Guide to
New Towns'

BEST
PRACTICES

How to approach the guide

The guide aims at **enhancing innovative initiatives** that are to be observed in European New Towns. As such, they have the potential to improve the quality of life of citizens and the overall image of New Towns.

However, the guide should not be misinterpreted. Thus **a few clarifications** should be made beforehand:

- Its ambition is not to give a comprehensive view of all best practices; obviously, many other examples could have been chosen in other New Towns;

- The decision was made to deal with various themes to enlarge the scope as much as possible, but some are more important than others due to their growing importance (e.g. environment-related initiatives);

- Some best practices deal with a very specific initiative while others describe a more general tendency gathering many micro-initiatives; once again, diversity has been chosen.

How to use the guide

The guide was designed as **a practical tool** for politicians to be able to identify simply and quickly the best practices that seem relevant for their New Towns.

Therefore, each best practice is presented following the **same pattern**:

- A brief presentation summing up the context and the outline of the project;

- A synthesis of main aims and outcomes;

- A timeline (when appropriate);

- An analysis identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats;

- A brief paragraph about the replication possibility of the practice.

Although best practices are enhanced through this guide as sources of inspiration, **they do not constitute miracle solutions** that can be applied to every New Town. Each best practice is indeed the result of a specific context comprising local needs and resources, a political and administrative system, financial means… Thus, the question of replication should be given special attention, especially when projects are costly.

Content

	BEST PRACTICE	NEW TOWN
THEME 1 COMPETITIVENESS	- Advancity competitive cluster - Eco-cluster - Aviapolis - Renovation of shopping centre - New city centre - Centre of Patrimonies - Very high speed internet access	Marne-la-Vallée (FR) Sénart (FR) Vantaa (FI) Hässelby-Vällingby (SW) Almere (NL) Cergy-Pontoise (FR) Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines (FR)
THEME 2 ENVIRONMENT	- Geothermal power - Carbon offset fund - Eco Park	Marne-la-Vallée (FR) Milton Keynes (UK) Milton Keynes (UK)
THEME 3 IDENTITY AND COMMUNITY	- Gateway project - Our Basildon - Hotspots - Hergé museum - Library - Initiatives for the elderly - Cross-border cultural cooperation - Political market - Virtual Zoetermeer game	Harlow (UK) Basildon (UK) Harlow (UK) Louvain-la-Neuve (BE) Barbera del Valles (SP) Villeneuve d'Ascq (FR) Villeneuve d'Ascq (FR) Almere (NL) Zoetermeer (NL)

Outline

When it comes to sustainable development, Marne-la-Vallée appears like one of the most advanced French innovation centres, as the Advancity competitive cluster shows. The cluster is part of a comprehensive national policy launched by the French government in 2005 to boost research and development in high added-value fields.

As any cluster, Advancity concentrates interconnected businesses, research centres and educational structures. It aims at achieving sustainable mobility and city through 3 intertwined themes: city and city planning, housing and building, mobility and transport. The cluster is composed of a network of more than 100 members among which 10 world company leaders (EDF, Veolia, Suez…) and renowned universities and research centres (Cité Descartes, Ecole Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées…).

Since its creation in 2006, Advancity has approved more than 60 projects for a total amount of 130 million euros, which makes it the 5th most successful French competitive cluster in terms of financed projects.

Aims and outcomes

- Achieve leading national and international position in economic activities related to sustainability
- Contribute to the fight against climate change: indeed, the cluster's targets (i.e. building and transport) account for 2/3 of the carbon emissions
- Strengthened positive image and identity of the territory

Timeline

- **2005:** competitive clusters' policy launched in France
- **2006:** creation of the "Sustainable City and Mobility" competitive cluster, which would later be known as "Advancity"
- **2008:** assessment of competitive clusters; Advancity found to be quite successful
- **2009:** due to its success, the cluster opens to eco-technologies

advancity
Ville & Mobilité Durables

Analysis

Strengths	- Strengthening of inward and outward image thanks to the label "competitive cluster": creation of high added-value jobs on the territory, attraction of skilled workers… - Active contribution to the reduction of carbon emissions - Light association structure that enables easy and flexible contact between the members
Weaknesses	- Difficult start and necessity to prove itself - Means no more adapted to the success: necessity to reinforce human and financial resources - High dependence on the State
Opportunities	- Territorial marketing opportunity for local authorities - Further development expected: new research laboratories of the Equipment Ministry will be implemented on the site by 2011, the cluster has recently opened to eco-technologies and could move from a national to a world status (which means more financial means from the State)
Threats	- Highly competitive field, both on the international and national scales (e.g. Rhônes-Alpes region, which aim is to become the eco-technologies European leader) - Lack of resources to keep up to the growth - Danger of mono-specialization since it is fashionable trend

Replication possibility

The implementation of a competitive cluster provides the opportunity for a New Town to become nationally or internationally renowned in a high added-value field. It is thus an efficient tool to create qualified jobs and attract both businesses and inhabitants.

Nevertheless, clusters need to rely on a solid basis of disposable resources, i.e. the proximity of already competitive (or promising) businesses and research centres. It is particularly obvious for Advancity, which success is based on many renowned universities and research centres among which the Cité Descartes.

Key figures about the Cité Descartes

- 150 hectares	- 600 ongoing PhD
- 18 research and higher education centres	- 500 engineers and technicians
- More than 50 laboratories	- 200 education programmes
- 15 000 students	- 6 000 employees
- 1 100 teachers and research directors	

This partnership with the Cité Descartes is all the more important as the development of the latter goes on. By 2012 indeed, a new scientific and technical cluster will emerge. It is expected to become one of the biggest world centres on sustainable development and urban civilization, and it will work closely with Advancity. A breeding ground of initiatives and projects is therefore required for the proper development of a competitive cluster.

Moreover, Advancity is part of comprehensive national policy that enables businesses to benefit from funds and fiscal exonerations and from; the State is consequently an active member which provides for financial resources. Once again, what happens after the end of the national policy? Are competitive clusters a sustainable economic development tool?

Eco-cluster
Sénart (France)

Outline

With the emergence of challenges related to sustainable development, eco-clusters have begun to appear throughout Europe. They aim at:
- establishing a sustainable urban planning according to the principles of high environmental quality;
- catering for eco-activities that integrate an ecological management;
- enabling a management of the business park that respects environmental charters.

Following these objectives, Sénart is currently developing a project of eco-cluster located on 3 communes. 2 new business parks (Le Charme and Les Portes de Sénart) are to complete the existing one (Chanteloup), for a total surface of 300 ha among which 70 ha will be dedicated to green spaces. The eco-cluster is to enforce an environmental quality charter developed in the framework of the ENCOURAGE European project.

