

URBAN II Evaluation

Case Study Le Mantois



1.0 Introduction

The URBAN II Programme of Le Mantois is targeted at the two communities of Mantes-la-Jolie and Mantes-la-Ville which are located about 50 km west of Paris in the Department of Yvelines.

As illustrated in the table below, the municipality of Mantes-la-Jolie is suffering from high unemployment, compared to the national average, with more than one third of the local population being economically inactive and an unemployment rate exceeding 20% (8% higher than the French average).

Table 1.1 Mantes-la-Jolie and Mantes-la-Ville – 1999

Variable	Value	Value	Value (France)
	(Mantes-La-Jolie)	(Mantes-La-Ville)	
Population	43 679	19 258	58 520 688
Population density (hab/km ²)	4 656.6	3 177.9	107.6
% unemployed in the total population	13,2	8,5	8,9
% inactive in the total population	34,8	29,3	30,7
Unemployment rate (%)	20,2	12,0	12,9

Source: INSEE local statistics, 1999

The most acute difficulties and problems of the municipalities are unevenly distributed, with two social housing areas (Val Fourré in Mantes-la-Jolie and Bas du Domaine in Mantes-la-ville) being home to the most prominent economic and social issues. The two target districts of the URBAN II programme are located at the edge of the municipality and are geographically separate from one another, with one being found in the town of Mantes-la-Jolie and the other in Mantes-la-Ville.

At the start of the 1960's, the French Authorities faced severe housing shortages due to the immigration of large numbers of people attracted by the economic growth of the Valley of the Seine. From this issue grew a number of large social housing areas including Mantes-la-Jolie and Mantes-la-Ville. However, after an initial spell of growth these neighbourhoods underwent a sharp fall in prosperity during the economic downturn of the 1970s which in turn led to a range of complex social issues. In addition, there was also a perception among local people that policy makers had abandoned the districts and that no political attention was devoted to the rising problems in their neighbourhoods.

In 1991, the most vulnerable district of Le Mantois –Val Fourré – was the centre of large scale rioting which led to a number of deaths and high levels of media attention. This dramatic event was

often seen as the trigger which led to increased political attention for the area. From this key turning point, local and national politicians realised that Le Mantois was desperately in need of a large scale regeneration scheme aimed at tackling some of the root causes of the areas problems which some of the drivers behind the rioting. As a consequence, a range of political stakeholders came together to set up a local regeneration scheme called the “Mantes en Yvelines project” which involved a range of parties including the EU¹, the State, the Ile-de-France region, the Yvelines department, « Communauté d'Agglomération de Mantes en Yvelines² » and the 9 municipalities constituting Le Mantois.

It was a political wish to integrate and link the vulnerable districts of Mantes-la-Jolie and Mantes-la-Ville into a larger regeneration programme. In 1996 EPAMSA - Etablissement Public d'Aménagement du Mantois Seine Aval (Public Planning Institution for the region of the Mantois Seine Aval) was established to manage this programme and all policies targeting Le Mantois to ensure a more joined up and holistic approach to the issues found within the target area.

It is in this setting that the municipalities of Mantes-la-Jolie and Mantes-la-Ville jointly applied for URBAN I funding (which they obtained). It was confirmed by stakeholders that Le Mantois initially applied for Objective I funding but did not obtain it and was granted URBAN funding 'as a compensation'. After having been involved in URBAN I, Le Mantois successfully applied for URBAN II funding (integrated in the second “Mantes en Yvelines project”).

1.1 Background to the URBAN II Programme

In 2000, about 29,000 people lived in the zone covered by the URBAN II programme which was smaller than the average French programme area.

