



**EU2020 Going Local
Final Evaluation**

Final report
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1 Introduction

1.1 Scope of the evaluation

EU2020 Going Local is an interregional cooperation project part-financed by the INTERREG IV C programme. The project is a so-called capitalisation project that revolves around the transfer of good practices among EU regions. Key outputs of this project are action plans for the implementation of these best practices in each of the partner regions. The project was implemented between October 2010 and December 2012.

Half-way through the project (November 2011) a mid-term evaluation was performed to review the interregional cooperation work done during the first year of the project and to make recommendations to help focus the activities in the remaining year of project implementation, to maximise the impact of the project outputs.

The aim of this final evaluation is to make an assessment of the nature and quality of the results that were produced by the “EU2020 Going Local” project. This should lead to concrete recommendations for the future implementation of the action plans and best practices. And it should identify possibilities for further European cooperation in this field. The evaluation targets the following interrelated aspects of the “EU2020 Going Local” project:

- *The nature and impact of the best practice identification and transfer*
 - the transfer and exchange process among the partners
 - the actual uptake of selected best practices in the partner regions
- *The nature and success of the involvement of regional stakeholders*
 - extent of regional stakeholder involvement (nature and intensity of involvement) in best practice identification and action planning during the project
 - anticipated involvement of relevant regional stakeholders in the further implementation of action plans
- *Securing the follow-up of project results and dynamics in the future*
 - plans and modalities for the further roll-out and continuation of the regional action plans and other project results (best practice collection, intra- and interregional networks, strengthened EU orientation in the partner regions)
 - identifying windows of opportunity for continued development of new activities to contribute to the Europe 2020 Strategy by the partner organisations, including possible European cooperation activities.

The evaluation results in a qualitative review of the results and effects of the project as they can be observed at the end of the project lifetime. The primary scope of the evaluation does not include project implementation and management structures, or project communication activities.

1.2 The EU2020 Going Local project

The INTERREG IVC project “EU2020 going local - From detached Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategies to a regionalised indigenous EU2020” is a joint initiative of 14 partners from 9 EU Member States:

- Sörmland Regional Council (SE) – Lead Partner
- Örebro Regional Development Council (SE)
- Ministry of Economic Affairs, Energy and Industry of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (DE)
- City of Duisburg (DE)
- Regional Development Agency of the Ljubljana Urban Region (SLV)
- Riga Planning Region (LV)
- Zemgale Planning Region (LV)
- Stoke-on-Trent City Council (UK)
- Municipality of Schaerbeek (BE)
- Ministry for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure (LUX)
- Province of Gelderland (NL)
- Regio Achterhoek (NL)
- Local Government Yorkshire & Humber (UK)
- Cartaxo Municipality (PT)

These partners had not worked together in this composition in project before, and for some partners (e.g. Regio Achterhoek) it was the first time to join a European cooperation project.

The overall objective of the project is to capitalise on experiences and good practice regarding the project's sub-theme: energy and sustainable transport. Good practice that has proven to be very successful in one of the partner regions shall be transferred into another partner's regional mainstreaming programme (for instance the Objective 1 or 2 Programmes of the 2007-2013 funding period). This will enable the different partners to further improve and modernise their regional policy. By adapting good practises learnt through the partnership or via the new projects which will be initiated via the action plans.

To achieve this objective the following consecutive steps are foreseen:

- Collecting and documenting relevant good practices from the partners
- Workshops dedicated to presentation of models/practises per region
- Smaller thematic working groups to match regions specific interests with the good practises provided
- Start composing action plans parallel to the exchange of good practises
- Involvement of relevant stakeholders in the respective region
- Exchange and discussion of all action plans within the partnership
- Finalising action plans

The project will deliver 10 regional action plans for further implementation in regional strategy-plans/tools, adopted by the regional authorities. Twelve good practice examples or projects will be successfully transferred within the partnership.

1.3 Evaluation approach

This evaluation is based on a combination of desk-based research, discussions with the EU2020 Going Local partners during the projects' wrap-up meeting (Düsseldorf, 12/13 November 2012) and telephone interviews with individual project partners. The evaluation was performed in November and December 2012.

The desk-based research consisted of a review of available project documentation. In particular the most recent available version of the action plans, the available documentation related to the 7 thematic working groups, the application form/project plan, the good practice documentation (INTERREG IVC templates) and the project newsletters and progress reports.

For the interviews all project partners were invited to participate. Seven partners responded to this invitation and were interviewed. Furthermore one partner made a written contribution to the evaluation. A standard list of discussion points was used for all interviews, to explore partners' experiences and appreciation related to the development of their action plans, the good practices exchange and the thematic working groups, the impact of the project in their region and expectations for the future follow-up of the project outputs. The list of interviewees is included in Annex 2 of this report.

The findings of the final evaluation are presented in this document. Chapters 2 to 5 consecutively address the good practice exchange, the action plans, the impact of the project and its future prospects. Each of these chapters briefly presents the context and activities and modalities planned in relation to these areas, and then presents the observations that emerge from the evaluation work. Chapter 6 presents the conclusions and recommendations of this evaluation.

2 Identification and transfer of good practices

2.1 Identification and transfer of good practice in EU2020 Going Local

EU2020 Going Local is an INTERREG IVC project of the so-called *capitalisation project* type. This type of project is expected to focus specifically on the transfer of existing good practices¹ between regions participating in a project. The partners are expected to develop action plans to prepare the implementation of such good practices, making use of mainstream EU Structural Funds programmes (e.g. European Regional Development Fund, other INTERREG programmes). This implies that from the start, these projects have to be well aware of the existing basis of good practices in their field of cooperation.

At the start of the project, the EU2020 Going Local partnership collected over 50 good practices from almost all partners. These are grouped in four categories ('sub-themes'):

- Local/regional climate impact programmes and sustainable management control systems
- Renewable energy and waste to energy
- Energy efficiency measures
- Sustainable public transport and non-motorised transport

During the first year of the project (2011) a series of good practice exchange workshops was organised, dedicated to more detailed presentation and exchange of good practices among the whole partnership. In the second year of the project, focus shifted towards the creation of a number of smaller working groups for more detailed exchange among partners with a shared interest in certain (fields of) good practice.

2.2 Recommendations from the mid-term evaluation

The mid-term evaluation (November 2011) concluded that the many good practices identified, covering all four 'sub-themes' of the project should enable a fruitful exchange. The high number of practices and the varied quality of (documentation about) the practices made it difficult to easily identify potentially relevant good practices from this collection. The thematic workshops during the first year were important to give partners an overview and understanding of all good practices available.

Several bilateral or multilateral contacts and meetings between partners were arranged in addition to the original project work plan to have more detailed exchange and transfer of specific good practices. The activities of the smaller thematic working groups made a slow start compared to the project plan.

The mid-term evaluation made the following recommendations related to good practice exchange:

- To reduce the extensive collection of good practices and revise and update the descriptions of the selected good practices to be more concrete, uniform and complete.
- To consider publishing the remaining collection of good practices as a legacy of the project and as a concrete output for dissemination of the results of EU2020 Going Local.
- A concrete proposal for a more interactive set-up of the remaining thematic workshops.
- Concrete and coordinated action at project level to speed up the formation and facilitate the implementation of the thematic working groups' activity.

¹ INTERREG IVC defines a good practice as: "... an initiative (e.g. methodologies, projects, processes and techniques) [...] which has already proved successful and which has the potential to be transferred to a different geographic area. Proved successful is where the good practice has already provided tangible and measurable results in achieving a specific objective." (INTERREG IVC Programme Manual, Section 1.1)

2.3 Observations related to identification and transfer of good practice

2.3.1 The collection of good practices

In the second half of the project, the initial collection of 54 good practices has been refined and reduced, resulting in a remaining selection of 20 good practices. Among these practices are also several 'new' ones that were not listed in the initial good practice collection. The remaining good practices come from 6 different partner regions (Stoke-on-Trent, Örebro, Achterhoek, Luxemburg, Yorkshire & Humber and Riga).

These practices are described in the format officially prescribed by the INTERREG IVC programme. This format is more concise than the good practices description model originally used by EU2020 Going Local. It mainly requires a brief but concrete description of the practice, proof of its results and contact details of the owner.

The content of many of the good practice descriptions remains at a general and abstract level, mainly listing topics and objectives rather than concrete directly applicable practice. Although this can be partly attributed to the very concise nature of the mandatory template, it would have been possible to provide more concrete and practical descriptions. In some of the good practice descriptions information seems to be missing, for instance regarding the proof of result or the contact details of the 'owner'. On the basis of the information provided in many of the descriptions it may prove difficult for potential users to get an understanding of a good practice.