**Eco-activities in France:
a sustainable investment**
- Diverse: water, waste, renewable energies…
- Fast growing sector: +10% every year
- Pool of jobs: 370 000 jobs in January 2007
- Overall expenditure for the environment: +5,5% in 2005 compared to 2004
- Environment in the GDP: 3,4% in 2005 compared to 1,4% in 1990

Aims and outcomes

• Respect of the environment and high energetic performances
• Mutualisation of means and services
• Creation of a technological resource centre/platform
• Valorisation of the image of businesses and of the New Town

Timeline

• **2001:** Sénart decides to extend a pilot environmental quality charter to new business parks
• **2005:** the Chanteloup business park applies the charter; the Ile-de-France region officially chooses Sénart to cater for an eco-cluster
• **2006:** the administration council of the State structure in charge of the projects of the New Town discussed the creation of 2 planning areas
• **2007:** creation of the 2 planning areas and beginning of technical studies
• **2009:** first businesses due to establish on the new business parks

Analysis

Strengths	- Creation of at least 3 000 jobs in the first development period - Good accessibility of the eco-cluster - Environmental charter quality already enforced by existing business parks and pioneer companies (e.g. Prolohis in Chanteloup has installed a significant number of photovoltaic panels) - European dimension
Weaknesses	- High financial dependence on the State, the region, the department and several agencies - High investment costs and success uncertain
Opportunities	- Enhance and improve the image of the territory - Fill in the economic flaws of the New Town - Contribute to the reduction of the environmental imprint
Threats	- Competition with other eco-clusters - High specialisation can be dangerous if conjuncture changes - Reduction of socio-environmental standards due to the economic crisis

Replication possibility

It is often said that Sénart has had difficulty in balancing jobs and housing on its territory: indeed, the development of economic activities has been slower than in some other French New Towns (e.g. Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines). That is why this project, which enables Sénart to create many jobs in a field that proves to be profitable, seems to be a good strategy of diversification of the economy.

It should not be forgotten, though, that the project is part of a wider strategy of commitment to sustainable development through the creation of an eco-quarter, the implementation of an environment-friendly housing certification… Thus, such a project should not be replicated out of the blue but integrated into a coherent strategy that can be easily understood and promoted.

One should also keep in mind that eco-activities, although fast growing, must not become a mono-specialisation following the general trend in all industrialized countries, otherwise conjuncture changes could affect badly the local economy.

Finally, competition is hard in this field, and complementarities have to be found with other regional projects to guarantee the success of the eco-cluster.

Aviapolis
Vantaa (Finland)

Outline

Vantaa is a rapidly growing city that benefits from the presence of the Helsinki-Vantaa airport, which is Finland's only international airport. Within the framework of an ambitious urban project called Aviapolis, a new area covering 42 km square has been emerging for a decade. It is conceived as a contemporary aviation city mixing:

- **Business**: Aviapolis is the fastest-growing concentration of business in the Helsinki metropolitan area. According to a study published by KTI (Finland´s Institute for Real Estate Economics) in 2005, it is the most popular business site in the Helsinki metropolitan area. One of the flagship developments is the Econia Business Park, which is expected to be Finland's largest solar house project.

- **Retail**: in the centre of the Aviapolis area is the Jumbo shopping centre, which is Finland's second largest shopping centre. The adjacent leisure centre called Flamingo offers a wide range of commercial services including a hotel, restaurants, spa and cinemas.

- **Housing**: more than 16 000 people are currently living in the area, and this number is expected to keep rising. The Kartanokoski housing district serves as the focus of the new housing areas and hosts an international school and day care centre, as well as a library and an office providing a wide range of administrative services.

Aims and outcomes

- Use the transport hub as an opportunity for urban and economic development
- Turn Aviapolis into a calling card representing the whole of Finland to be able to attract businesses, residents and outside visitors alike
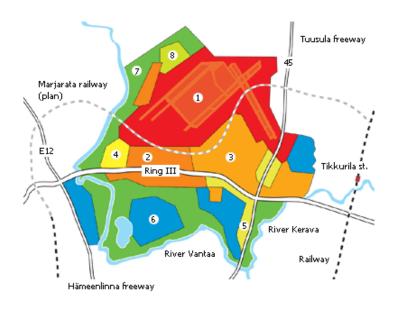
Analysis

Strengths	- Positive redefinition of Vantaa's and Helsinki's metropolitan region competitiveness - Excellent logistics that make it an unparalleled location for companies requiring proximity to transport connections - Wide range of functions: businesses, housing, commercial services, leisure, green spaces
Weaknesses	- Overabundance of big projects (e.g. Jumbo, Flamingo…) makes each of them less punchy - Predominance of economic activities over housing and social needs - Long term quality of life near an airport can be questionable
Opportunities	- Enhanced territory through a flagship project - Access to new markets (e.g. Asia) - Response to the region's growth and future needs
Threats	- Reinforcement of Helsinki's weight at the expanse of other regions - Lack of integration of less privileged and less educated households - Hypothesis of growing air traffic could be questioned by recent environmental challenges

Replication possibility

Aviapolis is an ambitious urban project mixing a wide range of functions and activities. As any project of this kind, it has the potential to change radically the image of the New Town of Vantaa, and more generally to reinforce the competitiveness of Helsinki's metropolitan region.

However, it has a high cost that can only be financed by a solid private-public partnership able to attract a critical mass of investments. Above all, the project is based on the fact that 98% of air travellers arriving in Finland do so through the Helsinki-Vantaa International airport. Consequently, the project would never have been developed if it wasn't for the excellent logistics of the area (access to international markets with the airport, efficient motorways and rail networks among which the E18 that leas directly to St Petersburg…). But even at a smaller and less ambitious scale, it could be an inspiration to many New Towns which are in need for a redevelopment and still experience growth.

1. Helsinki-Vantaa international airport

2. Logistic functions, technical wholesale

3. Technology center, Business Parks, logistic services, research and development, know-how and technology intensive production and hotels

4. Research and development, company services and security intensive functions

5. Retail units

6. Housing areas

7. Recreational areass

8. Motor sport arena

Outline

Simultaneously as the New Town of Hässelby started to take shape, a shopping centre linked to it was built. During its initial stage in the 1950s it was extremely popular and hip. After a couple of years without any renovation of the area the popularity turned into a bad reputation of an obsolete shopping zone.

In 1987 the town centre had still not managed to go through any renovations and it was instead labeled as a cultural heritage. This certification meant that the facades and the overall impression could not be changed, hence the renovation was made more difficult.

However, the rebuilding and renovation of the shopping area started in 2003 with a solution that combined both the preservation of the old and the creation of something new. A floating glass roof was built over the shopping street and an additional mall was built.

Aims and outcomes

- Promote attraction for people to live in the New Town
- Improve the overall image
- Create jobs and enhance the economy

Timeline

- **1987:** cultural heritage certification/protection
- **2001:** planning of the renovation
- **2003:** start of renovation and extension
- **2008:** end of renovation and extension; World Architecture Festival price in Barcelona

Analysis

Strengths	- Expansion of shopping area while respecting the historical construction - Identity kept and strengthened - Additional renovation of other parts of the centre e.g. main square, library, cinema, parking space…
Weaknesses	- Opening hours (costly and not competitive enough) - Normalization between income and costs not until 2013
Opportunities	- Economic boost - Increased popularity in terms of living and shopping - Creation of new jobs
Threats	- Other shopping malls are bigger, longer opening hours, situated in the capital city centre - The costs for the building might not pay off - Indifference among the inhabitants

Replication possibility

The (re)creation of this shopping area was spurred by the fact that the shopping mall that had been renovated nearby was doing very well. Hence, the idea was basically a replication of the Kista Gallery. Nevertheless, the regeneration project always kept in mind the preservation of the town.

The replication might not work in terms of economic measures since it has been extremely costly, but it is a great example of how towns can preserve the old parts while renewing their image. Since New Towns have a problem with identity and attachment it is important to keep some of their heritage.

