



PLANNING TOGETHER FOR BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE

Guide for Integrated Management of Urban Rural Interaction

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PLANNING TOGETHER FOR BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE – GUIDE FOR INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF URBAN RURAL INTERACTION

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I. INTRODUCTION

What is the secret behind successful and competitive cities and regions? What makes some places more attractive than others? It is the combination of people who feel happy and thrive in their living environment and a city that takes care of the welfare of its citizens.

Enabling a high quality of life and the well-being of individuals is the key element in the development of attractive and competitive cities and regions in Europe. The most successful cities are those that are able to effectively facilitate such circumstances allowing people to develop and use a broad range of talents in their personal and business lives.

The key issue here is the cities' and towns' readiness to listen to residents, businesses and other groups, and to allow them to participate in decision making thus together developing a better society. Successful cities' and towns' then are those that are able to offer different groups of people the opportunity to live, work and flourish in an environment that enables residents to choose their 'ideal' lifestyle; where to live, how much time to spend each day commuting between work and home while also giving them a range of choices over where to consume or purchase the daily necessities of life.

“Planning for sustainable individual cities and towns is not enough as people live, work and use services across borders within functional regions rather than individual cities.”

How then can we create such environments where people feel happy and are motivated to use their talents for the public good in return? Effective regional planning is a necessity in the building of well-functioning cities, but planning for individual cities

or towns is not enough. Regional planning has to increasingly respond to the needs of people living in wider city-regional areas. Increasing mobility has made the borders of individual municipalities more porous and thus far less important in daily life. Therefore new kinds of integrated planning and decision making models straddling traditional sectors and administrative borders are increasingly required.

TOWARDS INTEGRATED REGIONAL PLANNING

We are living in the Europe of regions where functional regions have become increasingly significant. Individual municipalities cannot thrive alone in the global competition for (new) businesses, taxpayers and tourists. In order to succeed and build attractive city-regions, cooperation over municipal borders is necessary including both urban and rural areas. Current challenges such as climate change, demographic change, and structural changes in production



patterns, urban sprawl or environmental problems cannot be solved within individual municipalities. Successfully addressing these problems depends increasingly on the ability of urban and rural municipalities to cooperate and find common solutions.

Historically municipalities tend to function as independent actors and, in this light, the regional cooperation across administrative borders has been found often challenging. Cooperation between urban and rural areas has traditionally been lacking as the challenges facing each area have generally been viewed as separate. This combined with the trifling competition between neighbouring municipalities fundamentally hinder the cooperation. In the contemporary world urban and rural contexts have however become increasingly blurred and it is obvious that better management of urban-rural interaction is required.

“ Successful regions are those that are able to create suitable circumstances that allow people to develop and use all their talents in their personal and business lives. Planning together increases the level of commitment people have to their own living environment. ”



From the regional development perspective the borders between cities and their surrounding regions should be dispelled even erased. In their place boundless and multifaceted co-operation across city-regions should be emphasised. Increased regional integration and clustering has the potential to speed up the transmission of new ideas, to make people’s mobility smarter, to increase the underlying productivity of business and to generate powerful economies of scale. New platforms and transparent management models are thus required in order to further involve both citizens and other stakeholders.

FUNCTIONAL REGIONS / CITY-REGIONS

A functional region is a type of region characterised by its function such as a city-region, that has a certain core (a central city) and a surrounding part (countryside, smaller municipalities). A city-region can consist of different administrative units but it functions as a single unit as it shares resources such as the labour market, the transport network and has a common regional centre. Different forms of spatial interaction occur between these areas and link them together e.g. commuting between the central city and the countryside, trade and business, travel for recreation and to access a wider range of services.

THE INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AS A TOOL FOR REGIONAL PLANNING AND COOPERATION

A useful tool facilitating the integration of the decision making and planning processes of neighbouring municipalities is the Integrated Management System (IMS). This is a logical step-by-step management model used previously mainly in sustainable urban management (Managing Urban Europe 25, CHAMP).

Integrated management can also be beneficially applied to regional planning in the wider city-regional context. The system can help in the establishment of structures used to better link different regional and municipal governing bodies in spatial planning and to facilitate cooperation across sectors and borders. The IMS is a management cycle that helps take us through common planning and development processes in a more structured way. The various steps of the model (See figure 1.) enable common development visions and goals to be formulated together with different stakeholders.



Figure 1. The IMS Cycle



The IMS model helps to direct all available resources to the defined goals. By including individual and other stakeholder perspectives in the spatial planning task the transparency and democratic accountability of the planning and decision making processes are secured. Integrated management of planning activities in city-regions builds understanding, accountability and transparency between the actors involved.

The initiation of real cooperation is often the hardest part of any joint planning procedure but once done it has a potential to turn a single project into a process. A successfully implemented cooperation project in one field, for example mobility planning, can open doors for cooperation in other fields creating long lasting partnerships between municipalities in the region – literally building new bridges.

USER INTRODUCTION

'Planning Together for Better Quality of Life' is one of the final outputs of the NEW BRIDGES project promoting a more integrated approach to regional planning. This guide functions as an inspiration to anyone interested in striving for a more open, inclusive and interactive planning culture. It can be used in different ways; either as a guide to establishing city-regional co-operation and applying the quality of life approach to regional planning from scratch or it can be used to help improve existing practises by rendering co-operation structures more effective.

The IMS model will be presented step by step: How to get started with the common planning process, how to involve all the necessary actors, and finally how to implement the plan successfully. The case examples drawn from the partners involved in the NEW BRIDGES project provide practical illustrations of how the different steps of the IMS process have been carried out by various city-regions in the Baltic Sea region.

In the project the focus has been on three elements of the quality of life within urban-rural interaction: accessibility and mobility, the provision of services and residential preferences. This guide concentrates on strengthening the management of these elements as a part of a broader approach in spatial planning. Related to each step of the IMS model the guide will define the basic framework for and the most important concepts in coherent city-regional planning. It will also, briefly, outline the basic policy goals and strategies at different levels in this field. Lastly it will provide relevant policy recommendations for three different levels of spatial planning with a view to the promotion of a more coherent and sustainable Baltic Sea Region.

More practical methods, tested during the NEW BRIDGES project, for the implementation of the various steps of the IMS model can be found from the Online Toolkit completing this guide (www.urbanrural.net).





– STRENGTHENING OF QUALITY OF LIFE THROUGH IMPROVED MANAGEMENT OF URBAN RURAL INTERACTION

The NEW BRIDGES project (2009-2011) funded by the Baltic Sea Region Programme has sought to develop new approaches to the integrated management of urban rural interaction with a view to improving the quality of life across the Baltic Sea Region (BSR). The project focused on three key elements impacting resident's quality of life in an urban-rural setting: residential preferences, mobility and accessibility and the provision of services.

Project implementation was based on the creation of new management models and methods for regional planning corresponding to the needs, values and lifestyles of the people living in the BSR. These models and methods were tested during the project by the 8 NEW BRIDGES partners in 7 city-regions around the Baltic Sea region through concrete Pilot Actions focusing on different aspects of quality of life. The project involved successfully various city-regions around the BSR in comparison of their size, from Hamburg metropolitan region in Germany to Hiiumaa island in Estonia, but also with the significantly distinct planning cultures and the policy approaches between these countries.

Various methods were used and tested in relation to encouraging the participation of local residents, politicians and interest groups in regional planning, including local stakeholder meetings, surveys and interviews. Involving local actors in the planning process helped the NEW BRIDGES partners to better understand the different perspectives on quality of life and the value of planning together with the goal of creating better living environments. The project contributed to this through the promotion of a new planning culture which advocates for a more open, interactive, innovative and inclusive society.

One of the most important achievements of the project has been the newly established urban-rural partnerships between neighbouring municipalities in the partner city-regions. The project has also helped in the realisation that further multilevel cooperation between the national, regional and local levels is required in order to build attractive and competitive regions in the Baltic Sea Region. More information on the project can be found at www.urbanrural.net.



2

PLANNING TOGETHER



2.1. STARTING POSITION – BASELINE REVIEW

How to improve the quality of life in your region? What actions are needed and who should be involved?

Before reaching your goals, you need to know where to start. The baseline review creates a framework of information that serves as a basis for the setting of relevant targets to improve the quality of life. Furthermore, it will serve as the point of reference when monitoring and evaluating progress and achievements as improvements are only measurable and visible if compared to the ‘point of departure’ - the baseline.

Since quality of life is a multi-faceted concept focusing on individual life perceptions it is essential to pay attention to individual’s opinions and preferences. The first and most important step is to investigate how the quality of life in your city-region could be amended. You can start by discussing with different stakeholder groups such as residents, business holders, investors etc., asking how their living, working and business environments could be improved and what actions this would require.

To encourage the participation of different actors various involvement methods are needed. Local stakeholder meetings offer a chance for open discussion between residents and local authorities to gain a preliminary insight into residents’ opinions on quality of life issues. Individual opinions can be analysed more systematically through e.g. resident surveys or focus groups interviews.

At this stage an initial stakeholder analysis can be carried out to map all of the relevant actors in the city-region. Besides including the individual level via

interest groups and local residents, external expertise such as researchers, NGOs and the private sector should be involved in bringing different perspectives to the baseline review.

HOW TO USE THE RESULTS OF THE BASELINE REVIEW?

The **baseline review** will help you to analyse the current strengths and weaknesses, risks and opportunities for example regarding mobility and accessibility, the provision of services and residential preferences in the city-region. It identifies the existing gaps between individual aspects of residents’ living and working environments and the regional plans and strategies to make the city-region more attractive. Only the people living and working in the area have the first-hand experience of how their daily life could be improved.



The baseline review should be undertaken in a city-regional context. In daily life residents do not recognise existing administrative borders. These borders simply restrict the use of certain services making their lives more complicated. Therefore bear in mind that the form should follow the function meaning that defining the problems should not be restricted by administrative borders.