The good practices are available for download on the EU2020 Going Local website in the exchange of experiences section. They are presented as a list of practices, however, there is no context explanation of further grouping into certain thematic categories. Moreover the names of individual practices are rather abstract (many abbreviations, no reference to origin or theme). This presentation makes it difficult for users, in particular those not familiar with the details of the project, to find and understand the good practices through the EU2020 Going Local website.

2.3.2 Thematic working groups for good practice exchange

The thematic working group activity has picked up speed during the second half of the project. During and shortly after the mid-term event of the project (November 2011) the partners identified 10 potential thematic working groups on the basis of shared interests and the availability of concrete good practices or general partner experiences.

The initiators of the groups were invited to write a short description of the scope of the working group. Other partners could then decide to join in. Seven working groups were actually activated.

1. Electric Vehicles
2. Smart Steering
3. Dialog with Citizens
4. Cycling
5. Green Skills
6. Energy Agency
7. Waste to Biogas

Three other working groups were also proposed, on the themes Energy Efficiency or Energy & Poverty, Sustainable Transport of Goods and Fuel Cells. These were not effectuated, as there were not enough partners sharing an interest.

It was up to the leaders and members of the working groups to plan and prepare activities. Each working group therefore followed a slightly different programme. The project conferences that took place during the first half of 2012 were an opportunity for the working groups to get together.

In particular the Stoke-on-Trent project conference in March 2012 was an occasion for all working groups (except the one on Waste to Biogas) to stage a working group meeting or workshop. These sessions were dedicated to presenting and discussing existing practices and experiences from the partnership and focussed on the related needs of partners (individually or jointly).

The Schaerbeek partner meeting in June 2012 was mainly dedicated to exchanges on the draft local action plans of the partners. However, in parallel, the working groups Energy Agency and Dialog with Citizens organised additional meetings. Several thematic working groups also organised separate additional meetings and activities.

The text boxes below illustrate the different approaches and activities developed by the various thematic working groups during the project:

The working group **Electric Vehicles** (later named 'e-VIPs' - Electric Vehicles Very Important for Public Services) was the first working group to actually start. Already in September 2011 a first meeting took place in Rotherham (UK), at the initiative of the local partner Yorkshire and Humber. Participants included partners Sörmland, North Rhine-Westphalia, Stoke-on-Trent, Schaerbeek and Cartaxo, as well as representatives of the automotive industry. The Portuguese good practice MOBI.E – network for electric mobility, was an important basis for this working group.

A second meeting of the group took place during the Stoke-on-Trent conference. The working group was a platform for these partners to discuss their ambitions to boost the use of electric vehicles, in particular by focussing on the possibilities of their own car fleets. This project activity has resulted in, or supported, several concrete pilot projects of partners testing or purchasing e-vehicles (Stoke, Schaerbeek). And activities dedicated to the further introduction of electric vehicles are listed in several partners' action plans (i.a. North Rhine-Westphalia/Duisburg, Yorkshire and Humber, Schaerbeek).

The working group **Smart Steering** focussed on tools for steering towards results for the local implementation of the EU2020 strategy. The exchanges were based on the so-called Sörmland approach (a management control system for improved regional and local results) and focussed on the Results Based Accountability (RBA) method for improving public policy programmes. Participants were Luxemburg, Riga, Zengale, Ljubljana, Schaerbeek, North Rhine-Westphalia, Sörmland and Stoke-on-Trent.

The members of this group had frequent exchanges via e-mail, a workshop in Stoke (March 2012), a phone conference and a dedicated working group meeting in Luxemburg in May 2012. The Results Based Accountability method also was presented and discussed in-depth during the project's final conference in October 2012.

Through the work of this group, the RBA method was introduced as a key tool for monitoring the follow-up of action plans (and other regional/local policies). Many partners refer to the RBA approach as an important good practice they will take up from the project and as a source of inspiration for their further programmes.

The working group **Energy Agency** met in Stoke-on-Trent, and had follow-up contacts afterwards, including at the wrap-up meeting in Düsseldorf. Participants included Ljubljana, Örebro, Schaerbeek, Achterhoek, Latvian partners and North Rhine-Westphalia. These exchanges focussed on concrete experiences in the creation and implementation of energy agencies. Some partners have very advanced experience in this field (Örebro, North Rhine-Westphalia, Zengale and Riga), while others (Ljubljana) have very concrete ambitions towards creating an energy agency. This exchange is concretely reflected in the Ljubljana action plan.

The **Waste to Biogas** working group organised a dedicated site visit and meeting in Örebro in February 2012 meeting. Partners Achterhoek and Stoke-on-Trent visited several biogas production facilities in the Swedish region and were introduced to the applications of biogas (including for car fuel) and related organisational models in the area. Both visiting partners have adopted plans related to biogas use in their local action plans.

As an overall observation, the working groups can be seen as a successful instrument for exchange between partners. All partners were actively involved in at least one working group. Most of them contributed actively, not only to receive, but also to bring their expertise and good practices.

The groups had different intensities of interaction. A few of them clearly corresponded to themes directly and concretely linked to partners' planned actions in line with their action plans. These include the groups on Electric Vehicles, Cycling, Energy Agency and Waste to Biogas.

Some other groups were more focussed on themes with an eye on future activities, for instance Green Skills. This is a theme already covered in the action plan of initiator Yorkshire and Humber, that has

been picked up by other partners as a theme for further exploration after the EU2020 Going Local project.

Working group themes with a strong relevance for future cooperation were also strongly underlined during the wrap-up meeting. Many partners agreed on the importance to continue the exchange on the subjects of cycling, green skills and energy agencies.

On the project website a dedicated section on working groups is available. However, for most groups only very limited information is available for interested partners. This is limited for most groups to a general description or a draft agenda. Presentations, meeting reports or other outputs are not available for most of the working groups.

2.3.3 Other activities related to good practice exchange

Next to the project workshops and the thematic working groups, several additional activities took place or are foreseen for more detailed exchange and transfer of good practices.

Several partners engaged in bilateral exchange and interaction in parallel to the 'official' work programme of the project. Based on a shared interest these partners started a more detailed exchange on a certain theme or good practice, by means of e-mail and phone contact, as well as bilateral visits. Examples include ongoing bilateral exchanges and work visits between Luxemburg and Schaerbeek (on lighting of public space, energy production, renewable energy sources), between Duisburg and Yorkshire and Humber (i.a. on electric vehicles), Luxemburg and North Rhine-Westphalia (European Energy Awards) and Stoke-on-Trent and Sörmland/Eskilstuna (waste).

Also some partners were able to establish contacts with relevant 'third parties' outside of the partnership, as a direct result of their participation in EU2020 Going Local. For instance Örebro was put in contact with the city of Venlo (NL) through partner Duisburg. A delegation went over to visit this Dutch city, which is home to an important international intermodal logistical hub, providing inspiration for the ambitions of Örebro in this field.

3 Local action plans

3.1 *Local action plans in EU2020 Going Local*

INTERREG IVC capitalisation projects are expected to produce action plans to specify how one or more good practices – identified before the start of the project – will be implemented in each of the partner regions. These action plans should be strategic documents defining precisely how the good practices will actually be implemented under the Structural Funds programme of each region participating. It needs to include detailed information about the good practices selected, the main stakeholders that will be involved in the implementation, precise steps and actions for successful implementation and information about the provisional EU mainstream funds allocated for implementing the Action Plan². INTERREG IVC does not prescribe a specific format for the action plans.

Stoke-on-Trent was the coordinating partner for this part of the project, building on their previous experience in developing local action plans in the context of a project funded by the EU programme URBACT³. To facilitate the action planning work of the partners a template for a local action plan was adopted at project level, following the model used in this URBACT project. Partners could take this template as a starting point to develop their action plans. The template for the action plan was presented and explained at several partner workshops.

Drafting of the EU2020 Going Local action plans took place mainly during the final year of the project. Partners generally worked within their region to prepare the plan with their local stakeholders and write the action plan. External expertise was made available at project level to support the partners in drafting their action plan. Each partner could consult an external expert to get feedback and advice on practical aspects and content of their plan via telephone and during a one-on-one meeting at the occasion of the partner meetings. Exchange and discussion among the partners on the (draft) action plans took place during the partner meetings in Stoke-on-Trent (March 2012) and Schaerbeek (June 2012). After that the action plans were finalised.

