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New style cluster policy: riding the waves of San Sebastian's emerging surf economy

van Winden, Willem; de Carvalho, Luis

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CASE STUDY

New style cluster policy: riding the waves of San Sebastian's emerging surf economy

URBACT II



**New style cluster policy: riding the waves
of San Sebastian's emerging surf economy,
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Authors

Willem van Winden and Luís de Carvalho

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CASE STUDY

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riding the waves of San
Sebastian's emerging
surfeconomy**

FOREWORD

This case study is part of a bigger capitalisation initiative set by the URBACT programme for 2014–2015 with the objective to present to cities local good practices about:



New urban economies



Jobs for young people in cities



Social innovation in cities



Sustainable regeneration in urban areas

These four topics have been explored by four URBACT working groups (workstreams), composed of multidisciplinary stakeholders across Europe such as urban practitioners and experts from URBACT, representatives from European universities, European programmes and international organisations working on these issues.

The case study on San Sebastian (Spain) is one of the concrete results of the URBACT workstream ‘New urban economies’, after collection of data, a study visit, and interviews with local stakeholders.

It explores the practice the city put in place to boost its local economy, actions implemented, achievements and challenges, success factors, and conditions for transfer to other cities. The first part of the case study summarises the key points of the practice, while the second part (analytical template) provides more details for those interested in transferring the practice to their local context.

We hope this shall be an inspiration for you and your city!

The URBACT Secretariat

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NEW STYLE CLUSTER POLICY: RIDING THE WAVES OF SAN SEBASTIAN'S EMERGING 'SURF ECONOMY'

 By Willem van Winden
and Luís de Carvalho*

San Sebastian's surf cluster is a city-driven, new-generation type of cluster policy that connects apparently unrelated activities around a common theme: surf. By choosing a theme rather than a specific sector, the cluster initiative refrains from 'picking winners' and opens new opportunities for economic diversification that make use of specific local strengths: gastronomy, hospitality, natural-urban resources, IT-digital competences and engineering skills. This case makes clear that nurturing an economy around a theme or lifestyle requires an integrated platform approach, flexibility of intervention, and involvement of stakeholders and unusual suspects. The findings and lessons from this case are also relevant for cities that want to encourage innovation in transversal themes rather than specific sectors or technologies.



Source: Fomento San Sebastian

SAN SEBASTIAN: MORE THAN A SURF SPOT

The city of San Sebastian, in the Basque Country (Spain), is famous for its gastronomy, its scenic location, and its rich cultural heritage. But also, it is a great surf spot, and the city is home to many surf-related businesses. It is not just surf schools and shops: the city is also home to producers of surfboards, special clothing, accessories, and digital equipment. "We noticed that surf, overall, was a growing business in our city", said Eukén Sesé, director of the city-owned development agency Fomento San Sebastian, "and we wanted to make more out of it. That's why we set up our surf cluster policy". His organisation which is 100% city-owned, has 50 employees and a total annual budget of about €25 m,

* Willem van Winden is co-ordinator and Luís de Carvalho core group member of the URBACT workstream 'New urban economies'



and develops and implements the city's economic strategy. Its mission explicitly includes the support to emerging economic clusters in the city, and to forge links between firms and the knowledge institutions. However, for Fomento, 'emerging' does not mean 'from scratch': the clusters selected must have some roots in the region and potentials in the city.

Surf tourism is now the third largest tourism segment after gastronomy and conference related tourism. San Sebastian's waves themselves are good but not exceptional. What makes the local surf scene unique is the link with the city: San Sebastian is one of the few European places where it is possible to surf good waves right next to the city centre. This attracts a diverse and mixed crowd that combines shopping, clubbing, eating and surfing.

What is the surf cluster policy about, and what is it good for? For Eukén Sesé, the main challenge is to **connect the dots**, and stimulate collaboration. "It was easy to see that surf was becoming a local economic driver, but the industry was very fragmented. We have a number of 'old' established players (e.g. surf shops, local board manufacturers), some new entrants (technology companies, surf schools, etc.), and some academic research groups, but there were few if any relations among them". Hence, the surf cluster was designed with the mission of creating a 'co-operation and participation space', a transversal platform for the stakeholders in the sector and beyond to develop a number of competitiveness-enhancing initiatives for its members.

GAINING TRUST FROM THE SURF COMMUNITY

Maite Ayestaran was appointed by Fomento's director as the surf cluster manager. Her first task was to identify the players in the cluster, and engage with them. It proved difficult to gain their trust: there were doubts about Fomento's knowledge about surf as industry and lifestyle. This hurdle was partly solved by hiring an external expert to support her, but the

main change came when she started to learn to surf herself. "I gained their trust the first time they saw me on the water, then they started seeing me as one of them". Her advice to any cluster manager: make sure you are credible, engage deeply with companies, make sure you understand their business, otherwise nothing will work". But there were more hurdles. The surf cluster team had to deal with the very strong competition between players in the sector. "Some established firms thought that we were supporting new companies against them, and severely opposed the initiative; others claimed a special status within the cluster initiative". Ayestaran spent much of her time explaining the pre-competitive approach of the initiative, the position of Fomento as a neutral entity, the value of co-operation, insisting on the equal treatment basis of the initiative, etc.

ADDED VALUE FOR THE COMPANIES

“
[...] the surf cluster was designed with the mission of creating a 'co-operation and participation space', a transversal platform for the stakeholders in the sector and beyond to develop a number of competitiveness-enhancing initiatives for its members.



Eukén Sesé

But after some time, more and more companies took part in cluster meetings, and things started to work out. The design of the surf cluster – i.e. open entry, equitable membership and mixed types of industries – helped to forge new links between seemingly unrelated firms. As the owner of a surf school explains: "the cluster meetings help us to think about new possibilities, such as teaming up with an IT company to develop an e-commerce solution or to do a project with an engineering school". One remarkable company in the cluster, Wavegarden,

developed an artificial wave technology, and sells it worldwide. For them, the cluster is helpful to find new partners within the broad space of the surfing industry. "In our business – new leisure concepts linked with wave gardens – we need complementary companies that could be part of the whole package, and we can easily meet them here". For newcomers, the surf cluster helps to find partners. The manager of a new technology company (originally from the skiing industry now entering the surf business) explains: "we relocated here from another region, and the cluster helped to get in touch with local people and better understand the surf business and possibilities ahead".



