/regional level. It involved all partners, with a focus on the four sub-themes identified by the project:

- **a. Enterprise development for ethnic minorities:** This includes financial and non-financial business support, measures to access market and entrepreneurial culture.
- **b. Active inclusion in the labour market,** with particular focus on young adults; single parents and Roma.
- **c. Cultural diversity:** the economic and social cohesion potential in relation to cultural diversity in regeneration programmes, and actions targeted at supporting/developing intercultural dialogue.
- **d. Access to Education, Health and Housing services.**

To do this an agreed template was produced and each partner appointed a local expert to conduct the mapping exercise and produce a report for which they received feedback from the thematic expert until a final version has been completed.

The mapping reports dealt with the following elements:

- ▶ Key trends and issues at regional/city level on migration and integration supported by figures and breakdown by gender, age and ethnicity/nationality of the migrant population.
- ▶ Review of current actions/services provided and the results obtained so far.
- ▶ Definition of priority needs that are not covered by the services provided: gaps in terms of particular types of services.

The results of the local mappings<sup>4</sup> were presented by the experts at the second steering group meeting in September 2007. The exercise turned out to be a good opportunity for cities and Managing Authorities to work together. Most of all, it allowed partners to identify the issues to be addressed in the MILE project in priority:

▶ **a. Enterprise development of ethnic minorities:**

- ▶ Customization of current financial and non-financial services for enterprise development to the needs of ethnic minorities
- ▶ Efficient information dissemination about the existing services
- ▶ Boosting the enterprise culture particularly for women and young people
- ▶ Developing networks of businesses which could compete globally

▶ **b. Active inclusion in the labour market:**

- ▶ Customize employment services to the needs of ethnic minorities
- ▶ Need for good practices for access to the labour market
- ▶ Information dissemination about employment services
- ▶ Conduct studies/surveys to estimate the scope of the phenomena of early school leaving and implement monitoring systems
- ▶ Tackle the socio-economic difficulties leading to poor attainment levels of migrants and Roma children and prevent early school leaving
- ▶ Changing the current situation of Roma community by developing strategies which involve Roma in the decision making and planning processes of interventions targeted to them
- ▶ Providing child care is essential for improving access of single parents and woman to employment
- ▶ Greater customization of the available services to the needs of migrant women

▶ **c. Cultural diversity as a driver for economic development and social cohesion:**

- ▶ Explore the potential of cultural diversity-based development along with ensuring access to new Technologies and training services for ethnic minorities
- ▶ Intercultural dialogue needs planned interventions using potential of migrants associations which are very active in this field as well as the cultural events already existing in the cities
- ▶ Implement participation mechanisms of ethnic minorities in local democratic structures

▶ **d. Access to housing, education and health:**

- ▶ Provide adequate housing support services for ethnic minorities
- ▶ Promote dialogue and communication to facilitate access of ethnic minorities to housing
- ▶ Improve access of migrants and Roma to higher education

<sup>4</sup> 9 reports were produced, as the city of Herrera de Los Navajos joined the project at the end of this Phase and was unable to produce the mapping report in time. Their contribution will be available during the second phase of the project.

- › Implement intercultural mediation services at schools
- › Implement intercultural mediation services at health services
- › Provide health and education professionals with culturally sensitive training to manage the diversity of clients
- › Improve information dissemination services in housing, education and health

## 2. Immigration and Integration issues for the MILE partners: Priorities to be addressed through the network activities

The priorities to be addressed in the MILE project are clearly the result of the analysis of the local situations in the different partner cities and regions. This section highlights the main weaknesses and needs identified at local level (through a SWOT analysis) in relation with the 4 main topics that will be dealt with by the project. For each topic, examples of local realities are given, showing how the project activities will answer to concrete problems.

### › 2.1 ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT FOR ETHNIC MINORITIES:

Regarding the topic of enterprise development actions targeted at ethnic minorities, the mapping exercise at local level allowed to identify a series weaknesses/ needs among the partners:

- › **Ethnic minorities do not fully use the available services for the following reasons:**
  - › They are not aware of them or do not identify with them because they are not customised to their needs
  - › They face obstacles accessing financial and non-financial support and heavy bureaucratic procedures
  - › Lack of entrepreneurial spirit, in particular in women and young people
- › Enterprise development segmentation
- › Enterprise development projects have no impact on the unemployment status of ethnic minorities

**In Venice (Italy) for instance**, there are no particular business supports or financial facilities in terms of the availability of credit for migrants and ethnic minorities. This is due to a general policy towards migrants and the ethnic minorities, that is mainly based on the promotion of a system of equal opportunity for all people (natives and migrants). Therefore in the field of the non-financial support services, there are many entrepreneurial associations that supply services, also for the enterprises with migrant owners. The number of enterprises owned by immigrants is rapidly increasing (4.2% of the total enterprises in the region of Veneto, 7.5% in the city of Venice).

The main priorities concern the information networks with several language translations and a databank of the professional associations and related training courses in order to supply detailed information about opportunities of training for the enterprises.



**In Timisoara (Romania)**, the only business support system is the one focused on specific measures of support for setting-up businesses in disadvantaged Romanian communities. Several small projects have been initiated within EU programmes or with support from foreign donors, such as the Soros Foundation, but their impact and sustainability remain limited. The idea of financial support for income-generating activities in disadvantaged communities was used so far only in relation to Roma and they were grants, not credits. There is now a debate and several initiatives to initiate micro-credits for disadvantaged persons to set-up small businesses. However, existing grant schemes, EU-funded credit guarantees and micro-credit systems are only accessible to Romanian citizens. Only small enterprises with a majority of Romanian capital can access this type of support. Thus, while Roma and other national minorities have full access, migrants cannot benefit from it.

**In Nea Alikarnassos (Greece)**, there is a Programme for financial support in order to create a new business (promotion of self-employment). It refers to the general population but also emphasises on the needs' cover of Special Social Groups, where migrants, Roma and other ethnic minorities are placed. Although theoretically a migrant can apply for programmes that refer to the creation of a new business, in practice this is very difficult, as it cannot be combined with the legislative procedures concerning his/her work permit.

## ➤ 2.2 ACTIVE INCLUSION IN THE LABOUR MARKET:

According to the official local records concerning active inclusion in the labour market, it appears local situations are characterized by the following dominant patterns:

- Employment services are not customised to the needs of ethnic minorities and are insufficient
- Information dissemination about employment services is poor
- Validation of academic accreditations is a main obstacle to the access of highly-qualified migrants to better jobs
- High drop-out rates among migrants and Roma children
- Attainment levels are relatively poor for some groups
- Access to secondary and higher education very low in migrants and Roman students
- Woman migrants have more problems accessing full time and adequate jobs
- Reconciling family and work life still very difficult in most cities

**In the District of Charlois (Rotterdam, The Netherlands)**, the main problem underlined in the local mapping is the "poverty trap" which means that low-educated and jobless people are financially better off with their unemployment benefits and extras like low-priced child care, housing benefits, health care insurance, etc. rather than by accepting a low paid job where they lose all the financial extras. In this way it is difficult to enforce programmes and to close the gap towards the labour market.

A special role in Charlois is played by the TIP office (Transfer Information Point), which looks after the early school leavers and other youngsters who have to get back on track. There is a programme set up to get pupils under 18 back to school which can include special training, assessments, career tests, apprenticeships, tutorship. For youngsters between 18 and 23 almost the same programme is implemented, but the emphasis is not on going back to school, but on getting a starter qualification or a job.