3.2 *Recommendations from the mid-term evaluation*

The mid-term evaluation concluded that the action planning process developed according to plan. Partners had generally set up the necessary links to regional stakeholders and regional structural funds actors. The local action plan template provides a generally clear framework for developing regional/local plans. Given the INTERREG IVC context two important elements are under-emphasised in the template, notably the adoption of good practices as the main 'subject' of the action plan, and the relation to the regional structural funds actors and programmes⁴.

The evaluation pointed out the need for stronger coordination and guidance at project level to steer and support the action planning process. This should deal with certain issues reported by partners including lack of clarity on the next steps in action plan development, different interpretations of the relation between good practices and action plans, limited information about the progress and results of action planning in other partner regions.

The main recommendations in this field were:

- A stronger coordination at project level of the action plan development, by ensuring a clear work plan for the final year, regular bilateral contacts from the project management with all project partners and an active attitude of partners in sharing their experiences, draft outputs and questions with the members of the partnership.
- More detailed guidance on some of the key elements of the action plans, to ensure that all partners work on the same basis and get the most out of their action plan.

² INTERREG IVC Manual, section 2.1.2

³ As partner of the URBACT project “UNIC – Urban Network for Innovation in Ceramics” (2008-2011), Stoke produced a local action plan to build a sustainable innovation economy in the 'traditional' ceramics sector.

⁴ This may be explained partly from the fact that these elements are not covered by the UNIC action plan template that was used to model the EU2020 Going Local action plan template.

- Project meetings and events in the final year should include sufficient opportunity for partners to exchange and discuss their action plans-in-progress. Clever arrangements of these meetings (e.g, by organising peer-review sessions, grouping of partners based on thematic or institutional synergies) could enhance the effectiveness of this exchange.

3.3 Observations related to the local action plans

For this evaluation 10 local action plans were available in an approved or final draft version. These are the action plans of:

- Sörmland Regional Council
- Örebro Regional Development Council
- North Rhine-Westphalia and City of Duisburg (combined action plan)
- Regional Development Agency of the Ljubljana Urban region
- Riga Planning Region
- Zemgale Planning Region
- Stoke-on-Trent City Council
- Municipality of Schaerbeek
- Province of Gelderland and Regio Achterhoek (combined action plan)
- Local Government Yorkshire & Humber

Combined action plans were developed by the partners in Germany and The Netherlands respectively. In these two cases, both the regional authority (province Gelderland, federal state NRW) and a sub-regional authority (Regio Achterhoek, City of Duisburg) were involved in the project. In both cases the regional authorities are also the Managing Authorities of the regional Structural Funds programmes.

The action plan for Luxemburg is still under debate between representatives of different governance levels within the country, mainly regarding the extent and level of detail of actions to be included. It is foreseen that an action plan will be adopted, although this will be only after completion of the project.

The action plan for the Portuguese partner Cartaxo was not fully developed. This is related to overall difficulties experienced by this partner to participate in project activities, due to a lack of financial resources.

3.3.1 Local action plans – structure and approach

Most partners made use of the template that was provided at project level to develop their action plan. In general these action plans address all main sections indicated in the template. These include a description of the general local context. For each main sub-theme of the project (if selected by the partner) a description is then made of the actors, the main problems (including reference to relevant good practice) and the proposed actions. The summary description of these three elements was streamlined by means of standardised tables.

Within this standardised structure, the plans differ considerably in their approach, level of detail and completeness of information. Some of the plans give a precise description of the actual development process, existing policy context and stakeholder involvement, while others approached the plan more technically focussing mainly on a factual presentation of problems, solutions and actions.

The standardised tables describing the stakeholders, problems and actions in each action plan ensure that regardless of the different approaches, action plans can be compared and interpreted easily. However, not all action plans include all requested information. For instance, over half of the plans do not provide specific information about the costs and financing of their actions.

Only the action plan for Gelderland/Achterhoek follows a different structure, based mainly on a description of the state-of-the art and regional potential of a range of renewable energy sources. The document does include the most relevant elements of the other actions plans (problem analysis, reference to good practice, presentation of actions).

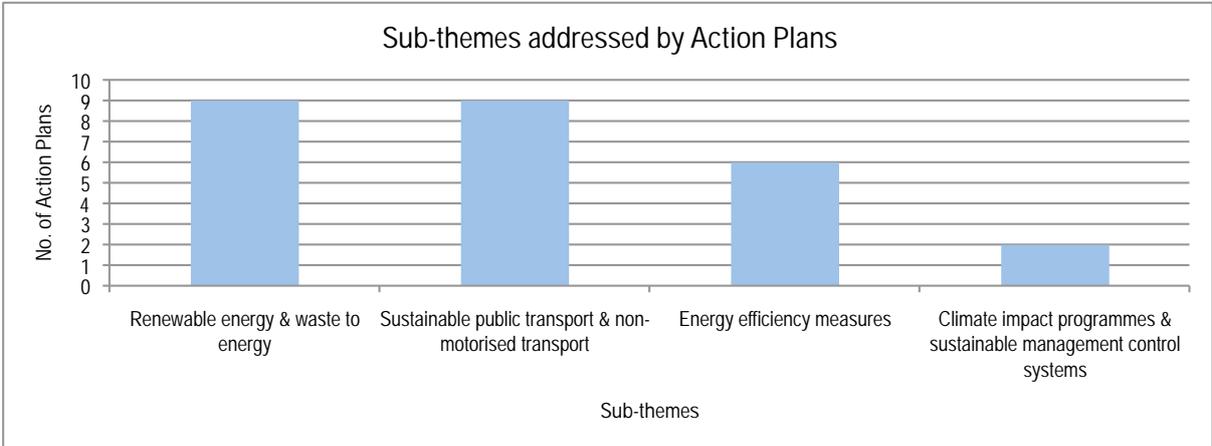
Partners perceived the action plan template as a helpful practical tool to guide action plan development in the right direction. The external support and guidance available to each partner in the

final year of the project was also generally seen as helpful. It was seen as a possibility to get external feedback on the draft plan, and compare with the examples of what other partners were doing. The planning of one-on-one consultations with the partners also helped structure the action planning process by introducing clear internal deadlines.

Several partners reported that at project level, there was initially no common understanding of the specific rules and requirements that INTERREG IVC presents for 'capitalisation projects'. During the first 10 months a lot of effort and time was spent on building a shared view on the aims and objectives of the project and getting a common understanding to the purpose and approach of the action plan. Especially considering the relatively short project duration of 2 years, it would have been good if this common understanding, along with very clear project goals, would have been created at the start of the project. This could have sped up the process of good practice transfer and of the action plan development.

3.3.2 Local action plans – thematic focus and nature of actions

The local action plans of the partners are very different in thematic scope. At the level of the main sub-themes addressed in the project, most action plans address issues within 2 or 3 of the 4 themes. The coverage of the 4 sub-themes of the project by the 10 action plans is as follows:



Within these 4 broad themes, action plans address a wide variety of issues, corresponding to the existing challenges and needs and (ongoing) policy agendas of the partners.

Within the theme of transport many action plans address cycling and electric vehicles, whereas public transport and sustainable freight transport are featured less frequently. The renewable energy theme is covered in all its diversity, including all forms of sustainable energy production in different combinations. Energy efficiency actions range from improvements in public buildings, social housing to awareness raising.

The action plan for Örebro stands out, being particularly focussed and specific. It covers only one specific topic, sustainable transport of goods. And it sets a very concrete and coherent agenda of interrelated projects. It has a relatively short timeline (2 years), and implementation is already underway.

Many of the action plans include actions that are part of an already existing agenda or programme. These may be either new policy agendas that emerged in parallel to the project, like the new coalition agreement in North-Rhine Westphalia (June 2012) that has a strong green energy and climate focus. And in some cases action plans also include already ongoing actions that are part of a longer running climate programme (e.g. the City Climate Analysis in Duisburg that runs since 2009).

This link to existing policies is understandable considering that partners are not 'blank' in the theme of sustainable development. All of them entered this project on the basis of existing ambitions and initial policy steps in this field. Moreover, it is important to make sure that the results of the project will be embedded in existing regional/local policies and strategies.

Some partners reported that the action plan provided the missing framework to tie certain scattered activities together. The inclusion of these existing policies was needed to get 'buy in' from local stakeholders in the project activity. These actors will get involved in the project if it supports and enhances their existing plans and ambitions.

