



Image [Source: Programme URBACT III](#)

Looking for partners for Urbact III upcoming call? Have a look to designated Urban Authorities in Umbria and beyond

Some hints on the state of play of Art 7 ERDF Reg in Italy¹

By Paola Amato, Urbact III validated Lead Expert, EDIC TERNI

07/04/2016

Looking for partners for the [Urbact III Implementation call](#) won't be an easy task since prospective Lead Partners and partners will have to meet 2 conditions:

- *already have an integrated urban strategy/ action plan addressing a specific policy challenge*
- *and secured funding to finance the implementation of this strategy/ action-plan*

As the call documents state, the above conditions are surely met in case of cities designated Urban Authorities developing integrated urban strategies under Art. 7 of ERDF Reg (Integrated Territorial Investment, urban axis, dedicated programme) or cities beneficiaries of any funded operation under the UIA Programme (Art 8 ERDF Reg). In this

¹ **DISCLAIMER_ Views and opinions stated in this document are the sole responsibility of the author and are not or in no way commit neither the Europe Direct Terni nor the Secretariat Urbact III or the DG REGIO. The only scope of this brief report is to help other European cities to get some understanding on the implementation of Art 7 in Italy**



latter case cities will also be eligible for the third type of Urbact III call for transfer networks¹

If we look at the implementation of Art 7 across the EU the panorama is quite diversified as shown by [Márton MATKÓ](#), European Commission, DG Regional and Urban Policy at the 3rd UDN seminar in Brussels past 18 Feb 2016. This is due to division of power across Member States and the way the principle of subsidiarity is lay down and handled by each country.

But complications rest on many other aspects. Understanding urban dimension and main initiatives put forth by the EU to enhance role and value of urban areas are not easy tasks especially if you are a small or medium city lacking professional staff. Along with lack of expertise, much depends however on the regional authority (Managing Authority): on the one hand whether it pushed/promoted experiments on integrated sustainable development in CP 20107-2013, the latter not mandatory at the time, and on the other hand the way it has involved its cities at strategic and Programming level in current CP2014-2020, providing sustainable development has become a mandatory commitment in current CP EU regulations.

Along with other regions in central Italy, the Region Umbria in many ways meets the above conditions along with being ahead in the stage of advancement of Art 7.

Over time Umbria has largely invested on sustainable development schemes (called Integrated Urban Plans; Integrated Territorial Plans) main-streaming lesson learned in CP2014-2020, while being among the first in Italy in 2014 along with Emilia Romagna to designating cities as Urban Authorities (UA) in its OP ERDF and starting a co production process to set up urban strategies as a framework to identify suitable integrated operations. Put it simply: Umbria has made its main cities (Perugia, Città di Castello, Foligno, Spoleto and Terni) potentially eligible for Urbact III call for Implementation network (deadline 22 June 2016). The 5 designated UA (UA) to test art.7 were indicated in the OP ERDF setting with an ad hoc Axis 6 Sustainable Urban Dev. At present the Urban sustainable strategies have been finalised and operations identified.

Complying to national recommendations based on 4 main drivers of development, Umbria's sustainable strategies and interventions, combine low carbon strategy for urban areas, regeneration and cutting pollution of former industrial sites, sustainable mobility and regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods. The total amount allocated by the Region Umbria combines ERDF and EFS resources reaching a total of 35 Millions (> than 5% ERDF recommended by EU regulations).

What to expect from Italy?

Apart from Umbria let's have a look to Italy as a whole especially when it comes to the stage of implementation of ART.7, providing approval of regional OP in Southern regions came with very much delay.

According to the Italian Partnership Agreement Art 7 ERDF Reg will be developed via regional OPs and national OPs (PON Metro). As a basic concept set by the PA and all recommendations drawn upon the Italian Urban Agenda set during negotiations with the Commission, urban sustainable development aims at strengthening Italian polycentric urban system made of small and medium sized cities that in most regional OPs will act as designated Urban Authorities. On the other hand National OPs will see as main beneficiaries 14 metropolitan cities, including Napoli, Rome and Milan. In all cases functional areas will cover portions or districts located across city boundaries in the logic of

functional integration while again the most expected UA will be cities or Union of cities (Sicily).

Apart from PON METRO and the 14 metropolitan cities acting as UA, designated UA in Italy will be for most part small medium sized cities selected by MAs based on national criteria aimed at assessing cities' main strategic territorial role or functions. This plays counter with different institutions implementing Art. 7 in other MS were due to different administrative and institutional organization, choice for UA will fall on other entities as case of France's "neighbourhoods".

As concern implementation of Art 7, out of the three main options identified by EU regulations (Integrated Territorial Investment, urban axis, dedicated programme) Urban Axis will be the major option (for example Umbria, Toscana, Emilia Romagna or Lombardia) while urban ITI will have a limited application in a few regions such as Marche and Sicily.

In the case of Marche a call was launched in Dec 2015 to identify 3 potential implementing cities out of 5 initial candidate cities. In Sicily the situation is not easy to assess since the regional OP ERDF was among the last set of OPs approved by the EC. In Tuscany the MA opted out on urban axis to be carried out on a selected number or urban area indicated in the OP ERDF. Here a restricted call for expression of interest on the part of those cities falling within eligible territories was launched last Jan 2016; a step that will open to the co-production phase with the designated UA. Concerning non urban ITIs

Last but not least it is worthwhile mentioning that non urban ITI be implemented in "internal areas" as indicated by the National strategy. Here experiments will find application in most Italian regions, including Umbria under coordination by the central government, a process steered by former Mr Fabrizio Barca that will perhaps produce interesting results due to a true synergy among ordinary and EU funding resources.

1 For information concerning future 3rd types of Urbact call consult the Programme website. <http://urbact.eu>