Transport Research Knowledge Centre

● **INFORMATION NEEDS OF CITIES**

Study on the information needs of cities within the CityMobil and CityNetMobil Reference Groups

CONNECTING TRANSPORT RESEARCH WITH EU POLICY

**European Commission
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**Transport Research
Knowledge Centre**

Study on the information needs of cities within the CityMobil and CityNetMobil Reference Groups

Final Report

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1. Executive Summary

This report describes the study carried out by TRKC of the information needs of a subset of cities within the CityMobil[1] and CityNetMobil Reference Groups (where the project CityNetMobil is a continuation of the project CityMobil).

Essentially, the study had four aims:
1. To gain a general overview of information needs of a subset of the cities active in CityMobil
2. To understand how these cities currently access research results
3. To identify (from the same subset of cities) more effective ways in which research results can be made available, and in particular the TRKC website, Policy Brochures and Thematic Summaries
4. To evaluate the usefulness of TRKC products for CityNetMobil activities.

The study had two stages:
(i) The first stage involved interviews with members of the CityMobil Reference Group and covered Aims (1) to (3). This 'Interview Stage' of the study was carried out in 2008, involving six interviews with CityMobil Reference Group members in June/July (detailed in Section 2) and one interview in December (thus comprising a total of seven interviews).
(ii) In the second stage, Aim (4) was addressed in a 'reading/questionnaire' survey of members of the CityNetMobil Reference Group, carried out in July/August 2009.

For each interview in Stage 1, TRKC personnel travelled to each of the cities concerned. All interviews, which lasted between one and two hours, were organised according to a semi-structured approach. At the start of the interview, interviewees were shown a list of topics to be covered in the interview (with topics to be covered in any order).

After completion of the interviews, the results were written up by the interviewers. Draft versions of these results were sent to each of the interviewees in order to correct mistakes and misunderstandings. Furthermore, interviewees were asked if they would prefer the interview results to remain confidential (i.e. within the TRKC project). It was stressed at this point that the main purpose of the interview study was, as mentioned above, to gain

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[1] CityMobil is a major research, development and demonstration project, funded under the EU´s Sixth Framework Programme. It addresses the integration of automated transport systems in the urban environment. Integration based on real-life implementations of the automated transport system of three sites is the focus of the project. Further information about the project can be found at http://www.citymobil-project.eu/index.php

feedback on the TRKC to help its current development: hence, even if the results were to remain confidential they would still have served their main purpose.

In Stage 2, all CityNetMobil Reference Group cities were invited to participate in a 'reading/questionnaire' survey. In order to participate in this survey, it was necessary for a city contact to download and read eight TRKC documents from the TRKC website (one Policy Brochure and seven Thematic Research Summaries). The contacts were then asked to complete short questionnaire on these documents, indicating how useful each document was to their activities in CityNetMobil. The eight TRKC documents involved are listed in Section 6.

CityNetMobil contacts were asked to score each document in terms of usefulness and to give reasons for their score. The questionnaire also asked for suggestions about future TRKC products.

1.1 Results/conclusions

The results from the interviews were arranged under three main headings and are summarised in Sections 3-5:
- Feedback from interviews concerning information needs
- Feedback from interviews concerning TRKC, distinguishing between:
    - General points
    - Concerning Policy Brochures
    - Concerning Thematic Summaries
- Relevance to CityMobil activities, distinguishing between
    - Obtaining information
    - Broadcasting information
    - 'Sharing' information between city actors

Given that participation in Stage 2 involved downloading and reading eight documents, it was not expected that a large number of cities would participate. In fact, three cities accepted the invitation and the results are summarised in Section 7.

The main conclusions that can be drawn from Stage 2 are:
- A wide range of opinions was shown by three cities with respect to the various TRKC documents.
- Not surprisingly (given the nature of CityNetMobil) documents concerned with technology were considered to be the most relevant to the cities´ CityNetMobil activities.
- The responses show that there is a potential for a CityMobil Policy Brochure. This possibility will be investigated further in the future.
- In particular, the city of Vantaa recommended studies on how to plan and introduce new vehicles as PRTs in urban transportation.