**In Komotini (Greece)**, all the actions implemented concerning immigrants in Komotini are directed to the total population. There are no specific measures for new comers, early school leavers, single parents or women migrants in order to actively include them in the labour market. In general, there is lack of information about the rights and options in the labour market. There is a need to officially inform all the newcomers and early school leavers about all the steps that need to be made and the existing possibilities. Also, a common problem is the non-recognition of the diplomas obtained by migrants particularly by women in their countries of origin or the long bureaucratic procedures in order to achieve this. As a result, they usually apply for part-time jobs that are irrelevant to their skills and are usually underpaid with reduced or no social and health insurance.

## ➤ 2.3 CULTURAL DIVERSITY AS A DRIVER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL COHESION

Concerning the potential of cultural diversity for local economic development and social inclusion, the analysis of local realities in partner cities shows the following situation:

- Lack of knowledge about the potential of cultural diversity to boost economic development and social cohesion
- Basic lack of access to New Media and new technologies and basic skills
- Lack of planned mechanisms to promote intercultural dialogue
- Low participation of ethnic minorities in local democratic structures

**In Vantaa (Finland)** for instance, cultural diversity is supported by the migrant NGOs in their activities. Very often these NGOs are specialised in strengthening their own cultural heritage. But new actions should be developed so that multiculturalism is seen as a richness and not as something that leads to problems. In terms of intercultural dialogue there is a strong NGO, Hakunilan International Society, that organises a wide range of international cultural activities. The city is also planning a new kind of international independence day organised together with a migrant organisation Berdere. The main needs are participation in decision-making, representation at the political level, local political life and development of migrant organisations.

**The context is different in Sevilla (Spain)**, which benefits from a long and consolidated tradition as a tourist destination, with a diverse cultural legacy that is upheld by the footprint left behind by the different cultures that have inhabited the city throughout its history. Various initiatives relating to the intercultural dialogue have been introduced by the city: there are several international music festivals, radio and television channels on the migrant issues and celebration days against racism and xenophobia. The private organisations also carry out various cultural exchange measures. But these initiatives are mainly developed by groups and institutions that are dedicated to immigration issues and they still have a limited reach. It would also be a good idea to increase the number of spaces where natives from Seville and new residents can work together organising socio-cultural activities for the neighbourhood.

## ➤ 2.4 ACCESS TO HOUSING, EDUCATION AND HEALTH:

The situation concerning the access to housing, education and health in the partner cities present the following main weaknesses:

- Lack of housing support services for migrants
- Tenants refuse to rent houses for migrants
- Low participation levels of migrants and Roma in education particularly in higher education
- Lack of intercultural mediation services at school
- Migrants who work in the informal economy have no access to health services because they are not covered by social security
- Lack of transition and cultural mediation services at health centres
- Health practitioners are not trained to manage the diversity of clients
- Lack of information dissemination about housing, education and health services

### **Turin (Italy):**

**Housing:** Public housing is open to foreign application but under condition and in a limited number. Lo.ca.re project is an housing agency that furnishes guarantees to the owner and the tenant and under several conditions gives financial support to the tenant and fiscal advantage to the owner. In 2004 50% of the contracts were with foreign renters. The city needs to think more about public housing in terms of social diversity.

**Education:** The City of Turin offers a service of support and assistance in insertion of foreign minors in scholar structures. A few project were financed by the City in order to support integration but no large-scale programmes exist. The School of Mums is one of them in the school and focuses on the learning of Italian of the mothers as an instrument of involving them into school and scholar life of their child. The main problems include the lack of places in public preschools and the decrease of Italian being taken as a 2nd language because of ministerial budget restriction.

**Health:** Regularised immigrants, with work and residence, have access to medical public services. The ISI, created to furnish medical care also to foreign people in temporarily staying in Italy, became a facilitating element for access to health services also for foreign residents. The presence of cultural mediator is one of the crucial elements of success.

### **Amadora (Portugal):**

**Housing:** Many immigrant families as well as poor Portuguese families living in slums got new houses over the last years through a Special Housing Program developed by the central government and through re-housing actions carried out by Amadora City Council. But newcomers were left out of these programs and many of them are living in very bad housing conditions.

**Education:** Children of immigrants are accepted in school no matter the residence status of their parents. Even if their parents are illegal residents, children can attend school, but there are no specific actions or measures. Strong measures should be taken to reduce school repetition and dropout rates which are very high among children of immigrants as well as among native children and youngsters of the same social condition. This is a very serious problem in the Portuguese educational system.

**Health:** No specific actions or services exist concerning immigrants' access to health. Immigrants have full access to the national health system in the same conditions as natives. Following a formal decision by the Ministry of Health, illegal immigrants also have access to the national health system. Due to insufficiencies in the health system, many immigrants (as well as natives), have health problems that are not being addressed on time.

## 3. Implementing the MILE project : objectives, planned actions and methodological framework

The priorities to be addressed in the MILE project are clearly the result of the analysis of the local situations in the different partner cities and regions. This section highlights the main weaknesses and needs identified at local level (through a SWOT analysis) in relation with the 4 main topics that will be dealt with by the project. For each topic, examples of local realities are given, showing how the project activities will answer to concrete problems.

### ▶ 3.1 OBJECTIVES AND PLANNED ACTIONS:

Based on the above analysis and identification of the thematic priorities, the overall goal of the Implementation phase is to assist partner cities to develop and identify good practice project proposals for possible funding from ERDF, ESF or other EU or National sources of funding.

To realise this overall goal, the project will undertake a number of actions in order to achieve the following objectives:

- ▶ **Develop and deliver an Action Learning Set ( ALS ) transnational exchange programme** for over 90 key actors from 10 cities and their 10 “sister regions”. The ALS would bring together key actors in the business of “doing” (elected representatives, practitioners, institutions, companies, or community-based organisations) from the cities, alongside involvement of actors from each of the Managing Authorities in the partnership. The aim will be to ensure close involvement and co-operation in the learning exchange between practitioners, policy makers and programme managers. This will create genuine conditions for co-production and the accumulation of knowledge, experience and know-how.
- ▶ **The ALS transnational exchange programme will focus on 3 specific sub-themes** which reflect the priorities identified in the Development phase:
  - ▶ Enterprise development for Ethnic Minorities and Active Inclusion measures in the labour market
  - ▶ Cultural Diversity Development
  - ▶ Social Cohesion Access to key Services (Education, Health, Housing)

Each sub-theme should be systematically approached using an Action Learning Methodology (see section below) and allow a cross-section of participants to exchange experience, to develop greater professional capacity and thus to identify and develop good practice within regional operational programmes.

- ▶ Create a web site resource which would include:
  - ▶ Case Studies
  - ▶ Sub-Themes Reports
  - ▶ Link to relevant websites
  - ▶ Publications
  - ▶ Reports
  - ▶ Contacts with regional/city/national/European actors

- › **Develop actions** that could form part of the participating partners regional operational programmes
- › **Disseminate the project outcomes** to other cities and regions

### › 3.2 METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK (ACTION LEARNING METHODOLOGY)

Action Learning is inherently based on ensuring that the personal and social capital that participants bring will form part of the exchange and learning process. Action Learning is an organisational, problem-solving technique.