Outline

As the fastest growing New Town across Europe, Almere is expected to have a population of 300 000 inhabitants in the next decade compared to its current 180 000 inhabitants. Given this background, and given the New Town has to face many challenges as that of its identity, it seemed necessary for the city centre to be more equipped and enable citizens to meet in a friendly environment.

A new city centre on an area of 32 ha designed by the Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas was developed between 1999 and 2007. On the whole, the mixed programme is composed of approximately 67 600 m2 commercial, 9 000 m2 leisure, 890 housing units, 3 300 constructed parking spaces. The budget for this project has reached 700 million euros among which 500 were financed by the promoter Bouwfonds Mab Development.

Aims and outcomes

• A city to live in: respond to continuous growth by providing a wider range of facilities and making Almere the "leisure city"

• A city to work in: attract more businesses in the area to reduce the number of commuters (almost 80% of the inhabitants work outside of Almere)

• Come to terms with the negative image of dormitory town and create city pride through a flagship project

The project has endowed the city with major facilities such as a museum, a theatre and a concert hall.

The New Town needed to send a clear architectural signal, hence the Citadel, a shopping mall that is articulated around 2 different levels (transport and parking spaces on the one hand, shops and housing for pedestrians on the other hand).

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Timeline

- **1994:** competition for the definition of a master plan
- **1998:** beginning of the construction
- **2007:** completion of the project

Analysis

Strengths	- Improvement of quality of life for citizens: better provision of services and amenities, architectural and urban quality… - Creation of many jobs e.g. linked to commercial spaces - Long term vision responding to current needs and anticipating future growth - Flexible and energetic organisation for the project (City Centre Development Corporation)
Weaknesses	- Very costly project - Functionality of some facilities not optimal (e.g. theatre) - Limited role of the population in the whole process
Opportunities	- Improve the outward image of the New Town - Reinforce or help create city pride and sense of belonging for citizens
Threats	- Social uses of the new city centre not matching expectations - New city centre competing with other areas and emptying their activities - Increase in housing prices due to the creation of a trendy new centrality and loss of social diversity in the area

Replication possibility

Developing a new city centre in the heart of Almere is a landmark action that has been granted several architectural and urban awards. It is indeed exemplary not only in terms of national and international visibility (i.e. positive impact on the image), but also in terms of social benefits (i.e. improvement of the quality of life of citizens). Almere has the political will to move from a dormitory and commuting town to a city where you can both live and work, and it seems quite successful in this attempt.

The main problem raised by the project is its extremely high cost. In the case of Almere, one can reasonably agree that the investment was worth it due to the considerable growth and potential of the New Town. Nevertheless, a smaller New Town would not need such a large-scale development and could probably not pay for it or gather the necessary critical amount of investments. In any case, an important project like this must be thought through and integrated into a wider strategy. For instance, Almere seeks to develop an urbanisation strategy in a regional context: thus, developing a new city centre does not come out of the blue but appears on the contrary like a crucial element of this strategy.

Outline

In the framework of a ministerial call for proposals, Cergy-Pontoise has planned the creation of the Ile-de-France Conservation, Research and Restoration Centre of Patrimonies. The project will be implemented in the Neuville sector, which is currently being planned and which encompasses green- or brownfields.

Three towns are still competing to cater for the CRRCP, but the aim of Cergy-Pontoise is to integrate the facility into a wider project designed to boost the development of the New Town.

Aims of the centre

- Stock in the optimal conservation conditions the works of art that are maintained in storerooms
- Enable curators to carry out study, counting and research works on the art collections
- Shelter workshops of works of art restoration for French museums
- Gather research laboratories on cultural heritage

Aims of the global Neuville project

- Create by 2013 a dynamic new area of 77 hectares mixing and balancing cultural and educational facilities and tertiary and leisure activities
- Offer a new generation of spaces through very high environmental standards

The ongoing Ecocampus project is fully part of the Neuville project. It aims at reinforcing synergies between the university and businesses. Along with the CRRCP, it will enhance the position of the New Town as a dynamic centre in both cultural and economic fields.

Analysis

Strengths	- The CRRCP will benefit from well-thought security measures (intruders, fire…) and would offer the public a wide range of activities (conferences, workshops, exhibitions…) - The CRRCP will be integrated into a wider project aiming at mixing different urban functions, reinforcing the quality of life and attracting further businesses - Good accessibility of the site towards Paris and the region through a multimodal pole
Weaknesses	- Remoteness from Paris requires much time in public transport - Coherence and viability of the project if the ministry finally decides to locate the CRRCP in another town - Investment costs high and uncertain results
Opportunities	- Using the flagship effect to enhance the territory - Reinforce synergies between university and businesses
Threats	- Lack of identity and integration of the new area in the existing urban structure - Project not sufficient to shed a positive light on the territory

Replication possibility

Even though the project is centered on the CRRCP i.e. a project supported by the ministry of culture, the dynamics generated by the project can be used by other New Towns to develop new attractive activities and enhance their territory.

Obviously, the coherence of such a project depends on local needs, which need to be clearly identified first to be able to subsequently define a strategy of adaptation. In the case of Cergy-Pontoise, the university is a crucial element and is one of the reasons of its development: consequently, New Towns that do not shelter significant educational or research facilities would find it hard to develop such a project.

The aim to mix cultural, educational and economic activities is a good strategy, but it can also raise questions and issues as to the high concentration of activities in one area while others may be neglected. In any case, developing such a project implies high costs for the Cergy-Pontoise agglomeration, and success is not guaranteed, especially since the New Town suffers from a negative outward image.
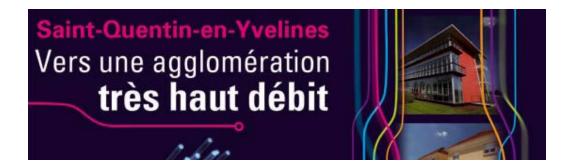
Outline

In our knowledge economies, the question of internet access has become crucial to enhance competitiveness and define major players. The agglomeration of Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines has understood this and intends to become a leading digital planner through a project of optical fiber network.

Main assets of the optical fiber technology:
- Rapidity of the network: possibility to reach 100 Mb/s compared to 512 kb/s to 30 Mb/s with the ADSL and cable technologies
- Reliability of the network: the optical fiber is not sensitive to electromagnetic waves that disturb signals, hence low maintenance required
- Multiplicity of services all at once and in optimal conditions: digital leisure (online games, high definition TV…), videoconferences, telecommuting…
- Possibility to reduce the environmental imprint by making videoconferences or online shopping widespread practices

Aims and outcomes

• Anticipate future technological needs and reinforce competitiveness of the New Town
• Ensure that all inhabitants and businesses (even the remotest ones) can benefit from this service

Timeline

• **1987:** creation of the cable network and of a local company in charge of the commercial management of the network
• **2005:** pre-emption of network infrastructures by the agglomeration, which is now in charge of their maintenance and development
• **2008:** awareness of the necessity to develop the very high speed internet access; the State launches the Digital France 2012 plan to foster the development of very high speed internet access
• **2009:** the very high speed network is launched
• **2011:** the totality of the agglomeration will be equipped in optical fiber technology

Analysis

Strengths	- Significant element to reinforce the competitiveness of the New Town and attract further businesses - Significant element to improve the quality of life of the inhabitants: no investment costs, possibility to choose the operator and hence to benefit from more competitive prices (whereas there used to be a unique operator), optical fiber technology to be available even in small villages
Weaknesses	- Cost benefice ratio of the investment uncertain
Opportunities	- Enhanced territory through a flagship initiative - Strategy of technological anticipation that is expected to pay off in near future - Development of new ways of working and living that can facilitate daily life and reduce the environmental imprint
Threats	- Insufficient comprehension of the stakes of very high speed internet access by the inhabitants - Technical problems that could lead to delays, especially if the first round of optical fiber linking is problematic

Replication possibility

The project developed by Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines is a good example of what an anticipation strategy can be. Indeed, the New Town has understood the potential benefits of information and communication technologies and tries to turn its weaknesses (exclusion of areas, unique operator) into assets (optical fiber as a way to promote social inclusion and offer more competitive prices to the users).