Concerning the nature of the actions presented, most action plans list actions that are defined as concrete activities, and in certain cases even as projects (i.e. a well defined activity-planning-finance combination).

In some action plans, all or part of the actions have been described at a more general level - as objectives and ambitions identifying the direction of desired developments and activities. These would require some further elaboration into concrete actions.

The range of different actions proposed is very diverse and includes:

- specific analysis and (feasibility) studies
- setting up of dedicated organisations (energy agency, PPS for energy investment, regional energy alliances)
- training of professionals
- energy audits
- awareness raising campaigns
- purchase of materials (e.g. electric vehicles)
- investments (e.g. in energy production, grids)

3.3.3 Local action Plans – link to good practices

As indicated, the essence of the action plan (in the INTERREG IVC context) is to plan for the implementation of concrete good practice examples available within the project partnership. In the action plan template this is addressed in the context of identifying benchmarks from good practices in relation to the problems observed by partners.

Most action plans contain some references to good practice examples from the project context. Typically, the action plans cite only one or a few good practices, corresponding to some of the issues they cover. Many of the action plans refer partly (or even mainly) to good practices from other actors in Europe or in their own countries, outside of the scope of the project. The descriptions of these practices are often limited to a general reference to the origin of the practice (e.g. "car sharing programme – Switzerland", "waste incineration plants in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Germany").

Where action plans do refer to good practices, this is in the context of problems/solutions observed by the partner, as prescribed by the action plan template. However, none of the action plans directly includes a good practice in the "actions" part of the plan.

This implies that the EU2020 Going Local action plans do not steer towards and result in the direct, one-on-one transfer of good practice between project partners. In this respect the action plans deviate from their initial purpose as prescribed by INTERREG IVC (i.e. planning for the transfer and implementation of pre-identified good practices, see paragraph 3.1.). Project partners frequently responded that they see the need to answer to local challenges and potentials as the main aim of their action plan, rather than the import of good practices per sé.

Respondents pointed at the restrictions of a strict focus on good practices from the other partners. First of all, it is difficult to implant a good practice directly into the socio-economic and institutional setting of a different country. Adaptations will always be necessary.

Also, several respondents said that they did not find one or more individual good practices that directly answered to a challenge in their situation. This can be explained from the wide thematic scope of the project which meant that good practice examples were spread over many fields of intervention, and that the precise fields of interest of partners were quite far apart. Also the institutional setting and mandate of partners differed considerably, ranging from the very local municipal level to regional and even national level. While this large diversity can be very inspiring in general, many respondents also viewed it as a weak point of the project partnership, as it stands in the way of focussed cooperation and of achieving concrete transfer of good practices between equal partners.

On the other hand, all partners confirmed that they had benefitted considerably from the collection of examples from other partners in the project. The exchange and discussion among partners on all these examples is perceived as very inspiring at a more general level, informing and influencing the overall orientation of action plans, and providing building blocks (rather than blueprints) for some of the actions. This is substantiated by clear evidence of exchange of experience and knowledge transfer (see chapter 2), in particular through the working groups, on themes that directly correspond to the scope of the action plans of the partners involved (e.g. on energy agencies, electric vehicles, biogas).

3.3.4 Local action plans - the involvement of stakeholders

A key feature of the local action planning process should be the involvement of local and regional stakeholder. The participation and commitment of these actors is essential for a successful implementation of the action plans.

All partners have identified the main relevant stakeholder groups in their area and listed their main challenges and interests in the action plan. Not all action plans give very detailed information about the way their stakeholders were actually involved.

All partners had internal steering groups (within their own administration). Many also formed (additional) steering groups with external stakeholder participation. In most cases, these external stakeholders were mainly public authorities within the area covered by the action plan. But some partners also involved other actors. On the whole, the following types of actors were involved, either in steering groups, or through other forms of interaction:

- Representatives of local municipalities and councils within the action plan area
- Various non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
- Business (Örebro, Stoke-on-Trent, Yorkshire and Humber)
- Relevant national/regional ministries (Örebro, Riga, Zemgale, NRW/Duisburg, Stoke-on-Trent, Luxemburg)
- Universities (i.a. Zemgale)
- Citizens (Schaerbeek)

The actual approaches of involving the stakeholder community varied per partner. Partners like Ljubljana and Zemgale held regular meetings with their stakeholder groups, mainly composed of local authorities and some NGOs. These actors were involved from the start and had an important role in selecting and prioritising the topics covered in the plan. And they were directly involved (for instance through workshops) in the definition of the actions included in the plans.

Örebro has set up a steering group composed of representatives of the public sector. In line with the focus of their action plan on sustainable transport of goods, they organised strong involvement of the logistics-related business community. They organised an initial hearing among regional stakeholders to create awareness of the project and do a first identification of needs. Interviews with 10 logistics companies provided further input for potential actions. An online survey among 200 actors in the logistics sector was used to select the most preferred actions, that were included in the action plan.

In the UK a recent institutional reform led to the abolition of regional development agencies and other bodies at the regional level. So-called local enterprise partnerships (LEP) emerged as new platform for regional coordination on jobs and economic growth in UK. Stoke-on-Trent anticipated on this development, by initiating a sub-group on low-carbon economy within in their new LEP, that played a role in co-developing the focus and actions of their local action plan.

Stoke-on-Trent also organised three dissemination sessions for local actors in the West-Midlands region (May and June 2012), to promote the local governance approach of EU2020 Going Local and maintain the involvement of the local level stakeholders. During each event one other project partner participated (Schaerbeek, Örebro and Yorkshire & Humber) as advocates of their respective good practices and the project cooperation approach.

The Managing Authorities (MA) of regional structural funds programmes in all partner regions were informed about the project and progress on the action plans, at least to some extent. Partners generally saw these contacts as a possibility to inform the preparation of the new funding period 2014-

2020. Two MA's were involved as partner in the project, notably the Province of Gelderland and North-Rhine Westphalia. Both of them were joined by another authority from their region, that was the main area of focus for most actions in their action plans.

In nearly all countries there were no possibilities to apply for funding at short notice due to the depletion of the present Structural Funds programmes (Örebro being the main exception, see 4.2.1).

Most of the partners drafted their action plan in the English language, and not all of these plans are available in the local languages of the partner countries. Having English language plans is practical at the EU project level, for comparison and discussion. However for partners from non-English speaking countries, it will most likely be a restriction for the further implementation and adoption of the action plan if it is not available in the local language. Several partners reported language difficulties in their work with local stakeholders, or with other departments in their own organisation.

3.3.5 Local action plans – finances and timing

For the actual implementation of actions, it is important to have concrete information about the financial implications and the timeline of actions

The nature and detail of the financial information in the action plans differs considerably. Out of the 10 available action plans 4 present concrete cost indications for all or most of the actions in the plan. Some of the other plans give rough indications of the financial implications of the action plan, either in the form of relative cost indications (high/medium/low), or by presenting an aggregate cost indication for the plan as a whole. In 3 of the action plans no or very little financial information related to the actions is included.

The financial size of the action plans and the individual actions varies considerably. This is strongly related to the nature of the activities included (See section 3.3.2). The estimated costs of individual actions range from around € 50.000 to several millions of euros. Some extremely costly multiannual, multimillion euro investment schemes are also included, mainly related to investments in energy generation or distribution infrastructure (Stoke-on-Trent, Gelderland/Achterhoek, Zemgale and Riga).

The aggregate financial volume of the action plans that present concrete financial information ranges from approximately €15 million to €1,9 billion.

All but two action plans identify potential funding sources for the implementation of each of the individual actions, and/or present an overview of possible funding mechanisms relevant to the themes addressed in the action plan. Mostly these are rather general references to either own resources, or (in most cases) external funding sources from EU or national level, and sometimes private contributions. These references are indications and generally do not reflect committed and confirmed financial contributions.

Yorkshire and Humber have adopted a more elaborate approach. Their action plan identifies for each project on the actions list exactly which (EU) funding mechanism is most suitable, including dates of relevant calls for proposals. This allows to set priorities and add focus to the planning and timing of preparation activities to apply for funding for projects listed in the action plan.

Two of the action plans include a separate paragraph or chapter that identifies on a more general level potential funding sources and possibilities related to the issues covered in the action plan.

Concerning the time-line for the implementation of actions from the plans, most partners look at a period up to 2020 (one even looks at 2032). The planning of individual actions is not very precise. Most frequently a very rough indication is given, e.g. "2013 – 2020". The Örebro action plan adopts a different approach. This plan covers a much shorter time-line with all actions concretely planned in the period until 2014.