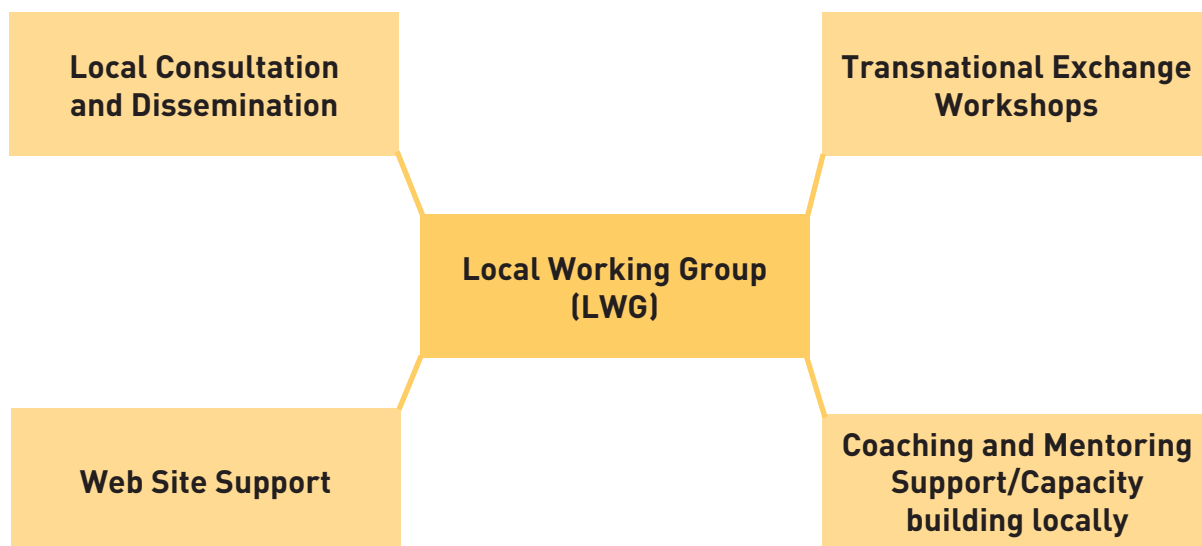
Action Learning is a technique which encourages participants to learn with and from each other, in pursuit of the solutions to real-life, work-related problems. It uses problem-solving as a means towards both individual and organisational change. Action Learning also provides external inputs which reflect the needs of participants.

The methodology aims to achieve two key goals:

- › To maximise impact at a local level and ensure that the eventual local project proposals have wide ownership
- › To facilitate the effective transnational exchange of experience and learning

#### › Maximising impact at a local level

The following diagram provide an overview of the process and key actions in order to achieve this goal. The different elements of the process are then outlined below.



**Local Working Group (LWG):** it will be established by each partner. The LWG will consist of between 10-12 members who will be selected on the following basis:

- › Membership has to include participants from public and third sector organisations. Where desirable, private sector involvement should also be included.
- › Participants have to be actively connected to the theme of the network at a local level.
- › There should be a gender balance in the LWG.
- › Include one local politician responsible for the theme of the network. This politician will also be required to participate in the final transnational event of the network.

**Local Consultation and Dissemination:** the LWG will involve several local stakeholders in order to organise at least 3 meetings per year. One of these meetings will be linked once a year to a consultation and dissemination event which will attract at least 30-40 other local stakeholders. The goal here is to make sure that the results of the transnational exchange programme are shared.

**Transnational Exchange Workshops:** Participants of the LWG will take part in at least one of the transnational exchange workshops. This will ensure that the LWG members are all actively connected to the exchange programme and can thus ensure that there is adequate dissemination at a local level. This step is further elaborated below.

**Coaching and Mentoring Support/Capacity building locally appointed:** The LWG will be required to produce a local action plan as one of the obligatory requirements of the URBACT II programme. The LWG will be supported in this work by the thematic expert(s) BUT also with locally identified “coaches/mentors” who can advise and guide the LWG in its development of the local action plan. The local dissemination and consultation events will form part of the action plan development process. Thus ensuring that the end product has wide ownership and thus greater chance for implementation.

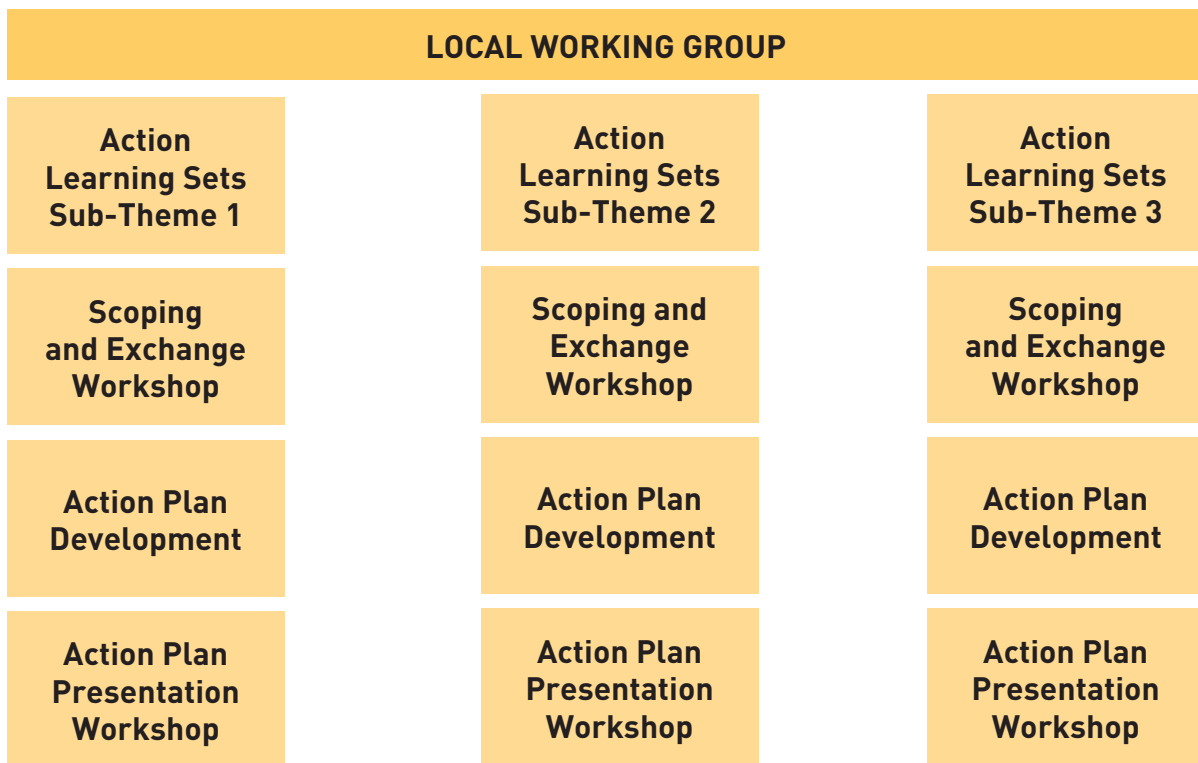
**Web site support:** within the Urbact Website, a dedicated project space will be established for the thematic network. Each LWG will be required to ensure that all LWG member profiles are placed on line. The website will collect all the documentations produced during the life of the project and provide access to relevant case studies and resources that can assist LWGs in their action plan development.