Source: Luís Carvalho

ENGAGEMENT WITH UNIVERSITIES: A CONTEST FOR SURF INNOVATION

There is a lot of innovation going on in surf-related technology: new materials, boards, apps, devices, clothes and all sorts of accessories. New knowledge and research is needed, but, as in so many other places, **there was hardly any connection between the surf business and the local universities**¹. “So”, cluster manager Ayestaran explains, “it made sense to engage with universities as well, we had to find a way to make that connection work”. She got in touch with Florencio Fernandez, professor at the Polytechnic University (University of the Basque Country) and the idea was born to organise a contest for surf innovation, in partnership with three universities and higher education institutions – Mondragon, TECNUM and the University of the Basque Country. University students and their supervisors were challenged to prototype new surf products (focusing on boards and accessories), and to involve end-users in the process. It was a big success; more than 100 ideas were proposed by student teams, and the 18 best ones were selected to be prototyped. Many of the participating teams proved to be fanatic surfers themselves, and they loved to work on this. Here are some examples of prototyped products:

- Sensors and microchips in the board for use of visually impaired people;
- A board with a built-in engine;
- New foams and glass fibre to be used in boards.

The winners gained a support package to set up their own business: privileged access to start-up funds, and the opportunity to closely work with mature companies in the field. The contest helped to open up the door for co-operation between university departments and surf companies, who never considered it in the past. In the words of Professor Fernandez: “Now we have companies coming to us, to see what we can do together; [...] moreover, we are now engaging with new people within the University for some concrete surf-related projects.”

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Enhancing training for surf industry professionals is a key achievement of the cluster. The local University of Mondragon offers a Masters programme on ‘marketing and management in surf’, that is, in principle, very interesting for surf companies. But as the course is tailored to regular, full-time Master students, it did not suit the agendas of busy company bosses. To change that, Fomento made a deal with Mondragon to open up some of the more interesting modules of the course for professionals. Employees from companies are now able to attend these modules over 6 weekends, and 14 already did so.

¹ In the article on triple and quadruple helices, earlier in this publication, several other examples are mentioned.



THE WORLD SURF CITIES NETWORK: LEARNING AND SELLING

As part of the cluster policy, Fomento set up an international city exchange network: the World Surf Cities Network (WSCN)², with medium-sized surf cities that also want to make more out of the surf business (cities pay a fee to become a member). They learn from each other about surf cluster practices, surf-tourism promotion and joint project development. Moreover, the network makes business sense: surf firms in the San Sebastian cluster use the contacts to gain access to new markets, and to find business partners abroad. Fomento financially supports cluster members if they travel to matchmaking events in the network. It also runs the secretariat of the network.



Source: Fomento San Sebastian

NOT JUST THE ECONOMY: SMART, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE

Euken Sesé, director of Fomento, is clear about his motives: the key driver to develop the surf cluster initiative is economic development and diversification of the city's economy. "With our actions, we want to enhance the competitive performance and have new jobs in the surf-related industries in San Sebastian. And it also helps to dynamise the image of the city as a place not just for rich pensionados who love good food". Yet, there is more than that: one goal is to open up the surf experience to new groups and make it more 'inclusive'. Supported by the cluster policy, firms have developed surf solutions for blind people (using sensors), children (safety solutions) and elderly people (new types of surf lessons and bundled products). Thus, surf is developing as a more inclusive sport not just for the young and energetic. Moreover, surf is associated with a healthier and more active lifestyle, and closeness to nature, and these are important values for the city. And, last but not least, there is a close relation between surfing, the carrying capacity of the city's beaches

and environmental sustainability – spreading surf and surfing products (e.g. tourism) throughout the year is key to keep the city's urban quality as well.

COSTS AND BENEFITS

San Sebastian's surf cluster policy, as a rough estimate, costs about €250,000 per annum.

How does the Fomento leadership know that it pays off? Fomento has set no quantitative targets or results indicators, but the management team

frequently assesses the impact of their actions and the changing situation of the industry.

A first tool is the city's 'cluster observatory' that allows them to trace the dynamics of the surf industry over time (new firm and job creation, surf tourism etc.). Second, there are frequent surveys of cluster members, to assess their satisfaction with the current initiatives. And last not but least, Fomento's management team uses professional self-assessment methods to critically analyse their own actions and adapt them if needed.

“*With our actions, we want to enhance the competitive performance and have new jobs in the surf-related industries in San Sebastian. And it also helps to dynamise the image of the city as a place not just for rich pensionados who love good food*”



Euken Sesé

A point of debate is whether companies should pay for being a cluster member. In San Sebastian, membership is free, as long as one is in the surf business and shows willingness to participate in the cluster initiatives. But many regional development experts, in general, are in favour of a membership fees: they would signal commitment, and avoid free riding. A related discussion concerns the role of the local government: how long should it be the caretaker of a cluster, and when comes the point where the cluster organisation must stand on its own feet? This raises questions about the longer term, and whether the cluster would always be dependent on the municipality. San Sebastian goes for the public option, with bottom-up participation, no fees and open access.

² <http://www.worldsurfcitiesnetwork.com/index.php/en/>
The network members are: Arica, San Sebastián, Durban, Ericeira, Gold Coast, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, New Plymouth, Newcastle, Santos, and Viana do Castelo.

LESSONS FOR OTHER CITIES?

Despite the specificity of surfing and the surf economy, this story holds at least four lessons for other cities.

First, framing the cluster around a broader theme (surf, in this case, but it could be applied to other domains) rather than around a sector or technology makes it more **inspiring and recognisable**, and helps to catalyse new relationships and innovation beyond industry silos. This is critical for the consolidation of new ‘smart specialisations’ in cities and regions.

Second, cluster policies can be sparked by ‘hunches’, but these are only a starting point. Their concrete design and operationalisation requires a much stronger **evidence base**, assessing the effective potentials for those activities in the city/region. To this, it is wise to involve old and new players in policy design. Instead of picking winners, the concrete identification of new economic growth potential should be done bottom-up, by multiple players (established companies, new entrepreneurs, universities). Local governments can create the conditions for those processes to occur (like in the surf cluster), but should refrain from deciding everything by themselves.

Third, and related with the previous, an important message for city officials and cluster managers is: get out of your office! Open, frequent and informal communication between the cluster manager and

cluster members is essential to design adequate policies and effective actions. Moreover, it also facilitates **distributed leadership**. Despite being the initiative taker, Fomento assigned important roles to other external players, namely to the universities, in the case of the surf innovation contest.

