SECTION 2 - THEMATIC COVERAGE

2.1. THE URBACT SEVEN THEMES

2.2. THEMES FOR FAST TRACK LABELING

2.1. THE URBACT SEVEN THEMES

The URBACT II Programme defines seven themes as a possible focus for thematic networks and working groups. These are included in one of the two Priority Axes of the Programme as follows:

Priority Axe 1 – Cities, Engines of Growth and Jobs	1.1. Promoting Entrepreneurship
	1.2. Improving Innovation and Knowledge Economy
	1.3. Employment and Human Capital
Priority Axe 2 – Attractive and Cohesive Cities	2.1. Integrated development of deprived areas and areas at risk of deprivation
	2.2. Inclusion
	2.3. Environmental issues
	2.4. Governance and Urban Planning

Candidates are invited to define the focus of their projects in terms of *one* of these themes. This theme should be seen as the dominant entry point to the problems or challenges identified by the partners of the project and should structure the approach taken. However, as the central characteristic of URBACT is precisely the "integrated approach" it is clear that there are strong linkages between all the seven themes and both axes. As a result, the dominant theme chosen by candidates should provide the "colour and shape" of the project while allowing the partners to explore the connections with other themes.

The table above shows the way in which the themes have been classified into the two priority axes. At the same time an indicative list of interesting topics in each theme has been provided in the Operational Programme and Technical Working Document (See TWD, Fact sheet 1). The European Commission has also stated its interest in supporting networks in a limited number of specific themes with a fast track label[1] (See TWD, Fact sheet 2b and below section 2.2.).

In order to help candidates organise their proposals in a more coherent way, we now provide a series of promising approaches derived from the experience of URBACT 1 and other programmes. These approaches should been seen as "pistes" or orientations but should in no way limit the creativity of candidates in proposing other solutions.

However, candidates should also bear in mind that the assessment of projects will be based on the relevance of the theme and the potential

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[1] 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 integration; reusing brownfield and waste disposal sites.

added-value of the approach taken by the project at both European and local level. So it is essential that, in order to set up a project in URBACT II, whether a network or a working group, Lead partners take stock of the main available results and knowledge from existing networks and 2000-2006 Operational Programmes.

Theme 1.1. Promoting Entrepreneurship

Under URBACT I, several networks have focussed on local economic development and the promotion of entrepreneurship and job creation as a major pillar of social inclusion. A "Cross-Cutting Working Group" on Local Economic Development has been created at programme level, which analyses the projects carried out by ten city networks and over 100 cities. Two publications and an online thematic dossier have been produced[2]. URBACT I also prepared a report on local economic development for the German Presidency of the EU in 2007[3]. Many other European and National Programmes have also produced extremely valuable results.

All this material helps to provide a base line for future experimentation by cities. It throws up three promising lines of approach, which, as mentioned previously, should not be treated as exhaustive or mutually exclusive.

1.1.1. The development of clusters of economic activity around new urban opportunities/ challenges

Cities have shown that, under the right conditions, they can use their powers to help local firms escape from crowded, low margin market segments. On the one hand these policies involve exploring a range of tools like public sector purchasing and the use of both the social economy and public-private partnerships to lever in new resources and funding. On the other hand, they involve the development of clusters of economic activity around new urban opportunities such as culture, care and the environment. The following text provides some examples of these promising strategies.

- Strategies aiming at creating viable and sustainable markets in policy fields characterized by a strong public intervention (care, social services, the environment, culture and cultural heritage, etc.)
- Development of the social economy in deprived areas, exploring a range of tools like public sector purchasing, public-private partnerships, etc. to lever in new resources and funding.

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[2] See www.urbact.eu
[3] See http://www.bmvbs.de/-,2712.982779/Strengthening-the-local-econom.html

- Strategies aiming at ensuring that the management of economic activities is consistent with environmental and social concerns (e.g. airports, polluting industries, land-use planning)
- Development of clusters of economic activity through partnerships with universities and local businesses ("Triple Helix Catalyst")
- Strategies aiming at linking deprived areas to the rest of the urban economy
- Strategies addressing growing trends towards industrial relocation (de-industrialisation trends, growing weight of service-related activities in urban economies, etc.)