### › Facilitating effective transfer of experience at transnational level

The following diagram provide an overview of the process and key actions in order to achieve this goal. The different elements of the process are then outlined below.

**Action Learning Sets:** Each Partner would identify 3 participants who would form the Action Learning Set (ALS) for the specific sub-theme. This would mean that each Action Learning Set would consist of 30 key actors plus external experts and the Management Team.

Action Learning Sets will be formed for each of the sub-themes. Whilst there will be some overlap in membership between the ALSs, the intention is also to ensure that membership of each ALS is directly linked to the sub-theme, thus ensuring a close involvement with the issue at a city or regional level. For each sub-theme the composition of the ALS will remain fixed.



**Scoping and Exchange Workshop:** Participation of the 30 members in a transnational scoping and exchange workshop. This workshop would focus on mapping of practice and identification of need of all partners in relation to the sub-theme as well as showcasing good practice.

**Action Plan Development:** This is the action plan development phase. This will involve each local action learning set undertaking a number of activities:

- ▶ Organisation of training and working sessions which would focus on providing support and coaching/mentoring in developing local action plans.
- ▶ Undertaking local consultation and dissemination in order to share the outcomes of the transnational workshop and clarify local needs/priorities in relation to the sub-theme.
- ▶ Identify experts at local level to help the Action Plan definition

**Action Plan Presentation Workshop:** This would be the final workshop for each ALS at which all of the

ALSs will present their action plans and thus provide a means for further exchange of good practice and good ideas.

The work of each ALS would be undertaken over a 5/6 month period thus enabling participants to develop good relationships that will enable ongoing working with each other beyond the life of the group. Alongside the work of the ALS, the project will create the online resource consisting of:

- ▶ Case Studies
- ▶ Sub-Theme reports
- ▶ Links to relevant websites
- ▶ Publications/Reports
- ▶ Contacts with regional/city/national/European actors

The MILE project and its challenging orientations and methodological framework for the next phase clearly demonstrate the importance of the Development phase in all projects. Making sure that all partners are on the same tracks regarding the issues to be addressed, the outputs to expect from the network activities and the potential added-value of the project for other urban practitioners beyond the partnership. The conditions have been created for a successful implementation of the network's activities. To be continued.



**URBAMECO**  
**URBAN PROJECT/METROPOLITAN**  
**AERA/DEPRIVED AREAS/DEVELOPMENT ECO**



# URBAN SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL REGENERATION OF DEPRIVED AREAS OF AGGLOMERATION




**LED BY GREATER LYON**

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URBAMECO



-  **LYON** Lead partner
-  Belfast Project partner
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# THE URBAMECO FAST TRACK NETWORK

European cities and Managing Authorities working together on the *integrated regeneration of deprived urban areas*.

The URBAMECO Fast Track Network, lead by the Greater Lyon, is one of the two pilot projects launched under URBACT I in order to test the Fast Track initiative within the framework of the programme. It addresses the theme of the integrated regeneration of deprived urban areas, with a specific focus on economic revitalisation and sustainable urban development. Building partly on an existing partnership created in URBACT I through the REGENERA network, it has involved a set of new partners interested by the innovative formula of the Fast Track initiative, among which cities and more especially the corresponding Managing Authorities of Operational Programmes<sup>1</sup>. As a result of the first phase of the project (6 months dedicated to project development), the partnership has been finalised as follows:

Partner cities	Partner Managing Authorities	Country
Greater Lyon (Lead Partner)	Prefecture of the Region	France
Belfast <sup>2</sup>	Managing Authority for Northern Ireland	Northern Ireland
Birmingham	Advantage West Midlands	England
Göteborg	NUTEK	Sweden
Constanta	General Directorate Managing Authority for Regional Operational Programme, Ministry of Development, Publics Works & Housing	Romania
Lodz	Lodzkie Voievodship	Poland
Wroclaw	Lower Slesian Managing Authority	Poland
Tatabania <sup>3</sup>	Central Transdanubian Regional Development Council and Agency	Hungary
Arnhem	Province of Gelderland	The Netherlands
Nea Ionia Magnesias	Managing Authority for Thessalia Region	Greece

The reader will find here information on the project, the activities implemented so far during the *Development phase*, the issues identified as a priority to work on during the exchange and learning activities and the work plan for the *Implementation phase* to come<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>See the Introduction of this brochure for more information on the Fast Track Initiative and Fast Track Networks. More information is also available on the “Regions for Economic Change” website: [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/cooperation/interregional/ecochange/index\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/interregional/ecochange/index_en.cfm)

<sup>2</sup>Belfast left the FTN and will not take part into the Implementation phase.

<sup>3</sup>Tatabania (Hungary) is in the process of joining the partnership in replacement of Pila (Poland) which has recently left the project.

<sup>4</sup>This note builds on the Feasibility study completed by the URBAMECO thematic expert, David Froessler: URBAMECO Fast Track Network – Creating Competitiveness and Social Cohesion in Deprived Urban Areas – Feasibility study (2 parts), December 2007. All documents related to the project are available on the URBACT website.

# 1. The challenges of project development: setting up the partnership, defining the issues to be addressed

The first phase of the project, also called Development phase, was to be dedicated to finalising the partnership (from 5 to 10 cities along with their Managing Authorities), realising a baseline study on the network's topic (landscape at European level and local situation in each partner city), refining the issues to be addressed through the project and defining the work programme for the exchange and learning activities. In accordance with the general framework set up by the programme for the Fast Track Networks, the URBAMECO partners and their expert, David Froessler, organised the Development phase around the following activities:

- ▶ Completion of partnership respecting a balance between Competitiveness and Convergence regions;
- ▶ Organisation of an "Intake seminar" in September 2007 in Lyon, to start cooperation, joint planning and joint production;
- ▶ Provision of a detailed "Fast Track City Dossier" by each partner, including structured and comprehensive information about the city, the region and the targeted neighbourhoods to be considered in the project;
- ▶ Implementation of a series of two-day visits, by the thematic expert, in each partner city so as to grasp the local situation, define the topics to be addressed in the project, and organise the participation of the city and its Managing authority in the project activities;
- ▶ Realisation of the "Feasibility Study" (baseline).

Along with the completion of the partnership, and especially the involvement of the Managing Authorities of the different partners, the realisation of the "Feasibility study" was also a challenge for the project partners considering the short period of time available (about 3 operational months). The methodology developed by the expert included the collection of "City Dossiers" to be provided by each partner. Despite the tight schedule, these dossiers have been filled in in great detail with all the information required and agreed upon during the Intake seminar:

- ▶ basic statistics on the local situation in the region, city and neighbourhoods concerned;
- ▶ structured information on the political and administrative systems at all relevant levels;
- ▶ detailed information on all relevant policies and programmes at city and region levels;
- ▶ in-depth information on the neighbourhood to be selected for the development of the Local Action Plan to be produced by the partner city;
- ▶ a definition of the Local Action Plan's objectives and intended outcomes;
- ▶ a definition of the partner's expectations with regard to the project's partnership and activities.

As a second step, and building on the "City Dossiers", the project expert then organised a series of field visits in each partner city. On this aspect also, partners turned out to be actively involved. In each city the local delegates managed to activate and involve a high number of stakeholders and potential partners

for cooperation within the framework of the project, both at the level of the city and at the level of the Managing Authority. These 2-day visits could be used to discuss problems to tackle and opportunities with regard to the network activities to be developed and to define, building on each local situation, the potential added-value and concrete outcomes of the project.