Fourth, the case of San Sebastian shows that the value of local products and services can become closely linked with the quality of urban assets, such as the natural and built environment (seaside, beaches, and urban atmospheres). This is plea to consider more integrated cluster policies that link economic development with urban and environmental planning in the city. ●



Source: Fomento San Sebastian



Source: Andrzej Pobiedziski

ANALYTICAL TEMPLATE OF THE CASE STUDY



BACKGROUND INFORMATION	
NAME OF CITY	San Sebastian (Donostia, in Basque)
REGION AND COUNTRY	Gipuzkoa province, Basque Country, Spain
GEOGRAPHIC SIZE	San Sebastian Municipality: 186,000 inhabitants (61 km ²) San Sebastian Functional Urban Area: 393,000 inhabitants (373 km ²) Gipuzkoa province: 710,000 inhabitants (1,909 km ²) Dublin Functional

1. PRACTICE DESCRIPTION	
ONE-LINER DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE	The surf cluster* is a local economic development initiative aiming to connect and strengthen the competences of players of different types of surf-related industries in San Sebastian, with an eye to foster new business and innovation networks. <i>*Throughout this case study, unless stated otherwise, we refer to surf 'cluster' as a policy/initiative, not as the full set of surf-related activities in the city/region (which the initiative aims to support).</i>
MAIN REASON FOR HIGHLIGHTING THIS CASE	The surf cluster is a city-driven, new-generation type of cluster policy aiming to connect apparently unrelated activities around a common theme or platform: surf (and wave sliding sports). Instead of a technology or product type, it focuses on a lifestyle that radiates into many products and services such as boards, clothing, devices and even spatial/leisure concepts (e.g. a wave garden). Therefore, the cluster policy is focused and at the same time offers scope for diversification. It makes use of the strengths of the region (gastronomy, hospitality, natural conditions, IT-digital and engineering skills), combining them in new ways. Although not explicitly designed as such, the surf cluster initiative largely captures the logic behind the smart specialisation strategies underlying Europe 2020, namely by actively supporting the discovery of new activities and innovation potentials in a bottom-up way. It refrains from 'picking winners' but focuses on connecting old and new players (e.g. linking universities, companies and students through open-innovation contests); moreover, it combines the formation of new local connections with the access to external sources of variety – knowledge, networks, markets – through city-driven international exchange networks and mobility grants. Last but not least, the surf cluster illustrates how to foster links between new economic activities, sports, lifestyle and natural/tourist resources, which is critical for the sustainable development and attractiveness of many European cities.



1. PRACTICE DESCRIPTION (CONT'D)

OVERALL OBJECTIVE

Overall, the surf cluster initiative aimed at profiling and enhancing a specific platform of activities related with surf in the city. Surf was perceived as a relevant (and growing) local economic driver, but the constituent's competences, innovation abilities and cooperation routines were seen as fragile and fragmented. There were a number of 'old' established players (e.g. surf shops and local manufacturers) and new entrants (universities, technology companies, surf schools, etc.) working in potentially related fields but with limited, if any relations among them. Moreover, although its impact on the economy, society and physical space of the city had been growing, surf was still largely perceived as a peripheral, counterculture activity.

Hence, the surf cluster was designed by Fomento San Sebastian (the city's economic development agency – see 'The planning context') with the mission of creating a 'cooperation and participation space' for the stakeholders in the sector and of developing a number of competitiveness-enhancing initiatives for its members while embedding surf further in the city's image and culture.

Hence, the overall aim of the cluster is local economic development, but not only. The cluster's mission has been translated in a number of strategic objectives, namely:

- Promoting and defending the general, shared interests of its stakeholders and creating spaces for meeting and debate;
- Developing initiatives to respond to the competitive challenges of the sector;
- Promoting the image, visibility and importance of the sector;
- Promoting the sector internationally;
- Promoting cooperation, innovation and entrepreneurial capacity among its companies, stakeholders and other agents to steer knowledge transfer (in a 'triple helix' fashion).

**1. PRACTICE DESCRIPTION (CONT'D)****DESCRIPTION
OF ACTIVITIES**

The surf cluster developed a relatively large portfolio of activities to accomplish its objectives. Those can be divided in two main streams: cluster 'services' and cluster 'projects'.

Cluster services encompass a number of business support provisions to companies, designed to increase their internal competences and capacities. Those services are provided by Fomento to many other companies in the city (in every sector), but fine-tuned and eventually augmented to the specific needs of the surf industry. Cluster services include:

- Expert advising on issues such as marketing, business development and innovation, finance, internationalisation, office rental, aid and grant search, business plan development, etc.;
- Seed financing and start-up support;
- Support to participate in business missions and fairs;
- Organisation of training courses for experienced and inexperienced surf professionals on business management, social media, on-line sales, etc.;
- Internationalisation/mobility grants to unemployed graduates to work on surf-related projects abroad;
- Surf observatory, including frequent scans on sector dynamics, job profiles, market research, etc.

Cluster projects are tailor-made activities, often co-designed with the cluster members to stimulate the industry as a whole, fostering networking, image building and the surf-related platform. Some of the activities carried out so far are pinpointed below, but new initiatives frequently emerge through interactions between cluster managers and cluster members:

- Information and networking sessions with cluster members;
- 'Open innovation' contests ('surf board innovation competition', for engineering students in cooperation with three different universities and three local companies);
- Joint development of surf-tourism products with surf schools and hostels;
- Steering of concrete working groups (e.g. together with surf schools and clubs to draw beach-related occupancy regulations);
- Setting up of a 'World Surf Cities Network' (WSCN), led by San Sebastian with 10 other leading surf cities around the world;
- Marketing and communication (website, social media, conference and event participation, etc.).

There is a strong relation between cluster services and cluster projects. First, while the first contribute to enhance the internal capacities of companies (which are essential to innovate and absorb new knowledge), the latter contributes to strengthen the network of players as a whole, namely by forging new relations and connections between previously unconnected activities. Second, there is a focus on complementing local networking initiatives with the access to external knowledge 'pipelines' and international positioning (e.g. through the WSCN and the grants for international mobility).