It is essential, though, that such an initiative comprises the whole territory, no matter how small some of the urban entities can be. Indeed, very high speed internet access should not be a factor of exclusion of some territories that are considered "less profitable". Thus, the municipality must be the driving force of the project and ensure that there are no spatial (and social) inequalities in the delivery of the service.

Outline

Val Maubuée's district heating system was created in the 1980s. It concerns vast areas in two communes of the agglomeration (Lognes and Torcy) and functions with a thermal power station of 26 MW that fuels 87 sub-stations. This low-temperature system was conceived right from the beginning to be able to work with geothermal energy. However, the sharp decrease in the price of fossil fuels lead to the implementation of a gas boiler instead.

Due to current environmental concerns, representatives have decided to use the geothermal solution to fuel the district heating system. The private company Dalkia will be in charge of the installation and maintenance of the district heating system, and will thus cover the costs that are expected to reach 15 millions euros.

Main assets of geothermal energy:
- A clean energy that does not contribute to accentuate climate change: geothermal power plants do not have to burn fuels to manufacture steam to turn turbines; consequently, using it helps reduce carbon emissions
- A renewable energy, contrary to fossil fuels: earth heat is indeed contained in rocks, and it does not imply fuel costs since geothermal "fuel" is to be found where the power plant is located
- An energy that can be found and used pretty much everywhere, especially with the progress of modern technologies; its price is much less volatile than fossil fuels

Aims and outcomes

• From July 2009, an approximate 30% decrease in the price of energy for the users (depending on the subscribed intensity) e.g. 4756 houses
• From 2011 on, a 80% decrease in carbon emissions, i.e. 18 000 ton less CO_2 rejections in the atmosphere compared to the past situation
• Strengthened positive image as a major player in sustainable development

Timeline

• **2009 (April):** representatives choose the company Dalkia as the "délégataire de service public"
• **2009-2010:** drilling operations; construction of a geothermal power station near the central boiler; execution of a geothermal loop to link the well to the geothermal power station
• **2009 (July):** expected decrease in the price of energy for the users
• **2011:** geothermal district heating system operational

The future boiler, a project by the architect Jean LESCOT

Analysis

Strengths	- Strengthening of outward image and inward pride - Contribution to reduce carbon emissions - Clever financing: costs entirely born by the company Dalkia and at least 1,8 million euros subsidies given by the region - Immediate decrease in energy prices for users
Weaknesses	- Initial costs (i.e. assessment of the potentialities of the site) high and can scare off investors - Geothermal energy to be used only in the immediate vicinity of the power station - Fashionable trend sensitive to the conjuncture
Opportunities	- Marketing opportunity: an iconic sustainable development action for an already active player - Further development of the geothermal district system is possible
Threats	- Technical/economic difficulties leading to delays - Competition on the energy market - New technologies could prove more efficient in the future

Replication possibility

The creation of a geothermal power plant is something of an iconic action for a city. It can greatly contribute to reinforce the quality of life of the inhabitants while striving to reduce the costs of their energy bills.

This is however a costly initiative: such a project would probably not be possible if it was not for the French "délégation de services publics" system, which enables local authorities to transfer the costs to a chosen company. Although geothermal energy is to b found everywhere, investment costs are high, especially as regards feasibility studies and drilling operations. Another pre-requisite is the adaptability of the infrastructure: in the case of Val Maubuée, the district heating system has been conceived right from the beginning to be able to work with geothermal energy. Also, the expected success of the initiative stems from a coherent global strategy. The geothermal energy project is thus consistent with the overall sustainable development strategy of Val Maubuée, hence New Towns that do not cultivate this image would not necessarily be able to pull it off.

Outline

Milton Keynes Council (MKC) set the overall goal to achieve carbon neutrality in all new developments sites. This means that when new buildings are being constructed they should not increase CO_2 emissions. This is done by using new energy measures of renewable technologies, better insulation, maximizing sunlight for heat gain and daylight to reduce electric lighting, building in groupings etc when constructing new buildings.

Developers who do not manage the zero carbon emission goal will have to pay money to a carbon offset fund, £200/tonne CO_2. The money will compensate for the emissions since it will go to improving the energy situation in existing buildings. This service is done by Milton Keyne's Energy Agency. Lately this strategy has been recognized as successful and after a second reading in the House of Commons the House of Lords will see if it could be adopted by other local authorities.

Aims and outcomes

- Avoid the net increase in CO_2 emission as a result of new constructions
- Zero carbon emissions in Milton Keynes
- Development of new energy solutions for new buildings
- Improve energy situation in old buildings

Timeline

- **2005:** MKC adopts the Sustainable Construction policy (D4) within the Local Development Framework
- **2006:** publication of a supplementary planning document to help developers to reach the zero carbon target
- **2006:** 94% of the new developers had followed the policy's methods
- **2007:** MKC receives the Green Apple award for its contribution to reducing climate change
- **2007:** the right of MKC to apply the policy was questioned by the Government
- **2008:** the Planning and Energy bill was launched in the House of Commons (with the aim to let other local authorities adopt similar polices to MKC's)

Analysis

Strengths	- No extra expenses for MKC when renovating the old buildings, already paid for by the Carbon Offset Fund - Methodology documents for the developers to use - Guaranteed carbon cuts in the local environment - The compensation is within the community and not quotas that are bought from developing countries - Local job creation
Weaknesses	- The expected £800 000/year might turn out to be less - Local initiative without global effects
Opportunities	- Other local authorities could adopt similar policies - High demand for housing means that new buildings will be developed in accordance with the D4 - Reduction of fuel properties - Funding of local expertise and technical innovation
Threats	- The government will not allow Milton Keynes to have this policy - Construction companies will build in other towns - The developers will feel uncertain about how to build in accordance with the policy

Replication possibility

There are already discussions in the UK if other local authorities could adopt similar policies, which indicate that the chance for replication is high. There is at the moment one other town that has a similar policy to Milton Keynes, and also here it is working well.

What is needed for a similar policy to function elsewhere is a well-developed methodology of how to measure the carbon emission, a jurisdiction that requires all new developers to ask for permission from the political administration for construction of buildings, and a public construction company or energy agency that can carry out the renovation of the old buildings. As long as national politics allows for local authorities to decide on these policies it can be replicated.

Outline

Milton Keynes was already one of the 3 locations for Gulliver's Theme Parks, which are part of Great Britain's top 10 tourist attractions. A project of Eco Park was developed to offer a new kind of experience where learning happens naturally through hands-on activities. Indeed, the Eco Park deals with "hot topics" such as sustainability, recycling or healthy-eating, and many aspects of its design aim at promoting sustainable development (e.g. solar panels and grass roofing).

