The Netherlands: URBAN I in Rotterdam

The URBAN I programme for the Delfshaven area in the centre of Rotterdam covered a population of around 75,000. The programme aimed to target opportunities and problems by integrating policies, implementing measures to stimulate sustainable economic development and employment, as well as promoting a safe environment and social innovation. A wide range of measures included promoting local business through networks and start-up facilities, stimulating tourism, refurbishing public spaces, reduction of drug related problems, and strengthening the community function of local schools. The total eligible cost of the programme was Euro 26.2 million, with an EU contribution of Euro 7 million.

The ‘Prinsestheater’: Culture and Cultural Diversity

Having been used among other things as a cinema and a place of worship before finally being abandoned, the Prinsestheater in the Rotterdam borough of Delfshaven was refurbished in 1997 with support from the EU under the URBAN I Community Initiative. It received a new purpose as a restaurant that revives the heyday of the theatrical revue. The authentic Art Deco and Jugendstil details of the theatre, including wooden panelling, leaded windows, chandeliers and paintings on the walls and ceilings, were restored.

The Prinsestheater also plays an important social role. On theatre nights, visitors can enjoy their dinner while watching a performance. But during the rest of the week, the Prinsestheater is at the disposal of local residents and various ethnic communities, who organise and participate in a broad range of cultural activities. The Prinsestheater has helped in turning around the negative image of the area, not only by stimulating local economic development, but also by providing facilities for cultural activities and thus enhancing social cohesion in the Rotterdam borough of Delfshaven.

The total cost of the project was Euro 901,000 of which the European Union contributed Euro 191,000.

Administrative authority

Mrs. Wilma Waaijer
Communication Advisor
Integrated Area Approach SWA Delfshaven
P.O. box 63047
NL-3002 JA Rotterdam
The Netherlands
Tel: +31-10-42 52 511
Fax: +31-10-27 62 964
w.waaijer@obr.rotterdam.nl
The cities of Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam, and Utrecht benefited under the URBAN I Community Initiative (1994-1999) and Amsterdam and Rotterdam further benefit under URBAN II (2000-2006). A total of Euro 87.1 million will be spent under URBAN II (EU contribution: Euro 29.8 million) benefiting 135,600 inhabitants.

European Commission

More information about the URBAN initiative can be found at:


If you would like further information about regional policy, for example about the structural funds’ interventions in other regions or about the reform of this policy, please visit this European Commission website:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/index_en.htm

Or send an E-mail or fax, or write to:

European Commission
Regional Policy Directorate-General
Inforegio Service
Avenue de Tervuren/Tervurenlaan 41
B-1040 Brussels
E-mail: regio-info@cec.eu.int
Fax: +32-2-296 6003

Keyword: The URBAN Community Initiative

- The majority of European citizens live in urban areas. Cities are centres of economic growth, but can at the same time face concentrations of social, environmental and economic problems. The URBAN Community Initiative is an instrument within EU Cohesion Policy, dedicated to the regeneration of urban areas and neighbourhoods in crisis.
- The second round of URBAN (“URBAN II”) consists of 70 programmes across the EU, covering some 2.2 million inhabitants. These areas often face quite severe deprivation. For example, on average unemployment and crime rates in URBAN II areas are both around twice the EU average. In addition, the proportion of immigrants is more than twice the average for EU urban areas. Finally, the proportion of green spaces - an indicator of environment and amenity - is only half the EU urban average.
- Between 2001 and 2006, the European Union will invest Euro 728 million of European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) money in these areas. Adding local and national cofinancing, including the private sector, this makes a total investment of Euro 1.6 billion. Funding concentrates on physical and environmental regeneration, social inclusion, training, entrepreneurship and employment.
- A particular feature of the URBAN initiative is the high degree of involvement of the local level. In most cases the local authority is responsible for day to day implementation, advised by local community groups and in partnership with the national authorities and the European Commission. Another interesting feature is that there will be a network of the URBAN II programmes to exchange information and experience on sustainable urban development across the European Union.