1. PRACTICE DESCRIPTION (CONT'D)

INTEGRATED APPROACH	The key drive for the surf cluster is economic: its ultimate goal is to enhance the competitive performance and new job creation for the surf-related industries in San Sebastian, namely by creating new cross fertilisation opportunities. Yet, and beyond that, the project's actions clearly take into account the social and environmental features of the city – actually, the economic objective of the cluster is closely linked with these dimensions. First, surfing is changing towards becoming a socially diverse activity, involving different social and demographic groups; hence, many cluster activities are encouraging e.g. the development of surf solutions for visually impaired people (sensors), kids (safety solutions) and older groups (new types of surf lessons and bundled products). Moreover, surfing is seen by the cluster proponents as a way to flatten tourism seasonality and diversify the tourist profiles of San Sebastian (traditionally wealthy and older). Second, surfing in San Sebastian is closely linked with the quality of the built and natural environment (the wave breaks just in front of the city). Thus the image-building activities linking surf and city towards a unique tourism product, as well as the working groups to preserve the sustainability of the beaches for surfers and other audiences (e.g. avoid overcrowding).
TARGET AUDIENCE	The key direct beneficiaries of the surf cluster activities are: • Companies involved in surf-related activities, from different angles and industries, including e.g. surf shops, hostels and accommodation, technology and engineering companies, manufacturers (e.g. textiles, accessories), distributors, event organisers, tourist operators, communication and audio-visual companies, etc.; • Universities and R&D centres (with education programmes and technological competences relevant for surfing industries); • Public institutions, clubs and surf-related federations; Other indirect beneficiaries are e.g. surfers, beach users, students, and the civil society in general.
MAINSTREAMING OF GENDER EQUALITY AND NON- DISCRIMINATION	The surf cluster initiative is clearly gender neutral. Although the initiative wasn't designed explicitly accounting for gender issues, there is an increasing number of females involved in surf-related activities. Moreover, the head cluster manager is also female, and so are the representative persons of many of the cluster members.
TIMEFRAME OF THE PRACTICE IMPLEMENTED	The surf cluster initiative was launched in May 2011 and has now been running for about 3 years. There is no foreseen end date. The first implementation years are currently being assessed and evaluated with an eye to plan the next stages of the initiative.



2. POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

2.1 REGIONAL AND CITY FRAMEWORK

San Sebastian is located in Gipuzkoa, a province of the Basque country, one of the autonomous regions of Spain. Together with Bilbao and Vitoria, San Sebastian is one of its most important cities. San Sebastian's population is ageing and its unemployment rate over the last years (post-crisis) has been about 11 percent. As the economic base of the city is highly dominated by tourism and service industries, the economic policy of the city has been focusing on economic diversification, namely through the support of emergent activities. In this vein, surf-related activities are understood as growth and diversification drivers in their own right, but also as relevant to reinventing other traditional activities, such as tourism and engineering-based industries.

First, surf tourism is already the third largest tourism stream in the city, following food and congress-related tourism. San Sebastian's wave itself is not excellent, but the surf establishes a unique relation with the city's image and quality of life, being one of the few places where it is possible to surf good waves just right in the city. This allows for diversified and mixed tourist groups that combine shopping, eating and surfing.

Second, some surf activities call for engineering-related competences in which the region excels, thus providing room for new productive combinations. The Basque Country has a long tradition of supporting clusters (i.e. networks of players around a certain industry) and cluster policies – although not at the city/urban level. The Autonomous Region has a well-established and independent economic and innovation policy, providing substantial support and funding to companies and leading R&D institutes. Many of the abovementioned cluster services benefited from the Basque Government's funding, and they were de-concentrated and managed at the local level.

Finally, surf activities are seen as a new businesses and an entrepreneurship opportunity for the many graduates that have difficulty in finding a job in the region. Moreover, surfing is seen as closely related to the amenity 'package' of the city (seaside location, low congestion, quality of the public space, strong identity), contributing to enhance the city's attractiveness vis-à-vis other competing locations.

2.2 THE PLANNING CONTEXT

The surf cluster is closely linked to the vision and economic diversification strategies of San Sebastian. Fomento San Sebastian – the municipal-owned economic development company (with roughly 50 employees and a total annual budget of about € 25 m) – is a pivotal institution implementing the city's economic strategy. Fomento was incorporated as a public company in 2004 and since then the scope of its tasks has been increasing, including the provision of external consultancy services, the organisation of training and brokerage, job fairs, entrepreneurship, strategic planning exercises, among others. The mission of Fomento explicitly includes the support to emerging sectors in the city through clustering models and by forging new links between the city's economic base and the knowledge institutions.

The surf cluster is one of the cluster policies designed and implemented by Fomento to support emergent industries. However, for Fomento, 'emergent' does not mean 'from scratch': the types of activities targeted must have some roots and potentials in the region. Moreover, beyond the economic dimension sensu stricto, the surf cluster is also closely linked with other sectoral strategies of the city (sports, internationalisation, public space quality), being mentioned in the recent EU2020 strategic plan of San Sebastian (San Sebastian, 2014).



3. DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 PRACTICE DESIGN AND PLANNING

Project idea

The Director of Fomento and his staff had the initial idea for the surf cluster by 'hunch', namely through local observation of the changing landscape of surf activities in the city (e.g. use of the beaches, new tourists, new shops, etc.).

Previous initiatives

This was the first time that Fomento and the city dealt with surf from a clustering and economic perspective. However, cluster policies were not new for Fomento: they had been developing them for almost seven years as a key model to accomplish economic diversification. Among others, cluster policies are considered as key to enhance the competitiveness of firms and strengthen international presence. Fomento sees cluster and new network formation as a new economic model in which networks – formal and informal – are the key drivers of local economic dynamics and innovation. Before the surf cluster, the city had prioritised already three clusters: assistive technology, renewable energy and audio-visual; and more recently, Fomento started working on a food & urban farming cluster. The initial idea to launch a cluster by Fomento may have different drivers, e.g. a EU project opportunity, the advice of key players or simply a 'hunch' – as in the case of the surf cluster.

Assessment and evidence base

Following the initial hunch, the policy design followed a structured process, going through different stages to identify what kind of actions would be appropriate. It started with a diagnosis to analyse the current size and potential of the cluster, job profiles and actors, etc. Moreover, close consultations were held with companies and other stakeholders (i.e. universities, associations, technology centers, clubs) to analyse how the surf industries could be strengthened, where the weak and strong points are, and which ones need to be addressed. As a next step, a strategy and work plan were made, namely for the types of services to provide. Previous cluster initiatives from Fomento had followed a similar design process.

Management structure

Since its inception, the surf cluster has its own 'cluster manager' – a senior employee from Fomento –, supported by other technical staff and an external consultant with long experience in the sector.

The manager is responsible for steering and facilitating the local networking, developing common projects and, more in general, for ensuring the realisation of the cluster action plan (containing the elements of the cluster approach discussed before). The cluster manager provides leadership to the surf cluster, backed by the institutional power of Fomento (and its Director) and the sector expertise of the external consultant. Moreover, related to different projects and actions within the cluster, a number of specific working groups are formed with representatives from the interested parties (Fomento, companies, associations, universities, etc.).

The management structure is thus small and agile, often meeting on a weekly basis. They spend much time discussing with companies and other relevant actors about concrete projects and future opportunities, setting up meetings, organising projects etc. At the same time, their time is limited; as an employee of Fomento and external advisor, respectively, they have more duties beyond steering the cluster.

3. DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION (CONT'D)

3.2 MANAGEMENT	Agility The management team of the surf cluster had been able to adapt and react as a number of initial hurdles popped-up. First, it was initially difficult for Fomento to gain the trust and legitimacy to act within the surf community. There were doubts about their abilities and knowledge about this industry/lifestyle. This hurdle was progressively solved through the presence of an external expert in the management team, but also with the progressive learning of the head cluster manager of the surf activity itself. As expressed by the cluster manager, “I gained their trust the first time they saw me on the water, then they started seeing me as one of them”. Second, the surf cluster team had to deal with the very strong competition between players in the sector. As explained, “some initially felt that we were supporting new companies against them, and severely opposed the initiative”; or “in a second moment some key players were convinced but wanted to have special status within the cluster initiative”. Overcoming these tensions took considerable time and persistence to explain the pre-competitive approach of the initiative, the position of Fomento as a neutral entity, the value of cooperation, insisting on the equal treatment basis of the initiative, etc. Thirdly, the cluster management had to adapt the design of some initiatives on the go, as they proved ineffective for the needs of the members. An example is the design of training courses, whose curricula had to be adapted, but also new training partners and lecturing institutions had to be sought due to lack of demand for the initial courses. The establishment of a partnership with a local university with specialised ‘surf management’ training helped avoiding redundancy across training providers, allowed to align courses with industry’s needs and facilitated contacts between companies and students.
3.3 MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEM	Monitoring The management team closely monitors the outputs delivered by the different activities of the cluster. This is done by regular collection of output indicators, such as number of training courses; start-ups supported, international job grants awarded, companies under expert assistance and advice, meetings, etc. (see point on ‘Description of activities’ for more details). Results and target specification The surf cluster did not set a-priori a fixed or quantified set of targets and results. First, it is considered to be difficult and perhaps artificial to establish a direct quantified link between the cluster’s activities and the desired change of situation (e.g. surf industry’s performance, innovation, growth and jobs) due to the many external variables involved. Second, a large part of the initiative (e.g. the ‘cluster projects’) has a markedly experimental and flexible character, whose targets and expected results are per-se dynamic and hard to combine with fixed sets of indicators.



3. DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION (CONT'D)

3.3 MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEM

Evaluation approach

The lack of quantified targets and result indicators does not mean the lack of evaluation. On the contrary, the management team frequently evaluates their actions and the changing situation of the industry, through different methods.

First, Fomento has set a 'cluster observatory' that allows tracing the dynamics of the surf industry over time, namely new firm and job creation, surf tourism and associated demand features. Second, there are frequent surveys of cluster members, in order to assess the users/cluster members' satisfaction with the current initiatives. Third, the management team develops self-assessment reports of their activity in order to take stock of previous actions and adapt the cluster's actions for the future. Fourth, there are frequent meetings and face-to-face assessments of results, achievements and further needs with cluster members. Fifth, the cluster manager has voluntarily been through an external cluster 'coaching' activity under the setting of an EU exchange network (KnowCities, an Interreg IVB project), supporting a process of self-discovery and self-critique of the cluster activities in order to adapt to new challenges.

Governance mechanism

Contrarily to other cluster initiatives elsewhere, the surf cluster does not have a formal structure or its own legal entity. The activities of the cluster are thus governed by Fomento San Sebastian and, ultimately, by the City Council (Fomento's 'owner'). This makes it possible for the cluster members to directly benefit from the general services provided by Fomento.

The cluster membership is done on an open and equitable basis, and there are no membership fees involved. In order to join the surf cluster, companies and organisations have to fill in a membership form justifying their relation with the surf industry and their willingness to take part in the cluster's activities.

The surf cluster group has currently 57 members, and roughly 70 percent are companies. Some cluster members are also co-organisers of events and other partnership-driven initiatives of the cluster (e.g. open innovation competitions – see 'new practices'), while others are simple beneficiaries.

Partnerships

So far, Fomento is the leader and engine behind the development and implementation of the surf cluster. However, it closely works with different types of partners, which are also the 'end-users' of the initiative – companies, universities, associations, etc. (see 'target audience') for concrete initiatives (see 'new practices'). Moreover, some of the initiatives rely on cooperation with other units within Fomento (e.g. training, business support services) and departments of the City Council itself (e.g. for surf and beach regulations and permitting issues).

3. DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION (CONT'D)

3.4 GOVERNANCE: PARTNERSHIP, PARTICIPATION, MOBILISATION AND EMPOWERMENT

Roles and interests of the partners

As said, Fomento is the leading organisation behind the surf cluster and does it as part of its core mission (economic diversification of the city). To this effect, besides the cluster manager, Fomento hired an expert consultant with long experience with surf industries, providing additional inputs to the initiative while strengthening the liaison with the surf community (see also 'Management').

Other partners in the initiative (companies, universities, associations) are simultaneously the policy recipients: as cluster members, they are beneficiaries but also co-create some of the policy initiatives (e.g. innovation contests, working groups). As analysed in a recent survey, there are a number of major and common incentives for participation in the surf cluster, namely:

- Market development, cooperation and synergy opportunities with other partners and related activities;
- Information and access to funding sources;
- Formation of collective action to defend the general interests of the industry.

Beyond these common objectives, different participants have differentiated aims when becoming members of the cluster. For example, universities are willing to find new platforms to 'commercialise' their research and explore new education markets.

Involvement of stakeholders and end-users

Members are mobilised through the regular meetings and initiatives of the cluster. However, in order to increase the diffusion of the activities to other potential members, a specific website was created. The cluster activities are frequently promoted through participation in conferences and other events, with an eye to reach other potential members and recipients, as well as wider audiences.

When the surf cluster was launched, the team of Fomento 'searched' for partners to join in the initiative, to create a certain critical mass. However, currently, most of the new members search for the cluster themselves and ask to join as they became familiar with its purposes (whether through indirect communication or through mouth-to-mouth).

Role of the city and political support

The political support to the initiative has been increasing ever since. It started as a personal bet of Fomento's Director but has gained legitimacy at higher policy-making levels. Even though the political leadership changed since the inception of the initiative, the support to the surf cluster remained. Surf is currently well established in different local policy agendas (economy, tourism, internationalisation, etc.).



4. INNOVATIVE ELEMENTS AND NOVEL APPROACHES

Key innovation

Contrarily to other cluster policies that focus on a concrete technology or product type, the surf cluster initiative is designed to help connecting apparently unrelated activities around a common theme or platform: surf. It focuses on a lifestyle that radiates into many products and services such as boards, clothing, devices and even spatial/leisure concepts. Therefore, it actively supports the discovery of new activities and innovations from the bottom-up. This is supported by a number of distinctive practices, as analysed below.

