

URBAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK WEBINAR SERIES

Urban Innovative Actions, achievements and perspectives

3,10 and 17 February 2021



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European
Commission

UIA: Overview of UIA assessment study and pointers for the future

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Key findings from the UIA 2014-2020 assessment study

James Rampton, Centre for Strategy and Evaluation Services



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The mid-term assessment (Jan-Oct 2020)

- State-of-play at mid-point (4 calls, 75 projects, of which 12 completed)
- Theory-based, drawing on the literature on innovation
- Mixed methods: literature review, data analysis, surveys, interviews, case studies (15)
- Survey responses: applicants (130), Managing authorities (53), open survey (355)
- Consultees: project promoters/partners (81), other cities (8), regional/national/EU-level bodies (12)



Urban Innovative Actions (UIA)

- Sustainable, scalable, transferable innovations in cities
- Programme managed indirectly by the EC with the Région Hauts-de-France
- Calls at EU level focussed on 12 topics (3-4 in each call) in line with the Urban Agenda for the EU
- €5m ERDF per project (€372m overall)
- Projects led by urban local authorities with public/private/NGO partners
- 3-4 years implementation +1 year knowledge transfer



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Progress at project level

- Diversity of innovations (*service innovations, use of technology, social financial, governance*)
- Diversity of outputs and results achieved or expected (*new services, products and processes; technology platforms; infrastructure & equipment; citizen and business outputs; partnership and governance*)
- Delays in starting and implementing projects (greatest risks related to infrastructure and equipment)
- Challenges related to innovation (technical or technological, regulatory frameworks, public misunderstanding, target group take-up) or more “usual” (procurement, permits, on-site problems)
- Instances of innovations being scaled up in same city/region



Achievements – programme level

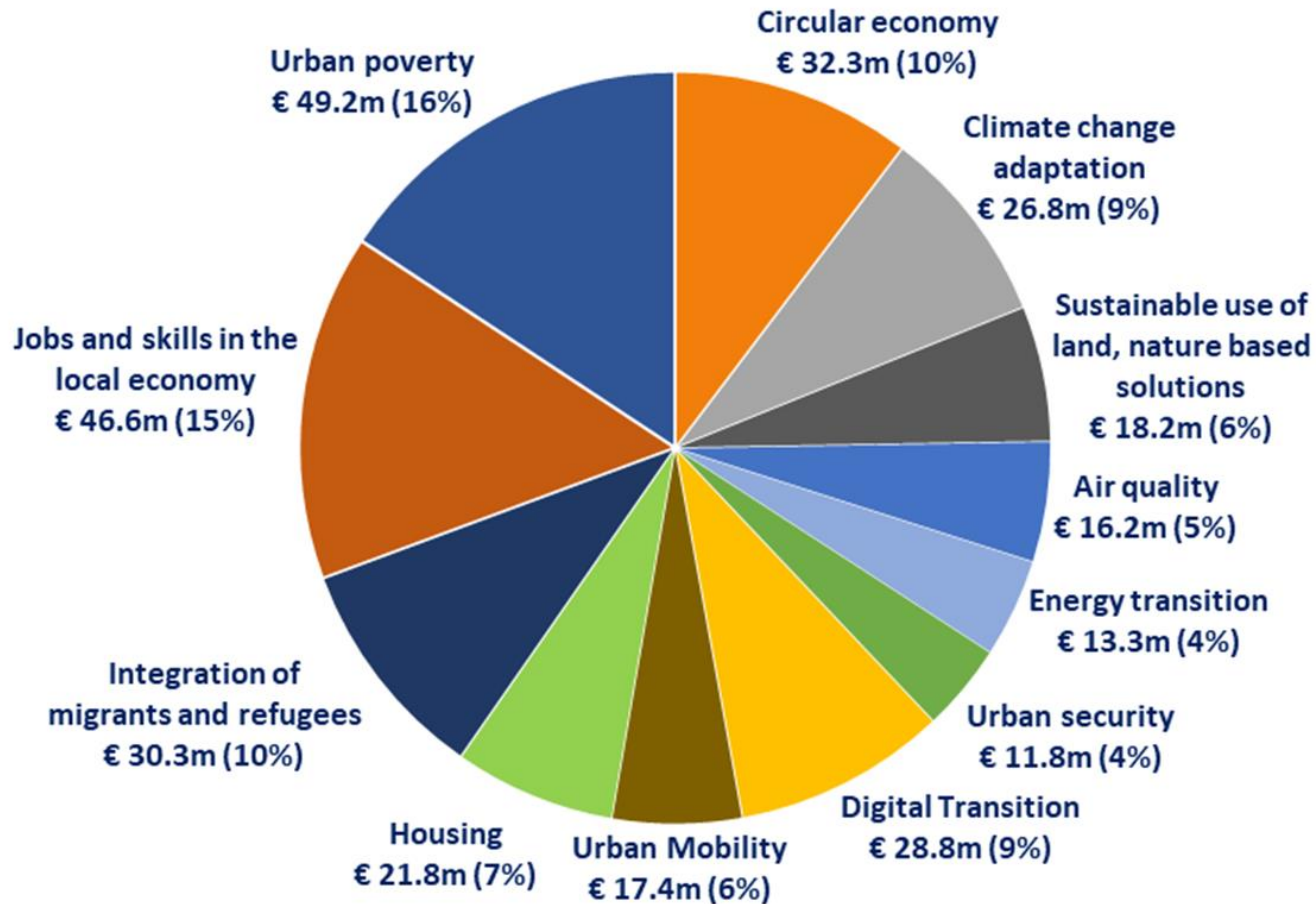
- Cities appreciate the UIA instrument (design, rules, application process and support)
- Projects in a diversity of cities (size, country, innovation context)
- Urban authorities often play a key role in the innovation process, but their role varies widely by project
- Potential for and instances of replication in other cities (e.g. via URBACT or bilaterally by cities)