Beyond the expected outcomes of the Development phase, meaning the final partnership, the baseline and the work programme for the Implementation phase, more could be achieved during this first phase, as stated by the expert in his report. More specifically, it appears that the Intake seminar, the Field visits and the Follow-up seminar lead to a positive momentum amongst all partners:

- ▶ in each partner city, the field visit has been used to involve a wide range of stakeholders and potential partners in a discussion with an innovative approach, leading to new insights and to a modification of existing plans and intended procedures;
- ▶ a new dialogue between Managing Authorities and local authorities has been established as a result of the joint participation to the seminars and workshops during the field visits, creating new exchange and cooperation structures.

Nevertheless, one of the most important results to have been achieved during the Development phase is the definition of a clear focus for the project activities:

*“Using regional and city-wide growth potentials and the active support of local residential and business communities to create competitiveness and cohesion in deprived urban areas in the framework of Integrated Neighbourhood Development Strategies”.*

This result could be achieved thanks to the analysis of the local situations, needs and expectations as a first step in the process of project development, a step which may appear time and resource-consuming but turns out to be necessary to get the project on good tracks from all partners' point of view.

## 2. The URBAMECO partners' situation in terms of urban regeneration: selected neighbourhoods, priorities and expectations with regard to the project

This section presents in a synthetic way, partner per partner, key elements of the local situations that lead to the definition of the project topic and work programme. It aims at highlighting the way local realities give sense and shape to projects within the URBACT programme. More especially in the URBAMECO case, this bottom-up process builds on the selection of neighbourhoods to be considered in the project, on the identification of problems and topics to be dealt with in the Local Action Plans, and on the definition of the outputs expected by each partner with regard to the Local Action Plans to be produced<sup>5</sup>.

### › 2.1 THE CITY OF ARNHEM, THE NETHERLANDS

#### › The Fast Track neighbourhoods in Arnhem

The City of Arnhem wants to develop a Local Action Plan for two neighbourhoods located next to each other: Klarendal and Sint Marten. They are characterised by general problems of outward migration of households with higher incomes/levels of education and inward migration of socially and economically weaker households; growing unemployment rates; low income level; growing population with different nationalities, different cultural background and lifestyles; erosion of social cohesion and family connections; poor quality of housing; growing tensions between communities, growing feeling of unsafety, criminality, drug abuse, etc.

#### › Problems and topics to be addressed by the Local Action Plan in Arnhem

In the Local Action Plan, Arnhem wants to focus on how the development of economic potentials in a neighbourhood has effects on the overall development of that neighbourhood and on the competitiveness of the surrounding city and region. The city's philosophy is to create several surroundings/environments in which the fashion sector can develop.

#### Klarendal

In Klarendal, the focus is on two zones with mixed buildings for living and working [ateliers]. The housing corporation has the goal to develop about 40 houses/units in a part of the neighbourhood that is deprived. They invest in real estate [partly with financial contribution of the city and a subsidy of the ERDF] and rent them to the fashion designers. Another topic is the branding of the neighbourhood and scouting of the appropriate entrepreneurs as an integrated part of the strategy. It is expected that these activities [investment in real estate and the establishment of new fashion companies] will give a strong development impulse to the neighbourhood, but also to the competitiveness of the surrounding city and region.

<sup>5</sup>More information and contact details for each partner city may be found in the "Feasibility report" mentioned above.

## Sint Marten

With the Local Action Plan for Sint Marten, the city wants to contribute to the bottom-up planning activities of the residents in the neighbourhood. For both neighbourhoods it is a fact that the economic development must be a strong element of an integrated approach that also includes social and physical aspects of regeneration.

### › Desired outputs of the Local Action Plan as defined by Arnhem

A set of actions to stimulate the [further] economic development in the neighbourhoods, in combination with the social and physical field is required. Moreover, the aim is to attract investment from public and private partners. It is also an objective of the Local Action Plan that there will be more residents and companies actively supporting the new neighbourhood profile [fashion in Klarendal and sustainability in St.Marten]. This can lead to the expectation that there will also be more residents and companies who find the neighbourhood attractive [lively, safe, well-connected].

In that way, the city tries to persuade more new residents and companies to come into these neighbourhoods from other parts of the city and region. And finally the city of Arnhem hopes to develop a strategy on how to translate the experience from their city to the seven other cities in the Province of Gelderland.

## › 2.2 THE CITY OF BELFAST, IRELAND

### › The Fast Track neighbourhoods in Belfast

It has been agreed that the target area(s) for a Local Action Plan in Belfast will be selected from the so-called "City Places". It is the overall aim of this initiative to allow Belfast City Council to provide each of the areas with "tailor-made" council services, based on the assessment that poorer areas need different services than richer areas. Once the data for all City Places are complete, the next step will be to set up citizens engagement mechanisms in each of the City Places. It could then be checked which ones will be selected for the URBAMECO-project as neighbourhoods that will receive a Local Action Plan. For the selection of these City Places, it is agreed to look at communities at the fringe of the City Centre – Shankhill, Falls Area – communities around the Gasworks site, East Belfast and the Titanic Quarter – as they are communities in neighbourhoods close to big development projects which are in desperate need of equally getting some benefit from such positive economic development.

### › Problems and topics to be addressed by the Local Action Plan in Belfast

General topics to be addressed in these neighbourhoods are:

- › There is a clear need for a more diversified housing stock. Affordable housing for socially disadvantaged groups should remain available in central locations, but at the same time, housing of higher standards must be developed to support the aim to keep/attract higher qualified and creative people.
- › The city's capacity to produce environmental solutions for businesses has to be developed. Universities in Belfast are active in this field and contribute to this sector as a potential growth sector for the city of Belfast.
- › Keeping the small-scale retail-structure of Belfast alive in the growing competition with the large department stores and shopping centres is another challenge.

➤ While the economy has expanded dramatically in recent years, the city centre has been the main area to benefit from this growth. There are opportunities for locating businesses in neighbourhoods which are located on the edge of the city centre (and which have considerable areas of dereliction and vacant land).

### ➤ **Desired outputs of the Local Action Plan as defined by Belfast**

The aim for the “Local Neighbourhood Action Plans” in Belfast is to develop such a plan for each of the selected City Places in 2008. The research done in the first half of the year needs to get a strong bottom-up support from working with the selected communities. The fact that a lot of qualified people are missing in Belfast or leaving the city at the end of their university time leads to the idea that a slightly different approach to the intended market research might need to be chosen for Belfast: The focus of the research for Belfast might not only be on sectors that offer potential for growth and sustainable development, but also on specific target groups like young creative people and how they can be attracted to stay - possibly with interesting attractions and opportunities that could also be established in the deprived neighbourhoods to be selected. The question will be, how can a strategy be developed either to keep the people in the city after their studies or to attract such people from other European Cities.

The “top-down” element of the research will be to carry out a land mapping exercise to identify available land, confirm whether it is zoned for particular uses, identify ownership and examine the opportunities for development to accommodate the growing economy. Linkages with both the public and private sectors will be required to determine the most appropriate way of moving forward on this.

