

FIN-URB-ACT

Local Action Plan City of Aveiro



April 2011



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The initial situation

In the baseline study presented at the end of 2008, the City of Aveiro wanted the Local Action Plan to address different aspects for improving the local financial and non-financial support system, namely:

- Define the best funding structure considering, on the one hand, the existing programme funds at regional/national level and on the other, the needs and challenges of local SMEs;
- Identify the needed tools to make SMEs' access to funding schemes easier;
- Define a strategy with the purpose of involving/committing all relevant actors for a common objective and therefore to establish a new partnership that would stimulate the communication and benchmarking among them;
- Identify and develop new forms of non-financial support that can be used as a success factor for new enterprise;
- Identify new financial instruments that can be used by entrepreneurs to implement their enterprises ideas, such as micro-credits, risk capital or specific incubators;
- Establish a new area for enterprises incubation: The Innovative University, as well as a new awareness on entrepreneurial spirit, will make it necessary to set up a new incubation centre for spin-offs, start-ups, business growth and R&D activities. The Baixo Vouga sub-region in which Aveiro plays an important role, intends to establish a sub-regional net of incubation areas. Therefore, the Local Action Plan will be essential to achieve this common goal, inside the sub-region of Baixo Vouga;
- Foster employment: The Lisbon Agenda is essential and Aveiro will contribute in promoting competitiveness and employment on their territory.

It was also stressed that the City of Aveiro would expect from the European network with other Cities or Regions that were dealing with improving their entrepreneurial environments to debate and exchange ideas on:

- suitable cooperation frameworks with Managing Authorities,
- methods for assessing highly innovative activities (e.g. by pooling existing expertise and support packages for innovative projects),
- small business advisory support schemes,
- non-grant financial instruments,
- incubation activities and experiences with start-ups from universities,
- general education strategies.

The composition of the LSG

The Local Support Group of Aveiro is a multi-tasked group that includes all the major local and regional actors addressing the issue of Economic Development, and more specifically, support to SME and promote of entrepreneurship. The diversity of the LSG embraces universities, national institutions, banks, Mutual Guarantee society, local and regional chambers, incubation centre, high-schools and media.

n°	family name	first name	gender	language spoken*	your organization name	type of your organization**	your position	activity of your organization
1	Ferreira	Pedro	Male	Portuguese	Municipality of Aveiro	City Hall	Expert	Municipality of Aveiro - City Council or responsible for Economic Development and Education
2	Cester Costa	André	Male	Portuguese	Municipality of Aveiro	City Hall	Coordinator project FIN-URB-ACT	Municipality of Aveiro - Economic Development and Structural Funds Office
3	Direito	António	Male	Portuguese	Municipality of Aveiro	City Hall	Head-Office Education	Municipality of Aveiro - Economic Development and Structural Funds Office
4	Geraldo	Rosa	Female	Portuguese	Municipality of Aveiro	City Hall	Expert	Municipality of Aveiro - Economic Development and Structural Funds Office
5	Martins	Lídia	Female	Portuguese	Comissão de Coordenação e Desenvolvimento da Região Centro	Managing authority	Expert	Managing authority
6	Rainho	José	Male	Portuguese	UATEC	University	Coordinator	Support business creation, support raising financing, entrepreneurial training and mobility of entrepreneurs
7	Cunha	Cristina	Male	Portuguese	Grupunave	Business Incubation	Director	Business Incubation and Fostering entrepreneurship
8	Miranda	Osória	Female	Portuguese	IAPMEI	National administration	Director	Support SMEs
9	Bajouca	Arménio	Male	Portuguese	Associação Comercial de Aveiro	Chamber of Commerce	Expert	Legal Support to local shopkeepers
10	Ribeiro	Ana	Female	Portuguese	Escola Profissional de Aveiro	Training and Educational Institution	Expert	Training and Educational Institution
11	Rita	Elisabete	Female	Portuguese	AIDA	Industrial Association	Chief Executive	Represent, defend, promote and support of the industrial businesses of the District of Aveiro