1.1.2. Using municipal powers and activities to improve the culture and conditions for entrepreneurship

This can involve the following promising strategies:
- Finding ways to overcome the administrative, fiscal and legal barriers which make it harder for people to make the transition to entrepreneurship (particularly from *the informal economy* but also from, unemployment, inactivity, from employment or from education)
- Measures to adapt the educational system, at all levels, to economic realities.
- Building the capacity of deprived communities while simultaneously building bridges to the growing parts of the economy.
- Creatively tapping some of the "locational" advantages of deprived urban neighbourhoods (low real estate prices, the availability of labour, access to suppliers and markets, attractive tax systems, etc).

1.1.3. Adapting financial and non-financial business support tools to the reality of different urban contexts

Financial and non-financial business support has been dealt with extensively in the past. So, for example, it would be more interesting to analyse the following aspects:
- Integration of such support schemes into broader strategies which build bridges between the weaker and stronger parts of urban economies
- Outreach measures and capacity building schemes to increase efficiency of local policies/ actions for particular groups like ethnic minorities and young people

Theme 1.2. Improving innovation and the knowledge economy

Cities are in a position to strengthen their role in promoting innovation and the knowledge economy with the development of innovative policies and new forms of governance that facilitate the emergence and exchange of ideas, individual and collective creativity, new forms of relationships with economic, social, cultural stakeholders.

During URBACT I, the Strike and ISN projects developed many insights into the knowledge economy. We can distinguish at least two promising approaches.

1.2.1. Strengthening existing poles of excellence through partnerships and cooperation.

Cities concentrate major research centres, prestigious universities, a highly skilled workforce, major business headquarters, etc. Thus they may play a major role in setting the conditions so as to foster the development of clusters and synergies among actors involved in knowledge-based activities and to attract new talents.

To improve their position within an increasingly global economy they can :

- Build alliances between existing urban poles of excellence with the aim of achieving critical mass and improving the synergy between them.
- Promote clusters and poles of excellence around new urban opportunities such as the environment, culture, services to the population and so on.
- Create and strengthen partnerships between public authorities (local, regional, national, EU level), universities/ research centres and the corporate world so as to set the conditions for innovation and knowledge to expand into economic activities
- Develop clusters and networks for the transfer of technological innovation to applied processes/ services/ products so as to foster local economic development.
- Promote applied research and technology which help traditional industries adjust to change.

1.2.2. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for the whole city which bridge the digital divide.

In many European cities, despite the presence and activities of poles of excellence, despite strongly dynamic sectors, areas of exclusion remain and even expand, leading to tensions that hamper urban development. Various divides develop: social divide, territorial divide,

digital divide, etc. In order to bridge these divides and to exploit the potential of all their citizens in the knowledge economy, cities can:

- Develop strategic policies for the whole city level with regard to ICT.
- Attract knowledge-based actors to deprived urban areas.
- Supporting in a more innovative way local businesses and people in adapting to the knowledge economy
- Develop new ICT and employment policies (retraining workers in cities, setting up programmes for ongoing training of companies)
- Provide access to ICT for all citizens and in particular for disadvantaged groups suffering from the effects of the digital divide
- Play an exemplary role in developing ICT within their own organisations and in other public services and infrastructure.
- Using knowledge based activities to promote community development and increase local skills

Theme 1.3. Employment and Human Capital

European cities started to experiment with local employment development over thirty years ago. Since then the European Commission has funded an impressive array of programmes and initiatives designed to test and spread good practice on local employment polices in both urban and rural areas. There is now a considerable body of knowledge or "acquis" as to what works and what does not work in local employment policies, which is being disseminated by various EU networks and projects. So it is essential that any new URBACT network adds value to existing knowledge.

During URBACT I, the Regenerando Network chose employment as its central theme. The UDIEX-ALEP network chose long term unemployment and discrimination in the labour market as one of its eight priority subjects. Other networks like Phyre and Young People from Inclusion to Inclusion have dealt with certain aspects of city employment policies. As a result towards the end of URBACT I, ten of these city networks formed a Cross Cutting Working Group (CTWG) on local economic development with a strong concern for employment ¡ssues.