Initiator of the innovation

The initiator of the new practices was Fomento San Sebastian, drawing on insight and joint discussions with cluster members and other experts (see section on 'Management').

New practices

Here we identify a number of practices that stand out vis-à-vis other traditional cluster initiatives. In many ways, and although not explicitly designed as such, the surf cluster largely captures the logic behind the smart specialisation strategies underlying Europe 2020, namely by actively supporting the discovery of new activities and innovation potentials in the city and region.

Firm and network-level incentives combined

As mentioned before, the cluster combines a number of network-level activities (meetings, contests, working groups, communication initiatives, etc.) with firm-level supports (entrepreneurship support, training, etc.). This combination is virtuous as the ability to participate and reap benefits from networking and exchange relies on the internal competences of firms and their capacity to search and absorb knowledge and information. By working on these two fronts, the surf cluster contributes to strengthen the local surf-related industries in a more integrated way (see also section on 'Description of activities').

Crowdsourcing innovations and user-involvement

One of the flagship projects under the surf cluster is the 'surf board innovation competition', a new concept to grow new surf products and innovations in a bottom-up way. Backed by Fomento and together with three cluster companies and three universities in the Basque Country (Mondragon TECNUM and the University of the Basque Country), engineering students with surfing knowledge were invited to propose new ideas for surfboards and accessories. The best ones got support to be prototyped and brought into market. To do so, students get specialised tutors and other supports (materials, workshop space, eventual grants and business advice, etc.) from the partner institutions. Besides the creation of new local products and entrepreneurship opportunities, this open-innovation contest contributes to create new networks among companies and universities (and even among university departments), while involving students in local surf-related industrial networks.

Connecting old and new activities and players

The design of the surf cluster – i.e. open entry, equitable membership and mixed types of industries – contributes to the emergence of new links among seemingly unrelated activities and to the development of new combinations. By choosing a theme (surf) and not a specific sector, the cluster initiative refrains from 'picking winners' while opening new opportunities of diversification that make use of local and regional competences: gastronomy, hospitality, natural-urban resources, IT-digital competences and engineering skills. As explained by cluster members [companies]: *"The possibility to cooperate with engineering companies was not in our radar [surf school], but the links with Fomento helped us to visualise that option [...]; the meetings help us to think on new possibilities, such as teaming up with an IT company to develop an e-commerce solution or to do a project with an engineering school [...]"*

"[...]In our business [new leisure concepts linked with wave gardens], we need complementary businesses that could be part of the whole package. [...] In the cluster's events we can see what other people are doing, namely in other activities that would not immediately cross our mind. Some things could make sense together, but all these pieces and persons would not just meet without the cluster [initiative]."

Moreover, the surf cluster helps to plug new entrants in the industry and in the region, as it is the case of one new technology company from the skiing industry: *"Our company was founded in another region and the cluster helped to get in touch with local people and better understand the surf business and possibilities ahead."*



4. INNOVATIVE ELEMENTS AND NOVEL APPROACHES (CONT'D)

Access to external networks and focused internationalisation

Beyond local networking, the cluster initiative tries to connect cluster members to external sources of knowledge and international market opportunities. The idea is to bring new competences to the city and promote local products abroad. This has been steered by two connected actions:

First, Fomento led the formation of an international city exchange network – World Surf Cities Network (WSCN) – with medium-sized surf cities in Europe, Australia, South Africa and South America, focusing on surf cluster practices, surf-tourism promotion and joint project development and exchange (e.g. definition of common economic impact methodologies). Moreover, through this network, local cluster members (e.g. companies, R&D institutes) can access information on new markets and potential knowledge and business partners in other cities. Fomento actively promotes this by co-supporting the travelling of local companies to events in other network cities and by brokering contacts.

Second, Fomento awarded a number of international mobility grants (funded by the Basque Government) to unemployed graduates to work in companies and organisations abroad, in surf-related activities. The WSCN is used as a source to find suitable job placements (in local companies), as well as to contribute to define relevant surf-related projects to be carried out by the graduates abroad. In some cases, the mobile graduates use the network to create new business opportunities for locally developed solutions (e.g. glasses for surfers and other specialised devices).

Sustainability-driven local action

Last but not least, the surf cluster works beyond the economic dimension of surfing and jointly works with surf schools, clubs, etc. to preserve the sustainability of the local resources, in this case to avoid overcrowding in the beaches. A number of initiatives have been developed to nurture the collective action of surf schools, supporting companies to cope with regulations and set new standards (e.g. meetings and workshops between surf schools, Fomento and different city departments). In this way, the cluster helps to bring together fragmented interests towards the preservation of the natural resources (beaches, waves) that sustain the surf industry.

Mainstreaming and diffusion

The WSCN has been a way to spread San Sebastian's cluster practice, namely through the network's international conferences, meetings and visits. In addition, the results and the practices of the surf cluster have been diffused locally and in Spain, and have generated attention from the press. Also, the surf cluster practice has been promoted in international conferences on clusters and local competitiveness (e.g. TCI - The global practitioner's network for competitiveness, clusters and innovation).

Partnership innovation

The overall partnership model involved in the surf cluster is not new in the city and has been experimented in other local cluster initiatives. It is however the first time it is deployed with the local surf community.



5. FUNDING	
5.1.FUNDING	Budget The surf cluster as such is not a directly EU supported project. Its activities (see section on 'Description of activities') are funded through the annual budget of Fomento. The total costs associated with surf cluster's initiatives, excluding the salary of the cluster manager, are estimated to be about 250,000 euros per year. Nevertheless, the Basque Government indirectly funds some of the cluster's initiatives – namely training, grants or internship support (ESF) – which are run by Fomento on a regional de-concentrated basis.
	Procedures to acquire funding The funding acquisition procedures (from the City budget and from the Basque Government) were stabilised beyond the activities of the surf cluster.
	Private leverage There is no specific account of the private leverage generated by the initiative. There is however evidence of complementary investments made by cluster members for certain initiatives. Some examples are: • The provision of men-hours (e.g. as tutors), workshop space and materials to support the prototyping of new surf-related ideas; • The investments made by companies to attend international conferences and trade fairs abroad (with only minor funds by Fomento); • The investments to start-up new companies (with support from the cluster's services).
5.2.OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME	Not applicable
5.3.MANAGING AUTHORITY (MA – IF RELEVANT)	Not applicable
5.4.COHESSION POLICY OBJECTIVE (IF RELEVANT)	Not applicable
5.5.LINK TO EU 2020	The cluster initiative is primarily linked with the 'smart growth' axis of EU2020. San Sebastian's EU2020 strategy (San Sebastian, 2013) explicitly refers to surf in its axis on 'strengthening a new economic model', more concretely on 'nurturing new companies and knowledge infrastructure related with sports'.



