

**THE SELECTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INNOVATIVE ACTIONS IN THE AREA
OF SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

Fiche no 20

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Commission Proposal	Relevant Article
ERDF Regulation [COM(2011) 614]	Art. 9(3)

This paper has been drawn up on the basis of the proposals for regulations adopted by the European Commission on 6 October 2011. It does not prejudge the final nature of the act, or the content of any delegated or implementing act that may be prepared by the Commission.

OBJECTIVE OF THE PAPER

The information in this explanatory fiche has been prepared in light of Article 9(3) of the proposed ERDF Regulation which provides: "The Commission shall adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 13 [of the ERDF Regulation] concerning the procedures for the selection and implementation of innovative actions."

The objective of this fiche is to identify the main elements concerning the procedures for the selection and the implementation of Innovative Actions in the field of Sustainable Urban Development (hereafter referred to as Urban Innovative Action (UIAs)).

RATIONALE AND LEGAL BASIS OF URBAN INNOVATIVE ACTIONS

According to Article 9(1) of the proposed ERDF Regulation for 2014-2020, the ERDF may, at the initiative of the Commission, support the costs of innovative actions in the field of sustainable urban development, subject to a ceiling of 0.2% of the total ERDF funding (as set out in Article 84(7) of the proposed Common Provisions Regulation).

The objective of UIAs is to support new approaches to tackling current and future urban challenges e.g. demography, migration, revitalization of local economies, in particular through pilot projects to test innovative solutions.

MAIN ELEMENTS

1. What is new compared to the previous programming period

The Commission has developed instruments to support innovative initiatives at local level in the past including two generations of Urban Pilot Projects (UPPs) that ran from 1990 to 1993 and from 1997 to 1999, as well as the Regional Programmes of Innovative Actions (RPIAs) implemented between 2000 and 2006.

In the 2014-2020 programming period UIAs will combine elements of the delivery method of RPIA with the urban focus of UPPs.

2. Activities

Innovative actions in the field of sustainable urban development are not limited by the thematic concentration requirements set out in Article 4 of the ERDF Regulation, and can therefore support all activities corresponding to the eleven thematic objectives set out in Article 9 of the Common Provision Regulation.

UIAs will aim at tackling the challenges linked to sustainable urban development in an innovative, sustainable, inclusive and integrated manner. This means that UIAs should test new ideas on how to face future urban challenges, while at the same time:

- aiming to be financially viable after the end of the ERDF financing;
- allowing for the participation of relevant stakeholders; and
- being transferable to other cities in other Member States.

While UIAs aim primarily at fostering innovation and experimentation in relation to sustainable urban development, the Commission wishes also to encourage innovation in terms of programme design taking into account the need to concentrate resources.

3. Applicants

A programme proposal for selection for UIAs can be submitted by any public authority in the European Union representing cities, a group or an association of cities or metropolitan authorities.

The Commission will define criteria to ensure that a minimum critical mass (in terms of population covered) is achieved.

The Commission strongly encourages the involvement of other organisations in the development and implementation of the programmes – such as universities, research and innovation centres, NGOs and the private sector, including SMEs.

4. Management - specific responsibilities of the relevant bodies

It is proposed to deliver the innovative actions through UIA programmes based on the experience of the UPPs and the RPIAs.

The Commission will be responsible for publishing open calls for UIA programme proposals, fixing criteria for participation, carrying out the selection of the programmes, and taking the decisions on financial support.

It is expected that the managing authority of the programme will be the public authority which made the successful bid. The Commission's financial contribution will be granted to the managing authority designated via a financing agreement.

The managing authority will be responsible for: the selection of the projects within the programmes; overseeing the implementation of the programme; making the required payments; the control, monitoring and evaluation systems; and the creation and management of a steering group to ensure the co-ordination of the projects financed by their programme.

5. Selection process for the programmes

The main selection criteria for the programmes will be the innovative content, transferability and robustness of the proposed UIA programme strategy to tackle future urban challenges and the expected ability of the programme promoter and its partners to deliver the planned results.

6. Duration

The proposals selected for implementation would be implemented during a 3 year period. It is anticipated that there will be a limited number of calls during the 2014-2020 programming period.

7. Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation

Programmes will need to have a strong built-in monitoring and evaluation component. At the end of the programme, the Commission will conduct an ex-post evaluation with the participation of independent experts. Annual reports would be required to be submitted to the Commission, focussing in particular on progress made, results achieved, and overall performance. Programmes will need to have a strong learning component which will need to be highlighted in the reporting activity.

Dissemination

Programmes will need to have a strong built-in dissemination component. The Commission will ensure the wide dissemination of the results through the Urban Development Platform and other relevant fora.

8 Support for Urban Innovative Actions Implementation

Managing authorities of selected UIA programmes, would participate in the Urban Development Platform as provided for in Article 8 (3) of the proposed ERDF Regulation.

9. Possible themes to be explored

The Commission is seeking to identify and develop innovative and experimental ways of tackling current and future urban challenges in an integrated way. Indicative themes and possible areas to explore are set out below. This list is not exhaustive.

- Urban sprawl and the spread of low-density settlements.
- Increased pressure on urban ecosystems.
- Resilience and economy of local resources.
- Recycling and reuse of waste.
- Innovative alternatives or complements to urban mobility. Development of service hubs in peri-urban areas.
- Managing diversity: innovative approaches to managing the "living together" of different age groups / socio-economic classes / cultural communities and ethnic groups.
- Innovative approaches to elderly-friendly cities and family-friendly cities.
- Co-production of services as part of citizen engagement and activation.
- Innovation in energy efficiency in housing.
- Innovative municipal service provision for city residents.
- Innovative business opportunities for SMEs through the transition towards low carbon build-up environment.
- Business friendly cities.