Through activities such as these, cities have shown that they are essential partners in the application of the main the priorities of the European Employment Strategy. In particular, they have pointed to the following four promising approaches:

1.3.1 Taking a strategic approach to activation based on the real knowledge of the needs of local people and firms

In some cities the number of people of working age that are officially "inactive" or outside the labour market is more than five times the numbers unemployed and is one most serious causes of poverty and social unrest. In purely economic terms this is also a terrible waste of any city's most precious asset – its people. Cities can explore strategies which:

- Use the cities proximity and leverage with local actors to better iron out some of the main barriers to employment for disadvantaged neighbourhoods and groups in a strategic, integrated way
- Provide more fluid training and support pathways into the labour market with a focus on specific target groups
- Promote a more strategic and proactive approach to the needs of local firms in terms of skills and employment.
- Explore a range of new strategies for improving the transition from the informal to the formal economy.

1.3.2. Improving human capital

In the field of human capital development, the cities involved in URBACT have explored a series of approaches to ensure that, throughout their lifetimes, residents acquire the right skills for an increasingly globalised economy. This involves keeping looking for innovative solutions especially along the following lines :

- Comprehensive, life long strategies, which recognise formal and non-formal skills and improve quality
- "Second chance" strategies for those missed by the formal education system
- Approaches which explore scaleable solutions to fight against school dropouts
- The application of ICT to improve access to educational resources
- Increasing the offer of high quality training so as to improve access to new growth areas for all citizens

1.3.3 Improving the adaptability of the workforce

Anticipating change, both on the side of firms and on the side of the workforce, and strengthening the linkages between areas of growth and deprived neighbourhoods are major challenges. The following approaches should be explored :

- News systems for anticipating change in the structure of local economies and in the corresponding needs for specific skills
- Targeted support to areas and groups at risk of exclusion to adapt to change and gain access to job in the growing parts of

the urban economy
- Strengthened partnerships with local schools, training establishments and employers
- Partnerships with local employers so as to be able to know better their needs and respond to them

1.3.4. Strategies for creating new jobs in areas of need

Cities have demonstrated that they can play a major role in turning urban functions in areas such as culture, social services, and regeneration into new jobs which reduce the segmentation and polarisation of the labour market. New approaches include:
- Going beyond the traditional role of employment departments and better considering the potential employment impact cities activities as a purchaser, investor, employer and trend-setter in the local economy.
- Mobilising all the cities opportunities and services to create markets and employment (culture, the environment, social services and the social economy…)
- Applying a series of entrepreneurial tools for ensuring the sustainability of new jobs

Theme 2.1. Integrated development of deprived areas & areas at risk

In recent years, it has become more and more obvious that the development and implementation of successful programmes like the URBAN Community Initiative to regenerate deprived urban neighbourhoods requires an integrated approach which combines physical, social and economic concerns and involves numerous actors from the private as well as from the public sector (See the Commission's communication: Cohesion Policy and the Cities – COM(2006)). The design of such integrated strategies, the creation of appropriate partnerships and the active participation of citizens are challenges that have occupied URBACT networks such as REGENERA and MEDINT.

Other projects such as PHYRE, Hous-Es or CHORUS have also addressed "physical urban regeneration", "housing area renewal" and "regeneration of urban areas with high levels of cultural heritage". Partners in networks such as Partners4Action (PPP) and UDIEX – ALEP (diversity, integration and inclusion) have made the link between their specialist fields of interest and the positioning within a more integrated approach.

The European Commission has indicated its interest in supporting thematic networks with Fast Track labels two topics within this field:

Achieving urban sustainable development; Re-using brownfield and waste disposal sites (See 2.2. below).

