

Short Report Metropolis Peer-Review-Training in Paris Île-de-France

Berlin, November 2012. Michael Abraham

This peer-review-training was carried out within the context of the Berlin Metropolis Initiative 'Urban Governance – Successful Policy Transfer' in co-operation with the Metropolis initiative 'Concrete actions taken by Metropolis to mitigate, anticipate and adapt to climate change' chaired by the region Île-de-France.

The training format has been developed by the Berlin Metropolis team and was carried out for the first time last year in Berlin. For this purpose, the Berlin programme 'Action Areas Plus' was reviewed together with experts (peers) from five cities from around the world. Solutions responding to difficulties in carrying out the programme were elaborated conjointly and positive trends of the programme were identified. At the same time the programme functioned as a good example for the participants who conduct similar programmes in their cities.

Figure: Mode of operation Peer-Review-Training



At this year's training on October 15th-16th in Paris (Region Île-de-France) experts from Hyderabad, Johannesburg, Sydney, and Vienna discussed the programme for the implementation of the **local Agenda 21 and the related climate-plan**. The experts from Johannesburg and Vienna are operating similar projects in their cities, the participants from Sydney and Hyderabad are dealing with urban climate programmes on a scientific level.

Peers

Hyderabad

Prof. Srinivas Chary
Vedala, Director of the Centre for
Energy, Environment and Urban
Governance (ASCI) Hyderabad,
India)

Sydney

Mr. Sunil Dubey, Metropolis country
manager for India, Faculty of Architecture
Design and Planning, The University of
Sydney, Australia

Johannesburg

Ms. Lunelle Joy Serobatse,
Director for Environmental Policy
& Integration in the City of
Johannesburg, South Africa

Vienna

Ms. Andrea Binder-Zehetner, Managing
director of the Association Local Agenda
21 in Vienna, Austria (*Verein Lokale
Agenda 21 in Wien*)

The programme was introduced by a so-called 'initial report' forwarded to the participants prior to the meeting. Among general information, the report also contained questions relating to the improvement of cross-linkages between other existing programmes and to the increase of the integration of additional players from the administrative and private sectors as well as the local citizens in the programme's implementation. During the workshop visits were made to a geothermal power plant and a 'green' school. Presentations by the project leaders outlined more details about the basic features of the programme.

During the following presentations by the peers, which also addressed relevant experiences made in their home cities and regions, a range of recommendations on how to make the program more effective have become apparent. They can be summarized as follows:

The inclusion of different institutions and the population of the region can be optimized by methodologically adjusted participation procedures and a stronger visibility of the implementing organisation. This will also have a positive effect on the realisation of the programme's objectives. In this context, transparency and communication are playing a central role (also to attract supporters from the private sector). Moreover a continuous and comprehensible presentation of the programme is very helpful. This can be supported by the distribution of a corresponding logo and an easy to comprehend graphic outline of the programme structure.

Internal administrative steering processes could be improved by conducting regular meetings and continuing training activities. Moreover, they could be carried out more task-oriented by summarizing the individual objectives and measures of the programme in a long-term framework plan.

The existence of a trustful atmosphere is quintessential for the co-operation of the different actors. The citizens will only be supportive if they trust their administration and their political representatives.

Also very concrete recommendations were made. For example, the programme could be advertised through public activities such as competitions, lotteries, or the introduction of an annual environment day.

The peers on their part appreciated in particular the visits of the heat and power plant and the green school and perceived the technical and organisational aspects they were introduced to as exemplary for the practice in their own cities. They were especially interested in the usage of rainwater in the school environment or the organisation of the heat and power plant as PPP.

Also for Berlin, the Paris climate-plan can be an example. It contains a series of approaches which could serve as a model for the on-going development of the Berlin 'StEP-Klima' (Urban Development Plan- Climate). For example, the socio-spatial orientation of the Paris climate-plan which pursues social compatibility as an important activity of the city's adaptation strategy is to be mentioned in this context. This can be observed for instance in the practice to keep energy costs on a social acceptable level for poorer social groups - and at the same time without risking the climate objectives. Vice versa, the Berlin approach of the 'No regret' measures could serve as an example for climate policy of Paris. Thus, a continuation of the exchange between these capital cities seems to be fruitful and desirable.

The following evaluation by all participants came to conclusion that the method of peer-review-trainings is very helpful to exchange practical knowledge between the participants. There were however some critical remarks which were addressing the rather high costs for the training which would not be justified by the achieved output of the activity. In total, the expenses amounted to 10.000 €, which are not including the costs for the Berlin and the Region Île-de-France staff.

In conclusion, the training format has proven its success. Nevertheless, financial cost for future workshops should be reduced. This may be achieved f.i. by reducing travel costs (connecting the workshops to existing events). At the same time the quality of the workshop results should increase by discussing the questions linked to the implementation of the programme more intensively prior to the workshop with the peers and by extending the times for discussions of these questions during the workshop.

The peer-review-trainings are an effective tool to exchange project-oriented and practical expertise in an international context. They also contribute to a structural enhancement of a wide range of urban development projects. The peer-review-trainings therefore still represent an important part of the Berlin Metropolis activities.

Participants of the peer-review-training