The baseline review helps you to answer following questions:

- How could your region be more attractive?
- What do the residents and other groups think about their living and working environment?
- What kinds of actions are needed to improve living and working conditions?
- What are the main gaps in quality of life, regarding e.g. residential preferences, mobility and accessibility, the provision of services etc?
- Who could best provide useful input in mapping the most urgent challenges?

QUALITY OF LIFE

Quality of life is a multi-dimensional concept. It is not just a matter of prosperity and high standards of living but is also focused on enabling people to attain their life-goals while providing them with the ability to choose their ideal lifestyle. The relationship between people and their everyday living environment affects individuals' perceptions of their own quality of life. As quality of life correlates with general living conditions but is here perceived individually straightforward solutions on how it could be improved are difficult to identify. In consequence, the notion of quality of life is not a universally agreed concept and is not amenable to formal definition. This has perhaps led to the situation where even though the notion of quality of life has had a significant impact on social and political trends and has become an important dimension in various policy fields, political decision-making in planning processes does not always pay sufficient attention to quality of life related issues.

In order to take quality of life related issues more fully into account in regional planning individuals opinions must be taken into consideration and the active participation of citizens must be encouraged. Strengthening quality of life can improve the prerequisites for growth and make city-regions in the Baltic Sea Region area more appealing places in which to live and invest.



DEVELOPING THE SERVICE STRUCTURE BEYOND MUNICIPAL BORDERS IN THE TURKU URBAN REGION

One of the project's aims in the Turku city-region was to find ways to make service provision more effective, to make sure that the supply and demand of services meet and improve the well-being of its inhabitants. The multifaceted suburban areas of Varissuo and Littoinen, situated on the border of three municipalities (Turku, Kaarina and Lieto) were chosen as the Pilot Action area. It was already known that the area displays socio-economic differences between its inhabitants, and significant challenges, particularly in respect of the use of services, exist.

During the local stakeholder meetings it became evident that a number of barriers, both physical and mental, had developed which now actively prevented people from using the closest services in the Varissuo-Littoinen area. Mental barriers promoted by widely held misperceptions about the neighbouring area in particular prevented people from using services across the notional administrative border.

Various methods were used to collect additional views and information from the citizens about the service structure. Diverse user groups, such as elderly people and children, were studied to discern their opinions of existing services. These studies confirmed the above-mentioned preconceptions and highlighted the existing barriers in the area. Some residents preferred to travel to a hypermarket further away rather than using the services actually located closest to them as they found the area in which these services were situated unpleasant. Most people used leisure facilities on their own side of the border with few services attracting inhabitants from both areas.

The information gathered from these studies is essential in improving the service structure and accelerating cooperation between the municipalities. Christina Hovi, Master Planning Architect from the Department of Environmental and City Planning in Turku notes that "it is very challenging and a slow process to change peoples' attitudes, but it is a start to recognise the prejudices preventing the use of services across borders." She continues by noting that existing legislation and the existence of different working cultures ultimately sets effective limits on the extent of collaboration across municipal and administrative borders.

"Traditionally we have learned to look and see things only from the perspective of our own municipality. We should instead learn to look at service areas as larger entities and not only think about our own municipality's interests" Hovi notes.

In order to further develop the effectiveness of the service provision more information is required. In addition, service supply in relation to consumer needs should also be further examined. Statistical and GIS-data as well as more surveys of inhabitants' use of services should be conducted to ascertain the real level of service demand and to help implement a more balanced approach to service provision.

The results produced by the project will be included in various normative documents in relation to public transport planning, service network planning and land use planning. The results will be also used in the larger process of creating a structural model for the entire Turku urban region.

ANALYSING LOCAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Planning for good living environments requires co-ordinated action across a diverse range of policy themes and administrative sectors. Before beginning any joint planning process you have to understand the local and regional context you are working within. Analysis of the local circumstances completes the baseline review.

Firstly start with an analysis of the existing experience of urban-rural interaction. What is the role and function of urban and rural areas in the city-region? Does cooperation currently exist between the various municipalities or authorities in the region? Do joint regional plans already exist tackling some of the main quality of life related issues (e.g. general plans, common mobility plans, common service strategies etc)?

The next thing is to formulate an overview of the planning system in the region. Knowing how the planning system functions in each of the municipalities helps to identify the right departments and persons with whom to cooperate. Find out who is in charge of mobility planning, land use planning etc. In addition, are external organisations deeply involved in planning, such as planning consultancies?

The baseline review should also seek to map legal requirements and all of those systems and procedures already in place to realise municipal and regional plans and programmes. It is important also to highlight the management structures behind existing formal agreements, programmes and plans related to regional planning.

HOW IS QUALITY OF LIFE ADDRESSED IN CURRENT PLANS AND STRATEGIES?

Before planning any actions the scope of the process must be carefully considered against existing plans, policies and strategies to ensure that any duplication or overlap is avoided. The current political and strategic goals have to be taken into account. It is critical, already in the baseline review phase, to initiate an open dialogue with politicians from all of the municipalities. This helps to ensure their commitment throughout the process while also harvesting the required knowledge about political processes in the city-region.

Pay particular attention to the following questions:

- How is quality of life defined in the existing strategies and plans?
- To what extent have residents' points of view been incorporated?
- How is quality of life addressed in existing programmes i.e. perhaps through educational or environmental questions?
- How does political discourse in the city-region treat the quality of life issue?

STRENGTHENING URBAN RURAL INTERACTIONS

Different forms of urban-rural interactions are directly linked to peoples' everyday lives and to the ways in which they interact with, shape and utilise their living environments. Urban residents look for certain qualities in rural areas like better leisure opportunities, fresh air, green space and better quality of life. Whereas urban areas are generally seen as offering better employment and education opportunities and a wider range of cultural and commercial services.

The fluency of the interaction between urban and rural areas has the potential to impact regional trade, business, production patterns, and tourism as both areas are economically highly interdependent. The strongest linkage between urban and rural areas is often however the labour force which commutes daily between these areas. It is clear that each region and its prospective development remain dependent on both urban and rural areas and on the interaction between them.

Within the broader context of urban - rural interaction there are certain elements that clearly have a significant effect on the quality of life: accessibility and mobility, the provision of services and residential preferences. These elements are usually behind individual choices in respect of their locational decisions. There are many ways in which the management of these elements could be strengthened through integrated city-regional planning:

- Improving accessibility between urban and rural areas through integrated mobility planning; e.g. Make regional public transportation smarter, rethinking the modal share of the regional mobility system, improving the functional relationship between urban and rural areas with regard to commuting.
- Common land use planning for activities like housing, retail outlets and other commercial services.
- Improving the regional service structure through the implementation of common service structure plans and cooperation in respect of organising services and involving the third sector and local residents in the planning process
- Integrating planning in terms of land-use, mobility, housing and service patterns in the city-regional context.

THE EUROPEAN SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE (ESDP, 1999)

ESDP, the reference document for spatial planning in Europe, was the primary vehicle introducing the concept of "urban-rural partnership". ESDP stated that urban and rural areas can formulate and successfully implement the regional concept in partnership-based collaboration. Since both areas are highly dependent on each other and many challenges cannot be solved without integration, urban and rural areas should see each other as partners rather than as competitors. In relation to polycentrism and urban-rural partnership the ESDP also made significant policy statements accompanied by corresponding policy actions.



DEVELOPING THE FIRST MOBILITY PLAN FOR RURAL TERRITORIES IN LATVIA

When the project started in Zemgale Planning Region the first step was to find out what, according to its inhabitants, was the most important factor in the strengthening of urban-rural interaction. Through various public surveys and discussions, improvements in the public transport system and in the road network were recognised as the most important aspects. It was decided that a New Mobility Plan for rural territories should be developed to determine the necessary actions needed to improve the public transport system and the accessibility of rural areas in the region.

In order to identify the necessary information and data for the Mobility Plan, the socio-economic conditions of Zemgale region were analysed; a road network assessment was carried out and cartographic material was prepared. A database including all forms of public transport was established and recommendations for an action plan focusing on mobility improvements in the region were prepared.

The mobility plan was elaborated by external consultants and presented and discussed in several local stakeholder meetings. During the process cooperation between national, regional and local authorities and the operating transport companies was invaluable for the further development of the

Mobility Plan as well as for comparing different points of view and the sharing of experiences. All participants were interested in and committed to the process but also concerned about the lack of financial means that could threaten the implementation of the plan. It was quickly recognised that close cooperation between national and regional levels in the planning of regional investment programs was required as well as further discussion on the role of planning regions in Latvia.

The database and the long and medium term strategic directions in the Mobility Plan for Rural Territories will serve as the basis for the development and implementation of concrete actions and for the updating of current land use policy. Raitis Madzulis, Project Manager for Zemgale planning region, hopes that the constructive cooperation between the state, local and non-governmental institutions and transport companies will remain in place. In the future municipalities in Zemgale region will have to be more deeply involved in regional planning in order to maintain this newly established cooperation. The project helped participants to realise that only common effort can lead to effective planning results thus improving the quality of life in the region.



2.2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES – ORGANISATIONAL SET-UP

Who should be engaged?

What are the roles and responsibilities of the various actors?

One of the key aspects behind the successful use of the IMS model is the creation of a suitable organisational set-up – one of the crosscutting elements of the system. The Integration of policy areas and planning procedures between different municipalities requires an organisational set-up that considers cooperation between actors across sectors and administrative borders. This provides a foundation for true integrated management. Before creating the organisational set-up the thematic and geographic scope of the process must be defined: Is the focus on a certain area or part of the region? Which of the municipalities involved are willing to participate? Is the focus on a certain aspect of the quality of life? Are there existing partnership structures within the region that could initiate the process?

The structure of the IMS should, where possible, incorporate and make use of the existing structures in the municipal or regional administration. Any initiative begun should be incorporated into existing planning practices in each of the municipalities. The process should not run separately or be solely based on new administrative structures. Integrated management of urban-rural interaction is possible if the process is an explicit part of the on-going and existing planning procedures.