6. PROJECT ASSESSMENT	
6.1. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY	Most of the cluster's activities are not directly reliant on EU funding and are likely to continue over the next years, despite of potential adjustments and new projects.
6.2 ISSUES AND PROBLEMS	As referred in section 3.2, the management team encountered (and was able to overcome) a number of issues, namely: • The ability to gain trust and legitimacy to act from the surf community. This challenge was heightened due to the close links between industry and lifestyle. Beyond the cluster manager, it implied involving an external expert (a surfer himself) and to personally dig into the nuts and bolts of the surfing lifestyle. • The strong competition between players in the sector, who initially refrained from cooperating and exchanging information with other firms. The cluster manager overcame these tensions by stressing and insisting in the pre-competitive approach of the initiative and the role of Fomento as a neutral entity. • The need to adapt and re-design some initiatives (educational programmes) due to lack of demand, to assure a stronger fit with the industry's needs. Still, a point of debate is whether companies should pay for being a cluster member. In San Sebastian, membership is free, as long as one is in the surf business and show willingness to participate in the cluster's initiatives. But many regional development experts, in general, are in favour of membership fees: they would signal commitment, and avoid free riding. A related discussion concerns the role of the local government: how long should it be the caretaker of a cluster, and when comes the point where the cluster organisation must stand on its own feet? This raises questions about the longer term, and whether the cluster would always be dependent on the municipality. San Sebastian goes for the public option, with bottom-up participation, no fees and open access.



6. PROJECT ASSESSMENT (CONT'D)

6.3 PROJECT OUTPUTS & RESULTS

The surf cluster is a medium to long-term effort to catalyse surf-related industries in San Sebastian. Urban economic structures change slowly, depend on multiple external-to-the-city factors (national policies, macroeconomic contexts, technological change, etc.) and policies have to take it into consideration. Moreover, it is difficult to disentangle the causes behind the overall (positive) evolution of the surf industries and jobs in the city. Naturally, a number of new start-ups and jobs would have existed anyway without the cluster services, others probably not.

Between 2012-2013, some of the cluster's outcomes are:

- The provision of expert advising to companies: 27 companies supported;
- The provision of seed financing and start-up support: 24 companies supported, and 11 started-up during 2012-2013;
- Travel allowances to participate in business missions and fairs: 10 companies;
- Organisation of training courses: 12 courses for experienced and inexperienced surf professionals;
- Provision of internationalisation/mobility grants to unemployed graduates to work on surf-related projects abroad: 18 grants between 2012-2014;

Moreover, there are already a number of tangible results and important 'little victories' that can be linked to the surf cluster's activities and outputs:

- The formation of new working groups between university departments (mixing competences in chemistry, materials, mechanics, electronics and graphic design) and between companies and universities;
- A number of new companies combining their competences towards new services and activities (e.g. joint selling of products and promotional activities);
- Raised awareness for cooperation potentials and explorative projects between cluster members;
- The prototyping of 11 new ideas for surfboard-related innovation (e.g. ocean glasses, new foams, communication systems, board sensors, boards with motor, etc.);
- New linkages and meetings between old and new players in the industry and enhancing of an economic 'surf-community' feeling;
- Image improvements and local awareness for the industry.



7. SUCCESS FACTORS, LESSONS LEARNED, AND CONDITIONS

7.1. SUCCESS FACTORS	• Open, frequent and informal communication between the cluster manager and cluster members; this was relevant to identify the most appropriate activities to support, fine-tune existent activities and jointly identify new relevant projects; • Distributed leadership: despite being the initiative taker, Fomento distributed important roles to other players and external experts, with relevant technical knowledge on the specificities of the industry. This helped to increase the buy-in of relevant companies and organisations and to access new communities of innovators (e.g. students, through the involvement of the university); • The definition of a cluster theme instead of a single product or technology; this contributed to make the cluster more relevant for its members (as they could learn from a more diverse set of complementary activities), to the emergence of a new product and service innovations, and to strengthening surf-related collective action in the city; • The international orientation of some activities contributed to raise the cluster profile and to link local entrepreneurs and organisations to new markets and knowledge sources. The formation of the WSCN was particularly relevant as an effective cooperation and knowledge exchange instrument; • The management agility, as it allowed readapting the cluster activities to concrete demands of its members, avoiding wasteful projects and redundancy (e.g. re-design training supports).
7.2. LESSONS LEARNT	• Cluster managers should be able to overcome the dilemma between insisting on a medium-term strategy and keeping the flexibility to adapt to emergent needs and opportunities. This case shows that this is possible and desirable, but requires political support and the ability to redesign initiatives in collaboration with several stakeholders. • There are advantages in designing cluster policies as ‘platforms’ that radiate around one common theme instead of a concrete product. In this way, cluster policies refrain from picking winning sectors, support new combinations and still concentrate efforts in domains in which the city/region has competences and advantages. • Related with the previous, and instead of picking winners, the concrete identification of new innovation potentials should be done bottom-up, by multiple players (companies, universities). Local governments can create the conditions for those processes to occur (like in the surf cluster), but should refrain from deciding by themselves. • Cluster policies can be sparked by ‘hunches’, but their concrete design and operationalisation requires a much stronger evidence base, assessing the effective potentials for those activities in the city/region. It should also involve old and new players in policy design. • The performance of certain clusters increasingly rely on the quality and sustainability of a number of non-economic assets of the city, such as the quality of the natural and built environment (as this case demonstrates). In those cases, the coordination roles of clusters managers (e.g. with other stakeholders and City Departments) are heightened.



7. SUCCESS FACTORS, LESSONS LEARNED, AND CONDITIONS (CONT'D)

7.3. TRANSFER	The surf cluster initiative was naturally inspired by many other cluster policies worldwide (including the European and Basque Country experience), but locally adapted to i) the specific context of surf industries (types of players, demands, etc.) and to ii) the political-administrative context of the City Council/Fomento (e.g. de-concentrated management of firm-level regional incentives; previous local cluster policy models). To our knowledge, the surf cluster model of San Sebastian, which is a relatively recent initiative, was not fully transferred as such to other places yet. However, many of its innovative practices have transferability potential to other industries and urban contexts. The model can be particularly suited to medium-sized cities willing to support new industries and economic combinations around concrete themes linked with sports activities and beyond (e.g. skiing), or cities whose competitiveness strongly relies on finding new combinations between endogenous resources and new knowledge (e.g. tourism, food, etc.).
7.4. TRANSFER CONDITIONS TRANSFERABILITY)	• Supporting emergent industries is not the same as supporting industries from scratch: the city/region must have some record of previous competences and activities in the field; • Political support (and associated funding) is required, namely to assemble a relevant number of company-network supports and to keep enough agility to change during the course of the plan; • For enacting such a policy, previous experience in running economic development and firm-level supports is desirable; the same for leading/participating in international exchange networks.