## ➤ **2.3 THE CITY OF BIRMINGHAM, ENGLAND**

### ➤ **The Fast Track neighbourhoods in Birmingham**

The proposed area lies south-east of Birmingham city centre and includes important arterial routes linking with the M42 corridor and towns to the south. It is called Sparkbrook ward (34,171 inhabitants). The area is characterised by major problems of deprivation, unemployment, low literacy level, poor growth rate in businesses, low income level, health, crime, etc.

### ➤ **Problems and topics to be addressed by the Local Action Plan in Birmingham**

What is now needed is a large scale investment of capital in order to promote transformational projects along the corridor together with more focussed activity around local cohesion in terms of ensuring that local people benefit directly and indirectly from the jobs and training opportunities which are provided by this investment. The strategy is based around a number of key activities:

- Connecting major employment sites in order to attract investment and jobs.
- The enhancement of business premises in the area.
- The improvement of the general environment.
- The provision of gateway features.
- The provision of business support activities.



## ➤ Desired outputs of the Local Action Plan as defined by Birmingham

The key outputs of the Local Action Plan include the following:

- Job creation and safeguarding.
- New business creation.
- Business support to improve their performance.
- Public/private sector investment levered into the area.
- Brownfield land reclaimed and developed.
- Skills – people assisted to improve their skills.
- Improvements to land and property in the area [including security], including an increased supply of employment land and premises.
- Reduced levels of crime and the fear of crime, particularly business-related.
- Improvements to the environment and key gateways to provide a positive image and area identity for/to investors/visitors/local community.

Essentially the key outcomes will be based around improving economic and employment opportunities, as well as providing an example of high quality urban renaissance and thereby contributing to reducing the level of deprivation.

## ➤ 2.4 THE CITY OF CONSTANTA, ROMANIA

### ➤ The Fast Track neighbourhoods in Constanta

Constanta City hall intends to develop in the framework of the Regional Operational Programme [Urban Sustainable Development] an integrated project of urban development contributing to a comprehensive and sustainable regeneration of the Peninsular Area of Constanta County.

The Peninsular Area is the target area for the URBAMECO activities. It represents “the heart” of Constanta County, being from the historical point of view the oldest site. It has clear boundaries which will be of great help for the design and implementation of an integrated regeneration initiative. The area is located in the central zone of Constanta municipality which is also the historical centre of the town. The entire zone is declared an archaeological and architectural protection area of national interest. It is placed between the old commercial port and some of the amusement beaches of the city on the Black Sea shore. It represents at the same time a part of Constanta city centre, hosting administrative, commercial and cultural functions. Despite some strong points, the Peninsula Area suffers from physical and social degradation.

### ➤ Problems and topics to be addressed by the Local Action Plan in Constanta

The refurbishment, preservation and capitalisation of the historic and cultural patrimony of Constanta is the priority for the Local Action Plan. It includes:

- the refurbishment [rehabilitation] of basic infrastructure of the Peninsular Area.
- the creation and rehabilitation of green spaces.
- the establishing and rehabilitation of a social centre.

## ➤ **Desired outputs of the Local Action Plan as defined by Constanta**

In order to solve all the problems and threats of the chosen neighbourhood, it is very important to draw up an Integrated Urban Development Plan for the area. As a desired output of the overall regeneration initiative, the number of tourists should be increased by capitalising on the area's historic and cultural potential on the national and international tourist market. Another intended output is the creation of about 1,000 jobs. The social centre will be rehabilitated/established and 10 km of streets may be built/refurbished/modernised including side walks and bicycle lanes as well as 5,000 square metres of green spaces.

## ➤ **2.5 THE CITY OF GÖTEBORG, SWEDEN**

### ➤ **The Fast Track neighbourhoods in Göteborg**

The target area for the URBAMECO project is Hammarkullen, situated in the District of Lärjedalen (8,052 ha and 24,421 inhabitants of which 7,822 live in Hammarkullen). Among the problems and challenges to tackle in the area are:

- lack of commitment and lack of a sense of common responsibility,
- insufficient public services,
- poor public lighting,
- no supermarket of any known chain in the area,
- mostly bad publicity in media,
- little belief in the neighbourhood's future among its residents.

### ➤ **Problems and topics to be addressed by the Local Action Plan in Göteborg**

Problems need to be addressed in an integrated way with focus on economic revitalisation. There is a need to develop the market place in Hammarkullen and turn it into a vibrant area with economic activity and various public and commercial services. This is to be done in cooperation with other deprived neighbourhoods in their work with developing neighbourhood market places. It is also to be done with an overall city perspective; the market place in Hammarkullen is to develop into a place attracting people from the whole city.

The number of working places needs to be increased and more varied. The feeling of anonymity amongst the residents in the area, the weak interest for the neighbourhood and the low involvement among the citizens and the employees are problems that need to be overcome by the Local Action Plan.

Common activities in all schools and preschools and other programmes are needed in the area [youth recreation centres, libraries etc.]. Children and young people do not see any positive future perspectives and their participation in Swedish society is very limited. It is intended to continue and develop the cooperation with Kommununiversitetet [Municipality University] and the University of Göteborg. Work with the children in the area is of importance for the future of the area and for the long term success for the work done today. There is a need to fight the feeling of lack of comfort and security in the neighbourhood.

### › **Desired outputs of the Local Action Plan as defined by Göteborg**

It is expected that the planned Local Action Plan has clear outputs and visible effects on the development of Hammarkullen. The main desired outputs are:

- › to revitalise the market place in Hammarkullen in order to meet the basic needs of public and commercial service for the residents. The market place should also attract people from other parts of the city.
- › to make Hammarkullen an attractive place for businesses to invest in. The establishment of working places in the area close to Hammarkullen creates a greater foundation for possible visitors to the market place and creates job opportunities for the people living in Hammarkullen.
- › to connect Hammarkullen in a better way to the city and the region. Hammarkullen is hoped to both contribute to and benefit from economic growth.
- › to overcome the feeling of anonymity amongst the inhabitants and to increase their interest and involvement in activities to develop and stabilise their neighbourhood. The improvement of the comfort and security in the neighbourhood through physical improvements in the area is another desired output.

## › **2.6 THE CITY OF LODZ, POLAND**

### › **The Fast Track neighbourhoods in Lodz**

The “New Centre of Lodz”, focus of the city’s participation in URBAMECO, is a strategy that contains several major development projects in the city centre of Lodz and is one of the central topics of the local Revitalisation Programme approved by the Town Council in 2004.

The neighbourhoods to be selected for the development of a Local Action Plan are located in the city centre of Lodz. In the whole district, there are 78,747 inhabitants. This is the oldest and most deprived area of Lodz, characterised by a severe lack of investment and maintenance which has led to a situation where all mobile people having left the area, and the remaining population are hit by serious social disadvantage.

### › **Problems and topics to be addressed by the Local Action Plan in Lodz**

The Local Action Plan for the City of Lodz will focus on one or two selected neighbourhoods in the city centre. It will include the Moniuszko Park as the core project, but will go one important step further: It will be the main objectives of this Local Action Plan, to establish links between the described large-scale investments and projects in the city centre and the social challenges and disadvantages of the people living here. Therefore, it must be a central objective of this Local Action Plan to identify elements of economic growth that can be used to create new opportunities for economic activities, income and employment on a smaller scale for the inner city of Lodz. This will also include ways to activate private capital to support investment and improvement in the area.

### › **Desired outputs of the Local Action Plan as defined by Lodz**

The most important output is the construction of a new and improved space for living and business in the central area of the city. Currently this area is almost empty and not valuable from an architectural, cultural and residential point of view. The local authorities want to create new working places, more comfortable places to live and more innovative places for culture and art in the city centre.