3.3.6 Local action plans – interaction and exchange between partners

All action plans have clearly been inspired by other partners' experiences and approaches. This is directly visible where the plans refer to other partners good practice. And in more general terms also in

the action plans related to themes of the projects' working groups (in particular the groups on Energy Agencies, Cycling and Electric Vehicles).

However, partners have not involved each other directly in the actual definition of the action plans, for instance to consult experienced partners on the identification of actions and on possible adaptations of good practices.

This observation relates to the fact that none of the action plans involves the direct import of a good practice from one of the other project partners (see also 3.3.3). If this would have been the case, the importing partner would clearly benefit from the more detailed input of the 'donor' of the good practice. As already stated, the great diversity in thematic focus and institutional capacities of the partnership strongly contributed to this situation.

Still, partners state they are keen to work with certain other partners in the follow-up of their local action plans. They see the need and possibilities for continuing interaction and cooperation with selected partners with experience within the scope of their action plan. This cooperation would mainly be on a general level and not directly in terms of one-on-one cooperation on the adaptation and implementation of a specific good practice or action.

4 Impact of the project

4.1 Introduction

The EU2020 Going Local project has come to the end of its two years implementation period. As described in previous chapters, partners have exchanged good practices related to sustainable energy and sustainable transport and developed plans for the realisation of related measures in their area. At this point the first effects of the cooperation and good practice transfer in the partner regions should become visible.

The mid-term evaluation of 2011 found that half way through, the project had resulted in the creation or strengthening of stakeholder networks within some partner regions. The close involvement of representatives of the political level in the project was seen as an important guarantee for the actual implementation of actions, that would lead to a real impact in the regions.

4.2 Observations related to the impact of the project

4.2.1 Implementation of action plans

Even if the EU2020 Going Local action plans have only been finalised towards the end of 2012, many partners have already started the implementation of certain actions from their plans before the end of the project. In many partner regions, actions related to the organisation of their sustainable energy and transport plans are underway (data collection, setting up working groups).

In addition to this, some partners have already started up projects from their action plan to realise certain tangible outputs in their region. The following examples can be given of such actions:

Örebro has started up the implementation of several actions from their plan. One project is already underway with support of the regional structural funds programme (ERDF). The project aims to develop and apply a method for mapping of freight flows in the region as a basis for decisions on infrastructure investments and location of companies, to contribute to increased climate efficiency. Two other applications for funding were submitted and are awaiting decision, respectively from the Swedish national authority for transport and the regional structural fund programme (ERDF).

In Stoke-on-Trent work already started in 2012 to set-up a joint venture company owned by the Stoke-on-Trent City Council. This should lead to the creation in 2013 of a registered trading company that will enable the council to invest in and operate decentralised energy infrastructure.

Both Yorkshire & Humber and Schaerbeek have realised concrete pilots and demonstrations involving the purchase or use of electric vehicles in their towns. In Sörmland some of the municipalities in the region have started applying e-meetings as an alternative for face-to-face meetings, with the aim to reduce travel.

On the other hand, several other partners were not able to start the implementation of their actions during the project. Often this was related to financing reasons. In particular the start of the structural funds programmes in 2014 is anticipated to make new sources of funding available for actions and investments in sustainable energy (e.g. in Latvia). In some cases action plans have not yet been formally approved (e.g. Luxemburg), or will first be further elaborated and specified to define concrete individual actions (Gelderland).

4.2.2 Introducing new ways of working

Another effect of the project that can be observed is the introduction in several partner regions of new ways of working, based on the experiences in EU2020 Going Local.

In Luxemburg, the process of developing an action plan for the southern region of the country was one of the first experiences with a structural form of supra-local cooperation among the 11 municipalities in this area (joined in the framework of the ProSud syndicate). Participation in the project provided a platform for building this cooperation, that will continue also after the project.

The Luxemburg partner Ministry for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure has also adopted the Results Based Accountability method for monitoring policy programmes. This method was introduced to the project through the Luxemburg-led working group Smart Steering (see paragraph 2.3.2). And finally, Luxemburg adopted in 2012 a national Climate Pact, which involves the use of the European Energy Awards as a tool for planning and realising climate and energy goals – based on experiences transferred by EU2020 Going Local partner North Rhine-Westphalia.

The close cooperation with the business community during the development of the action plan in Örebro (see paragraph 3.3.4) was a new approach, that proved to be successful. In future programmes and activities the Örebro Regional Development Council foresees the continuation of this approach.

In Gelderland partners report that the participation in the EU2020 Going Local project was a catalyst for the already ongoing creation of a strong regional partnership on sustainable development in de Achterhoek region (Pact van Groenlo). The momentum created by the EU project contributed to the participation of municipalities in the region and boosted the number and involvement of the signatories of this pact.

In the UK, partner Stoke-on-Trent has frequently updated the national ministry responsible for developing the new regional structural funds programmes - the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) - on progress of the Stoke action plan. The action plan approach was picked up by DCLG as a good practice tool for preparing the new funding period and they have reportedly pointed cities and regions around the UK to the EU2020 Going Local action plan approach as an example.

4.2.3 Spin-off projects and activities

Several partners have also developed activities that build on their participation in the project.

Yorkshire and Humber have submitted a bid to the European Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (CIP-EIP) in their call for projects on a Network of Green Procurers (autumn 2012). This bid, which includes cooperation with partners from Spain and Portugal, links to their action plan ambition to procure electric vehicles for the delivery of public sector services.

The municipality of Eskilstuna in Sörmland successfully applied for funding from the European Framework Programme for Research and Development (FP7). They are lead partner of the project PLEEC - Planning for Energy Efficient Cities, with a consortium of municipalities, universities and industry from 13 EU countries. EU2020 Going Local partner Stoke-on-Trent is a member of the consortium, as is the university of Ljubljana.

Sörmland has also been selected to host the 2013 Summer School of the Assembly of European Regions (AER). The theme of this Summer School will be “Green growth – regions towards a resource-efficient Europe” and the programme will showcase good practices and results from EU2020 Going Local.

4.2.4 The role of the political level

Representatives of the regional or local political level were involved for most partners during the whole project. Even though this is a precondition for INTERREG IVC capitalisation projects, it is not something that comes easily in European cooperation projects.

The fact that the EU2020 Going Local partnership has managed to maintain a continuous political involvement is an accomplishment that has benefited the implementation of the project. Partners report that the political backing they had for their project activities has been helpful in mobilising internal resources and external stakeholders in the action plan process.

Moreover, the political involvement is seen as an assurance that the action plans will be followed up and implemented, thus ensuring that the project will have a lasting impact in the partner regions. This expectation is supported by a joint political statement of the EU2020 Going Local Political Board, presented to the European Commission at the final conference of the project (October 2012). Key

messages of this statement include a guarantee to implement the local action plans in the respective regions.

Some respondents remarked that participation in the political board of the project has not been on an equal footing for all partners. Active involvement of politicians was widespread mainly among the partners representing a local authority or a regional authority of a comparatively smaller scale. But there were also partners that were not able to engage their political representatives, in particular those representing a larger territorial/institutional setting at regional or national level. This disparity may have an effect on the possibility of partners to mobilise political leverage for the implementation of their action plans in the future.

At the end of the project, during the wrap-up meeting in November 2012, members of the political board agreed to set up a network of politicians with the intention to develop new ideas and projects, keep contacts on general questions, exchange views and opinions. The exact modalities and working arrangements of this network are still to be developed.

5 Towards the future

5.1 Introduction

Upon completion of the project, the key issue is ensuring the further follow-up of the project outputs and results. This relates to the implementation of the action plans in each of the partner regions. And it concerns the possibilities to continue and build on the partnerships and networks that came out of the cooperation, both regionally and among the European partners. This chapter evaluates the success factors, possibilities and potential obstacles for building further on the EU2020 Going Local project.

5.2 Implementation of the local action plans

The EU2020 Going Local action plans are basically the starting points of a period of several years of local/regional implementation. For the actual realisation of the planned actions a few key success factors can be identified.

5.2.1 Availability of finances

Crucial for all planned actions to go ahead is the availability of financial means. As identified in paragraph 3.3.5 many of the action plans include expensive investments and add up to considerable total budgets per action plan. Respondents point to this aspect as a critical factor for the realisation of action plans, with the widespread reductions of public sector budgets in all parts of Europe as a serious threat to the full implementation of the plans. It will be essential to mobilise external financial means.