The organisational set-up always depends on the local or regional context as well as on the thematic and geographical scope of the process. An optimal

organisational set-up would consist of the following groups involving a number of relevant local stakeholders:

COORDINATION TEAM

The coordination team can consist of local and regional planners or other authority members from different municipalities. Alternatively one related department (planning, environmental issues or transport department etc.,) of one of the municipalities can take the lead in terms of overall coordination and implementation. The coordination team takes care of the coordination and operationalisation tasks and act as the initiators of the whole process. The coordination team also deals directly with questions such as: What kind of activities needs to be implemented? Who should be involved? Who is responsible for each task?



THE ORGANISATIONAL SET-UP IS ONE OF THE CROSSCUTTING ELEMENTS OF THE IMS MODEL

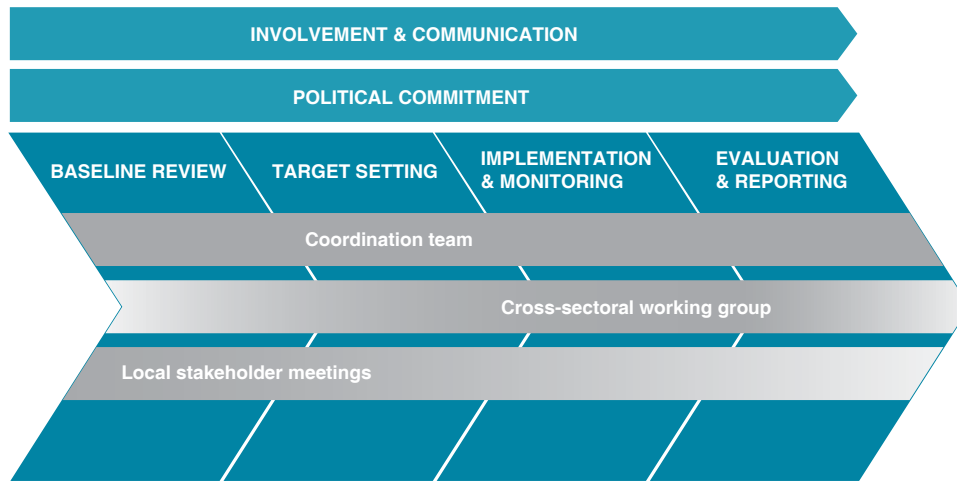


Figure 2. The level of the involvement of the different stakeholder groups varies depending on the phase of the cycle.

CROSS-SECTORAL WORKING GROUP

The **cross-sectoral working group** (CSWG) consists of local and regional authority members and politicians from all of the municipalities concerned. The working group participants should bring with them a certain level of expertise relevant to the region in focus and the topic to be discussed, e.g. comprising representatives responsible for planning, mobility, culture and social issues. Additionally, external experts such as researchers, consultants and NGOs could also attend.

Since planning is always a multidisciplinary process the main role of the working group members is to bring their professional knowledge into the planning process and ensure that all relevant perspectives are taken into consideration. The members of the CSWG should participate in planning throughout the process from baseline review to evaluation. The coordination team initiates the work of the CSWG, keeps them updated, and organises meetings and private consultations with them.

LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

An **important part** of the organisational set-up is the open stakeholder meeting designed to ensure the transparency and inclusiveness of the planning process. Stakeholder meetings invite interested participants to discuss, influence and evaluate the process. Stakeholder meetings play a particularly important role during the baseline review and target setting process when the main alignments are discussed. The meetings are organised by the coordination team.

In the ideal situation these meetings consist of all of the above-mentioned actors and active participants from each of the municipalities including local and regional level authorities, politicians, NGOs, private sector actors, researchers and residents living in the region. Heterogeneous group of professionals and other stakeholders discussing issues of common interest together can identify new and innovative solutions for improving the quality of life. Interaction and genuine discussion between actors from various sectors is crucial in order to create the trust and mutual understanding which forms the basis for most partnerships.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF AN IDEAL ORGANISATIONAL SET-UP COULD BE DESCRIBED AS:

- A flat hierarchy with a focus on informal organisation and interaction,
- Coordination of the process is cooperative and allows feedback from participants,
- The actors and institutions involved have clear objectives,
- The individuals involved are motivated and given room to raise their own opinions. They feel comfortable with their tasks and feel neither overburdened nor unchallenged,
- Communication is clear and transparent and does not depend on hierarchies,
- Regular and objective evaluation of results and objectives allows for timely reaction in the case of variations, challenges or issues that may evolve during the process,
- Such changes need to be effectively communicated to the people involved in order to avoid misunderstandings.

REGIONAL COOPERATION

Identifying common aims and goals for the development provides a starting point for a coherent regional planning for sustainable, attractive and competitive city-regions. As local development is increasingly determined by actions taken beyond the borders of individual municipalities it is evident that more cooperation within functional regions is needed. The EU Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion (CEC 2008) clearly states that territorial cohesion is about ensuring harmonious territorial development and making sure that citizens are able to make the best use of the inherent features of the territory they are living in and that this should be done in a coordinated and sustainable way.

Cooperation between different sectors within one municipality can often be challenging, never mind that between different administrative units and municipalities. Motivation, mutual trust and recognition of the benefits are required for any such effort to be successful. Cooperation between neighbouring municipalities is not always supported as they are often seen to be competing for the same resources, such as high value taxpayers, and are generally afraid of losing their independence. In order to thrive in international competition the interaction between urban and rural areas should be as functional and common goal oriented as possible. It should be understood when competing in the global economy that well-functioning city-regions, not individual municipalities, are tomorrow's success stories.



CONCRETE PROJECTS AND STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT TO REINFORCE COLLABORATION IN THE HAMBURG METROPOLITAN REGION

With the support of the NEW BRIDGES project Hamburg has sought to improve the level of cooperation between the city and its surrounding region at the strategic level, as well as through concrete projects at the community level.

One such initiative was the “New village centre” community project in Dambeck. This small village is located in the county of Ludwigslust, 130 km from Hamburg, in the federal state of Mecklenburg-West Pomerania. The project has actively sought new ways to support the maintenance and development of the rural village centres. Concrete ideas to improve accessibility to and the quality of services in rural villages have been developed together with local residents utilising local workshops. To tackle challenges such as the lack of infrastructure in retail or social services, tangible ideas like the exchange of voluntary services, mobile healthcare services and the further development of public transport with a ‘bus on-demand service’ were developed. Guido Sempell, Head of unit in the State Ministry for Urban Development and Environment in Hamburg recognises that “discussions and interaction with stakeholders have brought in more knowledge about local needs but also new possibilities to turn these ideas into reality”.

The Federal state government has identified the same challenges concerning service production in rural areas. Additional local workshops in Dambeck are planned and will be organised in connection with a new public funding program seeking to redevelop village centres in Mecklenburg-West Pomerania.

Throughout the NEW BRIDGES project the ties between Hamburg and the county of Ludwigslust have become closer, not only through the practical work carried out on the ground, but also at strategic level. The work in the project has from the outset been linked with an existing process at the federal state level designed to improve cooperation between the City of Hamburg and Mecklenburg-West Pomerania. Both the county and the federal state have been very active in the Northern German co-operation programme entitled Project Partnership North, the follow-up to the MORO-process (model project on urban rural partnerships, 2007-2010). As an outcome of the process Ludwigslust County and Mecklenburg-West Pomerania will become official members of the Hamburg Metropolitan Region. This new status will help to continue and intensify this collaboration and further develop urban-rural projects between Hamburg and Ludwigslust.



2.3 AIMING HIGH – TARGET SETTING

How to create a common vision?

How to get the city-region to stand behind common targets?

The first step is to form a common vision and identify the most important challenges in respect of the quality of life. It is important that everyone can agree with the vision and that they are committed to work towards it. Municipalities might have different visions and strategic objectives but it is essential to find a common understanding of the current situation. Stakeholder meetings offer space for open dialogue on what the participants consider to be the greatest strengths, weaknesses, potentials and threats regarding quality of life in their municipalities. The findings of the baseline review provide a common framework for the discussion. The focus of the discussions should, primarily, be on the needs of both urban and rural municipalities, and the potential to increase the links between them.

A common vision will be hard to attain unless it is accompanied by clear objectives and relevant targets. Everything cannot be done at once and a choice has to be made in respect of the challenges deemed most important to address at this stage. Clear and well defined targets designed to overcome the chosen priority challenges should be established. Targets and objectives should be integrated with those in the relevant municipal, regional, national and EU strategies and action plans (mobility policies, service strategies, master plans etc). In addition, compliance with European, national and regional legislation needs to be ensured. The most important thing is to remember that all the stakeholders from the city-region, especially politicians, must stand behind the visions and targets for the development, otherwise the action will not have the necessary legitimacy.

WORKING WITH QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES IN SPATIAL PLANNING

Quality of life is a good concept to use if the individual perspectives of the inhabitants are in the focus of the planning activity. Everyone will be able to relate the concept to his or her life situation and generate ideas related to questions and issues. The concept is however rather broad and may demand too much from the people concerned.

In order to operationalise the concept and stimulate fruitful discussion the focus should be on certain elements of quality of life - such as service provision or accessibility - rather than on the entire concept. When you refer to quality of life, always consider how to make the abstract concept as concrete as possible. It helps here to form concrete targets designed to improve the quality of life.

A common vision and targets developed in a participatory process will contribute to the acceptance of the process by the general public while strengthening the commitment of the participants and ensuring greater legitimacy within the city-region.

Planning of the practical process of target setting:

- Plan the involvement of stakeholders and make sure that all relevant actors from the municipalities representing various sectors are included,
- Decide how to go through the findings of the baseline review,
- Plan how to organise the agreement and approval of the priorities and targets,
- Indicate appropriate measures to fulfil the targets and create a clear plan for the implementation,

- Define the allocation of human and financial resources as well as the responsibilities for implementation,
- Ensure that the roles, responsibilities and contributions of the actors involved are clear and acknowledged by the various stakeholders and administrative units in the municipalities.