n°	family name	first name	gender	language spoken*	your organization name	type of your organization**	your position	activity of your organization
12	Magalhães	Hugo	Male	Portuguese	AGIR	Association	Director	AGIRS's mission is to revitalize the center of the city
13	Ferraz Alves	José	Male	Portuguese	BPI	Bank	Director	Financial products
14	Gonçalves	Marco	Male	Portuguese	Norgarante	Financial support	Director	Norgarante provides guarantees to companies and their shareholders studying solutions of joint access to capital markets.
15	Roseiro	Pedro	Male	Portuguese	Inova-Ria	Association	President	Inova-Ria - Association of Companies for an Innovation Network in Aveiro, is a nonprofit organization that has as its aim the creation and consolidation of a telecommunications group that contributes to the development and competitiveness of the region of Aveiro.
16	Almeida	Carlos	Male	Portuguese	IPAM	Training and Educational Institution	Manager	IPAM is a school of marketing, mainly target to the markets and business and focusing on research projects with practical application of theoretical areas that provide results in business.
17	Marques	António	Male	Portuguese	IEFP	Regional Administration	Director	Definition of training programs according to the needs identified in the local labour market
18	Luz	Ricardo	Male	Portuguese	Invicta Angels	Association	President	The Invicta Angels is an informal club of investors, operating primarily in northern and central regions, and has ideal areas of investment such as the ICT, nanotechnology, and sustainable construction.
19	Soares	António	Male	Portuguese	AAAUA	Association	President	Development of several activities in order to support former students of the University of Aveiro
20	Lagarto	Vasco	Male	Portuguese	Radio Terra Nova	Radio	Director	News Dissemination
21	Bonito	Ana Luisa	Female	Portuguese	AHRESP	Association	Expert	Provide all kind of support to the members of AHRESP

LAP Summary

The priority challenge that was presented to Aveiro was the development of concepts that strengthens the existing structures and instruments, adjusting them to the needs and reality of the SMEs. The methodology implemented, in accordance with the URBACT guidelines, that oblige the creation of strong synergies between all relevant local and regional stakeholders, in order to develop an integrated strategy with the contribution of the Managing Authority Coordination and Development Commission for the Centre Region, was one of the most important strengths within this project, that today is extremely relevant for some of the positive outputs already achieved. It was extremely relevant for the completion of the Local Action Plan, the interaction between local and regional economic, political and social agents.

Local Action Plan Overview:

Strategic axes	Target group	Goals	Indicators (two years)
Support to SMEs	Small and medium sized companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . To support company creation and financing . To supply relevant information related with their business and new markets for investment . Promote products and services provided by those companies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . 16 Projects approved within FICA (investment Fund of Aveiro); 3 Seminars; Prebiz: support to the creation of 20 new enterprises;; Characterization Business Study of the Region of Baixo Vouga; Promotion of Internaitonalisation – “Silicaon Valey”; 1 Survey and Summary of the Economic Situation in the Region of Baixo Vouga
Business Incubation	Start-ups (companies of less than three years) Entrepreneurs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . To provide guidance/review of legal, accounting and financial issues . To provide coaching and mentoring by experienced expertise's . To maximise knowledge acquisition, experience exchange between target group and relevant actors . To support the creation of innovative companies to promote sustainable development in strategic areas of the local economic development, such as ICT, <i>new materials</i>, creative industries and tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Support the creation of 15 new enterprises . Training for more than 100 young companies workers, Idea contest: more than 30 potential projects; 10 workshops Investor Readiness Arena: 6
Fostering Entrepreneurship in school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Primary and Secondary School students . Higher Education Students . Teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . To motivate the adoption of entrepreneurial behaviors in students and teachers . To adopt methodologies of teaching and learning, predominantly active, in which the student is the main focus in the classroom . To rely on education as a local developer, guaranteeing an education environment of excellence . To promote equal opportunities of access to education, infrastructures of information and knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Primary School: 900 students . Secondary School: 300 students . 2 classrooms with ICT technology - 45 sessions to foster entrepreneurship
Fostering an Entrepreneurial Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Young Entrepreneurs . Women Entrepreneurs . Entrepreneurs in strategic areas for the local economic development . Unemployed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . To promote social responsibility . To promote interaction and dialogue between companies .To promote the establishment of platforms of entrepreneurship promotion . To implement specific events to foster an entrepreneurial culture .To promote the creation of highly-qualified jobs . To encourage the creation of individual business and jobs, offering the necessary tools to achieve it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . 12 workshops: . 8 events . 6 inter-managerial sessions - 15 potential projects - 1 “Young Creator” Contest - Number of participants in workshops for female entrepreneurs: 100
Communication	All Project Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> .To facilitate the exchange of information and knowledge, between partners or between different target groups, through the creation of a knowledge and information platform; .To create a dynamic support network to companies and entrepreneurs; . To develop a territorial marketing tool to promote Aveiro as a city to live, work, study and invest 	

After two years of working closely with our Local and European partners, the strategy to support and promote SMEs in Aveiro led to a Local Action Plan defined as “Aveiro Entrepreneurial” that defined five strategic axes: Support to SMEs; Business Incubation; Fostering entrepreneurship in schools; Fostering an Entrepreneurial Culture; and Communication.

For the implementation and feasibility of the project, future actions must encounter the needs of the different publics, at different stages of the “life-cycle” of an entrepreneur, idea or business.