In line with the principle of INTERREG IVC capitalisation projects all partners look at the **EU Structural Funds** in their country as a main source of funding for their activities and investments. In particular in the case of partners located in so-called “less developed regions” of the Union, considerable amounts were and are expected to be available for investments in crucial infrastructures. Also the other regions will benefit from Structural Funds in their regions, although the financial volumes have been smaller and are expected to decrease for the 2014+ period. And for the 2014+ period investments in sustainable energy infrastructure and facilities will be among the top priorities.

This means that the Structural Funds can be anticipated as an important source of funding for the action plans. The actual possibilities will be influenced by several factors. These are in particular the exact position that relevant priorities (sustainable energy, transport) will get in the respective structural funds programmes and the amounts of funding available from the respective (national or regional) Structural Funds for each partner. This implies that it is advisable for partners to start or continue their communication with the Managing Authorities of the future programmes to try to steer the programme strategy in the desired direction as much as possible.

In any case, especially in the more advanced regions of Europe, also other sources of funding will need to be found next to the Structural Funds to realise all the investments and activities planned. Alternative lines for financing can be identified, some of which are already explored by partners.

Several **other EU funded programmes**⁵ support cooperation between European actors in the field of sustainable energy and transport. These cooperation programmes offer opportunities that include exchanging experiences, pilot actions, small scale investments and studies and research. EU programmes that address sustainable energy and/or sustainable mobility in their overall aims include:

- INTERREG - many programmes across Europe with different priorities and funding availability
- Intelligent Energy Europe programme (IEE) - 2013 Call published in December 2012
- ICT Policy Support Programme (ICT-PSP) - 2013 Call targets smart sustainable mobility
- CIVITAS - Cleaner and better transport in cities
- Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (EIP) - Includes eco-innovation and green procurement
- Framework Programme for R&D (FP7) – 2013 calls include research in areas of Smart Cities and Energy

⁵ Annex 1 lists references to more detailed information about the various funding mechanisms described in this paragraph.

Also in the new EU funding period, from 2014-2020, these funds will be available, although some of them will be organised and/or named differently (for instance, the IEE and Framework programmes will be integrated in the Horizon 2020 programme).

These cooperation programmes do normally not support major investments. These will require funding from other sources. In many cases, this will not be possible in the form of subsidies and grants, but requires **loans and other financial instruments**.

At European level, lending at relatively favourable conditions may be possible through the European Investment Bank for sustainable energy infrastructures.

The EU also offers financial instruments to co-finance technical support cost related to preparing, implementing and financing sustainable energy investment programmes. This could include feasibility and market studies, programme structuring, energy audits and tendering procedure preparation. The resulting solid business and technical plans should enable the beneficiaries to attract funding from private banks and other sources. Two instruments are available in this field: ELENA and IEE-MLEI, addressing large scale and smaller scale investments respectively.

Next to these EU-linked options, of course national and regional sources of funding, loans and support may also be present. And last but not least, the involvement of **private capital** should also be explored as a possibility. This could be from companies directly involved in/benefitting from actions partly, or even entirely financing activities or in the form of private equity. But also options related to **funding from the public** should be explored (e.g. crowd funding, cooperatives)

5.2.2 Ownership of the action plan

Another important factor for the successful implementation is clear and dedicated ownership of the action plan and of the individual actions in it. During the project, the allocation of staff capacity to the (work on the) action plan is generally secured, with funding from the INTERREG grant. But the implementation of the action plan also requires a lot of human and financial resources after the project, for the ongoing coordination of the action plan, for mobilising stakeholders and for implementing the individual actions in the plan.

Partners will have to put in their own resources, in particular for the coordination and mobilisation tasks (implementation of actions is more likely to get co-financed from external funds). And they need to make clear arrangements for the ownership of the action plan, specifying responsibilities (who does what), timing (when and for how long) and resources (staff capacity, finances). These arrangements do not have to be restricted to the formal partner(s) of the project. But it is essential to make clear which organisation(s) in each region play(s) which role in bringing the plan forward.

These future working arrangements are not always described in the action plans. This makes it difficult to fully evaluate how well prepared partners are for the implementation of their plans in the coming years.

However, several partners have made arrangements for this. A good example is set by Yorkshire and Humber. They have anticipated the need to organise ownership by including dedicated actions for governance and steering in their action plan, appointing a responsible actor and dedicated budget. Other partners report that they have made available internal staff capacity to continue working with regional stakeholders to initiate and facilitate the implementation of the action plan (Örebro, Stoke-on-Trent, Sörmland). These partners have also set up working groups of regional stakeholders that will play an active role in getting the action plan implemented. On the other hand, there are partners reporting that the ownership is not yet ensured, for instance due to developments in the institutional setting in their area (e.g. Zemplin).

5.2.3 Monitoring of the real impact of the actions

The actual results and regional impacts of the project will start to materialise following the implementation of the action plans. Effective and successful implementation of the action plan will

need to include the monitoring of the actual realisation of these results and impacts. This is important for keeping track of progress and, if needed, to adapt and steer the implementation of the action plan. And it is also essential to demonstrate in time what has really been achieved as a result of the EU2020 Going Local project to citizens, regional stakeholders and the EU level.

It is essential for effective monitoring to make all necessary arrangements at the start of (rather than during) an activity. Basic ingredients of a monitoring system include clear and coherent objectives, a set of indicators, including their baseline (present situation) and desired intermediate and target values (milestones), and a methodology to collect the data for measuring achievements.

The action plans do not specifically deal with monitoring of progress and results. On the other hand, the project has identified the Results Based Accountability method (RBA, see section 2.3) as a concrete tool that partners can and should use to keep track of their progress and results. Partners have agreed at the final conference of the project to apply this method on their action plan, starting off with filling in an RBA-matrix to be annexed to their action plans. At the time of writing this evaluation these RBA-matrixes were not yet available for the action plans assessed.

5.3 Building on the opportunities for cooperation in the network

The EU2020 Going Local partners are generally very positive about the partner network and would like to continue working together with other members of the partnership on sustainable energy and transport related themes. Partners widely express the wish to maintain the contacts in the network and join forces in new projects when the opportunity comes.

At the same time, partners have a realistic approach to this future cooperation. Based on the experiences in the project, most partners say that they do not expect to continue working together with all of the partners. The present partnership is generally seen as very diverse in terms of thematic scope, levels of experience and institutional context. This has made identifying and transferring relevant good practices between partners complex at times. For future contacts the respondents tend to identify some key partners based on their specific expertise, shared challenges and compatibility of the organisations.

Some partners have concrete plans to continue bilateral cooperation on specific issues. For instance, Luxemburg has the ambition to work closely with Eskilstuna to continue learning from their management control system. Luxemburg and Schaerbeek have regular exchanges on various issues related to i.a. energy efficiency. Ljubljana is in contact with the NRW Energy Agency to provide input for the preparation of a regional Energy Agency in the Ljubljana region.

5.3.1 Plans for future projects

Several ideas for future cooperation projects have come forward in the partnership. At the occasion of the final wrap-up meeting of the project (Düsseldorf, November 2012), these ideas were collected and the ones sharing the biggest interest among the partners were discussed in working groups. These dealt with the following subjects.

- *Green Skills*. Deals with the need to identify and provide the skills needed in the low-carbon economy. This initiative is led by Yorkshire and Humber, who already shared their initial ideas on the subject with other partners during the final months of the project. Other interested partners include Gelderland, Zemgale, Duisburg. Yorkshire and Humber will initiate a project development meeting spring/early summer 2013.
- *Cycling*. This theme was already covered by several partners during the EU2020 Going Local project in their action plan. Sörmland, Stoke, Schaerbeek and Ljubljana wish to develop new exchange activities and cooperation projects on the subject. A work visit to Ljubljana is planned for spring 2013.
- *Green traditions* - the role of traditional values in society and their influence on the EU 2020 agenda. This new theme came up during the wrap-up meeting. Schaerbeek, Stoke-on-Trent, Sörmland and Zemgale intend to work on this subject. Stoke-on-Trent will draft an initial project proposal early 2013.

5.3.2 A political cooperation network

During the project wrap-up meeting in November 2012 partners agreed to set up a network of politicians that will continue to cooperate in the future. This network should be a platform to develop new ideas, keep contacts on issues related to the EU2020 Going Local project and exchange views and opinions.

The exact modalities and working arrangements of this network still need to be developed. In its most basic form, the interaction in this network can be based on ad-hoc opportunities and developments. For instance to build partnerships when new possibilities for cooperation projects arise, or to tap into one of the partners' experiences to solve a concrete question. In this form of cooperation it is likely that the network will be based mainly on the personal contacts between individual politicians developed during EU2020 Going Local.