The Eco Park is currently expanding to improve and maximise its entertainment offer. It is now composed of:

- **A dinosaur park section**, where more than 30 life-sized dinosaurs can be observed and many other activities are proposed (e.g. taking a Lost World tour)
- **A farm park section**, where there are new animals every season and activities such as planting seeds and seeing crops grow or learning about how a farm works
- **An eco park section**, which aims at giving children a hands-on look at how to cutting down carbon footprints or incorporate recycling. This area is being expanded throughout 2009 and entry is free while development is taking place.

Aims and outcomes

- Create an innovative concept mixing education and fun
- Adapt to current thematic interests (e.g. environment, life sciences)
- Provide for new leisure facilities to respond to the growing population

Timeline

- **1999:** opening of Gulliver's Land in Milton Keynes
- **2005:** beginning of the project
- **2007:** opening of the Gulliver's EcoPark
- **2009:** expansion and restructuring of the EcoPark
- **2010:** expected opening of Gulliver's Camp to accommodate visitors

Analysis

Strengths	- Clever combination of learning and having fun (edutainment) - Promotion of environmental awareness - Only park of this kind
Weaknesses	- Eco park section in fact limited: the most important part of the theme park is dedicated to the farm area - No reduced price for children of over 90 cm - Closing time rather early (4:30 or 5:00 PM)
Opportunities	- Important profits due to the gap in the market for a theme park mixing learning and entertainment - Reinforcing Milton Keynes as a committed actor to environmental concerns - Increase tourism to the area of Milton Keynes
Threats	- Competition of other parks - Difficulty to further develop the new concept - Difficulty to attract visitors after the novelty fades

Replication possibility

Milton Keynes' Eco Park has 2 main assets: on the one hand, it features and materialises new global challenges and demands from the public; on the other hand, its innovative concept of edutainment enables to address issues to the young generation in comprehensible terms.
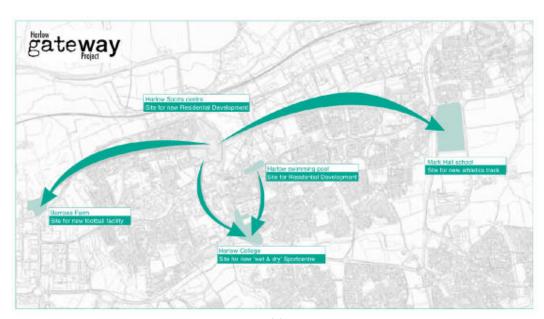
It should be mentioned, though, that this new park has been developed on a solid basis i.e. the tangible success of a previous theme park with its pool of visitors. It is therefore not a project emerging out of the blue, especially since Milton Keynes is already an active player in the fight against climate change (see carbon offset fund). Hence a general coherence with the actions of the municipality is required to guarantee the best chances of success.

Outline

Harlow Gateway is fully part of Harlow's regeneration strategy. It is a £50 million project backed by the Department of Communities and Local Government, Harlow Council, Harlow Sports Trust and English Partnerships. It aims at delivering new sporting facilities alongside much-needed housing for the New Town.

- **Athletics track**: a new £1million athletics track has been completed at Mark Hall Community School and Sports College. The brand new eight lane forms the focus of a major training programme for schoolchildren in the town. The track can be used by schools and the community in general. As the base for Harlow Athletics Club, the new facilities should enable the club to grow and develop athletes and coaches for the future.

- **Football stadium**: a new £3 million football stadium has been completed at Barrows Farm. It features a new pitch, main stand with seating and a covered stand for 3 000 spectators, a bar and conference facilities. The football designed is designed to offer a wide range of sports and social facilities for the community in general and also to support the club's bid to play Conference football.

- **Community leisure centre**: a £25m state-of-the-art community leisure centre has been completed near Harlow College. The new centre called "Leisurezone" features a swimming pool which is larger than the current one (eight lanes by 25m) and a smaller one (three lanes by 20m), a sports hall that can double as a conference/concert/exhibition venue, extensive health and fitness facilities, studios, members' bar/lounge… Leisurezone has been earmarked as a training facility for Paralympians and Olympians in the run up to the 2012 London Olympics.

- **Housing**: a total of 530 new homes and apartments have been built on the acre site of Fifth Avenue. Among those, over 30% of the homes are affordable (i.e. homes for rent which local people can afford). A further 60 homes are scheduled to be built in First Avenue.

Mapping of the project

Aims and outcomes

- Generate a major boost for sports, leisure and lifestyle activities
- Respond to the housing shortage
- Improve the overall image of the New Town

Timeline

- **2003:** partnership formed for the development of the project; Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott announces a £11 million cash boost for the project
- **2006:** completion of the stadium
- **2007:** completion of the first series of new homes
- **2008:** completion of the athletics track
- **2009:** completion of the leisure centre

Analysis

Strengths	- Provision of much needed housing among which a significant part is affordable - Renewal of some of Harlow's outdated infrastructure that will benefit local athletes but also the community in general - Location on a key site between the station and Harlow town centre - Efficient public private partnership
Weaknesses	- Costly project with uncertain return on the investment - Focus on sport facilities too narrow
Opportunities	- Promote sports and a healthier way of life in Harlow - Enable growth and regeneration to go hand in hand - Improve the overall image of the New Town
Threats	- Lack of urban integration for the new facilities - Indifference and lack of social use of the new facilities by the inhabitants

Replication possibility

Although a costly project, Harlow Gateway is based on an efficient partnership mixing the public and the private sectors and has the potential to conciliate growth and urban renewal. It can therefore be recommended if:
- The project is integrated into and coherent with a wider regeneration strategy (e.g. Harlow 2020 Vision);
- The project responds to an acute need/demand (e.g. outdated infrastructure);
- The project targets the community as a whole through a long term vision;
- A profitable partnership can be formed to guarantee the best development possible for the project.

Our Basildon
Basildon (United Kingdom)

Outline

"Our Basildon" is an outwardly simple project designed to promote community cohesion and sense of belonging in the New Town. It is based on a 12 km trail that weaves in a figure of eight through the centre of Basildon, showing the main elements composing local heritage (e.g. landmark buildings, figurative and abstract sculptures…). Although Basildon claims its identity as a New Town loud and clear, it also enhances through this initiative ancient remains and thus a more profound urban history.

The project is led by the Foundation for Essex Arts, which is a fully independent community organisation, and has been made possible by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Essex County Council and the Basildon District Council.