TERRITORIAL AGENDA OF THE EUROPEAN UNION 2020 – TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE, SMART AND SUSTAINABLE EUROPE OF DIVERSE REGIONS (TA, 2011)

The territorial agenda of the European Union 2020 emphasises polycentric and balanced territorial development as the key elements in achieving territorial cohesion. The agenda states that urban-rural interdependence should be recognised through integrated governance and planning based on broad partnership. The cooperation and networking of cities could contribute to the smart development of city regions at varying scales in the long run. Cities should, where appropriate, look beyond their administrative borders and focus on functional regions, including their peri-urban neighbourhoods. Urban-rural partnership responds to the needs of the authorities in rural and urban areas to identify common assets and elaborate joint regional and sub-regional development strategies and including also private stakeholders, in order to increase the attractiveness of the regions in relation to the investment decisions of both the private and public sectors.



PLANNING THE REGIONAL CYCLING SCHEME IN THE KAUNAS DISTRICT

“The strengthening of urban-rural interaction and the fostering of cooperation between the city and the district is extremely important for our rural municipality. This is not only because of the neighbourhood relations but also because of the movement of people between these areas for work and leisure purposes” notes Grazina Cepulienė, Project Coordinator for Kaunas district municipality. When Kaunas district municipality started to think of how the quality of life in the region could be improved it was clear from the beginning that close cooperation between different actors and municipalities in the regions was required.

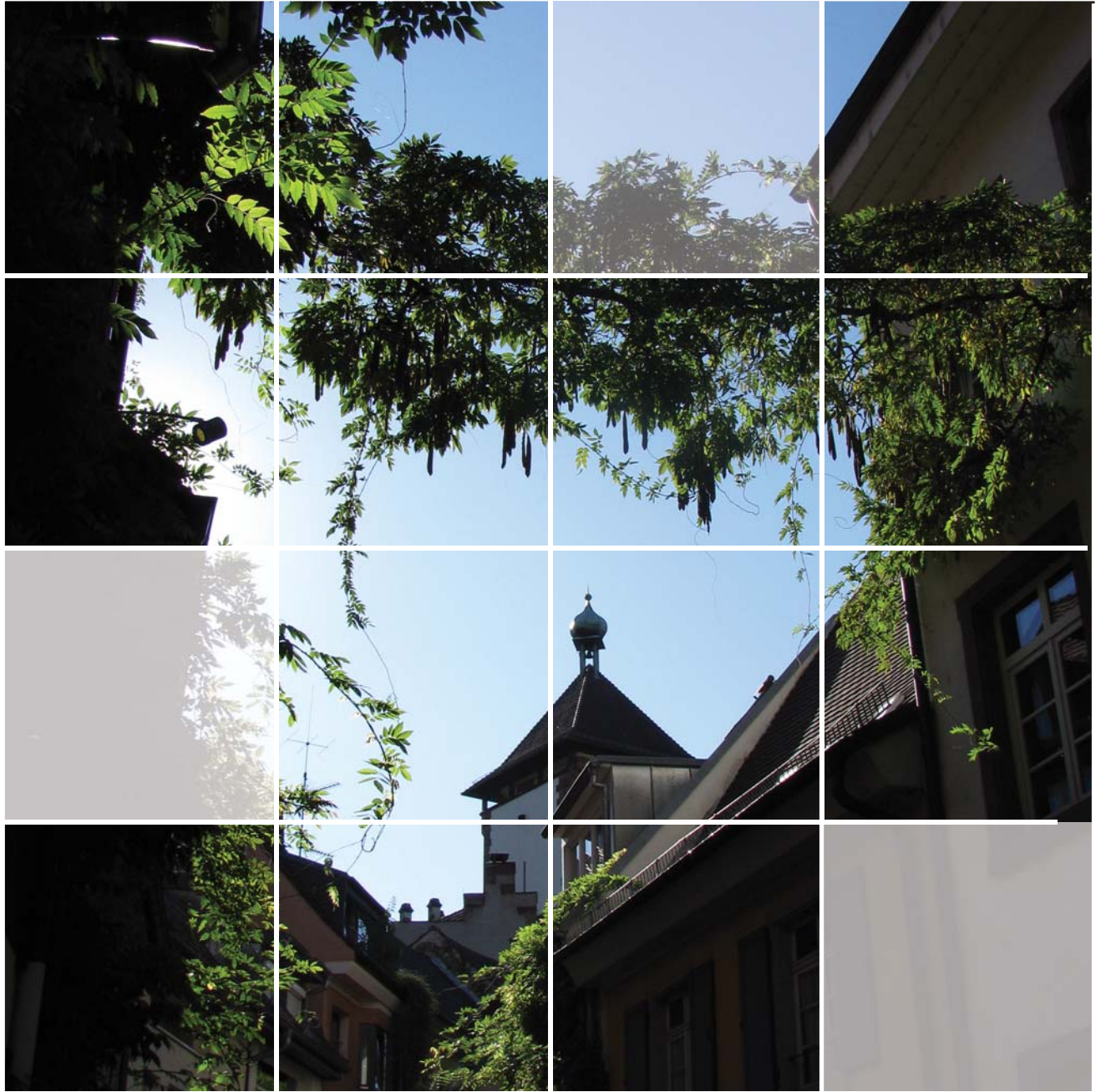
The process began with the creation of a dialogue with colleagues from the Kaunas City municipality and representatives of different groups and communities, over what kind of actions could make the region a better place in which to live for the inhabitants and more attractive for people visiting the region. Together, it was discovered that developing a sustainable transport network in the region was a common aim for all of the participants. Particularly important here was the development of a cycling infrastructure and the creation of a Kaunas district cycling paths scheme. Improving connectivity between the city and district municipalities was deemed to be in everyone’s interest.

In order to create a Cycling Scheme that would best serve the region’s inhabitants several meetings were organised with participants from various municipalities, local and regional level authorities,

politicians and NGOs. The initial aim was to produce a concrete vision of what was needed and then to discuss and evaluate whether the planned Cycling Scheme would attain the objectives set. The meetings also ensured that the scheme would be in line with existing schemes in the neighbouring municipalities. These local stakeholder meetings had a significant influence on the planning process as they offered the possibility to exchange experiences and to discuss ideas with local stakeholders and communities. In order to ensure the transparency of the planning process and the active participation of all actors involved the coordination team paid particular attention to maintaining communication with all of the stakeholders.

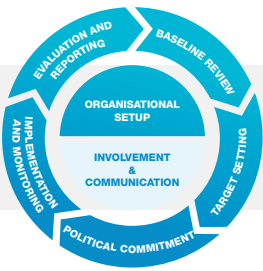
The Cycling Scheme has now been finalised and will be included in the Master Plan and in the Kaunas District strategy 2007-2013 to ensure its implementation. The document provides an important starting point for the development of cycling in the district.

In addition to the Cycling Scheme, the most valuable result of the project has been the cooperation platform established among different actors in the Kaunas city-region, helping them to find ‘best solutions’ for making the city-region a better place to live. It also became clear that better coordination of spatial planning activities between the municipalities is necessary. Newly strengthened relationships between the Kaunas city and district municipalities can clearly open doors to cooperation in other fields.



3

GETTING CITY-REGIONS INVOLVED



3.1 CONNECT AND ENGAGE – INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

*How to perform successful stakeholder involvement?
Why different groups need different kinds of communication?*

Cooperation will not be sustainable and rewarding without broad acceptance, political will, understanding, interest and an awareness and recognition of the benefits and responsibilities that come with it among the actors involved. In order to achieve this, the promotion of a sense of commonality and the reconciliation of the differing goals pursued by urban and rural areas, is required. Effective communication and involvement are the key factors in the success of the process from baseline review to evaluation.

A strategy for both communication and involvement is needed. The involvement strategy should define who to engage and what is the role of each participant. When defining the relevant stakeholders consider who is affected by the issues or can affect the issue. Who possesses relevant information and can deliver the resources and expertise required? Concerning the communication it should be pre-planned, how it is handled with external and internal stakeholders. Communication and involvement are closely related to the question of organisational set-up.

SUCCESSFUL STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

Inclusiveness is one of the overarching principles of the Integrated Management System. Relevant stakeholders should be offered opportunities to influence the key stages of the planning process: building the

vision, defining objectives and targets, measuring development, and participating in evaluation.

Strategies to involve external and internal stakeholders should be developed. In the category of external stakeholders we can include residents, private landowners, NGOs, researchers, entrepreneurs and government agencies, politicians and all the others who the plan might concern or who might be interested in it. External participants have an important role in the stakeholder meetings bringing in local knowledge, a broader perspective and critical feedback to the progress of the planning activities.



The internal stakeholders will include the representatives of the municipal and regional authorities and politicians actively involved in the process. In practical terms they are the members of the coordination team or cross-sectoral working group. Internal stakeholders take care of the operational implementation – the concrete elaboration of the plan or strategy. They make sure that the plans and objectives are approved at the political decision making level.

Comprehensive stakeholder involvement ensures that planned actions have wider acceptance across the city-region since local actors had the opportunity to contribute to the plans.

Planning for stakeholder involvement:

- Perform a stakeholder analysis to identify the internal and external stakeholder groups,
- Define an objective for your stakeholder co-operation, is it to enable more transparent decision making, to gain more knowledge or something else with a specific goal,
- Plan how various stakeholder groups will be involved and when, select communication and involvement methods used with each of the groups,
- Clarify that each participant is aware of their role and how they can be involved.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATORY PLANNING

The integrated management system places participatory processes at the heart of strategic decision-making and places significant emphasis on linking them to each step. One of the pitfalls here has however been that stakeholder involvement processes have been conducted parallel to – rather than as an integral part of – decision-making.

