

URBAN: Restoring hope in deprived neighbourhoods

Four years on from their initial launch in 1994, programmes funded under the URBAN Community Initiative are beginning to show significant results. Those programme actions that have had time to develop are now procuring visible improvements in the quality of life and habitat in the target areas. These promising achievements clearly show the value of the integrated approach proposed by URBAN to tackle the high concentration of social, environmental and economic problems increasingly present in urban agglomerations.

Poor living conditions aggravate individual problems and distress. In turn, social malaise and the lack of economic opportunity make the individual hostile to his/her environment. This vicious circle is today the cause of growing conflicts and imbalances, particularly evident in the areas where the problems are most acute.

The novelty of the approach proposed by URBAN is that it tries to break this vicious circle by re-valourising the individual through his/her habitat and not in spite of it. URBAN targets neighbourhoods in extreme deprivation. It addresses the problems of isolation, poverty and exclusion of their inhabitants through interventions that improve the ensemble of their physical and social entourage. Thus the neighbourhood becomes the milieu that sets the conditions for increasing individual prosperity.

URBAN's integrated approach takes account of all dimensions of urban life. It thus applies a package of projects that combine the rehabilitation of obsolete infrastructure with economic and labour market actions. These are complemented by measures to combat the social exclusion inherent in run-down neighbourhoods, and measures to upgrade the quality of the environment.

Part of the success of URBAN is its explicit commitment in embracing local citizens in the development and implementation of the programmes. Thus the citizens affected by the interventions are participating in the decision making process. The problems of urban deprivation are solved at grass root level.

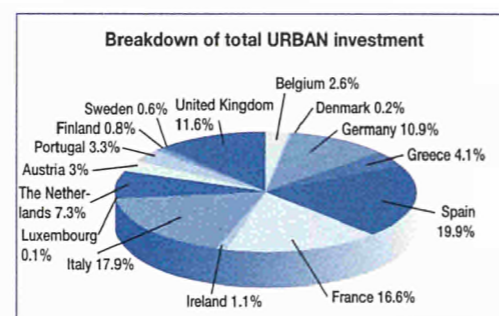
This brochure describes the main features of the URBAN Community Initiative, its target areas and population.

info regio

Outlook

The URBAN programme has helped to raise awareness about the importance of urban issues in regional development. In particular, the experience of the programme to date consolidates the apprehension that Community interventions in European cities should be integrated and based on local partnerships that ensure the involvement of all stakeholders. As a result, Community policies have been increasingly and more systematically reviewed from an urban perspective.

This new approach has informed recent developments in the formulation of EU policies for the next programming period 2000-2006, by putting issues related to sustainable urban development high on the Community priorities. It has been in particular embedded in the European Commission's Communication on "Sustainable Urban Development in the European Union: A Framework for Action", adopted on 28 October 1998.



Further Information

For further information on the URBAN Community Initiative, please contact:
Mr. Marcello Roma, Deputy Head of Unit
Directorate-General for Regional Policy and Cohesion (DG XVI)
Rue de la Loi 200 (CSM2 - 2/122)
B-1049 Brussels
Belgium
Tel.: +32 2 295 82 56
Fax: +32 2 296 32 73
or
consult the URBAN Initiative website:
<<http://info regio.ccc.eu.int/urban/initiative/index.htm>>

The Experience to Date

Many programmes have supported new economic activities and stimulated growth within already existing activities. Specific projects develop advice services and technical facilities for small and medium sized enterprises. Others aim to improve communication infrastructures, networking and create an attractive environment for private investors.

Programmes tackle the problem of unemployment in urban areas, either through the provision of training and related measures, or through employment subsidy schemes, particularly for young and long-term unemployed.

Specific projects target some of the most disadvantaged groups in the community, such as drug-users and ethnic minority groups. Specialist services are provided at a grass-roots level. They include counselling, personalised advice and follow-up, language training, access to information, or support in the search of employment and housing.