Therefore, we expect this project to contribute to the positioning Aveiro and its Region, as a sustainable multifunctional network, with a vibrating urban culture, based on the capitalisation of the distinct elements of the city, to create products with added-value, using knowledge, technology and creativity as inspiring sources for the creation of a new innovative urban economy.

Example of one action to be developed – PREBIZ:

The Bizness PREVIEW is a programme developed by IPAM – The Marketing School under the project “Aveiro Entrepreneurial”. This programme's mission is to anticipate possible problems in the business conception, as well as to advise and supervise the implementation of a new business. The professors from IPAM and successful entrepreneurs of the region of Aveiro will be the main actors involved in this process.

Through a close and honest relationship, we intend to share experiences and know-how, in order to encourage or discourage the implementation of projects that reach us from potential entrepreneurs.

The know-how of an entrepreneur is far more important and experienced than a college professor; on the other hand the professor is immediately more updated on the subjects that he lectures. The merger between these important references ensures the success of Bizness PREVIEW and the capacity to reach potential entrepreneurs of the region.

In the first place we will evaluate the ability of the potential entrepreneurs to lead the project which they propose to implement. Afterwards the business idea will be assessed by entrepreneurs and college professors invited to the project. If the proposal is feasible, we will provide suggestions to improve the business idea and present some financing solutions. On the other hand, if the proposal is considered ineffective, we will prepare a document summarising all the handicaps of the project, so that the entrepreneur can improve and re-apply for our support.

The Bizness PREVIEW intends that all of the companies established with our support, have an average life expectancy of more than two years, in order to consider that the investment in Aveiro is not a risk.

Aveiro: Comprehensive Communication Strategy:

The Local Action Plan of Aveiro is based on different pillars comprising the promotion of Entrepreneurship Culture, promotion of entrepreneurship in schools, business incubation and support for SMEs. For all these four pillars of the LAP in Aveiro an overall communication and dissemination strategy was developed under the common brand “Aveiro Entrepreneurial” in order to have a visual identity for all involved partners and stakeholders.

The objectives of the communication and dissemination strategy are to diffuse the information and raise the awareness about the project with the general target audience, to promote participation and to further reinforce ties with target audiences. The general flow of information should be optimised between the project partners and to maintain mechanisms for effective and timely communication. In order to raise the awareness of external stakeholders, links will be established with further projects of similar initiatives in order to take advantage of potential synergies. Finally, the results will be communicated to entities who might be interested in the project.

The target audience comprises three different levels. First, there is internal communication to the project partners. Second, there is the external audience which comprises various stakeholders like potential entrepreneurs from the academic, commercial and industrial side, young entrepreneurs (primary, secondary and vocational schools), incubator projects, SMEs as well as science, technology and innovation support organisations. The third level of the target audience addresses a general audience like the community, media, policy makers, public entities and the FIN-URB-ACT network.

Of particular interest is the creation of the integrated webpage, as it reflects the main Ideas of the FIN-URB-ACT project approach. So far, the members of the Local Support Groups present their support facilities and services, products and events on their own webpage so that much valuable information co-exists without being really linked. In fact potential investors (in particular, those coming from outside) or entrepreneurs might be lost in an unclear batch of information. Hence, Aveiro is going to use in the near future the one-stop model virtually to interlink diverse support facilities in a clearly arranged and thus more fruitful way in the form of an “integrated webpage”.

The main goals are to provide knowledge of references in the field of innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship. In the future the integrated webpage should not just act as an Information Point for external users, but also as a platform for the relationship between providers and to

disseminate all information related to the topics of innovation, creativity, financing and entrepreneurship (e.g. information on financing possibilities, local innovative companies, research and development institutions, local policies, opportunities for cooperation and collaboration, etc.)

The budget on the LAP

During the project implementation the City of Aveiro created the FICA (investment Fund in the City of Aveiro). The city invested €50,000 in the creation of this fund, and until now has had two projects approved. This was the only investment made by the city not included in the budget lines of the FIN-URB-ACT project.

During the project duration, our main objective was not only to design an integrated approach, but also to have access to funding for its implementation. The cooperative work with the Managing Authority gave us the opportunity to prepare a proposal for SIAC (specific programme under MAIS CENTRO). The actions presented under the LAP from May 2011 to April 2013, will be co-funded by ERDF. For that period we estimated an investment of €1.2 million, with a ERDF co-funding of €800.000.

It is important to stress that the LSG members have decided on the establishment of common protocol to monitor the implementation of the LAP and propose new actions. This protocol will be signed for a period of four years.

CONTACT:

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URBACT II

URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development.

It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal challenges. It helps them to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. It enables cities to share good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe. URBACT is 181 cities, 29 countries, and 5,000 active participants

www.urbact.eu/project



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