ANNEX

FURTHER INFORMATION	
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CONTACT	Maite Ayestaran (surf cluster manager) Donostiako Sustapena/Fomento San Sebastian Address: Alto de Errondo 2, 20009 Donostia Telephone Number: + 34 943 482800 E-mail address: Maite_Ayestaran@donostia.org http://www.fomentosansebastian.org http://www.surfcitydonostia.com/index.php/en/
NAME AND CONTACT OF EXPERT WHO DID THE 'CASE STUDY'	Willem van Winden w.van.winden@urbaniq.nl Luís de Carvalho lcarmo@letras.up.pt

→ URBACT II PROJECTS

PROJECTS	ISSUES ADDRESSED	LEAD PARTNERS
1ST CALL PROJECTS (2008–2011)		
Active A.G.E.	Strategies for cities with an ageing population	Rome – IT
Building Healthy Communities*	Developing indicators and criteria for a healthy sustainable urban development	Torino – IT
CityRegion.Net	Urban sprawl and development of hinterlands	Graz – AT
CoNet	Approaches to strengthening social cohesion in neighbourhoods	Berlin – DE
Creative Clusters	Creative clusters in low density urban areas	Obidos – PT
CTUR	Cruise Traffic and Urban Regeneration of port areas	Naples – IT
EGTC	Sustainable development of cross-border agglomerations	Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière – FR
FIN-URB-ACT	Small and medium enterprises and local economic development	Aachen– DE
HerO*	Cultural heritage and urban development	Regensburg – DE
HOPUS	Design coding for sustainable housing	University La Sapienza, Roma – IT
JESSICA 4 Cities	JESSICA and Urban Development Funds	Regional government of Tuscany – IT
Joining Forces	Strategy and governance at city-region scale	Lille Metropole – FR
LC-FACIL	Implementing integrated sustainable urban development according to the Leipzig Charter	Leipzig – DE
LUMASEC	Sustainable land use management	University of Karlsruhe – DE
MILE*	Managing migration and integration at local level	Venice – IT
My Generation	Promoting the positive potential of young people in cities	Rotterdam – NL
NeT-TOPIC	City model for intermediate/peripheral metropolitan cities	L'Hospitalet de Llobregat – ES
Nodus	Spatial planning and urban regeneration	The generalitat of Catalonia – ES
OPENCities*	Opening cities to build-up, attract and retain international human capital	Belfast – UK
REDIS	Science districts and urban development	Magdeburg – DE
RegGov*	Integrated policies and financial planning for sustainable regeneration of deprived areas	Duisburg – DE
REPAIR	Regeneration of abandoned military sites	Medway – UK
RUnUP	Strengthening potential of urban poles with triple helix partnerships	Gateshead – UK
SUITE	Sustainable housing provision	Santiago de Compostela – ES
UNIC*	Promoting innovation in the ceramics sector	Limoges – FR
URBAMECO*	Integrated sustainable regeneration of deprived urban areas	Grand Lyon – FR
Urban N.O.S.E.	Urban incubators for social enterprises	Gela – IT
WEED	Promoting entrepreneurship for women	Celje – SI
2ND CALL PROJECTS (2009–2012)		
Active Travel Network	Promoting walking and cycling in small and medium-sized cities	Weiz – AT
CASH*	Sustainable and affordable energy efficient housing	Echirolles– FR
ESIMeC	Economic strategies and innovation in medium-sized cities	Basingstoke and Deane – UK
EVUE	Electric Vehicles in Urban Europe	Westminster – UK
LINKS	Improving the attractiveness and quality of life in old historical centres	Bayonne – FR
OP-ACT	Strategic positioning of small and medium-sized cities facing demographic changes	Leoben – AT
Roma-Net*	Integration of the Roma population in European cities	Budapest – HU
SURE	Socio-economic methods for urban rehabilitation in deprived urban areas	Eger – HU
TOGETHER	Developing co-responsibility for social inclusion and well-being of residents in European cities	Mulhouse – FR
3RD CALL PROJECTS (2012–2015)		
4D Cities	Promoting innovation in the health sector	Igualada – ES
CityLogo	Innovative city brand management	Utrecht – NL
Creative SpIN	Cultural and Creative Industries	Birmingham – UK
CSI Europe	Role of financial instruments (Jessica Urban Development Fund) in efficient planning	Manchester – UK
ENTER.HUB	Railway hubs/multimodal interfaces of regional relevance in medium sized cities	Reggio Emilia – IT
EUniverCities	Partnerships between cities and universities for urban development	Delft – NL
Jobtown	Local partnerships for youth employment opportunities	Cesena – IT
My Generation at Work	Youth employment with focus on enterprising skills and attitudes	Rotterdam – NL
PREVENT	Involving parents in the prevention of early school leaving	Nantes – FR
RE-Block	Renewing high-rise blocks for cohesive and green neighbourhoods	Budapest XVIII District – HU
Sustainable Food in Urban Communities	Developing low-carbon and resource-efficient urban food systems	Brussels Capital – BE
URBACT Markets	Local markets as drivers for local economic development	Barcelona – ES
USEACT	Re-utilizing existing locations to avoid land consumption	Naples – IT
USER	Involving users and inhabitants in urban sustainable planning	Agglomeration Grenoble Alpes Metropole – FR
WOOD FOOTPRINT	Local economic development through the (re)use of brownfield and buildings of the wood furniture sector	Paços de Ferreira – PT
PILOT PROJECTS (2013–2015)		
Diet for a Green Planet	Cooperation to align eating habits for an ecologically sustainable development	Södertälje – SE
ESIMeC II	Economic strategies and innovation in medium sized cities	Basingstoke and Deane – UK
EVUE II	Electric Vehicles in Urban Europe	Westminster – UK
Gastronomic Cities	Promoting gastronomy as a key urban development	Burgos – ES
Genius: Open	Creating innovative solutions to city challenges via an on-line collaborative platform	York – UK
Healthy Ageing	Cities' action for an active and healthy ageing	Udine – IT
PlaceMaking 4 Cities	Useful public spaces instead of nice public spaces	Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council – IE
Roma-Net II	Integration of Roma populations	Budapest – HU
TUTUR	Temporary use as a tool for urban regeneration	Rome – IT

*Fast Track Label

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URBACT Secretariat
5, rue Pleyel
93283 Saint Denis cedex
France

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