Association of urban municipalities facilitating implementation of ITIs in Slovenia

Zdenka Šimonovič, Municipality of Ljubljana, President of the AUMS ITI Expert Commission

2 Cohesion Regions (NUTS 2):
- **West SLO**: (pop.: 0.9 million)
- **East SLO**: (pop.: 1.1 million)

No actual intermediate level of governance; just
- **national** (state) and
- **local** (municipalities)
ITI implementation system in Slovenia – result of peculiar situation:

- Historically *decentralised development* - in total:
  2,066,880 inhabitants in 5,978 settlements (of those, 155 urban settlements; 2018)

Average size of settlements in sq.km (2018; source: Statistical Office of The Republic of Slovenia)
Urban Municipalities of Slovenia

212 municipalities in SLO

11 URBAN MUNICIPALITIES – identified by Partnership Agreement as ITI beneficiaries

4 in West SLO region
7 in East SLO region

aprox. 715.000 inhabitants or 1/3 of SLO
Urban Municipalities of Slovenia

Article 141
(Urban Municipalities)

A town may attain the status of an urban municipality in accordance with such procedure and under such conditions as provided by law.

An urban municipality performs, as being within its original competence, particular duties within the state competence relating to urban development as provided by law.
Urban Municipalities of Slovenia and ITI

Biggest challenge:
Very diversified UM in terms of size (biggest Ljubljana – population 288,250, smallest Slovenj Gradec – population 16,593; 2017) → limited administrative capacity to act as IB for selection of ITI projects under art. 7 of Directive nr. 1301/2013. → tackling the issue as individual city → impossible

Solution: networking among 11 UM in search of solution led to the conclusion → the only way is to do it together (march 2016) → how: through the Association of Urban Municipalities of Slovenia (AUMS) as possible Common IB of 11 UM

Why AUMS: - it was already there
- it was right away operative
Association of Urban Municipalities of Slovenia (AUMS) and ITI

ZMOS = AUMS

Established in 2009.

Reason – specifics of urban municipalities in relation to the myriad of other (smaller) municipalities.

Until 2016 – only 1 employee; now 3.

Until 2016 – mainly focused on legislation, legal advise, technical support to urban municipalities, etc.

Since 2016: IB for final selection and ranking of ITI projects
Association of Urban Municipalities of Slovenia (AUMS) and ITI

Main scope of cooperation of 11 UM within the Association:

• **to set up the ITI system in Slovenia**

  and

• **to start the ITI system implementation**

  *(pre-conditions for ITI projects implementation by UM)*
Challenges in setting up the Association as IB

**Internal challenges:**
- **limited human resources** within UM and within the Association

**Solution:**
- Set-up of the **ITI Expert Implementation Commission** within the Association (1 representative from each UM; persons already experienced in EU policies and implementation of EU co-funded projects)

- **additional employment** in the Association (0,6 FTE), co-financed from TA
Association of Urban Municipalities of Slovenia (AUMS) as ITI’s IB - structure

AUMS’s bodies:
- President
- Assembly
- Supervisory Board

Permanent working bodies:

Committees:
- City administration directors’ board
- Finance
- Spatial planning
- Economic activities and transport
- Social sector
- Local self-government
- European affairs and international cooperation

Administrative support (TA)
- ITI Secretariat
- Experts Commission for ITI implementation

ITI IB’s related tasks
Challenges in setting up AUMS as IB

External challenge:

• MA and ministerial IB had to accept the Association as IB for final selection and ranking of ITI projects

Solution:

• Intensive dialogue with MA and ministerial IB, led by MA
Challenges in setting up AUMS as IB

External challenge:

• Accreditation process for AUMS to act as IB (multitude of documents to be produced):
  • Description of the management and control system of AUMS as IB,
  • AUMS Guidebook for the implementation of its role of IB,
  • Evaluation of fraud risks (OLAF requirements),
  • Agreement with MA on implementation of the IB role,
  • Change of national legislation to identify AUMS as IB...

Solution:

• Association’s documents produced by members of the ITI Experts Commission (first three listed above), other documents produced in cooperation with MA and ministerial IB
Over-all challenge

Time pressure!

- **for ITI projects implementation** (needed for sustainable urban development in cities)

- **for N+3 rule**
Urban Development Network
Sustainable Urban Development in Italy
Rome, 12-13 June 2018

Timeline

Final selection & Ranking of projects approved by AUMS Assembly
1st call – PA 6.3
28/12/17

1st call – PA 4.1
17/3/17

1st call – PA 4.4/ERDF
6/10/17

Final selection & Ranking of projects approved by AUMS Assembly
11/8/17

ITI system and role of the Association

Managing authority
IB – Ministry of infrastructure
PA: 4.1
PA: 4.4

IB – Ministry of the environment and spatial planning
PA: 6.3

Approval of projects
Review of applications

CALLS FOR PROJECTS SUBMISSION

UM/SUDS

SELECTION OF PROJECTS (SUDS)

2nd PHASE

1st PHASE

Reporting

IB - AUMS

Review of applications;
FINAL SELECTION & RANKING OF PROJECTS
Lessons learned:

- We need to **continue to work together on ITI within the Association** also in the future because it has enabled the setting-up of the ITI system in Slovenia and is crucial for its successful implementation.

- Networking among UM is **needed at early stage**, already in urban development planning and ITI structure building process → so that MA and ministerial IB have good knowledge about:
  - the situation on-field
  - what is the real effect of different solutions/limitations (e.g. even in the OP)
Lessons learned:

- Together, **we’re stronger** – better heard by MA and ministerial IB (especially to remove obstacles that derive from „gold-plating“)

- Networking has brought us to exchange information/ ideas/ experiences **also on other EU related issues**, not just ITI: e.g. the **planning of next financial perspective in Slovenia**
Any question?
THANK YOU!

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AUMS – Association of Urban Municipalities of Slovenia as IB for ITI in Slovenia

Overview of major steps:
• Dialogue with MA and ministerial IB on proposed solution (started in March 2016)
• Mandate from each UM to AUMS to act as IB for ITI projects final selection and ranking
• Change of National decree on ECP implementation in Slovenia and of Criteria for selection of operations (ITI – within relevant priority axis and specifically in chapter XIII)
• Agreement on tasks of AUMS as IB and Technical Assistance signed between MA and AUMS
• Accreditation process of AUMS as IB
AUMS – Association of Urban Municipalities of Slovenia as IB for ITI in Slovenia

Overview of major steps:

- Cooperation with MA and ministerial IB in adoption of all necessary ITI implementation guidelines and national regulation
- Methodology on indicative allocation of ITI funding to UM – criteria (SUDS ranking within the cohesion region, population in areas with SUDS, role within the cohesion region)
- Publication of the first invitation to present ITI projects for final selection and ranking (March 2017)