

## REHABILITATION OF DERELICT URBAN AREAS AND DISTRICT



### WHAT'S THE PROBLEM ?

This issue concerns the rehabilitation of a derelict urban area or district that takes place on a defined zone of a city, identified as particularly underprivileged.

Mainly, 2 kinds of developments could be distinguished concerning "the rehabilitation of an urban district" that relate to different concrete situations.

- The **redevelopment** that is led by huge new construction investments (buildings and equipments). Technologies play an important role and the functioning of the whole district is deeply reorganised.
- The **revitalisation** that is a more modest construction development where real estate investments are less important. Even though, social preoccupations and (or) public involvement and (or) protection of the environment, etc. are more taken into account.

### The redevelopment

In redevelopment cases, often public or private "investors" have located the site as being strategic. Usually, a proposal come prior any development plan or scheme for the district. Tools are then needed to frame the initiative.

This kind of development is often seen as an opportunity for the city, even more if there are potential investors! The main problem is to define conditions of sustainable development under pressure.

Every city needs changes and developments. Authorities in European cities are then facing currently this kind of decision-making problems related to districts' redevelopments. How to define the conditions of sustainable developments taking the various economical, social and environmental factors into account? The functioning of the district is so deeply modified that the importance of the impacts is of evidence and the challenge of importance.

### The revitalisation

This kind of project is often kept from big transformations and investments. Nevertheless, local authorities have pointed the district out to be revitalised. Tools are needed to frame this revitalisation.

Generally, public equipment and building (swimming pool, school, geriatrics centre, but also public spaces, roads, etc), and/or employment and social network (ex: job creation, promotion programme for SMEs, youth council, etc), and /or environment (green spaces, gentle mobility, etc) actions are part of the revitalisation program. Sometimes, developments are driving the revitalisation such as the public housing regeneration in Angelina street, Butetown, U.K ; or the reorganisation of the road network and the construction of a new school in New Tredegar, U.K.

At least, public involvement is in these cases a main preoccupation.

These rehabilitations are developed all through Europe, various examples could be found. Their number within PETUS case studies database is quite large. These projects are very familiar and practical problems of the renewal of cities.

This approach, trying to take social and cultural background into account and promoting inhabitants participation emerged in the 70ies as a reaction to the mass plan of the functional urbanism.

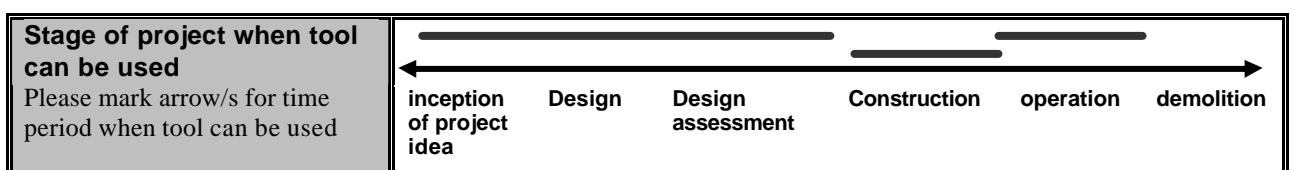
Particularly, local authorities are facing decision-making problems concerning these district revitalisations. The promotion of sustainability is not easy to put in practice. They have to deal with too many different parameters and points of view developed in different approaches. How to promote sustainability? What's the best choice? How to monitor the progress? What are the good references? Which benchmark to choose?

European SEA directive and the Aarhus convention, for instance, also forced decision-makers to be interested in such evaluation methods and tools.

### TIME AND SPACE SCALES' CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROJECT ?

Usually tools are needed from the inception of the project to the design assessment, especially because stakeholders are facing decision problems. Nevertheless, monitoring tools are often asked.

The construction phase is also evoked (DR-City, Dk), particularly in redevelopment projects as new construction projects are often planned.



The concerned scale is the district or neighbourhood.

Scale of project that can be investigated using the tool	Component	Building	Neighbourhood	City	Region
			X		

#### CONFLICTING AREAS

Identified within revitalisation projects' cases studies:

- Public-private partnership is often sought after but it is not always easy to solve differences between these 2 interests. This is a main conflict.
- The extra-cost of sustainable development is also frequently put in evidence. Budget conflicts, sometimes wrongly, with sustainability. As a part of this problem, preliminary studies are seen as time and money consuming.
- Construction developments disturb the eco-system. A balance has to be found between wild life and development. The importance of planning, has been identified in New Tredegar case.
- Public involvement and participation remain difficult. Various reasons are given such as time, training, etc.

Identified within redevelopment projects' cases studies:

- Technologies and up-to-date equipments play an important role in these kinds of (re)developments. Sometimes the expected material and equipment's performances do not meet environment requirements. At least, it is presented as such.
- Public involvement is still opposing resistance to change and lack of appropriation (and knowledge) of the sustainable concept, from inhabitants but from elected representatives, as well.

#### CASES STUDIES LINK TO THIS ISSUE

At least, those cases are considering the **revitalisation** process of an urban area:

- Regeneration Project for a Historical Quarter in the town center, Municipality of Berkovitz, Bu
- URBAN EU projects for Gries district and for the formerly industrial zone of Graz West, Au
- Revitalisation of the North district in Liège, example of urban redevelopment within the ZIP-QI legal context, (case presented at Liège meeting) Be
- New Tredegar Regeneration scheme, U.K.
- Angelina Street, Butetown Regeneration scheme, U.K.
- ECUB-project in the Anderlecht Municipality in Brussels, Be

These 2 last cases are more tools oriented.

- Integrated environmental guidelines for neighbourhood development/ Milieustreefbeeld indicator (Nijmegen), Nth
- DPL sustainability profile for district, on site in Leeuwarden, Nth
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The following cases could be considered as **redevelopment projects**

- Lyon Confluence, Fr
- Sustainable buildings in DR-City, Dk
- Porte des Alpes, Fr

#### WHAT COULD BE ENHANCED TO IMPROVE SUSTAINABILITY?

District rehabilitation is trying to include more environment, social and economic considerations. Most of the time, decision-makers are confronted with (too) many parameters and approaches. They get a bit lost! Moreover, it is often complicated to assess the impact of one choice upon another. Sometimes, a development made for a special purpose has unsuspected (indirect) impacts on another domain.

Different kinds of tools, guidelines, policies, etc. have been developed but the outcomes are still partial and a comprehensive assessment of the project's sustainability is still difficult to draw.

Another problem, clearly mentioned, is the complexity to compare alternatives as well as to evaluate the real progresses done. Monitoring methods are required to record the experiences of the project in operation.

#### **How?**

A framework/tool providing a global overview of the problem will be a good help. Clear information of what should be done to be sustainable is especially needed. Usually technical help is not missing so much, but there is an important lack of principles' definitions, illustrated experiences, challenges' explanations, etc. Structured information to provide an overview of the problem must be available.

The implementation of the SEA procedure for these cases could be a good framework.

Benchmark data, qualified or quantified examples are needed.

Monitoring has also to be better promoted by examples, references, etc.

For redevelopment projects, concerned with bigger construction projects, the benefits of a good communication between partners involved in the project has been highlighted. The creation of different steering committees and a global coordination team provide a big help. In such huge operations, the management, its continuity and communication are central.