All programme strategies are embedded in a long-term vision for sustainable development and an efficient use of resources. Specific projects aim to make the city a "greener" and friendlier place. The creation of parks and public spaces, traffic improvements, parking, pedestrian facilities, and security measures are examples of actions undertaken to improve the quality of urban life.

Many of the programmes are involved in exchange of experience networks, helping to disseminate lessons learnt from schemes that have proved successful. For example, the programmes in Germany have set up a "network", holding seminars and exchange visits, to benefit from each others' experience. International events have also been organised to increase exchange of know-how between EU cities: most recently the conference on "Public measures for the reconstruction of the physical environment" in June 1998 in Badajoz, Spain, and the conference on "Innovative initiatives for urban development" in October 1998 in Vienna.

Cities lying within Objective 1 areas were given priority for funding, in view of the particularly acute problems faced by these regions. 57% of programmes are located in Objective 1 areas and a further 27% are located in Objective 2 areas, presenting an opportunity for enhancing social cohesion in cities within these disadvantaged regions.



European Commission
Directorate-General for Regional Policy and Cohesion (DG XVI) CX-18-98-380-EN-C

Editor: J.-P. Berg, EC DG XVI/F.2. This publication does not necessarily express the official views of the Commission.
For further information, please contact: Mr L. Nigri. Fax: +32 2 296 60 03.
Address of DG XVI on the Internet: <<http://info regio.ccc.eu.int>>
Printed on recycled paper.

Context

The Community Initiatives are the special financial instruments of Structural Funds which the Commission proposes to Member States on its own initiative, to help solve problems having a particular impact at European level.

Community Initiatives are often used to consolidate the experiences and innovative approaches pioneered by Pilot Projects. The success stories from these innovative measures have helped to set the agenda of the Community Initiatives.

Results and methods from successful Initiatives are often transferred to the "mainstream" programmes. Both these programmes and Pilot Projects are also co-financed Structural Funds.

The URBAN Community Initiative has been a particularly successful example of this process. URBAN itself is a consolidation of the experience gained through the Urban Pilot Projects (UPPs). Similarly, due in part to the experience of the URBAN Initiative, there is a special focus on urban development in the proposed Structural Funds for the period 2000-2006.

Funding

The URBAN Community Initiative funds programmes in a total of 118 urban areas. Eighty-five programmes were launched in June 1994, and a further 33 programmes were launched in a "second wave" in 1996.

URBAN is co-financed by two of the European Community's Structural Funds: the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF). The total EC contribution amounts to approximately ECU 891 million at 1996 prices, of which, around 82% is provided by the ERDF and 18% by the ESF. The estimated total eligible investment for URBAN is ECU 1.8 billion. Other funding sources include national, regional and local authorities, as well as the private sector and social organisations.

URBAN Programmes

Belgium
Antwerp
Brussels
Charleroi
Mons-La Louvière

Denmark
Ålborg

Germany
Berlin
Brandenburg
Bremen
Chemnitz
Duisburg-Marxloh
Erfurt-Ost
Halle
Kiel
Magdeburg-Cracau
Rostock
Saarbrücken
Zwickau

Greece
Ermoupolis
Keratsini
Komotini
Patras
Peristeri
Thessaloniki
Volos
Xanthi

Spain
Albacete
Avilés
Badajoz
Badalona
Baracaldo
Cadiz
Cartagena
Castellón
Córdoba
La Coruña
Huelva
Langreo
León
Madrid
Malaga
Murcia
Palma de Mallorca
Pontevedra
Sabadell
Salamanca
Santa Coloma de Grameret
Santander
Sevilla
Telde
Toledo
Valencia
Valladolid
Vigo
Zaragoza

France
Amiens
Aulnay-sous-Bois
Bastia
Chalon-sur-Saône
Clichy-Montfermeil
Les Mureaux
Lyon
Mantes-la-Jolie
Marseille
Mulhouse
Roubaix-Tourcoing
Saint-Etienne
Valenciennes

The Target Population

Each of the 118 programmes funded under the URBAN Initiative has been drawn up in its own local context and reflects the specific problems characteristic of the neighbourhood.