In 1999, the employment rate of the Le Mantois URBAN area was more than twice as high than the French one (24% against 8.9%) and considerably above the city average of 10.9%, as well as just above the average unemployment level for all URBAN programmes across France. More than half of the unemployed population faced long-term unemployment (against one third in France). The fact that a high percentage of the population had no secondary education degree (slightly less than 30%)³ only reinforced the vulnerability of the inhabitants and their access to the labour market. Consequently, about 2.5% of the inhabitants of Val-Fourré are totally dependant on the RMI⁴ (compared to 0.8% in the region of Yvelines). Local security also remained an issue with a crime rate per 1000 inhabitants exceeding 105 in Val Fourré and 110 in Mantes-la-Jolie (compared to 65 in France). Built to absorb massive migration flows in the 60's, the area still hosted approximately 36% of foreigners (compared to 5,6% in France and 11% in the region).

¹ URBAN I programme from 1994 to 1999.

² The Communauté d'agglomération de Mantes-en-Yvelines (CAMY) is a public organisation for cooperation between municipalities. It was created in 1999 and is located in the département of Yvelines. It was one of the first intercommunity structures being created in the region.

³ In 1999.

⁴ The RMI is the Minimum Insertion Revenue (“*Revenu minimum d'insertion*”) granted to persons without revenues of having revenues inferior to the RMI (less than 400 EUR for a person alone and 835 EUR for a couple with 2 children).

Following this socio-economic outline, the following key challenges were identified for the target area:

- Large-scale social housing development with concentrated socio-economic deprivation in certain pockets;
- A high unemployment rate and long-term unemployment rate due to the lack of local employment opportunities and low levels of education and qualifications of the population;
- A high crime and delinquency rate;
- Social exclusion linked to income deprivation.

Furthermore, the area suffered from a negative image, which affected its attractiveness towards visitors, incoming populations and private investors and in turn led to a severe slowing down of population growth since 1990.

To tackle these problems, Le Mantois designed an URBAN II programme aimed at

- Improving the economic and social development of the area;
- Reducing the social divide between the rich and poor of the city;
- Upgrading the natural environment to improve and sustain its image and attractiveness.

Le Mantois received a total of 13 million euro of URBAN II funds (32% of the total programme, after co-financing). The split of these funds over the different themes is illustrated in the table below.

Table 1.2 Breakdown of funding by domain

Spend by theme	% Programme Spend	National Average Spend %	EU average Spend %
Economic	10.7	17.7	19.4
Social (incorporating Communication Technologies)	22.3	26.1	31.3
Physical (including transport)	62.6	51.7	43.9
Technical Assistance	4.4	4.2	5.2

Source: *Ex-post evaluation of the Cohesion Policy Programmes 2000-2006: The Urban Community Initiative, Country Level Notes from Task 1: France*

The table shows that the programme concentrated less on economic initiatives than the national and particularly the EU average and the social strand accounted for one only fifth of the spending which was again less than both the national and EU level average. The main priority in terms of resources was the focus on physical regeneration which received over 60% of total resources.

Overall, the programme implemented 70 projects. The main realisations of the URBAN II programme are the projects of the Green belt and the Nursing school, representing 22% and 6% of total ERDF funds respectively (the details of which are found later in this case study).

2.0 The Impact of the Programme

As explained in the above paragraphs, the URBAN II programme has been incorporated into the larger regeneration programme of 'Mantes en Yvelines II' (PMY II). As URBAN II funds only represent a fraction of the total amount invested at the level of the Communauté d'agglomération (ERDF represents 10% of total budget for the overall programme), it is difficult to isolate specific impacts and to assign them directly to URBAN II interventions.