## ➤ 2.7 THE GREATER LYON, FRANCE

### ➤ The Fast Track neighbourhoods in Greater Lyon

Two areas to be dealt with within the URBAMECO Fast Track Network:

- Vaulx-en-Velin, a small city of 40,000 inhabitants located in the Eastern part of Greater Lyon. This large housing estate area was designed in the 1960s and 1970s in accordance with the principles of separating traffic and pedestrians, with a large shopping centre as the new town centre, and the residential areas around it, isolated from each other. As from the 1980s on, Vaulx-en-Velin began to deteriorate with a concentration of social and economic problems amongst the inhabitants, the successive closure of shops and rising delinquency.
- Lyon la Duchere, a large estate built between 1958 and 1963 at a time of housing shortage. It consists of large apartment blocks. La Duchere's situation worsened progressively in the 1980s as the buildings deteriorated and flats were left increasingly empty. Social and economic vulnerability of the people living there increased and delinquency caused an image degradation and contributed to the isolation of the neighbourhood within an area of very strong economic development. Currently, 12,000 people live there in 80% of public social housing.

### ➤ Problems and topics to be addressed by the Local Action Plan in Greater Lyon

In these two neighbourhoods, actions are ongoing to demolish huge parts of the existing blocks in order to establish new private housing. The city also plans to build squares and streets. The Local Action Plan should address topics regarding the people who still live there, in relation with education, training to fight unemployment, culture, etc. Another topic is the enhancement of economic development. This covers support for new shops, special programmes for the inhabitants and the creation of new types of economic sectors.

### ➤ Desired outputs of the Local Action Plan as defined by Greater Lyon

The desired output is the definition of a local strategy for economic development in an integrated project, including:

- the nursery for private corporations,
- new buildings for private activities,
- the development of relationships between the local economic projects and the economic development of the metropolitan area of Greater Lyon.

## ➤ 2.8 THE CITY OF NEA IONIA MAGNESIAS, GREECE

### ➤ The Fast Track neighbourhoods in Nea Ionia Magnesias

Nea Ionia proposes four different neighbourhoods for the URBAMECO Fast Track:

- the Xirokampos neighbourhood,
- the Aliveri neighbourhood,
- the Neo Delta neighbourhood
- the Prosfygika neighbourhood.

All areas show significant problems of deprivation but do also possess certain potentials that need to be developed in the integrated renewal policy. In all of these neighbourhoods one can find a lot of social housing together with private housing. An important characteristic is the cultural diversity. Various waves of immigrants have arrived over the last decades – also a large Roma community - and in recent years there was a strong wave of immigration from the Balkan states. The selected neighbourhoods are close to each other and should therefore influence each other in their development.

### ► **Problems and topics to be addressed by the Local Action Plan in Nea Ionia Magnesias**

In general, gaining more cooperation within these neighbourhoods is a major concern. More especially, cooperation with the municipal housing society needs to be improved. In addition, it is urgent to activate more private capital for the regeneration processes.

**In Xirokampos**, the municipality wants to address the following problems: high unemployment rates; low level of specialisation; high rate of delinquency; lack of free spaces; insufficient identity of the area; low rate of participation of inhabitants in collective activities and defiance towards public policies.

**In Aliveri**, the problems to be tackled include: the high rate of illiteracy ; occupation predominantly in one or two vocational categories characterised by unregistered jobs; the low participation of inhabitants in collective activities and their lack of confidence in public policies; environmental problems; delinquency and insufficient police presence; and the fact of being more or less a ghetto with a high concentration of Roma population.

**In Neo Delta**, the problems to be addressed are: the division of the area by the railway line; the exposure to the old factories' installations; the insufficient identity of the area; again the low participation of residents in the implementation of actions.

**In Prosfygika**, the municipality intends to deal with: abandoned houses; a lack of open space and parking areas; an increased number of immigrants with a loose relationship to the area; the existence of an army camp; and the question of participation in planning processes.

### ► **Desired outputs of the Local Action Plan as defined by Nea Ionia Magnesias**

One of the desired outputs is to activate the population for an active participation in the design and later implementation of the Local Action Plans as well as in the development of solutions in the field of the crime prevention in the different neighbourhoods.

Another output can be the regeneration of the residential web and the improvement of the vocational skills. It is furthermore important as another expected output is the development of a favourable climate for the creation of enterprises. The municipality of Nea Ionia wants to establish a new way of communication and cooperation between all relevant stakeholders which is missing completely at the moment.

## › 2.9 THE CITY OF WROCLAW, POLAND

### › The Fast Track neighbourhoods in Wroclaw

The target area for the URBAMECO-initiative is a deprived area located between the inner city's historic market place and the second largest railway station in Wroclaw. The main street linking the city centre with the station building is very unattractive. The context for this project is the EURO 2012 Football Championship when many tourists and football fans are expected, who should then use this newly-created attractive link from the station to the touristic highlights in the city centre.

### › Problems and topics to be addressed by the Local Action Plan in Wroclaw

Wroclaw would like to act on three different levels of interactions:

- › In economic terms, the aim is to support entrepreneurial growth in new areas in which it is currently highly incidental or non-existent. With the planned actions, functionality and quality of public space should equally be improved.
- › In environmental terms, the aim is to renovate buildings and infrastructure which includes the creation of an area with optimum spatial arrangement and appearance.
- › In social terms, the aim is to prevent social exclusion of inhabitants, change the neighbourhood's image and improve its safety.

### › Desired outputs of the Local Action Plan as defined by Wroclaw

The Market Research that is intended to be undertaken in the targeted areas might be a good start for the development of a wider development strategy for the area in which tourism will certainly play an important role. The main goal of this area's comprehensive revitalisation is a sustainable regeneration of the area, its functional integration into the city.

## › 2.10 THE CITY OF PILA, POLAND<sup>6</sup>

### › The Fast Track neighbourhoods in Pila

Pila will contribute to the URBAMECO Fast Track with a variety of development projects and sites, all related to the topic of conversion and reactivation of redundant sites and areas (especially former military areas). The focus of the city's interest is the planned Sports Shooting Centre, but to this project will be added other reactivation projects for which Pila seeks further input and advice and can offer solid experiences (The Military airport; The new University Campus; The Multifunctional Complex; Military Training Ground; The Sports Shooting Centre).

### › Problems and topics to be addressed by the Local Action Plan in Pila

The problems that are supposed to be addressed by the Local Action Plan deal with the identification of investment types, cost evaluation and studies on particular parts of the above mentioned areas.

<sup>6</sup>The city of Pila has left the project at the end of the Development phase and will not take part to the Implementation phase. The city of Tatabania, Hungary, will join the project but could not be included in the baseline study completed by the expert.

### › Desired outputs of the Local Action Plan as defined by Pila

Pila expects different outputs and impacts with regard to its post-military areas. One focus will be on the revitalisation project “Sport Shooting Centre”. The most important expected outputs for all of the post-military areas are:

- › Reuse of these areas for local, sub-regional and regional functions.
- › Creation of new jobs.
- › Creation of new social functions: business, services, education, tourism, recreation, culture.
- › Protection of the natural environment.
- › Development of new housing.
- › Improvement of the quality of life for and with the local community.
- › Improvement of the city image.