Integrated urban regeneration was also a cross-cutting theme of the URBACT programme and is closely related to questions of governance (theme 2.4.). Some of the promising lines of approach not only involve integration between different policy fields and departments but also the integration of the disadvantaged areas so that they benefit from and contribute to the rest of the city. New approaches include:

2.1.1. Experimentation of new methods for integrated urban renewal of specific types of deprived areas/ areas at risk

- Integrated strategies for the renewal of different types of deprived areas (city centre, brownfield, peripheral housing, etc) combining physical, social, economic, environmental, etc. dimensions in the view to promote sustainable growth and job creation (Lisbon agenda)
- The incorporation of such strategies into broader strategies which build bridges between the weaker and stronger parts of urban economies
- The development of new indicators for the identification and measurement of « areas at risk », and integrated strategies aiming to prevent decline of such areas
- Outreach measures and capacity building schemes to increase efficiency of local policies/ actions
- The creation and development of innovative long term development plans and urban planning instruments for all the different factors promoting sustainable growth and jobs, including monitoring and evaluation systems

2.1.2. The design and management of new partnerships for integrated urban development

- The development of tools and processes aiming at identifying and mobilising key partners for sustainable urban development within the weaker parts of the city, such as the private sector, the community and NGOs, as well as local, regional and national government
- The development of partnerships, organisations and activities which build a bridge between areas at risk and the rest of the city.

2.1.3. Strengthening the efficiency of area based policies and tools[4]

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[4] Economic Opportunity Zones are designated areas in which the local authority delivers integrated packages of services aiming at fostering investments and entrepreneurship, ranging from subsidies for investors to public investments aiming at upgrading premises, to training schemes for specific groups and consulting/ coaching for local entrepreneurs.

- Identification of the conditions for the successful application of area or neighbourhood based tools like "Economic Opportunity Zones", "Zones Franches Urbaines", "Business Improvement Partnerships" which aim to improve some of the baseline conditions in disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods.

Theme 2.2. Inclusion

Inclusion[5] is perhaps the greatest challenge facing modern European Cities. The past thirty years have seen certain European cities coming close to crisis resulting from too-rapid economic restructuring, chronic unemployment and rapid population change. Urban unrest has pitched these cities into a tailspin where investors flee and the economy plummets. Urban authorities have reacted to the crisis by a wide range of initiatives focused on particular groups and also on regenerating the most disadvantaged areas. Nevertheless, social and spatial inequalities remain and sometimes keep increasing, so that new policy orientations need to be defined and implemented.

The inclusion theme was very rich in URBACT I. Projects analysed good practices in at least ten complex and closely sub-themes which are also prominent in the European Strategy for Social Inclusion.

During URBACT II, projects will be able to focus on any of the ten or on the relationship between them. But it will be essential for each city to clearly identify how the process of European learning proposed by their URBACT network will help to solve the specific challenges that they face. Below we provide examples of some of the promising avenues of future work.

One of the main concerns of URBACT networks has been the relationship between social and spatial exclusion within their cities. Some projects have dealt with this as a topic within itself, while others have concentrated on strategies to improve the situation of particular target groups – migrants and ethnic minorities, young people and children, women and so on. Inclusion among these groups depends first and foremost on access to work and to the benefits it brings particularly through salary or wages, social security, social status, and every day linkage to social networks. So the labour market has figured prominently in all these approaches. Population aging and demographic issues have also been a prominent concern.

The European Commission has indicated its interest in supporting thematic networks with Fast Track labels in three topics within this

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[5] In the URBACT II programme "inclusion" was referred to as social integration. This has been changed here because, in many countries the term social integration is primarily associated with ethnic minorities and migrants. We have also preferred to drop the adjective "social" to indicate that inclusion also has an economic and cultural aspect.

field: Making healthy communities; Managing migration and facilitating social integration; Integrating marginalised youth (See 2.2. below).