Nevertheless, some interesting findings are worth mentioning under the impact heading. The key area of impact mainly focused around the physical improvements which the programme has stimulated. Together with other physical (non-URBAN) investments, this has radically changed the image of the URBAN II target areas. Consequently, most interviewees mentioned the physical changes in the area as the most important impact of the programme and for them, the attractiveness of the area has greatly increased through URBAN II intervention. This was particularly the case in relation to three aspects:

- First of all, large amounts of (non-URBAN) funds were directed to improving housing facilities in the target area. In Le Mantois, the focus has been on improving the social housing where entire HLM¹ complexes have been upgraded or demolished and replaced by new buildings. Although not funded through URBAN, these interventions have radically changed the appearance of the area, as well as increasing its attractiveness. For most stakeholders the actions targeting the housing infrastructure have been the key driver for broader regeneration.
- Second, several URBAN projects directly aimed at improving the image of the URBAN II target areas were picked up as a key area of impact. Stakeholder interviews revealed that the Green Belt project is the best example of such physical related impact. As the two municipalities of Le Mantois are located along the banks of the Seine River and bordering large high quality rural areas, although the full potential of this green landscape has never been fully realised nor enjoyed by local people. The Green Belt project was initiated to change this and was seen as one of the flagship projects of the URBAN II programme. The project aimed to connect the local public areas of Val Fourré in Mantes-la-Jolie to the Vallée de la Vaucouleurs district of Mantes-la-Ville by creating a green belt between both (along the Seine River). The green belt (or corridor) encompassed a range of improvements such as paths for pedestrians and cyclists, measures aimed at the restoration of local heritage buildings, play and sports activities and the landscaping of a key areas around the various lakes in the area. Several other projects have contributed to the increased attractiveness of Le Mantois supported by URBAN II. About 7% of URBAN II funding has also been used for the renewal of one of the main boulevards of Val Fourré. It was opened up to its natural environment along the banks of the Seine, making navigation through the different neighbourhoods easier and facilitating access to the infrastructure along the river. URBAN II funding has also been used to improve the access

¹ HLM: Habitation à Loyer Modéré

throughout the Domaine de la Vallée (Mantes-La-Ville) with 460,000 euro of URBAN II being used to increase the fluidity of traffic in the district by improving routes, improving infrastructure around schools to make them more accessible and opening up the district to outside traffic, notably to facilitate access to retail activities in the neighbourhood.

- Other URBAN II initiatives contributing to the physical improvement of the area include the Red Cross Nursing School (IFSI). The school use to be located in the city centre where it hosted about 300 students every year before moving in 2004. To be able to expand capacity, a proposal was made to transfer the school to the Val-Fourré district, just across the local hospital. In 2004 the new school building was erected and officially opened. The new school is a visible sign of regeneration in the area. One of its aims is to encourage the recruitment of new students locally. The idea is to expand the existing offer of training courses and, more importantly, to set up new professional training courses for students with low levels of education: a preparatory class for the school of nursing auxiliary and the creation of a “life assistance” training course. This complementarity, with the possibility to go for a training in life assistance to courses in being a nursing auxiliary or more, has created a new dynamic for young people that are often excluded from the traditional academic system. The new school was built with 800,000 ERDF EUR funding (20% of the total cost). The project can be considered as successful as the number of students rose from 300 before moving in 2004 to 480 in Val Fourré in 2009.

Apart from these very tangible elements, several indirect impacts have occurred throughout the programme's delivery period. It is interesting to note that when stakeholders were asked to describe the largest impacts of the programme, many described the wider and more indirect impacts as being the biggest benefits of the programme.

A key area of impact identified was ‘the return of values’ to the area amongst the local population, particularly those relating to the respect for their surrounding environment. As the quality of life of people increased, their confidence rose and also people felt that they were more optimistic about the future compared to a few years ago. The increase in values also related to elements such as the value of work and the importance of gaining a good education to increase people's employment prospects. A good example of how this was achieved was the ‘Val Service’ project which employed local inhabitants for maintenance works or waste management initiatives in the neighborhood which in turn made local people more aware of their local environment.

Another key area of impact of URBAN II which again is less than tangible but equally important is the creation of the 'building blocks' for future development. Many stakeholders felt that the socio-economic improvements in the area will follow the physical development that has been instigated throughout the URBAN II period. According to them, socio-economic spin-off effects from physical improvement are still in their infancy which means changes to key socio-economic data and statistics have not manifested themselves fully as yet.