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Selected projects offer a good spread across the UIA topics



Challenges at programme level

- Applications from 26 Member States but concentrated on some of them (50% from Italy and Spain)
- Ensuring operational readiness of selected projects
- Ensuring sustainability and scaling up of innovations
- Overcoming challenges to replication of innovations
- Aggregating outputs and impacts at EU level



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Added value for Cohesion Policy (CP)

- UIA shows coherence and complementarity with other CP programmes (through the topics, design and activities)
- Most UIA projects (70%) are in cities hosting sustainable urban development strategies (SUDS) under Article 7
- Managing Authorities (MAs) and cities see UIA projects as coherent with SUDS
- Potential for mainstream CP programmes to fund the scaling up and replication of UIA innovations
- MAs are open to supporting replication or scaling up of UIA projects



Recommendations for the future EUI-Innovative actions

- Retain the fundamental elements of the UIA instrument
- Better define the type of innovations to be pursued
- Strengthen the focus on and support for scaling-up and transfer of innovations
- Improve the operational readiness of projects
- Optimise the added value for Cohesion Policy



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Thank you for your attention

The **UIA** assessment study:

https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/publications/studies/2021/assessment-study-of-the-urban-innovative-actions-2014-2020-final-report



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Pointers for the future

From UIA to EUI-innovative actions

François Gallaga

European Commission

Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy

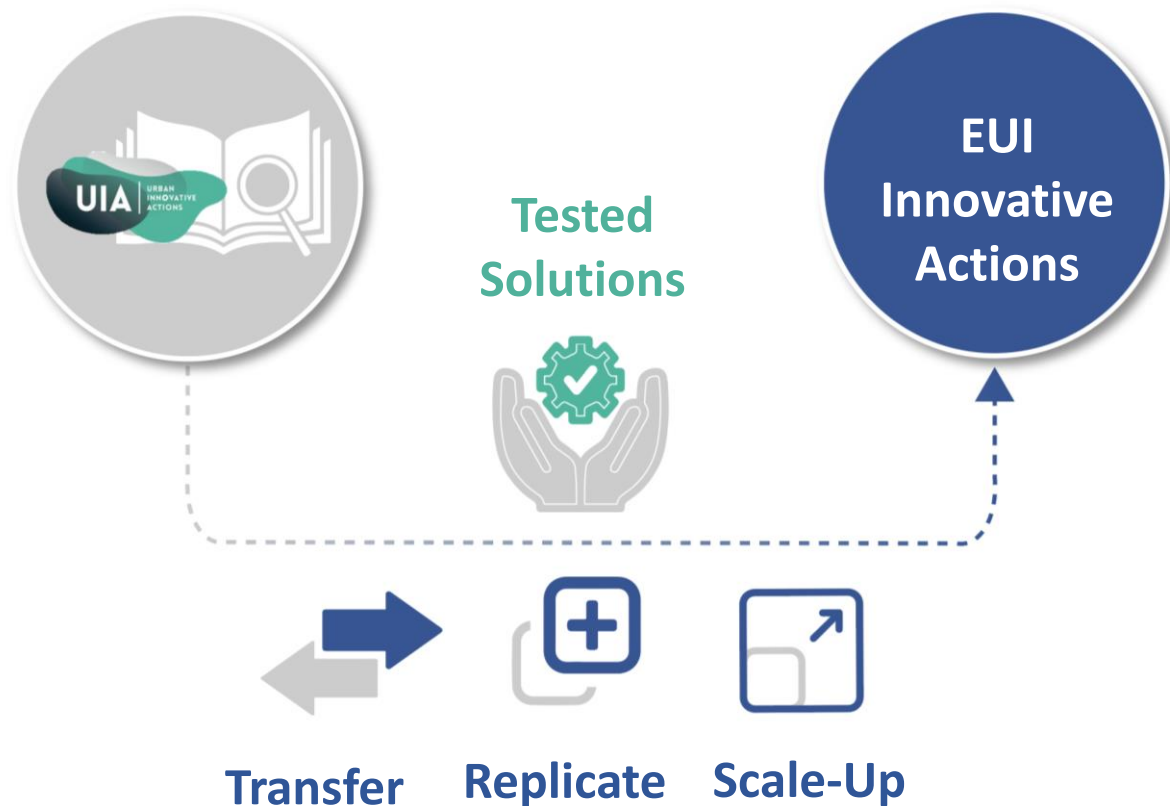
Unit 03, Inclusive Growth, Urban and Territorial Development



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Key drivers for reform



- Evolution, no revolution
- Closer definition of impacts and of targeted urban innovations
- Stronger focus on sustainability, scaling-up and transfer
- Better check the operational readiness of projects
- Optimise the added value of innovative actions, within EUI as an integrated set of services to cities, and for Cohesion policy 2021/27 (ERDF in particular)

What urban innovations targeted under the EUI?

Urban innovations for/led by cities

*Good urban governance in action – PO5 compatible
(place-based, integrated, co-created)*

Urban innovations relevant to the ERDF

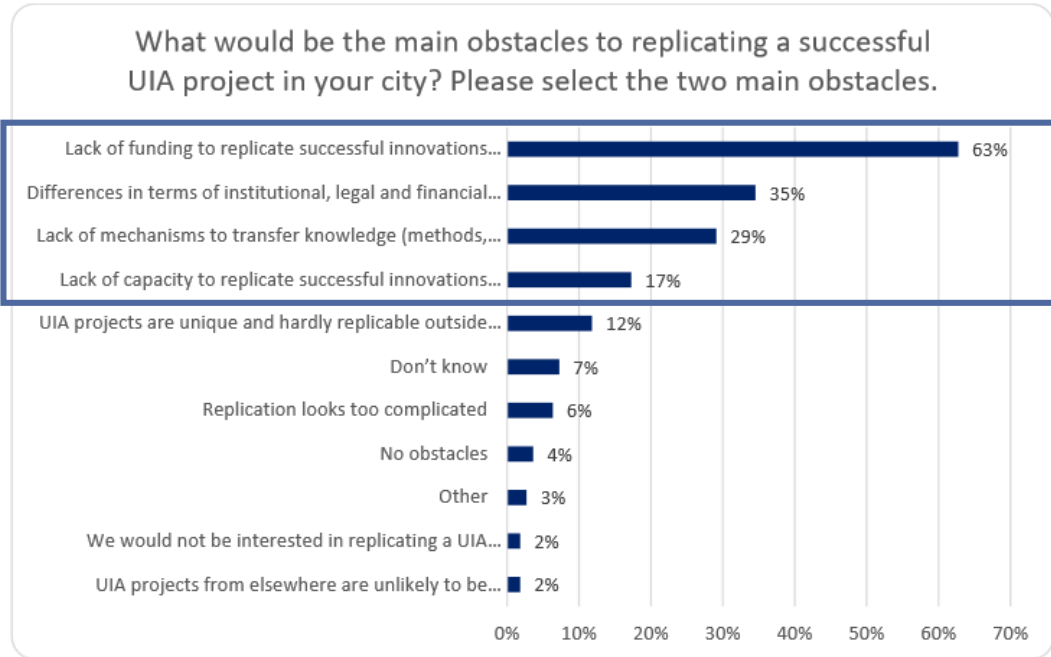
*Innovation capabilities linked to urban « megatrends »
(green and digital transitions)*

Innovations in view of specific local contexts

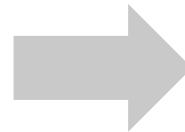


What new solutions to transfer innovative actions?