URBAN targets approximately 3.2 million people. On average each programme targets around 27,000 people. Populations range considerably: from 8,000 people in Bari (Italy) to a population of 130,000 in Vienna.

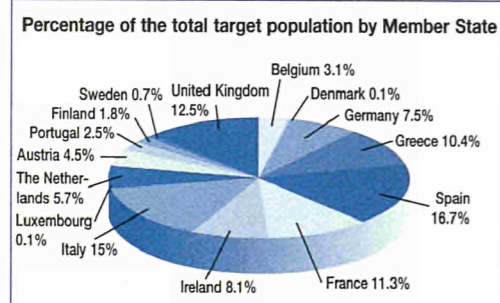
Ninety per cent of the programmes are located in cities with a population of more than 100,000. The other 10% are accounted for by cities in countries such as Greece where, although there are few urban areas over this size, they nonetheless demonstrate similar problems of urban decline and social malaise.

People living in URBAN areas suffer from high unemployment, poor housing conditions, a run-down urban fabric, and a lack of social amenities. On average, unemployment is around 22% in the target areas, but ranges considerably, from 11% in Vienna to 60% in Valencia.

URBAN places considerable emphasis on local participation at the project level. Local citizens are involved in the design and implementation of specific projects. This creates confidence in the scheme and builds consensus.

The Target Areas

The clear targeting of a well-defined area is the most efficient means of tackling urban deprivation. This spatially focused approach



maximises the impact of the interventions and reinforces the mutual benefits of the projects. The overall effects of each programme thus become more visible.

The problem areas are not treated as isolated units. By improving accessibility, enhancing communication, and attracting visitors and private investment, programmes explicitly aim to integrate each target neighbourhood into the rest of the city life. The ultimate aim is to establish a local development dynamic that will enable the city to organically assimilate the "problem" area and to further growth.

Each programme covers around 5.8 km² – mainly one single neighbourhood or administrative district. In a small number of cases (about 10% of the programmes), a group of different areas are targeted within one programme.

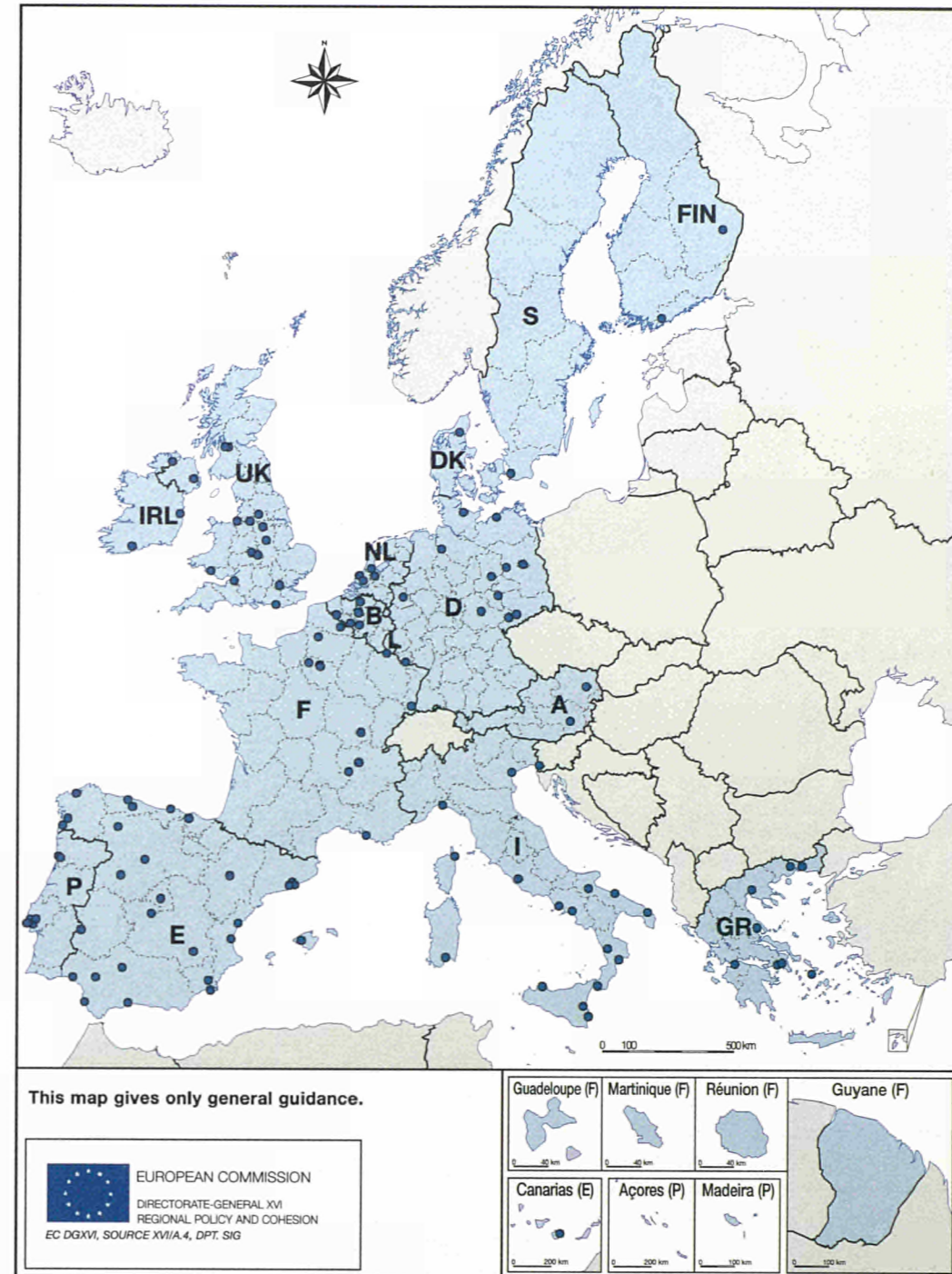
An analysis of the target areas according to their locational characteristics shows that:

- The majority of programmes (43%) intervene in **inner-city areas**: neighbourhoods within the core of the urban district, but which are excluded from mainstream city life.
- Around one fifth of programmes address the problems of **historic city centres**: those central areas with heritage and cultural value, but which have been abandoned and left to decline.
- Over a third of programmes tackle urban decline in **peripheral areas**: districts at the periphery of urban agglomerations, often difficult to access, on large social housing estates or abandoned industrial sites.

Programmes in inner-city areas are most common in France, the United Kingdom and Spain, covering large districts with above average population sizes, while those in historic centres are most common in Italy and Spain, and generally target a small population. Programmes targeting peripheral areas are most common in Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

In terms of the type of economic and social activity in the area targeted, interventions under URBAN fall predominantly (over 60% of the programmes) into areas that are characterised by a mix of residential and commercial functions. Just over a quarter of programmes fall into areas that can be classified as mainly residential, which are most common in France and the United Kingdom. A small proportion (12%) address problems in abandoned industrial areas, mainly in countries such as Belgium, Denmark, Germany and Spain.

The URBAN cities



URBAN Programmes

Ireland
Cork
Dublin

Italy
Bari
Cagliari
Catania
Catanzaro
Cosenza
Foggia
Genova
Lecce
Napoli
Palermo
Reggio Calabria
Rome
Salerno
Siracusa
Trieste
Venezia

Luxembourg
Dudelange-Differdange

The Netherlands
Amsterdam
The Hague
Rotterdam
Utrecht

Austria
Graz
Vienna

Portugal
Amadora
Gondomar
Lisbon
Loures
Oeiras
Porto

Finland
Helsinki-Vantaa
Joensuu

Sweden
Malmö

United Kingdom

Belfast
Birmingham
Brighton
Bristol
Coventry
Glasgow North
Leeds
Londonderry
London (Hackney Tower)
London (Park Royal)
Manchester
Merseyside-Leasowe
Merseyside-Liverpool
Merseyside-Netherton
Merseyside-North Huyton
Nottingham
Paisley
Sheffield
Swansea