Finally, a last key indirect impact of the programme was the accelerator effect on the pace of development in the target area. URBAN II has sharpened the focus and mobilized all involved

parties in the field. It was recognized by all levels of the French public authorities that URBAN funds were limited in time which stimulated a focused and determined approach to the problems inherent in the target areas.

Although numerous (direct and indirect) impacts have been cited, it is interesting to note that these impacts have hardly influenced the socio-economic conditions in the area. This is reflected in the indicators that are represented in the table below.

Table 2.1 Le Mantois - Evolution of the main indicators between 1999 and 2006

Variable	Value (Mantes-La-Jolie)	Value (Mantes-La-Ville)	Evolution in France
Population evolution	-0.6%	-0.6%	+0.7%
% employment in the population	+1% (52.9% in 2006)	+0.3% (62.3% in 2006)	+3.4% (63.1% in 2006)
Unemployment rate	-1.7% (18.5% in 2006)	+2% (14% in 2006)	-1.9% (11.6% in 2006)
Evolution taxable income (2004-2006)	+4.5%	+1.7%	+2.3%
% population without any school degree	Approx. +4% (33.9% in 2006)	Approx. +3% (24.6% in 2006)	Approx. -1% (20.2% in 2006)
Evolution number of companies (2000-2007)	+16.4%, of which +92.6% in the construction sector	+10.2%	+19.2%

Source: INSEE – Local Statistics

The table shows that the investments have not led to increased employment or a fall in unemployment over the programming period which perhaps suggests that although the attractiveness of the area has increased (as reflected in the increased housing prices¹) the economic conditions of the area has not yet followed this trend.

¹ The apartment prices in Mantes-La-Jolie rose by 28.8% over the period 2004-2009 which is more than 1% higher than in the department. (Source : Chambre des Notaires de Paris - http://www.paris.notaires.fr/prix/affiche_prix.php?ref=78)

3.0 Link with other programmes and policies

As mentioned above, URBAN II is not the only programme targeting Le Mantois. The CIP URBAN II Le Mantois is deeply integrated in a larger policy plan called the “Mantes en Yvelines project” with its first version initiated in 1995 and then renewed in 2001 (abbreviated PMY II). Overall the PMY II has a budget of more than 130 million euro with UBRAN representing only 10%.

This large-scale scheme gathered all the stakeholders together including the EU, the State, the Ile-de-France region, the Yvelines department, « Communauté d'Agglomération de Mantes en Yvelines » and all the relevant municipalities targeted by the scheme. The scheme initiates a global regeneration strategy for the agglomeration and therefore covers a wide territory: the municipalities, including the URBAN II area (Mantes-la-Jolie and Mantes-la-Ville), the other municipalities of the « Communauté d'Agglomération de Mantes en Yvelines » (12 municipalities) and the municipality of Limay.

The PMY II is oriented towards five priorities:

- Priority 1: Access to employment through improved employability (training) and an increased job supply;
- Priority 2: improvement of citizens' participation and proximity to social life in the districts;
- Priority 3: opening up of the districts and their population towards their environment: improvement of the environment, opening up to culture and support for the development of a network of associations;
- Priority 4: raise the basic skills of the population to favour their integration capacity;
- Priority 5: tackling the most severe social problems.

The above four priorities of the CIP URBAN II in Le Mantois, as well as all other public intervention schemes in the area are all integrated into this broad strategy and the fact that all political and institutional actors have pooled their forces at a higher level, allows for greater leverage effects to other funding regimes in the area elsewhere in the territory.

With the above in mind, URBAN II cannot be considered as a key driver of change in the area partly because it was a relatively small part of a much larger regeneration programme for the area. It is more of a tool contributing to the local development strategy and it also explains why it is difficult to isolate the URBAN intervention and its effects from other policies.