Four arguments supporting public participation in decision making and planning:

1. Participatory processes increase trust between the stakeholders and policymakers.
2. Participatory processes make the democratic process more transparent – filling in the years between elections so that citizens can have a visible impact on and understand decision-making between elections.
3. Outcomes may be better with participatory processes: i.e., if stakeholders are involved, the amount of knowledge gathered is larger than situations where only a few planners or consultants do the job.
4. Broad consensus and participation in planning ensures the long-term acceptance and viability of strategies and measures.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

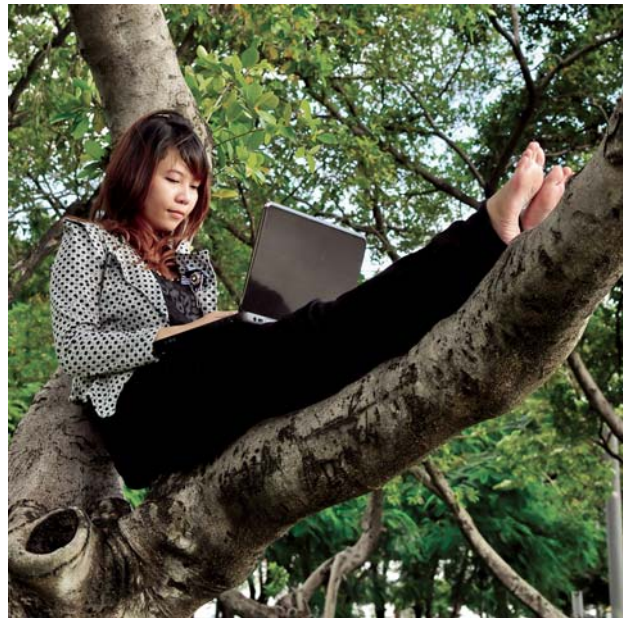
When it comes to communication, it is crucial to recognise the ‘common story’ – the overarching main message that is being communicated. The methods used and the message communicated vary depending on the target group. Internally, you need to “sell” the idea you want to develop further, whether it is a common biking plan, common master plan, regional cycling scheme etc., to people working in other municipalities, planners, politicians and the heads of administration. You have to convince them of the benefits that joint planning and cooperation in certain fields can bring.

Externally among the wider public you have to raise awareness of the issues and convince different groups that their opinion is both valuable and necessary in the planning process. Individuals need to understand that they can actually participate in shaping their own living environments. When communicating with external stakeholders avoid using technical and professional language. Public attention and awareness helps to build political support but also contributes to the citizen’s knowledge and understanding of the planning process.

When planning the organisational setup, an analysis of the existing information and communication structures within and between the municipalities is required. Do common ways exist to reach citizens across the whole city-region? Does cooperation between different political decision makers already exist? Does a regional discussion platform exist for spatial planning issues?

Remember that:

- The strong commitment of politicians, close interaction with stakeholders and the active contribution of local residents is likely to be the result of well-performed involvement and communication activities.
- Successful public involvement very much depends on the topic and scope: local and concrete issues get stakeholders more interested and committed to the process.





PARTICIPATION AND QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL IN ÖREBRO

Citizen participation and the ability to influence spatial planning are critical in planning good living environments in the municipalities of Örebro and Lekeberg. The two municipalities have set up a mutual planning process for mobility, housing and services in certain areas within the borderland of these two municipalities. One important aspect of the common Master Plan process is the attempt to find better ways to involve citizens who are often excluded from conventional participation processes. New ways of allowing people to express their opinions and reveal the changes required in their living environment are necessary to increase general well-being of the residents.

One developed method that promotes the role of children and young people in urban planning is the production of maps that are easy to understand (children's maps) through use of GIS (geographical information system). The method, which develops further work carried out by the Swedish Agricultural University (SLU), is based upon the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is computer-based and suitable for children from the age of 10. The method was successfully used within the NEW BRIDGES project.

This cooperation with the children in Örebro city-region began with an explanation of what urban planning means and the rights children have to express their own opinions. With the computer-based programme children's' expressed their feelings about the environment they were living. The children marked into digital maps their homes, their routes to school, the places and roads they used in their leisure time and their favourite places as well as those they perceived to be either dangerous or un-

pleasant. The results showed that the ways in which children observe spatial space varies from those used by adults to observe the same space. Children do not think or play like we expect. Sometimes unexpected places appeared as dangerous while unforeseeable places were seen as pleasant to play or spend time in.

"The results are extensive and make interesting map material mining a rich vein of information! We now need seriously to adapt children's views about the quality of life of their living environment to the new Master Plan," says the project leader Christin Gimberger from Örebro's urban planning office.

Besides the participation methods for children Örebro city-region has constantly tried to develop more effective ways to utilise individual perspectives in planning. The Master Plan process has developed new ways in which to engage citizens. It is important to ensure that these new and more inclusive approaches to planning can be sustained into the future and that they are widely adopted as an integral part of the planning process.

Eva Järliden, Public Health Strategist from the City of Örebro, concludes: "More transparent processes are needed, processes that are closer to citizens and allow open discussion and interaction between different groups. Working together over municipal borders, finding new methods to more fully involve the citizens, and creating common methods to plan and work in a sustainable way – all of this is required. Taking into account the social, economic and ecological aspects of a problem is the basis for planning attractive city-regions."



3.2 GAINING SUPPORT – POLITICAL COMMITMENT

*How to get politicians on board?
What kinds of role do they have in the process?*

Political commitment is the core element when implementing any kind of plan or strategy. In order to successfully introduce new targets and plans for the city-region, a large measure of political will and a clear recognition of the benefits are necessary. You may have planned a good project with clear targets and a robust implementation scheme. However, the project will be less successful if the processes and targets set at the planning level are not backed by the political decision makers and other relevant stakeholders in every municipality across the city-region.

Maintain the exchange of information alive with politicians from the outset of the process. Organise informal meetings with political leaders, mayors

and major political groups and specialised committees to provide them with information about the importance of the process you are pushing forward. As actors from different municipalities can be afraid of losing control of some issues and, ultimately, of their political independence, it is essential to build trust. Key persons like local and regional politicians are important in opening doors and generating minds in terms of improving the level of interaction between urban and rural areas.

HOW TO GET THE POLITICIANS INTERESTED

No matter what your topic is always clearly highlight the benefits and give politicians concrete examples of what needs to be done. Provide them with examples of how the daily life of the residents could be improved; how public transport could be more attractive, in what kinds of areas people prefer to live and what kinds of services they want. Explain to politicians what the expected impacts of the plans are and how the city-region will benefit from it. Inviting politicians to undertake concrete actions and to meetings where the issues are treated is a good way to get them to understand the basic problems involved. This ensures their long-term engagement. Look for politicians that are interested in the specific field in which your project best fits (urban planning, social issues, mobility planning, service structure planning etc). Make sure that you have enough politicians representing different sectors and municipalities.

Getting political support for the project is crucial in avoiding a situation where the project or desired goals are not in line with real political life and exist-



ing priorities in the municipalities. In the end decisions made concerning spatial planning are based on the existing strategies and visions (priorities agreed in political decision making) in the municipalities. Politicians are the ones with the power to influence.

How to do it in practice?

- Organise meetings with politicians at every crucial step of the process when important decisions are made,
- Explain and clearly justify the benefits and possible advantages of the project,
- Emphasise the importance of an integrated approach and of cooperation in regional planning,
- Political bodies and stakeholders should be informed before addressing the media to seek public attention for the project,
- Everyone should have an appropriate role in the implementation process and have the ability to provide input into the process,
- Address the question of the resources needed, the expected timeframe and the implementation plan.



EU GREEN PAPER ON TERRITORIAL COHESION (CEC, 2008)

The competitiveness and prosperity of a region depends on the capacity of its people and businesses to make the best use of all of that region's territorial assets. The Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion highlights the importance of functional regions and the intermediate level of governance for balanced regional development. The problems of concentration and connectivity can only be effectively addressed with strong cooperation at various levels and improved governance. In addition to cross-border co-operation the Green Paper recognises the importance of cross-sectoral integration stating that: Many of the problems faced by territories cut across sectors and effective solutions require an integrated approach and cooperation between the various authorities and stakeholders involved.