Aims and outcomes

- Increase local awareness of the built heritage and the open spaces
- Increase tourism to the area
- Use the initiative as a way to involve people and boost economic regeneration
- Develop the trail concept and promote it as an exemplary project for other towns

Timeline

- **2006-2007:** pilot trail project with 5 primary schools
- **2009 (April):** opening of the trail at the occasion of Basildon's 60th anniversary
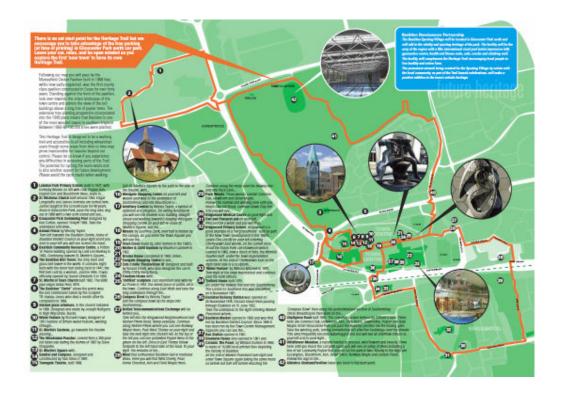
Analysis

Strengths	- Flexible and lasting tool since the trail can adapt to Basildon's physical changes - Participation of the population (e.g. children and students) while keeping costs relatively low - Transversal approach to deal with cultural and social challenges - New projects are under way (e.g. 3 projects with the NHS South West Essex)
Weaknesses	- Rationalisation and categorisation of heritage - Waymarked trail reduces spontaneous discoveries - Artificial initiative
Opportunities	- Look at the town with fresh eyes - Great potential in terms of construction of the local identity and sense of community belonging - Improve education and health of the inhabitants
Threats	- Potential competition with other New Towns which could replicate the idea - Lack of interest in the project by the population

Replication possibility

"Our Basildon" is an innovative and unique project that has the potential to showcase Basildon in a positive light. Therefore, it could be a source of inspiration for other New Towns provided that some conditions are respected:

- Initiators have to ensure that the local heritage can be enhanced and rediscovered through modern works of art, exhibitions or other events. Basildon stresses in its communication strategy the diversity of its heritage, and hence its interest for both residents and visitors.
- The involvement of the population is a crucial tool to foster community sense of belonging, and Basildon endeavours to integrate children and the young into the whole process. If such is not the case, the population will not feel concerned by the project or even excluded (e.g. top-down approach).
- The project must be conceived at a larger scale as a way to foster development, as shown by the projects resulting from the partnership between Basildon and the NHS South West Essex (e.g. healthy eating initiative or installation of outside exercise stations along the trail).

Outline

With the help of Harlow Star, Essex County Council and Harlow Council, Harlow Renaissance has established an annual competition giving free rein to citizens' views.

Community groups, societies, tenant and voluntary associations throughout the New Town were invited to nominate a project that would enhance their local environment for the benefit of all the community. Then, citizens were free to vote for their favourite project.

For the 2008 competition, 19 nominations were shortlisted and the winners were the Parndon wood and Hawkenbury meadow, and the new sculpture for the town park paddling pool. Competition organisers Harlow Renaissance and Essex County Council have put up £5,000 each to pay for the work (e.g. removal of trees, replacement of a pathway…). On the Harlow Renaissance website a follow-up of the project can be found, which enables citizens to be kept updated of recent developments if they do not see in the field itself.

Aims and outcomes

- Foster participatory democracy and community feeling
- Look at the New Town with fresh eyes

Analysis

Strengths	- Enables citizens to voice their views and make some choices for their hometown - Participation further encouraged in the development of the project - Low-cost yet popular initiative
Weaknesses	- Very punctual and specific initiative - Limited impact scale - Few votes in the end and not necessarily representative of the whole community
Opportunities	- Reinforce community feeling - Increase citizens' concern in their hometown
Threats	- Indifference of the citizens - Financial means insufficient to carry out the work

Replication possibility

"Harlow hotspots" is a simple budget participatory initiative that can lead to fruitful results for citizens. Indeed, one can expect that the focus on very local issues will increase the inhabitants' sense of responsibility for their hometown. Although the scale of the projects that are carried out in this framework is rather limited, the positive impact due to low-costs and involvement of citizens is potentially strong.

Thus, the replication of such a good practice should be easy, but municipalities should nonetheless see to it that a wide range of groups are represented both in the nominating part and in the final voting part. This can be achieved through an efficient communication strategy around the project.

Outline

The president of Foundation Hergé Fanny Rodwell decided to locate a museum dedicated to Tintin's creator Hergé (Georges Prosper Rémi) in Louvain-la-Neuve. Following the motivation of the town's beautiful natural surroundings that reappear in the comic as a proof for Hergé's liking and inspiration of this area.

The foundation paid for the entire building (15 000 000 €) provided that the municipality Ottignies-Louvain-la-Neuve and its greater region Wallon Barbant pay for infrastructure and transport to the town from Brussels and new parking spaces. The museum is located on the outskirt of the town but is connected to the centre by a bridge. Cars can enter the museum area without passing through the car-free town.

Aims and outcomes

- 200 000 visitors/year to the museum
- Increased interest in the town; more tourism
- Higher revenues of comic shops
- Higher revenues of restaurants/cafés
- Strengthened positive image and identity of the town and its citizens

Timeline

- **2000:** current mayor, Jean-Luc Roland, sends a letter to Foundation Hergé
- **2001 (January):** announcement of the museums location
- **2007 (May):** construction of the museum starts
- **2009 (June):** opening of Hergé museum
- **2010:** finishing of RER track (commuting train between Louvain-la-Neuve and Brussels)

Analysis

Strengths	- No costs for the town - Strengthening of identity - Strengthening of image - International fame for Tintin can attract a larger crowd of visitors
Weaknesses	- Costs for infrastructure related to the museum - Entrance fee high - Not very children friendly who are a large part of the expected audience - High class status e.g. entrance fee and restaurant might scare some people off - Challenges to receive visitors are not in the hands of the town (it can only deal with accessibility)
Opportunities	- Shops, cafés and restaurants in the centre can get the museum visitors as customers - Trademark itself as a comic town and create stronger links with the museum for more visitors to the centre - Enhanced interest in the museum after a Hollywood production of a Tintin movie
Threats	- Planned RER not finished in time -The town is car-free so some potential visitors might not come because of transportation - The charm of novelty fading: the museum will not have as many visitors after the first year - The museum becomes an isolate island in the town area, i.e. visitors only go to the museum and not the town

Replication possibility

The creation of museums with a focus on an internationally known artist/art style could be done in other towns to enhance the image and identity of a town. It is often a costly procedure and it seldom pays off in economic terms. In the case of Louvain-la-Neuve the museum was entirely paid for by a third party, this is a great advantage but can hardly be expected to be replicated.

Bidding for museums by offering to build the external facilities i.e. infrastructure and parking spacing can be used in other cases. However, town administration should be aware that this is normally also very costly.

The Hergé museum, which focuses on the Tintin comics, is closely linked to the identity of the Belgian society that has various internationally famous comics. Furthermore, a museum of the same kind in another country will most likely not have the same effects on the enhanced positive identification by the inhabitants of the place.

Outline

Following UNESCO's public library manifesto, Barberà del Vallès decided to create a new public library in the town. The idea guiding the project is based on UNESCO's definition of public library i.e. "the local gateway to knowledge provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups".

Every year from 2002 Barberà del Vallès has had a Citizen Plan of how to engage citizens in politics. During one of the workshops related to this plan, citizens discussed the library's different aspects and what purposes it should serve. Hence, the library's services have been developed by recommendations from the citizens and from guiding of the UNESCO manifesto. It is situated between the urban centre and the new developments of the town. It will therefore also serve as a bridge between the two neighbourhoods.