2.2.1. Strengthening measures against social and spatial exclusion

- Developing access to isolated urban areas
- Developing neighbourhood economies (special focus on SMEs) and entrepreneurship
- Integrated strategies for social inclusion combining actions related to changing perceptions, education and training, entrepreneurship and access to the labour market, culture, empowerment, etc. and linking deprived areas with more dynamic parts of the city, etc.
- Balancing communities by mixing tenures

2.2.2. Improving actions for Migrants and ethnic minorities

- Fostering integration and inclusion (access to information, the labour market, education, public services, etc.)
- The reception of migrants: developing pro-active approaches to integration
- Developing 'bridging' social capital (dealing with racism, challenging stereotypes, building bridges between communities, etc)
- Specific issues related to the Roma population

2.2.3. Innovative approaches for Young people and children

- Approaches that prevent school drop out
- Approaches that bridge the key transition to work
- Measures to reduce child poverty
- Measures to preventing crime

2.2.4. Innovative policies in favor of Gender equality

- Measures to reduce work and pay gap (access to the labour market, to higher professional levels, etc.)
- Measures to fight domestic violence and to challenge stereotypes.

2.2.5. Demographic challenges

- Innovative solutions to problems generated as a result of demographic change and especially the challenge of ageing population
- Managing "shrinking cities »

Another related approach taken by URBACT projects stems from the fact that social inclusion also depends heavily on certain aspects of the urban environment, the provision of public services in the city

and in its neighbourhoods, and on the ease with which the various groups that make up the population of the city can access these services. So these approaches tend to start from strategies to improve one or more of these areas – social services, health, security, housing or culture.

The most interesting approaches tend to be operating using one or more core principles which include: a *bottom-up approach* involving and empowering citizens and their associations and increased levels of user control as well as building up new structures and assets; i*nnovation in delivery and reform of locally delivered public services* to a more diverse population including through social enterprise solutions; *holistic approaches to urban renewal* and in particular the linking of large capital projects involving major investment to local communities to ensure that benefits reached disadvantaged people; *new ways of financing physical regeneration* so that the cost to the public treasury is reduced.

Below we provide further examples of some of the promising avenues of past and future work.

2.2.6. Improvement of social services

- Developing joined up services
- Focusing on specific target groups (women, young people, elderly) and especially on migrant population and ethnic minorities.

2.2.7. Health issues

Making healthy communities by:
- Reducing health inequalities
- Ensuring access to health care and providing continuity of care
- Developing partnerships between urban and health policy sectors to ensure dissemination of knowledge on healthy urban environment
- Developing exchanges between European, national, regional and local health programmes.

2.2.8. Increased security for citizens

- Integrated strategies for urban security building on partnerships with key stakeholders such as schools, social services, residents' organisations, etc.
- Community participation
- Prevention oriented policies aiming to fight against crime
- Measures to define, monitor and measure crime

2.2.9. Housing (inner city & peripheral areas)

- Participation in housing renewal and management

- New methods of financing housing improvement
- Mixing tenures and ensuring that new developments have economic opportunities within reach (i.e. not housing deserts)
- Approaches to affordability
- Tackling problems of housing supply and homelessness – both hidden homelessness and people living on the streets (including street children)

2.2.10. The Cultural Sector

- Using culture as a driving force for urban regeneration projects
- Using culture as a driving force to develop the local economy and to provide employment and business opportunities
- Developing cultural quarters that create a more inclusive economy whereby local minority ethnic groups and migrants play a leading role
- Stimulating cultural production and creativity as a driver of social inclusion (including target groups approaches, young people, ethnic minorities, etc.)

Theme 2.3. The Urban Environment

Urban areas play an important role in delivering the objectives of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy. The quality of life of a majority of European citizens is directly influenced by the state of the urban environment and cities are where many environmental problems emerge. At the same time, concentrating large numbers of people in one place opens up major opportunities for reducing the pressures on energy and land and for reducing the cost of waste treatment.

As a result, the 6th Environment Action Programme (6th EAP) called for the development of a Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment with the objective of '*contributing to a better quality of life through an integrated approach concentrating on urban areas*' and to contribute '*to a high level of quality of life and social well-being for citizens by providing an environment where the level of pollution does not give rise to harmful effects on human health and the environment and by encouraging sustainable urban development'.*

A relatively small number of URBACT I networks made the urban environment an important issue (HOUS-ES, CITUM, PHYRE) and this is, therefore, a field where there is considerable scope for innovation. *The European Commission has also indicated its interest in supporting thematic networks with a Fast Track label in three topics within this field: Developing sustainable and energy efficient housing stock; Re-using brownfield and waste disposal sites; Integrated policies on urban transport (See below 2.2.).*