## 3. What's next?

### The URBAMECO work programme

#### › 3.1 MAIN CHALLENGES IN THE MEMBER CITIES AND KEY TOPICS FOR EXCHANGE AND CO-PRODUCTION

The work implemented during the Development phase led to a very precise identification and definition of the main challenges to be dealt with through this Fast Track Network:

- › Development of Integrated Neighbourhood Development Plans [INDPs]. The “old” member states are experienced with this task, but these experiences show clear deficits that need to be overcome in order to use public funding efficiently and achieve sustainable results. For the new member states, the development of such INDPs is a fairly new task for which intense support, coaching and input are required.
- › Once the development of an INDP has been achieved, there is a clear need –especially in the new member states– to break such long-term integrated plans down into a detailed and reliable time and activity planning. This is not only a vital pre-condition for a successful organisation of the plan’s implementation, but also for the definition of criteria and “milestones” for an ongoing monitoring of implementation processes.
- › The same deficit of experiences and know-how refers to the detailed financial planning for the implementation. Relevant in order to insert the necessary resources in time into the municipalities’ budgets and political decision-making processes. And equally relevant for planning acquisition activities and strategies for additional resources from the public and private sectors.
- › Closely linked to these challenges and learning needs is the issue of the development of comprehensive local partnerships. Not only public-private partnerships but also “public-public partnership”: how to make the various levels as well as departments of the political and administrative system cooperate, establish integrated actions and maintain such commitment and strategic cooperation over time.

- A special aspect of this “partnership-challenge” is the active and lasting involvement of local communities. Very often there is no tradition of active residents participation – especially in the new member states – and there are always challenges with regard to the participation of specific target groups [e.g. ethnic minorities, Roma population, young people etc.].
- An additional problem that relates mainly to the cities from the new member states is the deficit of information and data about ownership structure, conditions of housing and also social key features of local communities.

In addition to these topics which are relevant to all network partners, an additional range of topics appear to be crucial for some of the partners, which will be dealt with in a more tailored-type of exchange activities (e.g. the integration of Roma-population in [the development of] a neighbourhood).

### ➤ 3.2 INNOVATIVE ASPECTS AND EXPECTED ADDED-VALUE

With the planned focus and objectives of the URBAMECO Fast Track Network and the activities envisaged in the Work Plan, innovation and added value will be achieved on different levels.

**For the target areas** in the participating cities and regions, this should be:

- Each of the areas will be provided with targeted research results, dealing for the first time in a systematic approach with the question on how growth opportunities in the wider city and region can be used to locate additional economic activities in these areas – leading to a wider mix of jobs and qualification levels, bringing additional income and spending power to these areas and contributing to a better integration of these areas into the surrounding cities and regions.
- With the Local Support Groups established in each target area, they will be provided with a lasting comprehensive Local Partnership that should continue to exist after the end of this network and act as an engine for further neighbourhood development.
- With the Local Action Plans to be developed for each of the areas, they will be provided with a clear planning and roadmap for the process of regeneration and development.
- The strong community development element of the work will help to activate and motivate the local community to become an active partner and co-producer in the development of sustainable regeneration and development strategies.

**For European policy making and practice**, the added value of this pilot operation should be:

- A practical contribution to the need to combine the objectives of competitiveness and cohesion in European cities – developed in a targeted effort by a partnership of cities and regions representing old and new member states involving the Managing Authorities as responsible organisations for the implementation of the Regional Operational Programmes.



- ▶ 10 experimental Good Practices in combining “top-down”- market research for economic growth opportunities in cities and regions with a “bottom-up”-neighbourhood approach to implement such growth opportunities in deprived neighbourhoods.
- ▶ 10 experimental Good Practices for Integrated Neighbourhood Development Plans of a “new generation” – not regarding deprived neighbourhoods as “islands of social welfare recipients and deprived people only” – but as potential for city-wide and regional growth and competitiveness.
- ▶ Based on these activities and their professional documentation, excellent potential of experiences for recommendations with regard to further action on local, regional, national and European level at the end of this network’s implementation – to be disseminated in professional print media as well as a European-wide Final Conference.

### ▶ 3.3 STEPS TO REALISE A MODEL FOR A NEW GENERATION OF STRATEGIES

In order to achieve the innovation and objective defined above, the following model and phases will be implemented:

#### *Phase I*

*Phase 1a: Market Research [or targeted analysis of existing research] with the following key questions to be clarified:*

- ▶ Which sectors and potentials of growth do exist in the overall city and its surrounding region for the forthcoming years that can be used as a starting point for development, investment, job creation and raised competitiveness?
- ▶ What kind of potential for new economic activities and employment do they offer in detail and how can such potential be realised?
- ▶ Which of these potentials can be realised in the deprived target areas of the URBAMECO Fast Track Network in order to functionally integrate them into the surrounding city and region and its growth and make them contribute to the overall competitiveness of the city and its region?

*Phase 1b: Neighbourhood Future Workshops [running in parallel] with the following issues to be addressed:*

- ▶ What are the development potentials seen from within the neighbourhood – which endogenous potentials in terms of skills as well as cooperation and support potentials can be activated and used for the later Local Action Plan?
- ▶ Which of the externally identified potentials and opportunities for growth could be realised in the particular neighbourhood – based on its physical potentials [available land, traffic situation etc.] but also the willingness and readiness of the local community to cope with and support such development?

*Phase II: Matching- Dialogue and Decision:*

- › Selection of potentials of growth to use as starting point for development of a particular area
- › Organise political support for this choice in the city and the region.

*Phase III: Local Action Plan*

- › Development of an Integrated Neighbourhood/District
- › Development Plan to plan the realisation of these potentials of growth over the next years – as a central element of an integrated partnership-based development strategy for the area.

*Phase IV: Getting ready for implementation*

- › Definition of detailed implementation arrangements
- › Organisation of necessary political decisions
- › Search for/organisation of partners for successful implementation.
- › Identification of resources and development of acquisition strategies for necessary funding.

## › 3.4 TIME SCHEDULE FOR THE REALISATION OF THE URBAMECO OBJECTIVES

### **Months 1– 3: Groundwork Phase**

- › Get Local Support Groups confirmed and operational [Mission Statement for each of them];
- › All necessary preparation for the Implementation Phase I with different needs and tasks in each city, based on advice provided by the Coordinating Expert;
- › Development of detailed planning for the Market Research;
- › Planning of tailor-made local exchange programme.

### **Months 4 – 8: Implementation Phase I**

- › Implementation of targeted market research – supported by an initial international training seminar and ongoing coaching by international experts during the implementation.
- › Implementation of “Future Workshops” in the target areas as an ongoing process for 6 months, to be continued as neighbourhood-based participation and co-production platforms.

### **Months 9-10: Consultation and Decision-Making Phase**

- › Achieve wide-spread support and political decisions for the objectives and contents of the Local Action Plan to be developed.

## **Months 11 – 14: Implementation Phase II**

- › Development of Local Action Plans in all URBAMECO target areas.

## **Months 14 – 18: Concluding Phase**

- › Feedback to Local Action Plans as a peer review exercise jointly done by all partners;
- › Strategic guidance for next steps to each partner (peer review exercise);
- › Guidance towards financial options and resources (seminar with external inputs);
- › Development of an Exit/Transfer Strategy for the network;
- › Dissemination through the internet presentation, print media, regional conferences and Final Conference.

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