4.0 Factor of success

The two key elements that have significantly contributed to the success of the URBAN II programme are as follows:

Strategy development at agglomeration level

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the PIC URBAN II Le Mantois is not an isolated programme, but part of a wider regeneration plan covering the whole agglomeration.

Le Mantois – and in particular its vulnerable districts - faces challenges that are highly similar to those encountered by neighbouring areas. Moreover, the social difficulties in the area are deeply integrated into the local context (deindustrialisation and restructuring of the industrial sector), surpassing the borders of the URBAN zone. It is not a coincidence that at a distance of 20 km, another URBAN II area (Les Mureaux) is coping with the same difficulties and that the Paris banlieu counts two other programmes: Grigny-Viry (south of Paris) and Clichy (north of Paris).

The fact that the URBAN programme is integrated in a broader development scheme, also intervening outside the URBAN perimeter, ensures a coherent development approach and creates synergies and leverage effects for a larger territory.

Built on experiences of URBAN I

Le Mantois has clearly benefited from its experience with the URBAN I programme. The fact that a lot of tools and systems were in place at the start of the programme and that the team could capitalize on previous experiences has benefited the overall management of the URBAN II programme. The importance of continuity at strategic level, but also at the level of human capital should not be underestimated, especially in countries that lack experience with integrated projects.

5.0 The Integration of the Programme

Strictly speaking, the URBAN programme in Le Mantois did not truly adopt an integrated approach. Although the programme generated investments in the physical, economic and social themes, the level of integration has remained weak throughout the entire programme. Few synergies have been created between the different priorities and measures of the programme, as well as between the projects in the field meaning that many of the potential synergies have remained untapped. The fact that the programme was largely dominated by physical regeneration measures has certainly not helped nor facilitated the integration with other measures.

However, although URBAN II had a relatively weak strategy for integration because the URBAN II programme was integrated into a wider regeneration plan (that contained axes focussing on economic and social problems this meant that integration did take place at the higher level (PMY level)).

Still, we feel that because of the physical focus of the URBAN programme, opportunities were missed to create links between other social and economic projects found elsewhere in the area. For instance, physical projects linked to the creation of a new library were not linked to educational or youth related projects. Even though some physical projects developed synergies with some local actors, these partnerships occurred on an ad hoc basis and are not the result of a proactive integrated strategy established by the managing authority.

The factors that can explain the lack of integration between the physical and other measures related to two specific points. First, the solely physical emphasis is typically French. On average, the French URBAN programmes spent more than 50% of their resources on physical regeneration whilst this is only 40% for most URBAN programmes. This can be explained by the fact that in France, urban development is often the work of experts in physical development (engineers, architects, etc.), who often leave aside social issues when developing strategies to tackle neighbourhood regeneration issues. Secondly, the fact that the managing authority (EPAMSA) is a public planning institution with a strong focus on physical development has also influenced the level of integration. As the social regeneration stakeholders were not in the driving seat, the attention for social cohesion initiatives were always of secondary importance to the physical initiatives, resulting in a weaker link between measures.

6.0 Programme management and partnerships

The managing authority was assigned to EPAMSA, a local agency for urban planning. EPAMSA was responsible for the daily management of the programme, in close collaboration with the two municipalities of Mantes-la-Jolie and Mantes-la-ville, that reinforced their cooperation through the programme. The link with the PMY II, at the agglomeration level, was made through the steering committee. The CAMY, the Department of Yvelines, the region of Ile-de-France and the State were members of the steering committee and supported the programme through their financial aid.

The construction in which EPAMSA is an intermediate organization between the municipalities and the other involved actors (often at higher governmental levels) is unique in France. Stakeholders identified some positive elements related to this structure:

- EPAMSA allowed for more flexibility than traditional structures, as they were close to the field and well acquainted with the local context. The fact that they were the mediator between the two involved municipalities has allowed for faster decision taking as well as better coordinated interventions.
- EPAMSA has put a stable and competent team in place during the entire programming period. As the two involved municipalities are quite small, they had limited capacity to oversee and deliver for this kind of large scale programme.
- The fact that EPAMSA is responsible for all new interventions targeting Le Mantois is beneficial in terms of sustainability and continuity of the initiatives. After URBAN II, the organization picked up other initiatives and continues building on its previous experiences.
- The local authorities have learnt much from the URBAN way of working. Today, the URBAN approach with respect to evaluation culture, monitoring, decentralised management and automatic clawback has been applied to other public policies within the municipalities.