It is possible to distinguish at least two potentially interesting approaches to the urban environment. The first tries to develop really integrated solutions to the major environmental challenges faced by cities – such as climate change and a reduction of the ecological footprint of cities. A second and closely related approach is to focus on more specific urban functions and responsibilities such as brownfield sites, housing, transport and flood prevention. Some of the fruitful avenues that cities have explored are presented below:

2.3.1. Achieving sustainable urban development

- Anticipating and managing the effects of climate change
- Moving to a low carbon economy
- Moving to a recycling society
- Integrating cultural and natural heritage in sustainable urban development policies, aiming at preserving and valorising elements of natural and cultural heritage while developing attractiveness, social cohesion, economic activity, etc
- Improving air quality
- Improving quality of water supply and treatment

2.3.2. Brownfield sites, derelict public spaces, and waste disposal sites (including landfills and historical mining waste disposal sites)

- Tools for the definition and monitoring of brownfield sites/ derelict public spaces/ waste disposal sites
- Strategies and tools for the rehabilitation of brownfield sites/ derelict public spaces/ waste disposal sites, and link to broader sustainable urban development strategies

2.3.3. Sustainable and energy-efficient housing stock

- Identification of technical and non-technical barriers and innovative solutions in favour of energy-efficient housing stock
- Improved information and training for users and service providers
- Integrated policies and action plans for the development of sustainable and energy-efficient housing stock
- Innovative policies aiming to develop affordable housing while limiting gentrification and ghettos

2.3.4. Integrated and sustainable urban transport and infrastructures

- Integrated collective transport in urban and suburban areas
- Mobility plans covering both freight and passengers over urban and suburban areas
- The coordination of mobility policy with land use planning

- The promotion of clean vehicles and alternative fuels.
- The promotion of energy efficient public infrastructure

2.3.5. Preventing and reducing floods

- Monitoring and prevention tools and policies

Theme 2.4. Governance and Urban Planning

The European Ministers responsible for Urban Development recently jointly underlined the need for "holistic strategies and coordinated action by all persons and institutions involved in the urban development process which reach beyond the boundaries of individual cities.

Every level of government - local, regional, national and European – has a responsibility for the future of our cities. To make this multi-level government really effective, we must improve the coordination of the sectoral policy areas and develop a new sense of responsibility for integrated urban development policy. We must also ensure that those working to deliver these policies at all levels acquire the generic and cross occupational skills and knowledge needed to develop cities as sustainable communities ".[6]

Governance is a transversal issue that concerned nearly all the networks in URBACT I and affects all the themes proposed for URBACT II. Nevertheless future candidates should pay particular attention to the work carried out in the past by the cities and networks involved in URBACT's Cross Cutting Working Group on the participation of citizen's in urban management as well as many of the results of the Cross Cutting Working Group on Integrated Urban Regeneration (theme 2.1.).

These initiatives offer many insights into the governance structures and approaches which can help cities deal with some of the major challenges related to globalisation, the knowledge economy, increasingly diverse societies, growing environmental threats and uneven spatial development (urban sprawl and inner city regeneration.

Broadly speaking it is possible to distinguish at least four promising fields for future action

2.4.1. Improving multi-level governance

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[6] The Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities, a document of the EU member states.

The key questions here concern methods and structures for improving coordination and communication - vertically between different layers of government and - horizontally between different sectoral departments and programmes and between the different territories that are constitutive of an urban or metropolitan area. Both issues are vital for improving the impact of the Structural Funds and other national government programmes in the next funding period. The issues to explore include:

- Integrated multi-level (vertical) governance schemes, adapting structures, procedures, working habits and skills to a permanent and positive interaction between local, regional, national, EU government levels
- Horizontal governance and integrated urban planning strategies which link the main town with the other local authorities in the metropolitan area, as well as metropolitan authorities with outlying rural local authorities.
- What kind of operational actors for development programmes? Private investors, public agencies, public-private bodies?