PREPARING A COMMON LAND-USE STRATEGY FOR THE TURKU URBAN REGION

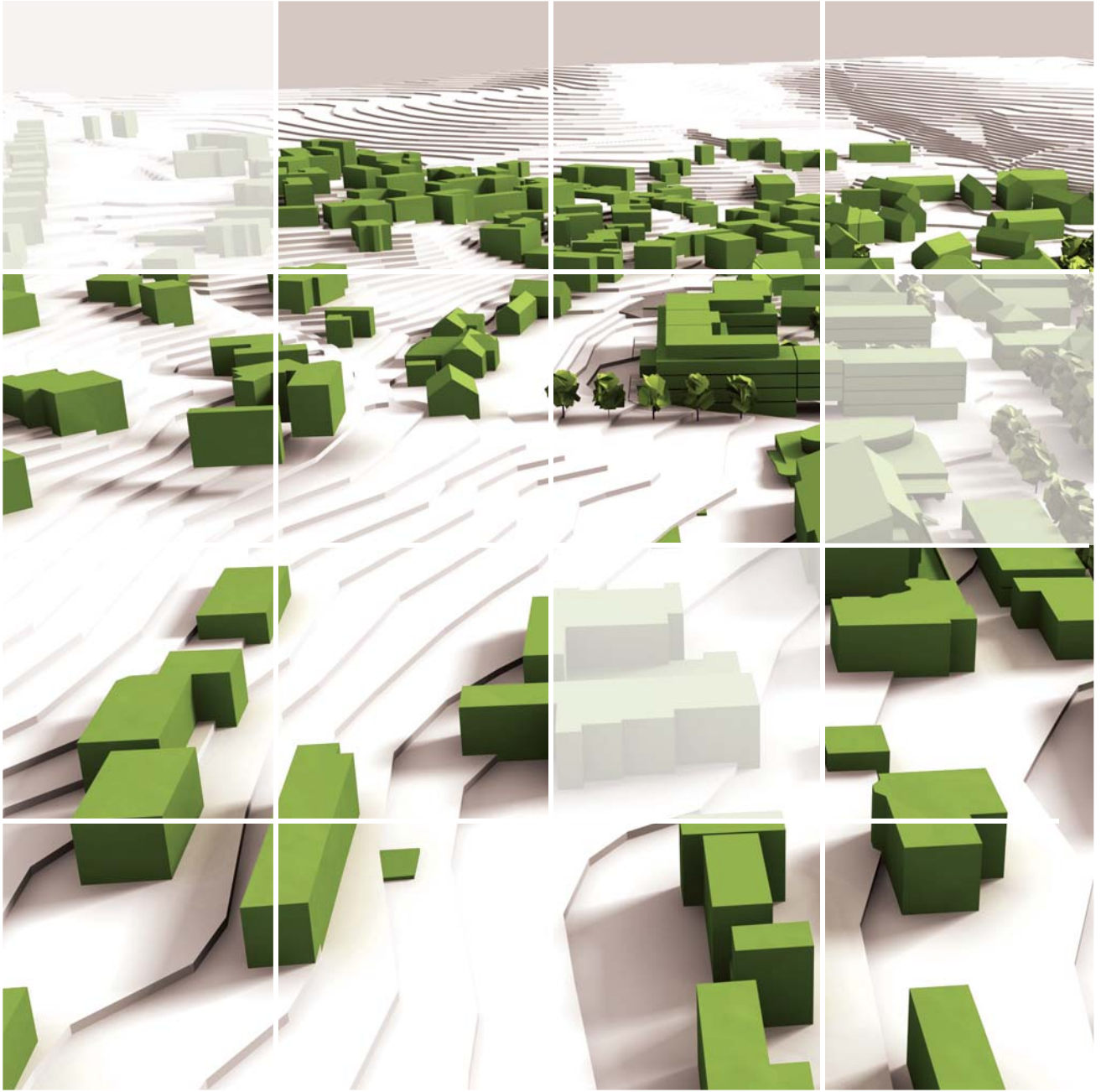
Parallel to the NEW BRIDGES Pilot Actions, Turku Region has also been busy developing the Structural model 2035 for the Turku Urban Region – a common land-use strategy for 14 neighbouring municipalities in Southwest Finland. The Structural Model was born from the national municipality reform initiated by the Cabinet and is a continuation of the PARAS-project which aimed to remodel and integrate regional service structures. The planning process started in 2010 and it is planned to conclude in early 2012.

The main objective of the model has been to find both a common vision for and the main solutions to the long-term development of the Turku region. The quantitative target of the model is regional growth of 75 000 inhabitants. The overall objective underlines improvements to the competitiveness and attractiveness of the city-region and the mitigation of climate change. The strategy aims to have common targets for all significant land use activities such as housing, business, service provision, mobility and transport in connection to the network of urban green areas.

Finnish municipalities generally enjoy broad autonomy in land-use planning. Regional co-operation has thus often been quite challenging as the municipalities are used to seeing each other as competi-

tors rather than as cooperation partners. Although the plan is not legally binding it will have great significance as it will be the first integrated plan to have attracted broad acceptance from the municipalities in the region.

The methods used in the planning process for the organisation of stakeholder meetings and to get politicians involved more generally were taken directly from the NEW BRIDGES project. Although the planning process schedule was rigorous it has managed to attract praise for its transparency and approach to involving different stakeholders, declares Mikko Laaksonen, Project Planner from the Regional Council of Southwest Finland. Individual residents as well as local stakeholders from different municipalities and regional authorities have had several opportunities not only to comment on but also to direct and evaluate the plan through the stakeholder meetings and public hearings organised in accordance with the participation and dissemination strategy prepared at the beginning of the project. The Steering Group which consists of high level municipal politicians, city administrators and regional level actors has coordinated the whole process.



4

IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN



4.1 MAKING IT HAPPEN – IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

How to get things done and follow up what has already been achieved?

How to get back onto the right track with monitoring?

The implementation of any kind of process is a demanding task in terms of the organisation and coordination of all the parallel actions that have to take place. Successful implementation is based on a plan, an organisational set-up, good communications and the involvement of all relevant stakeholders. Cooperation between different municipalities brings challenges in terms of managing and coordinating all of the tasks and responsibilities divided among the various administrative units.



The coordination team is responsible for coordinating that the targets agreed previously and the plan to reach the targets will be now implemented. The division of tasks must however be clear. The coordination team takes care of the involvement of the cross-sectoral working group in the necessary phases of the implementation process. Depending on the type and nature of the planned activities the coordination team could consider outsourcing some parts of the implementation process to external experts like consultancies. The most important thing is that the coordination team retains an overall picture of the whole process.

How to plan the implementation?

- Make sure that the cross-sectoral working group includes enough stakeholders from different sectors and municipalities,
- Set-up an informal discussion platform for different actors,
- Make sure that everyone signs up to common goals and objectives and understands the framework they are working within,
- Check if there is enough cooperation and communication between different departments of the municipalities,
- Find and assign appropriate measures relating to how the objectives are realised in practice,
- Consider whether substantial and formal agreements with stakeholders are required.

MONITORING THE ACTIONS

Mere implementation of the actions is not sufficient in itself. Equally important here is the monitoring of these actions and comparing whether they correspond to the original targets and goals. Monitoring means regular observation and the recording of the activities taking place. The most important value of the monitoring is that it provides an opportunity to modify the actions in the desired direction if sufficient progress is not being made (taking into consideration the time schedule). Monitoring is then a useful way of producing updated progress information for politicians and other stakeholders and of evaluating the performance of all of the institutions within the process. A good monitoring and evaluation process engages all stakeholders and is useful for those ultimately responsible for coordinating the process.

Success factors in a good monitoring process:

- Record the actions made and collect related data produced regularly,
- Set a realistic timetable,
- Set clear targets and indicators to measure performance,
- Require reporting of the relevant actions in the implementation process,
- Organise meetings for stakeholders to facilitate the coordination of actions and provide for and encourage the possibility of peer review.

THE EUROPEAN UNION STRATEGY FOR THE BALTIC SEA REGION (EUSBSR, 2009)

As the first macro-regional strategy the EU's BSR strategy represents a new approach to the introduction of its territorial policy agenda. This inter-sectoral strategy is built on four key-pillars: environmental protection, economic prosperity, accessibility & attractiveness, and safety & security. The strategy includes 15 priority areas under which around 80 so-called flagship projects are defined plus ten horizontal actions which serve the objectives of territorial cohesion.

The BSR strategy functions as a torch-bearer for the development of the EUs macro-regional strategies, the future significance of which will only increase. The BSR strategy however only has a weak reference to urban-rural partnerships since it does not differentiate between intra-regional areas in accordance with their territorial characteristics, for example urban-rural areas. Rather it treats the whole BSR as a homogenous area. The BSR strategy is thus still trying to determine its place within the existing dynamics and initiatives of the EUs macro-regional policy framework.

Furthermore, the BSR is rich in state and non-state stakeholders such as the Pan-Baltic organisations, foundations, network councils etc. (VASAB, CBSS-Baltic 21, Nordic Council of Ministers and the Union of Baltic Cities). Almost all of them have their own strategies, agendas and/or action plan development influencing overall macro-regional territorial policy development and dynamics.



4.2 GETTING READY FOR THE NEXT ROUND – EVALUATION AND REPORTING

Why the evaluation is needed?

How the findings can be used for further improvements?

The last step of the process is the evaluation. This is a planned and systematic process that assesses the achievements by reference to preset criteria. Evaluation is needed to understand why something has happened – whether it failed or succeeded - and whether the changes are significant. What has been achieved in respect of improving the quality of life? What are the main outcomes of urban rural cooperation? Evaluation requires systematic monitoring during the previous steps so that both the flaws and the successful elements of the implementation process can be identified. This helps in answering the question - what comes next?

The results of the evaluation should be reported to decision makers to ensure that they are aware of the consequences of their actions and to provide them with a solid basis for taking further decisions. In a best case analysis can be used to prove that the whole process has fulfilled its purpose and should be continued. It is important to ensure that politicians and other stakeholders remain aware of the state of progress in order to gain acceptance for subsequent actions. Relevant stakeholders should also have an opportunity to give their opinion of the process.

Evaluation is an important public awareness and educational tool. Reporting on the results creates openness in respect of the actions already undertaken. However, the dissemination of the results must be planned in accordance with the needs and requirements of the different types of target groups.

Residents are mainly interested in the concrete impacts that new plans will have on their daily lives while politicians may want information on the resources and investments required to realise these plans.

Things to remember:

- Base your evaluation on systematic monitoring of the actions implemented,
- Engage in a reflective dialogue over the results of the evaluation with different stakeholders and politicians,
- When communicating about the evaluation's findings to the public, be sure to use a variety of techniques such as visual displays, oral presentations, summary statements, and informal conversations,
- Take advantage of the evaluation results to consider what should be done next and how the results can be used to generate further improvements. Consider whether there is a need for a new baseline review.



INTEGRATED MOBILITY PLANNING IN POLAND

The Poviats of Jelenia Góra is located in the south-western part of Lower Silesia Voivodeship and consists of five rural and four urban municipalities. When various public institutions began to discuss how to improve the quality of life in the region it was quickly realised that there was an acute need for an integrated transport system covering the whole region. The existing regional transportation system was fragmented, time-demanding and was dominated by private transportation with the utilisation rate of public transport remaining quite low. In addition improvements to the connections between the district and the main city of Jelenia Góra were necessary.

The concept of integrated transport system which utilises various transportation modes including cycling, railway and bus connections was prepared in a cooperative process. Polish spatial planning experts were appointed to analyse the existing transport structure in the region, and to lead the elaboration of a new plan based on these results. Five local stakeholder meetings were organised in the region designed to involve various groups in the planning process.

The participants in these meetings included representatives of local public authorities, local railroad institutions, bus, cycling and transport offices and spatial planning institutions in the region of Lower Silesia and Jelenia Góra Poviats. During the meetings participants were consulted about the ideas and

plans prepared by the spatial planning experts and were given a chance to discuss the alternatives as well as various other aspects related to the plan. All of the suggestions provided in the meetings were analysed and taken into account in the further development of the plan. The planning process involved over 100 representatives from the various institutions with whom cooperation is expected to be maintained after the project is concluded.