To achieve cooperation of a more structural nature, it would be advisable to plan for certain (recurring) joint activities, for instance workshops, seminars, site visits or meetings. These could be organised in combination with existing events where partner are likely to meet (e.g. the annual Open Days of DG Regio or the AER Summer Schools), or independently.

This second option will take more effort, as such events require capacity for preparation and also participation. On the other hand it is more likely to yield a structural and ongoing form of cooperation that exceeds the level of personal contacts between politicians to become a political network between local and regional authorities. Such a network is more likely to continue also after the end of the elected terms of its individual members.

Given the restrictions to political participation experienced in some partner regions (as described in paragraph 4.2.4), it is likely that not all partner regions will be in the position to (actively) participate in such a network. On the other hand, it seems fair to assume that a network can develop and also take on board new members, for instance on the basis of existing European contacts of the network members.

6 Conclusions and recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

6.1.1 Identification and transfer of good practices

1. EU2020 Going Local collected 20 good practices related to energy and sustainable transport. These were selected from an initial long list of over 50 practices identified by the partners. The good practices are described in the mandatory INTERREG IVC template.

The good practices are publically available for download on the EU2020 Going Local website. The descriptions are of varied quality. Many of them only contain limited or rather general information about the practice. The website does currently not present any additional context information to explain the good practice (e.g. about the nature, purpose or subjects of the practices). At present it is difficult for 'outsiders' to effectively explore, find and understand the good practices.

2. Seven thematic working groups were established to facilitate exchange on certain shared themes between partners. All partners were involved in at least one working group. In particular the working groups on Electric Vehicles, Cycling, Energy Agency and Waste to Biogas clearly contributed to the content of the action plans of participating partners.

On the project website a dedicated section on working groups is available, mainly presenting basic descriptions and meeting agenda's. Presentations, meeting reports or other outputs related to working group content are not (publically) available for most of the working groups.

3. Several additional activities were organised by partners to exchange and transfer good practices on the back of the EU2020 Going Local project. Bilateral interaction took place between several partners to transfer experiences through mutual visits and virtual contacts. And some partners were able to make contact with relevant other EU regions to prepare their action plans, building on the networks of EU2020 Going Local partners.

6.1.2 Local action plans

4. Ten EU2020 Going Local action plans have been delivered, covering 12 of the partners. Two partners have not (yet) established an action plan. One of those two expects that an action plan will be adopted in the first half of 2013.

Action plans are all based on a standard template, however they differ considerably regarding themes and the nature of the actions proposed. All action plans include a thorough analysis of the local or regional challenges and stakeholder network and a package of corresponding actions for the coming years. Many action plans are less detailed in their descriptions of the financial aspects of the actions. In many cases no indication of costs or (potential) funding sources is provided.

Most action plans are written in English, and a translation in the local language is not always available. This may negatively affect the follow-up of the plans with local actors in the regions.

5. All partners involved local stakeholders in the development of their action plan. In particular representatives of the public sector were strongly involved in all regions. But also non-governmental organisations, private companies, universities, were involved by some of the partners. This suggests that the action plans has the backing of these stakeholders, which is essential for their successful implementation.
6. The action plans do not have a very strong link to the good practices identified in the project. Most action plans mention some good practices (from other partners, but also often from outside the partnership), but only at a rather general and abstract level. None of the action plans includes actions aiming at the actual implementation of a good practice from the EU2020 Going Local project. In this respect the action plans deviate from their purpose as prescribed by INTERREG IVC (i.e. to plan for the transfer and implementation of pre-identified good practices).

Reasons for this fact include the perceived absence of relevant good practices among the partnership, and the difficulty to import a good practice one-on-one into another institutional setting. It is also noted that the action plan template used by the project did not actively steer the partners towards selecting and implementing good practices from other partners.

7. On the other hand, partners state that the collaboration and exchange with other partners had an important influence on the overall orientation of their action plans, and gave inspiration (rather than a blueprint) for some actions. The exchange of experience and knowledge transfer in the working groups (in particular those on energy agencies, electric vehicles, biogas) has clearly had an impact on the scope of the action plans of the partners involved.
8. The partnership initially struggled to get a common understanding of the project. For many partners the specific requirements for INTERREG IVC 'capitalisation projects' were not quite clear. And partners had a different understanding of the purpose and approach of the good practice exchange and action planning. Establishing this common ground took considerable time at the expense of the good practice transfer and of the action plan development.
9. The very large diversity of the partnership in terms of thematic focus and institutional context is seen as very inspiring by partners. However, it also represented a weak point of the project partnership, as it stood in the way of focussed cooperation and of achieving concrete transfer of good practices between equal partners.

6.1.3 Impact of the project

10. Partners have started the implementation of certain actions from their plans. These include studies and analysis, creating local governance structures, and setting up an energy trading company. Some activities are funded from regional Structural Funds and other external sources, and others from own means of the partners. These first actions do not yet include substantial investments. Many partners anticipate the start of the new EU funding period for such actions.
11. EU2020 Going Local also triggered the introduction in several partner regions of new ways of working. Several regions have created new intra-regional cooperation structures and programmes, both among public authorities and with the private sector. Some partners also embedded the method of result based accountability in their daily routines as a result of the project.
12. EU2020 Going Local produced several spin-off projects and activities. These include new EU cooperation projects in the European Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (CIP-EIP) and the Framework Programme for Research and Development (FP7), building on contacts during the project. The annual Summer School of the Assembly of European Regions (AER) will be hosted by Sörmland in 2013, showcasing good practices and results from EU2020 Going Local.
13. Representatives of the regional or local political level were involved for most partners. Political backing will help to ensure implementation of the action plans and the impact of the project.

It is noted that the political involvement in the project was not equally strong for all partners. In particular partners representing larger territories or more complex institutional settings (mainly ministries at regional or national level) were not able to engage their political representatives. This disparity may negatively affect the ability of those partners to mobilise political leverage for the implementation of their action plans.

6.1.4 Future activities

14. For the effective implementation of the action plans in the years following EU2020 Going Local, three critical success factors have to be considered. These are:
 - *Availability of finances.* Many partners will largely depend on external funding to realise their actions. EU funding could play an important role in most regions, but also other sources (European Investment Bank, private capital, cooperatives, crowd funding) must be mobilised.
 - *Ownership of the action plan* should be clearly allocated to one or more actors within the partner region. It is essential to organise sufficient resources and capacity for coordinating the action plan implementation and mobilising stakeholders.

- *Monitoring of the implementation.* The 'owners' of the action plans must be able to keep track of progress of the implementation, to steer the action plan if needed and to demonstrate the impact and results of the action plan over time.

15. Future cooperation among members of the EU2020 Going Local network is most likely going to concentrate on new projects and initiatives. Although a few partners plan to continue bilateral cooperation on elements of their action plans, most partners expect that the implementation of their action plan will mainly be an intra-regional effort. Concrete plans for follow-up activities, and possibly even new projects are already on the table around the themes of green skills, cycling and green traditions.
16. Political representatives of the partnership agreed to set up a political network to continue cooperation after the project ends. This network should be a platform to develop new ideas, keep contacts on issues related to the EU2020 Going Local project and exchange views and opinions. Exactly how this network will function is to be determined in early 2013.

6.2 Recommendations

6.2.1 Wrapping up the EU2020 Going Local project

1. The EU2020 Going Local good practices will have to be submitted to INTERREG IVC at the end of the project to be uploaded in the public good practice database. It is advisable to brush up the content of the good practice templates to make sure they all give a concrete and clear description of the practice, that is easily understandable by 'outsiders'. This would include adding more comprehensive descriptions of the nature and potential effects of the good practice and checking the descriptions for irrelevant information.
2. The accessibility and presentation of good practices on the EU2020 Going Local website can be improved to make sure future users of the site (which has to stay on-line for several years after the project) can easily find and understand them. This could be achieved by the following steps:
 - Make a web link to the good practice section directly on the home page of the site. At present users have to navigate several sub-pages of the site before they get to the good practice examples.
 - Add an introductory description to explain the nature and possible use of the good practices.
 - Categorise the good practices in several relevant, easy-to-understand categories (e.g. energy efficiency, sustainable transport, ...).
 - Use clear labels for the good practice download files to replace the present rather complex ones (for example: GPE 16 LCLIP P8).
3. Complete the set of documentation available for download on the website, as part of the legacy of the EU2020 Going Local project. Elements presently missing are some of the action plans, as well as documentation on proceedings and outputs from the thematic working groups. Also consider rearranging the website to make all public documentation available on one logical point. Presently most information is accessible via the "exchange of experience" section, while a few other files are available in the "downloads" section of the website.