Figure 14: Replication obstacles reported by cities responding the open survey



Source: UIA assessment study – open survey (CSES)



Step 1: Systematise transfer with URBACT support

A method: « understand; adapt; reuse »

Transfer mechanisms for UIA projects 2014/20

Step 2: Embed transfer as an integral part of EUI-innovative actions

Frame-in transnational partnerships

(e.g. 1 lead city and 2-3 partner cities)



Evolution scenario (calls)

UIA

EUI Innovative Actions



- EU Calls in line with Commission's priorities/ Urban agenda for EU
- No predefined indicators
- No predefined ERDF TOs



Gradient of Options

- EU calls in line with Commission's priorities
- Leipzig Charter pointers (Green, Just, Productive) Integrated, place-based, participatory, co-creation
- Indicators defined
- Cohesion POs/SOs defined
- Rescoping of calls
- 'Bottom-up' identification of topics:
e.g. foresight surveys (EUI loop)



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Evolution scenario (selection)

UIA

EUI Innovative Actions



Strategic assessment (80%)

- Innovativeness
- Partnership
- Measurability of results
- Transferability/scale-up

Operational assessment (20%)



Gradient of Options

Strategic assessment

- . Innovativeness
- . Partnership
- . Measurability of results
- . Sustainability, scale-up
- . Transferability

Operational assessment

- . Review of criteria
- . Review of weighting

Further reengineering (e.g. "2 steps")

- selection on concepts
- selection on fully-fledged investments



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Evolution scenario (implementation)

UIA

EUI Innovative Actions



- ERDF 5M€/project max
- ERDF co-financing 80%
- 50% advance payment
- 4 years implementation
- Eligibility inspired from CPR



Gradient of Options

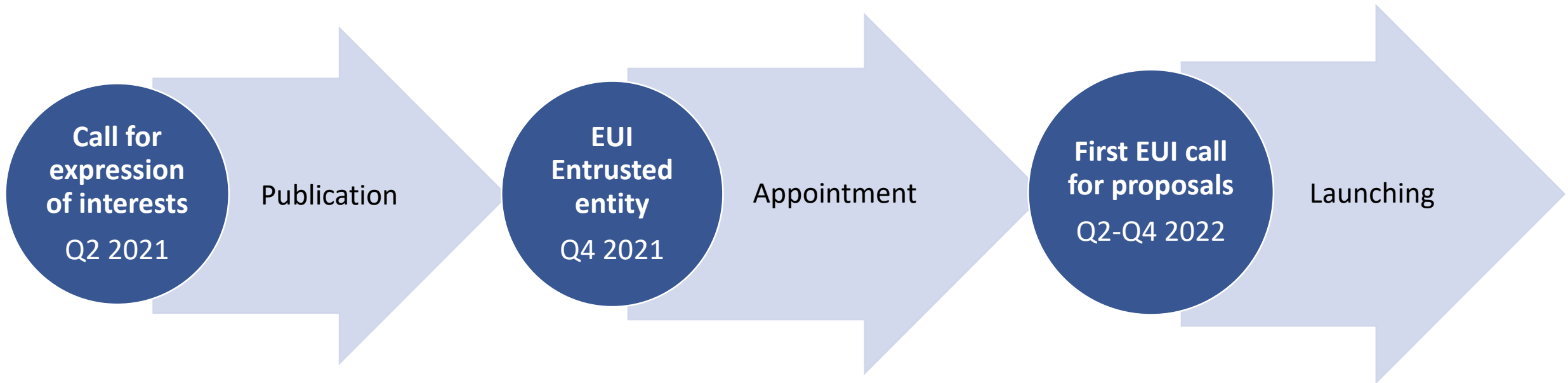
- Transfer partnership embedded
- Other rules kept/updated:
 - in light of new CPR
 - streamlining of major changes
- Further reengineering (e.g. graduation of grants) .to develop concepts .for full roll-out (up to 5M€)
- National co-financing raised (or variable)



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Timeline



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Thank you for your attention!

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