Aims and outcomes

- Guarantee democratization of culture and knowledge
- Ensure equal access to information
- Promote reading
- Prove commitment of the town's education value
- Enhance citizens' participation
- Bridge the gap between the old and the new area of the town

Timeline

- **2006:** renovation of the Plaza de Constituciò
- **2007:** start of building the library
- **2008:** expected finalization of the library
- **2009:** new expected finalization of the library

Analysis

Strengths	- Citizens' desires for the services of the library are incorporated to its plan - Awareness of the initiative by the citizens, which increases the chance that they will use the facility - Adapting to current situation, i.e. it will not only have free access to books but also offer internet connection, services, promotion for reading, cultural events… - Possibility to complement the services of the old library, since it is also a multimedia library - Attraction of large and varied audience in terms of age and social status - Funds from Generalitat de Catalunya and Diputación de Barcelona
Weaknesses	- Too many aims to be achieved - Not finished on time - No economic benefit
Opportunities	- Create a stronger link between all citizens of the town (different ages, social status and living areas) - Enhance citizens' involvement - Increase intercultural/social understanding - Improve knowledge and education of the inhabitants
Threats	- Too costly because of extended time period for the building - Difficulty to compete with the old library - Indifference by the citizens to use the facility

Replication possibility

The building of a new library in a town is a costly matter to begin with. However, many New Towns can apply for funds from higher political levels, such as regional and national, which would make the building process less costly. The motivation for the creation of a library based on the UNESCO manifesto can be used by other towns, which enhances their chances of their case as important and necessary.

Since the library has not open yet its visitors and users remain unknown, but the workshop involving the citizens in the development of the library is an important part, first for its maximized utility possibility and second for the involvement of citizens in local politics. The idea of citizens' workshops can easily be replicated in small towns in relation to different initiatives that the town is planning to carry out.

The location of the library will most likely lead to integration of the peoples in the different neighbourhoods in the town (and it mere existent as a public facility available to all citizens will also promote integration of different social classes etc). When New Towns are building public facilities they could replicate the idea of a planned location for integration of its citizens.

Outline

In Villeneuve d'Ascq, the number of people of 60 years old and more is expected to reach 17 000 by 2010, compared to 6 500 in 1999. The New Town seeks actively to adapt to the demographic evolutions and to anticipate forthcoming problems by integrating the question of the ageing of its population in its local policies. For a couple of years now indeed, Villeneuve d'Ascq has supported or implemented initiatives targeted at the elderly.

Aims and outcomes

- Adapt the urban frame to a growing challenge
- Fight against social exclusion
- Fostering of a common identity among inhabitants

A few landmark actions

- Creation of a CLIC (Local Coordination and Information Centre) with 8 other neighbouring communes. The CLIC aims at helping people of 60 years old and more by informing them and facilitating their life; it is also a tool to federate and coordinate local actors, and often an observatory of the elderly.
- Support to clubs of retired people. Many clubs have been created to gather the elderly in a friendly atmosphere and to avoid isolation and social exclusion. They offer a wide range of activities, from cultural and artistic ones to sport ones.
- Implementation of home care services to provide for the needs of the elderly

Analysis

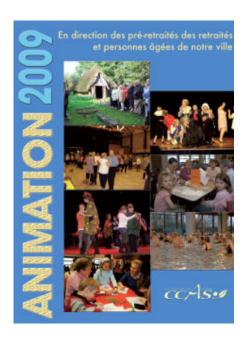| Strengths	- Wide range of activities offered by the municipality - Constant development of the activities - Efficient tools of communication: compilation of information in a brochure targeting the elderly, specific two-monthly journal for the elderly
Weaknesses	- Intergenerational dimension still insufficient while crucial to foster social inclusion - Some activities are offered for people of 63 years old at least
Opportunities	- Marketing opportunity: a town where community harmony is possible and quality of life is high - Strengthening of social inclusion and reinforcement of community sense of belonging - Long-term economic benefits to have elderly people still active in the social field
Threats	- Initiatives insufficient (e.g. number of association or employed staff) compared to the fast growing needs

Replication possibility

Good practices in terms of services to the elderly are interesting because they seldom require high financial means while enabling to respond to one of the main challenges of the 21st century. The case of clubs for retired people in particular should be highlighted, since it is a simple tool to foster social involvement and inclusion that the municipality can support. Communication should also be enhanced: indeed, gathering main information (services, clubs and associations, events…) through a yearly brochure enables visibility and easy access to information.

However, several pre-requisites must be filled in to ensure the best success of those good practices:
- Studies should be carried out to determine the expected evolutions of the number of elderly people, so that the offer can be adapted to the demand
- It is important to provide for a wide range of activities i.e. not only cultural or festal but also sport or manual activities. In doing so, the diversity within the elderly category will be respected.

Outline

Villeneuve d'Ascq proves to be breeding ground for cross-border cultural cooperation: indeed, the proximity with Belgian cultural centres and the desire to learn from the other have resulted in the development of many initiatives.

It should be mentioned, though, that most of them come from cultural actors themselves. La Rose des Vents theatre, for instance, is currently involved in 3 cross-border projects; among them, the NEXT festival concerns 5 cultural structures and enables for the very first time to make cross-border cultural cooperation visible.

In any case, the positive impact of cross-border cultural cooperation on the image of the New Town is clear, especially as Villeneuve d'Ascq is part of the European cross-border cooperation grouping (EGCC) called "Eurométropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai".

Aims of cross-border cultural cooperation

- Exchange experience and foster mutual support between cultural structures
- Increase the number and origin of visitors
- Develop common projects more likely to draw international attention
- Reinforce the sense of common identity through culture

Analysis

Strengths	- Increase in the number and origin of visitors - Increase in the cultural offer - Integration of the New Town into a wider regional entity
Weaknesses	- High dependence on EU funds - Financial/technical difficulties to elaborate cooperation projects, especially for small cultural structures - Cross-border cooperation emerges rather from cultural actors themselves or from wider urban entities (e.g. Lille Métropole)
Opportunities	- Reinforce or develop links with Belgian cities - Building up of a common identity - Increased visibility on the international stage
Threats	- No sustainability of actions after the end of EU projects - Exclusion of small structures

A flagship example: cooperation between museums

Cooperation between museums is often difficult due to the fact that they tend to be in competition to offer the best cultural programme. However, the fruitful results of cross-border cooperation are well-known by the members of the Eurométropole.

The Museum of Modern Art (MMA), which is located in Villeneuve d'Ascq, has thus developed a deep cooperation with the Museum of Contemporary Arts of the French Community of Belgium (MCA), which is located in Hornu.

Actions undertaken:

Right from its opening in the 1980s, the MCA has strived to launch innovative cross-border initiatives. Thanks to the INTERREG programme, it has managed to establish a partnership with Villeneuve d'Ascq's MMA; indeed, the two museums had many common features e.g. the same regional culture and the location on very close landmark sites.

The "Borderline" project has united them around 2 themes: the discovery of modern and contemporary art to the young coming from disadvantaged families, and the increase in the mobility of audiences between the 2 regions. The actions that have been undertaken are the organisation of pedagogic projects and common promotion campaigns, the exchange of art collections…

The partnership has reached an even higher level when the MMA had to close in 2006 for renovation and extension purposes. Indeed, the MMA lent its art collections and a substantial part of its reserve to the MCA.

MAM
Villeneuve d'Ascq

MAC's
Hornu

Results:

The outcomes of this cooperation were highly positive both for the museums and for the towns: diversification of the cultural offer due to the exchange of art collections, increase in the audiences' mobility, exchange of experiences and good practices… Therefore, the museums intend to pursue their cooperation e.g. through the "Garden Museums" project which aims at offering summer activities for families.

Outline

When it comes to participatory democracy, the Netherlands are often considered a pioneer and exemplary country. The New Town of Almere is no exception since it has implemented an internet panel to foster citizens' participation.

The idea is quite simple: via internet, citizens who have filled out an intake questionnaire are regularly presented with questions that are on the Council's political agenda (e.g. do you agree/disagree whether parking in Almere Poort should be free of charge?). The questions are accompanied by relevant background information, and panel members are subsequently informed of the concrete results of their participation.