6.2.2 Implementation of the local action plans

All project partners would be advised to prepare their response to the three main success factors for the implementation of their action plans: the availability of financial means for the actions, ownership of the action plan and monitoring the implementation. The following recommendations zoom in on these factors. More detailed background information on each of these points is provided in chapter 5 of this report.

4. Partners should develop a (more) detailed financing plan for their action plans. Most action plans only include general references (if any at all) to possible funding (e.g.: "EU funds"). This financing plan should include a general inventory of the possible sources of funding (Which sources are available at EU/national/regional level for my action plan priorities? What are the main requirements and possibilities, key actors, timelines etc?). It should include a specification of the concrete funding option(s) for each of the actions in the plan. And it should list the steps envisaged to secure this necessary funding.

5. Partners can actively use their action plans as a means to inform and influence the preparation of the new EU national/regional structural funds in their areas, as some of the partners are already doing. By engaging with the responsible authorities to make them aware of the potential of the projects listed in the action plan to help deliver the EU2020 objectives in their region, opportunities may be created in the scope of the new operational programmes.
6. To ensure continuity of implementation of their action plans, EU2020 Going Local partners should make concrete working arrangements to take their plans forward in cooperation with the regional stakeholders. These should include at least the following elements:
 - Main tasks and activities related to coordination and facilitation of the action plan (e.g. set up a regional action plan steering group, organise follow-up and support to individual action plan projects).
 - Appoint the responsible organisation(s) for these tasks. This could be the EU2020 Going Local partner organisation, but also other actors from the partner region can play a role in this.
 - Timeline, indicating the duration of the coordination task (corresponding to the timeline of actions) and specifying concrete steps for the near future (e.g. the first year).
 - Allocation of resources. How much staff capacity is needed and available? Financial means (if needed).

Partners should be able to engage their political board members, and build on their commitment to the action plans to make the necessary resources available and continuously mobilise regional partners for the implementation of the action plans.

7. The EU2020 Going Local partners should create monitoring arrangements for tracking the implementation of their action plan, steering the implementation (if needed) and demonstrating impact and results. It would be advisable to use the Results Based Accountability (RBA) model for this, as agreed among the partners. Using this common model will make it relatively easy to set up monitoring arrangements. And it will also enable the partners to compile and present the overall results of the project in the future.
8. To demonstrate the impact of the project as a whole, partners could agree to collect and compile their aggregate results after the project, for instance after 1 year, and again after 2 years. These results could be presented in a brief, appealing synthesis report, based on the common standard of the RBA method. This could be a tool for the future political network of the partners to communicate their achievements at the EU level to the European Commission and to INTERREG programme authorities.

This annual performance update would require little effort from all partners, provided they all use the same monitoring approach (RBA method). Coordination of this performance update should be in the hands of one partner. This could be the Lead Partner, but also another partner could take this responsibility, possibly on a rotating basis.

6.2.3 Lessons for project development in the future

9. The difficulties experienced in the partnership to get a common understanding of the aims, approaches and requirements of the project, point at the importance of an adequate and timely project development phase.

When developing future cooperation projects it is essential to take enough time to create a project plan that meets the needs and expectations of all partners and of the funding programme you aim at. Experience shows that a period of at least six months is needed to draft a good project application that is fully understood and supported by all partners. In this period several meetings of the partnership should take place, where partners can meet, discuss and build their joint project. It is also important that the main partnership is already in place and can actively participate in the whole development process.

10. The EU2020 Going Local experience also points out the importance of careful and focussed partnership building. While the large diversity of the partnership in terms of thematic focus and institutional context has provided a lot of inspiration to partners it also stood in the way of focussed

cooperation and of achieving concrete transfer of good practices between equal partners. For future project development it would be advisable to ensure partners are complementary and compatible in terms of thematic interests, mandates and territorial, institutional and political scale.

11. Finally, the EU2020 Going Local experience shows that it is important to apply sufficient thematic focus to future projects. The experiences and good practice examples were spread thinly over the very wide thematic scope of EU2020 Going Local, and several partners had difficulty to find relevant experiences from the others. Again, this is something that should be ensured during a thorough and interactive project preparation phase.

6.2.4 Creation of the political network

12. The intention to create a lasting political network building on the EU 2020 Going Local cooperation could make for an interesting and relevant legacy of the project.

In its most basic form, the interaction in this network can be based on ad-hoc opportunities and developments. For instance to build partnerships when new possibilities for cooperation projects arise, or to tap into a partners' experiences to solve a concrete question. In this form the network will be based mainly on the personal contacts between individual politicians developed during EU2020 Going Local, and it is likely that cooperation will fade out over time when new politicians take office in the partner towns and regions.

To achieve political cooperation of a more structural and continuous nature, it is advisable to agree on a joint agenda of the members of this network, by planning certain (recurring) joint activities. These activities could be organised in combination with existing events where partners are likely to meet (e.g. the annual Open Days of DG Regio or the AER Summer Schools), or independently. These could be for instance joint seminars or meetings on issues of shared interest, or site visits to one of the partner locations.

One feature of the network could also be the progress update of the action plan implementation (see recommendation 6), which can be used to communicate the achievements of the network to relevant audiences at the EU level.

Given the restrictions to political participation experienced in some partner regions it is likely that not all partner regions will be in the position to (actively) participate in such a network. On the other hand, it would be good to open such a network to new members, for instance on the basis of existing European contacts of the network members.

Annex 1 Background information on funding opportunities

More information about the various EU funds and other financial instruments described in paragraph 5.2.1 can be found through the following online sources:

- **INTERREG**

There are many programmes across Europe, each with their own territorial coverage, thematic priorities and funding availability. An overview of all programmes is available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperate/cooperation/index_en.cfm

- **Intelligent Energy Europe programme (IEE)**

The call for proposals for 2013 is open until 8 May 2013. More information at:
<http://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/>

- **ICT Policy Support Programme (ICT-PSP)**

The call for proposals 2013 targets smart sustainable mobility.
<https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/ict-policy-support-programme-participate>

- **CIVITAS - Cleaner and better transport in cities**

EU funded initiative to support cities to introduce ambitious measures and policies for sustainable urban mobility.
<http://www.civitas-initiative.org/index.php?id=69>

- **Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (EIP)**

Topics covered by this programme include eco-innovation and green procurement
http://ec.europa.eu/cip/eip/index_en.htm

- **Framework Programme for R&D (FP7)**

Calls for proposals in 2013 include research in areas of Smart Cities and Energy.
http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/wp-2013_en.html

- **European Investment Bank**

Lending at relatively favourable conditions may be possible through the EIB, which includes investments in sustainable energy infrastructure among its areas of intervention:
<http://www.eib.org/projects/topics/energy/index.htm>

- **Funding technical support for sustainable energy investment programmes**

(1) **ELENA** is directly operated by the European Investment bank, and targets the preparation of large scale investment programmes (normally over €50 million)
<http://www.eib.org/products/elena/index>

(2) **IEE-MLEI** is integrated in the annual calls for proposals of the Intelligent Energy Europe programme, and is intended to support smaller investment programmes

http://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/getting-funds/call-for-proposals/how-to-apply/index_en.htm

- **Examples of sustainable energy cooperatives:**

Wind energy cooperative Windcentrale (NL) through crowd funding : www.windcentrale.nl

Energy independent island of Samsø (DK)

http://www.managenergy.net/focus_on_june_2012_samso_.html

Annex 2 Partner interviews

The following persons took part in an interview as part of this final evaluation:

- Mrs Elisabeth Langgren Lundov Sörmland Regional Council (SE)
- Mr Sebastián Danneels Stoke-on-Trent City Council (UK)
- Mrs Sabine Stölb Ministry of Sustainable Development and Infrastructure (LU)
- Mr Wilco van Kalkeren Provincie Gelderland (NL)
- Mrs Carla Onderdenlinden
- Mr Raitis Madžulis Zemgale Planning Region (LV)
- Mr Manuel Silva Cartaxo Municipality (PT)
- Mrs Susanne Rosendahl Örebro Regional Development Council (SE)
- Mr Dr Michael Henze Ministry of Economic Affairs, Energy and Industry of the State North Rhine-Westphalia (DE, written contribution)