“These local stakeholder meetings provided an opportunity to create a discussion platform for stakeholders representing different institutions from the region and Jelenia Góra Poviats. Through these meetings people working with spatial development had the opportunity to meet each other, discuss openly and share their opinions and ideas”, says Katarzyna Pisarek, Project coordinator from the Lower Silesian Voivodeship. She continues, “the meetings facilitated dialog between regional and local authorities and also allowed for the discussion of various challenges with local community representatives”. Stakeholders themselves stressed that comprehensive and integrated cooperation of different institutions is definitely needed in Jelenia Góra Poviats.

The concept of an integrated transport system is now established. It recognises a very important issue in the area, namely, how the facilitation and integration of people moving around sustainably will also increase the quality of life of the people living and visiting the area.



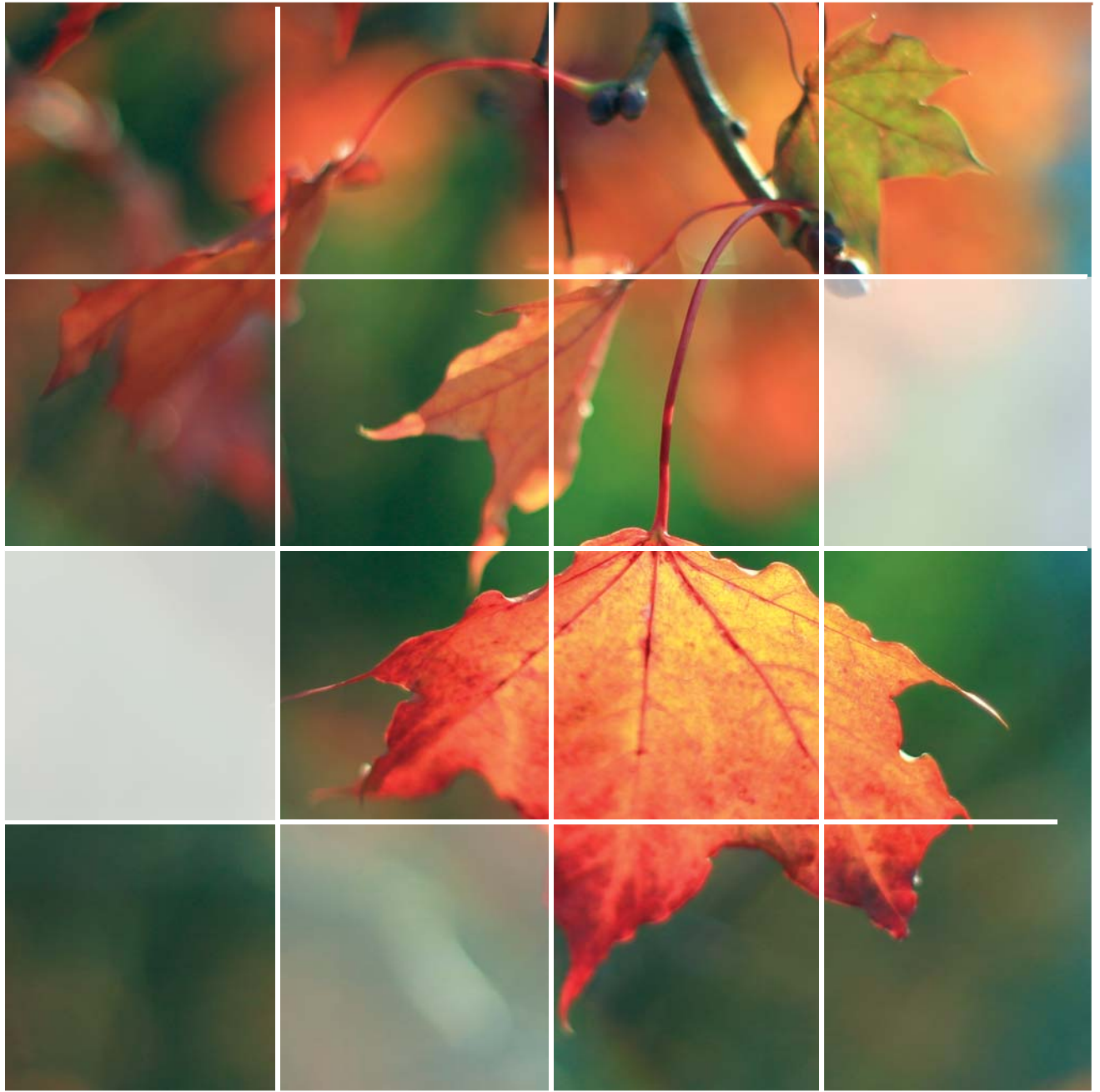
HIIMUMAA PEER VISITS – LEARNING FROM OTHERS

During the NEW BRIDGES project peer visits – study trips to explore other partners’ activities and experiences - played an important role when developing Pilot Actions in the city-regions. Each city-region visited at least one other project partner whom they considered as a ‘best practice’ example to support their own work. As a result, both visiting and hosting partner gained an insight into the work done in other Baltic Sea Region states and took home new ideas and inspiration for further development of the concept of urban-rural interaction and quality of life in their own city-region.

Peer visits also helped in the shaping and development of Hiiumaa’s Pilot Action – the detailed plan for Kärdla harbour. During the project Hiiumaa representatives visited Hamburg in Germany and the Turku archipelago in Finland. Anneli Veevo, Project Adviser from Hiiu County Government, describes the peer visit as a valuable method of learning from others and of gaining fresh ideas for one’s own work.

Reflecting on other region’s activities helps you to see and evaluate your own procedures from a different point of view. It can also prevent a repeat of the mistakes made elsewhere and means that there is no need to constantly reinvent the wheel.

Veevo also notes that in Hamburg they were most impressed by the development of the state harbour area with the construction of a new promenade and residential areas while the harbours in the Turku archipelago mediated a feeling of security. “Finns have decades-long experience of developing small harbours, managing to make them economically viable and thus securing their existence. This study visit gave us much in the way of inspiration in terms of the development of our own harbour area; we have a lot to learn from both of these partners. Thanks to this project, Hiiumaa County Government can see the island with a fresh pair of eyes”.



5

CONCLUSIONS

5.1 TOWARDS INTEGRATED CITY-REGIONS

Integrating different planning processes or achieving consistency in decision making within city-regions does not happen overnight. Rather, it is a slow and often step-by-step process that requires mutual trust and recognition of the common benefits. This can only be attained through genuine interaction and open dialogue between actors in the region, in a practical sense, bringing them together around one table to discuss shared ideas and solutions.

It should by now be clear that using the integrated approach to planning will not require any dramatic changes to customary habits. The Integrated Management System model presents a systematic approach to navigating through normal development and planning procedures, but in this case doing so together with other municipalities. The model includes activities that often run in parallel, or separate, like stakeholder involvement and interaction

with politicians, to become an explicit part of the planning process - paving the way for a more open, inclusive and interactive planning culture.

SMALL THINGS CAN LEAD TO BIGGER IMPROVEMENTS

Sometimes, even when aiming high it is better to start with a small scope and a limited number of stakeholders. The starting point can be a common mobility plan or the provision of common services across a municipal border. Building mutual trust, creating a common way of working and establishing a communications channel between different sectors or planning departments is time consuming. Each requires a significant investment of personal capital by the individuals concerned. However, as some of the case examples in this guide demonstrated once relations have been established expanding co-operation out into other sectors becomes much easier.

‘Starting small’ also refers to the fact that neither using the integrated approach in planning nor improving the management of urban-rural interaction is a single project, but continuous process in the planning of more coherent and functional city-regions. One of the most important questions here is how to transform isolated mutual planning activities to this continuous process of spatial planning.

The importance of the thorough evaluation of the achievements will be emphasised when seeking support for the continuation of the cooperation processes. Political approval and an acknowledgement of the results can be attained only through effective communication within the whole city-region. Evaluation is also needed when the cycle is almost com-



plete and it is time for another round and for the setting of new targets. Planning for attractive city-regions is a never-ending task.

WHY IS ALL OF THIS IMPORTANT?

All planning activity should, ultimately, aim at improving residents' opportunities to live, work and spend their spare time in the region in the way they most desire. The highest value asset held by the municipalities is their residents. The attractiveness and competitiveness of a region depends on the wellbeing of its residents and this is fundamentally related to their quality of life. Increasing residents' quality of life is not however a game of chance. It can only happen through constant teamwork and integration. It is time to turn our efforts, as individuals, as municipalities, as societies more generally, to putting the necessary pieces together to enable the formation of a vibrant, prosperous future.



*The [urbanrural.net](http://www.urbanrural.net) website includes a practical **Online Toolkit: methods for integrated management of urban rural interaction** showing how to implement the various steps of the IMS introduced in this guide. The online toolkit will present concrete methods that have been tested during the NEW BRIDGES project in relation to the following themes: How to perform a stakeholder analysis? What kind of involvement methods can be used? How to organise stakeholder meetings? How to study individual perspectives? Answers to these questions and more can be found at www.urbanrural.net.*

6

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

A **successful attempt** at creating attractive and competitive regions in the Baltic Sea Region is not only about co-operation between the municipalities and the various sectoral agencies. It also requires the seamless integration of policy targets across different government levels from the European Union to local level.

In order to improve the multilevel governance and transparency of governing systems in the Baltic Sea Region the identification of the roles and mandates of the various governance levels is required. Effective support and tools are needed to operationalise a top-down strategy and policy goals at the regional and local levels. It is, however, equally important to provide enough space for bottom-up approaches taking on board local circumstances. This may lead to innovative initiatives being developed by individual residents aiming to increase their quality of life.

This chapter will provide policy recommendations for three different levels, namely, the macro-regional, national and city-regional levels. These recommendations are based on the experiences gathered throughout the NEW BRIDGES project from the work in the partner city-regions, but also on transnational co-operation with several organisations, experts, stakeholders and researchers working in the field, and written policy documents, literature and research.

