

Regeneration process of degraded urban areas within the framework of JESSICA initiative

The project analyses how the projects implemented within the framework of JESSICA initiative affect the situation in degraded urban areas located in cities of 5 Polish regions. This new financial vehicles have showed the evidence that there are significant bottlenecks and obstacles hindering an effective and efficient realisation. The JESSICA projects are very often limited to the infrastructural investments and do not consider the regeneration process in a comprehensive manner. As a result, the projects implemented may improve the urban infrastructure, but do not tackle social and spatial problems. In authors' point of view JESSICA can be an effective and efficient tool for urban regeneration but should be supplemented by additional actions covering in particular social dimension of regeneration.

The project is based on three assumptions. First, given the observed problems and difficulties encountered in urban regeneration policies and the need for an approach considering their the economic, social and spatial impacts, one can advance a hypothesis that revolving funding instruments such as JESSICA are an effective tool for supporting urban renewal mainly with regard to economic dimension of regeneration process. Second, the study also draws on the assumption that regeneration requires a comprehensive and integrated approach to urban development. Third, it is also assumed that effective coordination of activities of the various actors involved in urban policy is a further prerequisite for effective urban regeneration initiatives. The main aims of the project are: (1) to define the characteristics of initiatives supporting regeneration of degraded urban areas in the context of an integrated approach (2) to investigate the tools used as part of JESSICA and compare to the model approaches to urban regeneration; (3) assess the efficiency of JESSICA solutions across selected European cities and identify the best practices; and finally (4) to use the findings to drawing policy lessons for the EU urban policy.

The methodology used in the project bases substantially on qualitative approach but elements of quantitative approach are also included. The Assessment of implementation of the JESSICA initiative in terms of its effectiveness and efficiency in achieving the objectives of regeneration of degraded urban areas has a multifaceted nature and requires to be examined with the use of positivist paradigm. In this case, it is needed to examine a cause-and-effect relationship between actions undertaken (projects) and their effects in the form of objectives (states) achieved (formerly intended) or processes permanently stimulating achievement of these states. Thus, the research should confront the intervention mechanism and its results with the theoretical model of regeneration.

Formulation of recommendations for policy makers will be based on the results of the model (tool) built with the use of spatial analysis tools in combination with *multi-criteria decision making methods*. In order to create a tool for decision making process referring to the selection of projects financed by revolving funds matched to the specific needs of degraded urban areas, the analytical hierarchical process (AHP) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) will be applied.