2.4.2. Partnerships and participation

Here the issues revolve around the structures and methods widening and deepening the participation of civil society, the private sector non-governmental stakeholders. Promising approaches include:

- Governance and participation processes/ tools addressing specific target groups (young people, women, the elderly, people from foreign origins, private sector representative etc.)
- Governance, participation and ICT tools
- Participatory budgets
- Developing specific skills, training schemes, capacity building schemes for local actors involved in urban planning (civil servants, residents, etc.)
- Governance and participation of stakeholders in the definition and implementation of a local integrated Strategy for Sustainable urban development
- Raising awareness among local actors on issues related to sustainable urban planning, the fight against climate change, etc., and developing related professional skills and knowledge

2.4.3. Dealing with urban growth and sprawl.

The pace of urban growth and land consumption is increasing rapidly in many European cities, leading to urban sprawl and to a chaotic growth of the urban peripheries and suburbs. This increases land prices and the cost and time taken by urban transport, cuts mobility, and threatens both the environment and traditional

activities of outlying areas. All of this can further marginalize deprived groups and areas both in the city centre and its periphery. Improved governance can help deal with these issues by, for example:

- Coordinating land use policies and Structural and Cohesion Fund investments between urban areas, rural areas, the region and the national level to manage urban sprawl
- Linking urban areas to rural surroundings
- Policentricity, urban planning and positioning of small and medium-size cities, rural towns, etc.
- Green belts strategies
- Coordinating the distribution of housing supply between inner city and peripheral areas

2.4.4. Reviving city-centres

The opposite side of the picture described above is that urban centres and certain neighbourhoods can get left behind even in the most fast growing cities

- Urban planning, strategies and tools for the renaissance of city centres (including PPPs, participation of key stakeholders, residents, etc.)
- Governance structures and procedures which provide neighbourhoods with more of a voice in the growth and development of the city

2.1. THEMES FOR FAST TRACK LABELLING

As defined by the Operational Programme, URBACT II shall be one of the two delivery mechanisms for the networking activities of the Regions For Economic Change initiative.

Among the Thematic Networks set up and implemented within the framework of URBACT II, the Commission will label a certain number as "Fast Track". A Thematic Network with the Fast Track Label shall be a tool to introduce best practice ideas in the mainstream through the Operational Programmes.

With the Fast Track label, the Commission will provide its support to a number of URBACT II thematic networks that are willing to contribute to the Regions For Change initiative by addressing issues relating to one of the seven themes presented below and by associating as much as possible, along with cities, the Managing Authorities of the corresponding Operational Programmes (See TWD, Fact Sheets 2a and 2b).

The priority themes to be addressed by Thematic Networks that wish to apply for the "Fast Track" label shall be determined by the European Commission building on those themes defined by the Communication on the Regions For Economic Change initiative (COM (2006) 675 on 8 November 2006) that touch upon urban issues. The list of themes under "Regions for Economic Change" (Commission Staff Working Paper SEC (2006) 1432) to be implemented in the framework of the URBACT II Programme concerns Priority Axe 2 only and is composed of the followings:

- Managing migration and facilitating social integration;
- Integrating marginalised youth;
- Making healthy communities;
- Integrated policies on urban transport;
- Developing sustainable and energy-efficient housing stock;
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- Achieving sustainable urban development;
- Re-using brownfield and waste disposal sites.

For each of these themes, the Commission has attempted to specify the areas in which it would be particularly interested in developing networks[7]. Candidates interested by the Fast Track label are invited to consider addressing issues in these areas under Priority Axe 2 (See TWD, Fact sheets 2a and 2b).

- **Managing migration and facilitating social integration (under URBACT theme 2.2.)**

Under the theme "Managing Migration, facilitating social integration", the Commission is particularly interested in the development of networks that include the following s issues:

- Actions to manage diversity in neighbourhoods, urban policies against ghettoisation and marginalisation.

- Enterprises development or self-employment for ethnic minorities.

- Actions to foster the inclusion of immigrants in the labour market, through job opportunities, vocational training or lifelong learning and with specific focus on women, new comers, early school leavers, disabled immigrants, Roma, victims of Human Trafficking, etc.