Nevertheless, some questions were raised on the effectiveness of the management arrangements attached to the programme:

- The fact that EPAMSA (an urban planning organization) has its own competences and own agenda (focusing on physical development initiatives), had its consequences on the realizations and the degree of integration of the projects. The feeling remains that many actors could have been triggered to get more involved in the programme (especially for social issues). EPAMSA was a good lead partner for the physical projects, but it generally lacked ambition for the social and economic interventions. It was suggested that more involvement from academics, company leaders and associations in future programmes should be undertaken in order to equilibrate the composition of the partnerships.

7.0 Sustainability and legacy

New public policies targeting Le Mantois

After the official end of URBAN initiative, other public actors have continued the work initiated in the area while enlarging the scope beyond the borders of the URBAN zone.

In 2007, the State, the Regional Council of the region of Ile-de-France, the General Council of Yvelines, 51 municipalities and 5 intercommunity cooperation agencies pooled their forces to regenerate the broad territory of the Seine Valley (in which the URBAN zone is incorporated). This is an operation that will touch 370,000 inhabitants on a 400 km² territory.

The main objectives of this programme are the following:

- Economic development and improvement of the employment rate by 20%;
- Developing 2500 new housing facilities by 2010;
- Improving the transport network;
- Enhancing the physical environment.

Between 2007 and 2013, the State, the region and the departement plan to allocate 250 million euro to the urban renewal of the Seine Valley. This funding will be allocated to the financing of a training pole, to parks and green spaces and to the creation of a congress centre.

Additionally, the region also benefits from 12 million euro under the urban priority of the ERDF “Regional Competitiveness and employment programme”.

The main objectives of this programme are the following:

- Reinforcing the attractiveness of the territory and its competitiveness through the development of an economic supply such as real estate supply to SMEs and the support for “eco building” and “eco industries” circuits.
- Reinforcing the territory’s attractiveness and accessibility through reinforced sustainable urban cohesion by improving the ICT knowledge;
- Developing skills and qualifications on the territory focusing on the fields of services to persons and healthcare.
- Finally, the National Agency for Urban Regeneration will provide 370 million euro for the physical regeneration of the area over the period 2005-2010.

Mixed results in term of follow-up of initiatives

Some of the 70 URBAN initiatives were successfully continued after the end of the programme, others were abandoned.

Example 1: The Val Services initiative focuses its activities on waste management, repair services and handiworks in the heart of Val Fourré. By employing local inhabitants, it builds local awareness and involvement towards the local environment. The company nowadays employs about 50 employees and is in charge of the maintenance of a part of the green belt.

Two other initiatives were not continued after the end of the URBAN funding.

Example 2: Using URBAN II funding, the managing authority developed an initiative to promote the use of the bicycle within the city. Initiated in 2001, the project has gradually been abandoned following operational difficulties.

Example 3: In 2004, URBAN II financed the opening of a “Handcraft incubator” building on the specific knowledge of the inhabitants. The project has also been gradually abandoned after a fire destroyed the installations.

The managing authorities have not developed a follow-up system for the activities initiated with URBAN funding. It is therefore very difficult to track down the sustainability of most actions.

Transfer of good practices

The team managing URBAN II within EPAMSA is still active and is now managing the ERDF regional competitiveness and employment funds as well as all the other national and local initiatives targeting Le Mantois. This is clearly beneficial for all parties involved, as they can capitalize on the past experiences of URBAN I and URBAN II and thus provide the necessary continuity.