Aims and outcomes

- Reduce the gap between politicians and citizens
- Ensure that citizens can voice their opinion on a wide range of subjects
- Enable politicians to make more mature and rational decisions

Analysis

Strengths	- Flexible tool: citizens are given a right to choose the place and time of their participation, which increases the chances of a high involvement - Easy tool: questionnaires are specific and therefore can be filled out very quickly; above all, inhabitants do not need to go to the post or to the city council - High level of participation (around 70%) due to a good communication strategy - Low-cost initiative
Weaknesses	- Number of people involved remains insufficient, even though it has constantly grown (2000 people in 2008) - Representativeness of the panel insufficient so far (need for more women, young people and lower-class groups) - Internet questionnaires require to have an access to the internet and to a computer
Opportunities	- Enable a better and more efficient decision-making process - Reinforce or re-establish mutual trust between citizens and politicians - Increase the interest citizens take in local matters and thus enhance sense of community belonging
Threats	- Internet could generate further physical distance between politicians and the citizens - Real impact of participation in the decision-making process could be limited in the long run

Replication possibility

The initiative developed by Almere presents a lot of advantages among which the simplicity, flexibility and low-cost feature of internet questionnaires. It can therefore be considered an efficient way to involve citizens, which is particularly important in New Towns to reinforce community feeling.

Nonetheless, such a project has to be explained by the municipality to the citizens, so that the latter can understand the importance of the action they are taking part in. In this respect, Almere did a good job in terms of communication in so far as it used many media to enhance the initiative (e.g. newspaper, internet, cards, posters…); this resulted in a high level of participation. Also, the use of the internet must be widespread in the given New Town, otherwise the results will be limited. Finally, even though every citizen cannot participate to an internet panel, the municipality should strive to enable the widest representation possible in order to reflect the diversity of the local community.

Outline

Zoetermeer decided to deal with the image of its town after acknowledging that it was sometime perceived as grey or no recognition at all. A town marketer developed a virtual game similar to SIM-city but with Zoetermeer as the case, that primary schools can use in their education. While playing the users will get to know the development of the town and the different steps throughout history. It also includes political issues that a major have to deal with, hence the users not only get knowledge about urban planning but also political decisions. The game became so popular that children all over the Netherlands are playing it and nowadays Zoetermeer has managed to establish its town on the mental map of a large audience.

Aims and outcomes

- Improved image of the town
- Enhanced positive identity of the citizens
- Raised awareness of the town's problems and solutions
- Establishment of Zoetermeer on the mental map of people

Timeline

- Pilot study in 2 primary schools
- **2003:** distribution of the game to all Dutch primary schools
- **2005:** upgrading of the game to suit secondary schools and inclusion in their geography lessons
- **2007:** inclusion of the game in a educational book
- Other Virtual games are being developed by Zoetermeer

Analysis

Strengths	- Large audience in terms of age and geographical spread - Establishing Zoetermeer on the map - Strengthening the identity of inhabitants - Cheap marketing solution - Possibility to download for free
Weaknesses	- Only about urban planning and not other issue related to the town - Older people not involved
Opportunities	- More people can get to know Zoetermeer - Permanent inclusion of Virtual Zoetermeer in various education material - Inclusion of more political issues in the game - Development of other virtual games (already under way) - Easily transferable to other towns in Europe
Threats	- Competitor can develop a graphical more advanced game that could take over the market

Replication possibility

Other New Towns in Europe could create similar urban planning games to establish their towns and give them a better image. The Virtual Zoetermeer could work as a model that could be used for the development of other towns' games.

On the other hand it would not serve a great purpose for other Dutch towns to replicate this game, since Zoetermeer has already covered a big area of the country. What would be better is to use the game as an example of how to use virtual games as an educational material and as an effective and cheap mean to promote different interests.

As a conclusion, these landmark examples of best practices highlight important features that have to be kept in mind to maximise the success of projects:

1) **New Towns should provide a "dream" or a "vision"** which people can own both individually and collectively. This vision should guide the future development of the New Town while being flexible enough to adapt to changes in needs and demands. It should also enable to answer crucial questions such as: should the New Town be like any other city or keep its specificity? Should it exist as a distinct entity or be integrated into a wider urban network? Without this vision, successful development seems hardly possible.

2) **New Towns must carry out an in-depth analysis of the local situation** (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats). The main question being: what will such a project bring to the New Town? Is it worth it from a socio-economic point of view? Even though New Towns were created not that long ago, each of them present specificities that one should keep in mind or enhance while developing new projects.

3) **New Towns should integrate projects into wider strategies** taking into account several geographical scales (local, regional, global). Thus, the project will be backed by other complementary initiatives that provide a global strategic coherence. For instance, developing an eco-pilot action while being inconsiderate of environmental aspects in the daily life of citizens should be avoided or at least be the driving force for a mindset change.

4) **New Towns should think in terms of long-term quality.** This is true for public spaces, which have to be enhanced to foster social cohesion, but also for facilities and public services that are to be delivered. The architectural quality is a necessary condition to avoid monotony and encourage community feeling; in this respect, the creation of iconic buildings can prove efficient if it is well-thought. Finally, long-term quality relies on diversity – of functions, social categories, ages, cultures – hence the need to provide for the widest range of housing and facilities possible.

5) **New Towns should form intelligent partnerships** to carry out the projects. In concrete terms, this means that they have to attract public and private investors while being able to retain some sort of control over developments. Cooperation with other neighbouring municipalities can also be a viable option to increase both the impact scale of the project and its legitimacy. Projects carried out through light, flexible structures often prove quite helpful.

6) **New Towns should foster citizens' participation** even more as "older" towns. Indeed, one of the solutions to solve the identity problem is to reinforce social cohesion through participatory processes likely to make people feel like they belong to the New Town (e.g. participatory budget, consultative panels, neighbourhood management…).

7) **New Towns cannot afford not to communicate**, especially in a globalized world where information and communication technologies have become a decisive factor of competitiveness. New Towns need to promote their territory on the national level but also abroad e.g. when bold urban projects are carried out or through European projects. City marketing is now essential, and it can be achieved through the creation of marketing agencies, the branding of different neighbourhoods with distinct styles, the resort to international architects… In any case, a good communication strategy should answer the fundamental question: what do we want to be?

ENTP – EUROPEAN NEW TOWNS PLATFORM

The ENTP (European New Towns Platform) is the organization representing the New Towns and fast growing suburban centres. Created in 2001, the ENTP has become in few years a solid network composed of 32 cities and several partners from 11 countries.

The main objectives of the organisation are to work as a Platform that the ENTP members can use to exchange information, share good practices and implement common projects; and to work as an advocacy body to represent the New Towns, promote them and strengthen their role on a regional and trans-national level.

ENTP activities include the promotion of exchange of information and experiences through conferences and workshops, the drafting and the coordination of European projects, to inform New Towns about the activities of the European Union and relevant programs, and to participate in the dialogue with the European institutions.

The main activity of the ENTP is coordinating European projects in partnership with a number of members. It has thus participated in projects financed by programmes such as INTERREG IIIB, INTERREG IIIC, URBACT and the program relating to the EC Framework Strategy on Gender Equality 2001-2005. The ENTP is also currently involved in designing and drafting projects on the themes of Energy and Culture.

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