- Access to services, such as housing polices, education, health, counselling, childcare.

- Actions to increase the participation of immigrants and ethnic minorities in the European information society.

- Actions to support small immigrant organisation as important tools for the empowerment of immigrants in local communities.

- **Integrating marginalised youth (under URBACT theme 2.2.)**

The Commission is particularly interested in the development of one or several networks which include the following possible sub-themes. Such network(s) could focus on one of the sub-themes below or provide integrated approaches combining two or three:

- Social and civic participation of marginalised youth.

- Transition to active life of disadvantaged youth.

- Marginalised youth and urban security.

- **Making healthy communities (under URBACT theme 2.2.)**

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[7] Candidates are invited to refer to the Regions for Economic Change website, where a series of thematic fiches provides insight on each theme. In these fiches, the Commission also refers potential partners to existing projects and networks that may inspire them in developing networking projects.

Under the theme "Making healthy communities", the Commission is particularly interested in the development of networks that include the following issues:

- Health services (hospitals, health care facilities and equipment). This also includes the issues of patient safety and quality of health services.

- Health care workforce: education and training.

- Health information, knowledge systems and E-health. Specific focus can also be on Personal Health systems and telemedicine services for chronic disease management.

- Promotion of better life styles, including: nutrition and physical activity, Smoke free environment/ Tobacco, health and air pollution…

- Reducing health inequalities: immigrants and ageing population.

- **Integrated policies on urban transport (under URBACT theme 2.3.)**

Under the theme "Integrated policies on urban transport", the Commission is interested in any proposal to reduce air pollution and related health impact and would in particular like to look at four areas:

- Integrated collective transport in urban and sub-urban areas, including (suburban/regional) railway connections, Park & Ride facilities and passenger terminals.

- Sustainable urban mobility plans that cover urban and sub-urban areas, and if applicable wider metropolitan conurbations, looking at passenger and freight transport in an integrated way.

- Successful coordination of mobility policy with land use planning and construction in urban and sub-urban areas.

- The use of clean vehicles and alternative fuels in urban transport.

- **Developing sustainable and energy-efficient housing stock (under URBACT theme 2.3.)**

Under the theme "Developing sustainable and energy-efficient housing stock", the Commission is interested in any proposal that under this theme, would in particular like to look at three areas:

- Identification of technical and non-technical barriers and innovative solutions.

- Improvement of the information of the users (in particular house-owners, local authorities) and development of specialised

trainings.

- Elaboration of integrated action plans for sustainable and energy efficient housing stocks at local/regional level.

- **Achieving sustainable urban development (under URBACT theme 2.1.)**

Building upon the experience gathered under the URBAN Community Initiative and based on the Community Strategic Guidelines, under the theme "The territorial dimension of European cohesion policy", the Commission is interested in any proposals to achieve sustainable urban development but, under this theme, would in particular like to look at the following four areas:

- Physical, social and economic rehabilitation of urban areas and improving the attractiveness of distressed urban areas within integrated urban development plans.

- Improving the environmental quality and the energy efficiency of/ in urban areas.

- Including disadvantaged urban areas in local efforts to meet Lisbon targets.

- Good local and multi-level-governance and innovative working methods for integrated urban development.

- **Re-using brownfield and waste disposal sites (under URBACT theme 2.1. or 2.3.)**

In the light of joint European initiatives to enhance brownfield development and the re-use of waste disposal sites and based on the Community Strategic Guidelines, under the theme "The territorial dimension of European cohesion policy", the Commission is interested in any proposals to re-use brownfield and waste disposal sites but, under this theme, would in particular like to look at the following five areas:

- Sharing best practice on, and innovative approaches to, the physical rehabilitation of brownfield sites and improving the attractiveness of urban areas.

- Coordinating land-use policies and EU funding and avoiding the use of greenfield sites.

- Development of partnerships between relevant actors, including public participation, within the framework of integrated and coherent approaches to urban development (governance).

- Creation and development of long term development plans and urban planning instruments for all the different factors promoting sustainable growth and jobs, including monitoring and evaluation systems

- Waste disposal sites, including landfills and historical mining waste disposal sites.