ON THE WAY TO MACRO REGIONAL COHESION AND BALANCED SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT

THERE IS A NEED TO:

- Promote the concept of quality of life in spatial planning and political decision making at all levels of governments - EU, national, regional and local.
- Emphasise the importance of urban-rural interaction within the next EU programming period and finding effective ways and means to strengthen territorial cohesion by building closer relationships between the cities and the surrounding rural areas.

- Build stronger linkages between urban and rural policies in development of EU strategies and policies while emphasising the positive interaction between these areas.
- Utilise more effective methods and direct funds to operationalise planned macro-regional strategies and commit civil society to stand behind these.
- Promote integrated spatial development strategies for city-regions including their respective rural areas, small cities and towns.
- Create favourable circumstances for the building of new territorial partnerships and cooperation, for example in the form of increased funding for urban-rural cooperation.

TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE, COMPETITIVE AND CO-OPERATIVE NATIONS

THERE IS A NEED TO:

- Promote participatory planning methods and the development of national legislation to enable a better response to be made to the bottom-up initiatives emanating from civil society, ensuring that individuals are better motivated to use their skills and resources in the common interest.
- Strengthen multilevel governance by empowering intermediate and local level decision making in spatial development.
- Support integrated long-term regional strategy development, especially in the fields of land-use planning, housing and mobility policies as well as in the provision of services.
- Create national legislation that supports the construction of wider service areas for functional city-regions promoting the utilisation of services across municipal borders.
- Facilitate co-operation between different municipalities at the national level by providing neutral co-operation platforms, improving the legislation and building further linkages between national urban and rural development policies.
- Support effective methods to reduce uncontrolled urban sprawl, for example through city-regional land-use-planning and strengthening the role of the regional authorities' in steering and monitoring the land use of the municipalities, and offering anticipatory consultation services for the residents attempting to build outside of the planned area.

BUILDING DYNAMIC, ATTRACTIVE AND INTEGRATED CITY-REGIONS

THERE IS A NEED TO:

- Promote co-operation between neighbouring municipalities with a view to strengthening functional regions as the current challenges faced by the municipalities, like climate change or uncontrolled urban sprawl, cannot be tackled without increased co-operation within wider city-regions.
- Erase the borders between cities and their surrounding regions in spatial planning strategy development emphasising the multifaceted nature of co-operation in these city-regions.
- Create new and further develop existing methods and practices supporting the involvement of stakeholders and inhabitants. Furthermore, special attention should be paid here to those groups or individuals in danger of being excluded from the planning process.
- Seek and test new and more effective ways of engaging the citizens enabling them to act together to create new resources for the common benefit, for example through neighbourhood committees, community programmes, public meeting platforms etc.
- Promote those 'soft' values and tools which take into account the individual perspective in spatial planning in order to better respond to the needs of the people living in a region. Thus improving residents' quality of life and overall attractiveness of the city-region.
- Intensify co-operation and increase the level of resources deployed to find new and innovative ways to provide services and public transportation in rural areas, combining both public and private services via active public-private partnerships. For example developing buss-on-demand services and more flexible ways of using public spaces.
- Develop more integrated management systems between different administrative sectors in the city-region in order to foster co-operation while improving and increasing the transparency of the governance system.
- Within city-regions actively seek new areas where housing, mobility patterns, and services could be integrated across neighbouring municipalities.

APPENDIX – EU POLICY DOCUMENTS

Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion. Turning territorial diversity into strength (2008),

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/consultation/terco/paper_terco_en.pdf

ESDP European Spatial Development Perspectives, European Commission (1999),

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docof-fic/official/reports/som_en.htm

European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region - Communication from the European commission (2009),

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docof-fic/official/communic/baltic/com_baltic_en.pdf

Investing in Europe's future - Fifth report on economic, social and territorial cohesion (2010),

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docof-fic/official/reports/cohesion5/pdf/5cr_en.pdf

Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities (2007),

http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/download_docs/Mai/0524-AN/075DokumentLeipzigCharta.pdf

Territorial Agenda of EU 2020 - Towards a More Competitive and Sustainable Europe of Diverse Regions (2011),

<http://www.eu-territorial-agenda.eu/Reference%20Documents/Final%20TA2020.pdf>

Council of the Baltic Sea States Strategy on Sustainable Development 2010-2015 (2011),

<http://www.cbss.org/Environment/creating-a-sustainable-baltic-sea-region>

APPENDIX – REFERENCES

Engage your stakeholders. Stakeholder involvement toolkit for local authorities (2009),

<http://www.matruschka-project.net/index.php/matr:toolkit>

Ensuring quality of life in Europe's cities and towns. Tackling the environmental challenges driven by European and global change (2009),

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/quality-of-life-in-Europes-cities-and-towns>

Platform for the managing urban Europe initiative – Integrated management system.

<http://www.localmanagement.eu/>

NEW BRIDGES- Strengthening of Quality of Life through Improved Management of Urban Rural Interaction Conceptual Paper (2009),

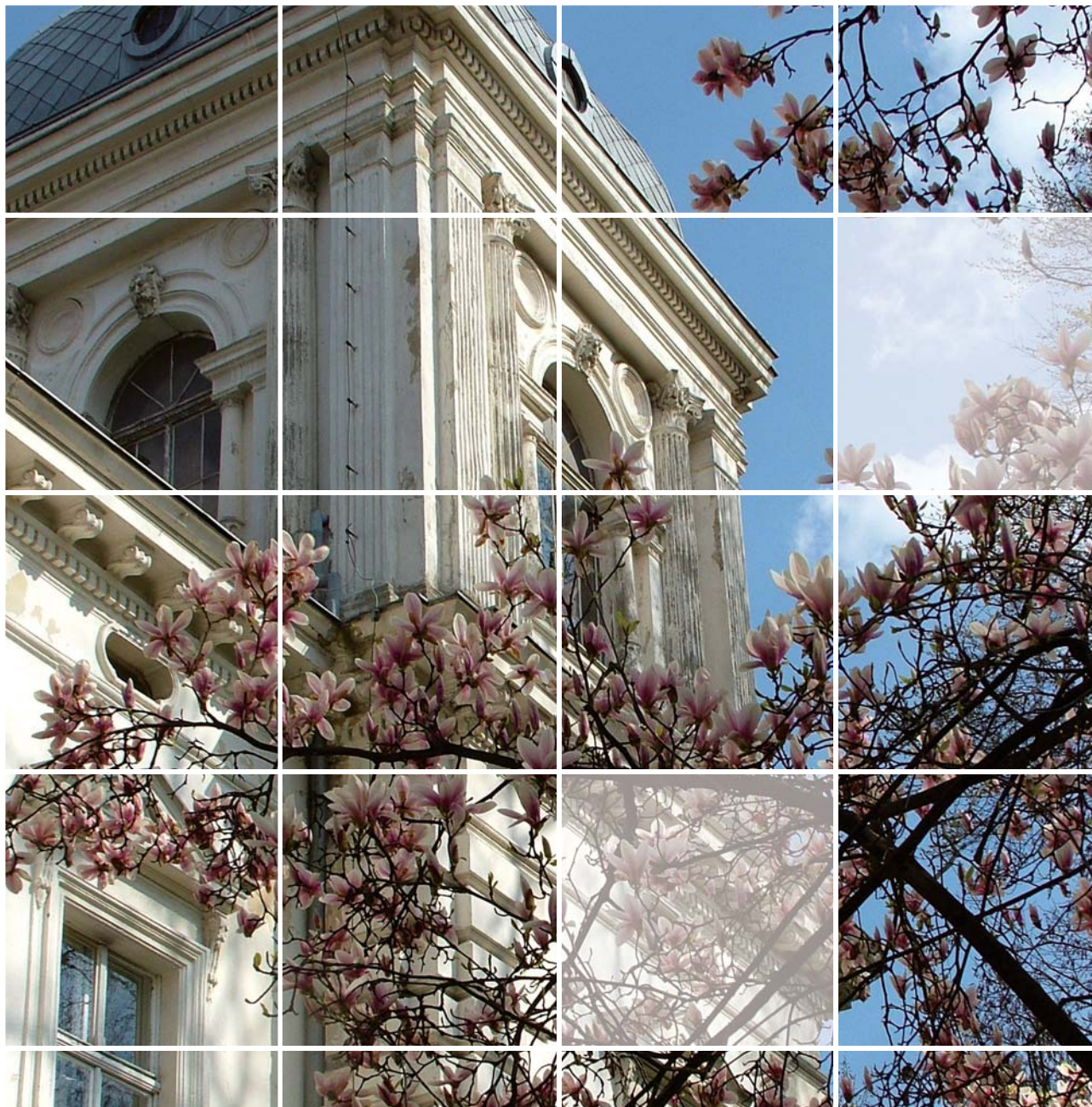
http://www.urbanrural.net/index.php/ur:outputs_0

Urban and rural narratives and spatial development trends in Europe (2010),

http://www.eu-territorial-ageda.eu/Related%20Documents/ES_100623_URBAN_RURAL_ENG.pdf

VASAB Long-Term Perspective for the Territorial Development of the Baltic Sea Region (2010),

http://www.vasab.org/conference/upload/dokumenti/vasab_ltp_final.pdf



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We are living in the Europe of regions. Individual municipalities cannot thrive alone in the global competition for new businesses, taxpayers and tourists. In order to succeed and build attractive regions, cooperation over municipal borders is necessary including both urban and rural areas.

Enabling a high quality of life and the well-being of individuals is the key element in the development of attractive and competitive cities and regions in Europe. The key issue here is the cities' and towns' readiness to listen to residents, businesses and other groups, and to allow them to participate in decision making thus together developing a better society.

Increasing residents' quality of life is not however a game of chance. It can only happen through constant teamwork and integration. It is time to turn our efforts, as individuals, as municipalities, as societies more generally, to putting the necessary pieces together to enable the formation of a vibrant, prosperous future.