2. Stage 1: methodological approach for city selection and interviews

2.1 Overview of CityMobil Reference Group Cities and city selection process

Information about the CityMobil project can be found at
http://www.citymobil-project.eu/index.php

In May 2008, CityMobil had a Reference Group comprising 35 cities. Initial budget estimates showed that it was feasible to carry out interviews with six of these cities, with TRKC personnel travelling to each of the cities concerned. In order to avoid a situation in which cities were "turned down" for interviews (after responding positively to invitations), cities were selected in an incremental fashion in four stages. Thus, in the first stage, nine cities were selected and invited to participate, all from different countries and representing a 'spread' across the EU, i.e. taking into account balance between north/south, east/west, and small/medium/large cities. Of these nine cities, four responded positively for an interview. In the second stage, a further two cities were contacted (with no response); in the third stage, a further three cities were contacted (one positive response); whilst in the fourth stage three cities were contacted (two positive responses). Thus seven cities in all responded positively, and subsequent budget calculations showed that it was feasible to interview all of these. As stated in Section 1, these cities were:

- Clermont Ferrand (France)
- Gateshead (UK)
- Opole (Poland)
- Rome (Italy)
- Uppsala (Sweden)
- Vienna (Austria)
- Trondheim (Norway)

2.2 Preparation for interviews and post-interview procedures

Although the invitation showed how the TRKC website could be accessed, the interviewees were not asked explicitly in advance to explore the website, since this would probably have reduced enthusiasm for participation. However, interviewers brought TRKC

materials (Thematic Research Summaries and Policy Brochures) to help discussion during the interviews.

All interviews, which lasted between one and two hours, were organised according to a semi-structured approach. At the start of the interview, interviewees were shown the following list of topics to be covered in the interview (with topics to be covered in any order):

- Information about city
- Responsibility of interviewee
- Decision-making process in the city
- Information needs for general policy-making and for CityMobil activities
- Information sources
- Limitations on currently available information
- Suggestions about future types of information availability
- TRKC as it is now (based upon a short Powerpoint presentation and the Thematic Research Summaries / Policy Brochures brought to the interview)
- Suggestions for future development of TRKC (mainly concerned with follow-up projects)

After completion of the interviews, draft versions of the results were sent to each of the interviewees in order to correct mistakes and misunderstandings. Most interviewees responded: in particular, the interviewees from Gateshead requested that the results be kept confidential (and so they are not reported below).

3. Feedback from interviews concerning information needs

As intended, the discussions about information needs were very wide-ranging, reflecting the various (diverse) viewpoints and interests of the interviewees. In general, though, two underlying themes recurred throughout the interviews:

1. The 'world of information' is becoming increasingly complex. In particular, through the internet there is a large increase in availability of information, and it requires careful thinking as to how to manage this situation effectively.

2. There are increasing opportunities for EU funding for projects that facilitate professional information exchange.

A number of key points emerged from the discussions about information needs:

- It is important to develop a conceptual map of how different types of information acquisition fit together (Clermont Ferrand)

- There is a general need to understand how the information needs of various groups differ (senior professionals, technicians, politicians, the public) (Clermont Ferrand, Rome, Trondheim)

- In interactions with professionals from other cities, one could find out the 'real story' behind various transport interventions (including the problems confronted), as opposed to the 'rose-tinted' version that might be found in the public domain (such as on the internet). (Clermont Ferrand, Opole)

- There is a need **within organisations** to develop an approach in which particular individuals take responsibility for accessing different types of information (thus avoiding duplication of effort) (Vienna)

- There is a need **between (cooperating) organisations** to develop an approach in which particular organisations take responsibility for accessing different types of information (thus avoiding duplication of effort) (Clermont Ferrand, Uppsala, Trondheim)

- Information needs concerned both technical information and information about funding sources (and potential partners to access such sources) (Rome)

- There tends to be a hierarchy with respect to which cities are 'in the loop' with respect to getting hold of information in general, and particularly information about funding opportunities (and EU resources)
  - Most of the cities visited felt they were already in the loop
  - Opole felt left out of the loop (and perhaps this is a common perception of cities in the New Member States, i.e. the EU12)
  - Trondheim did not get full access to EU financial resources given that Norway is not part of the EU

- As well as needing to access information, cities increasingly need to be able to broadcast their experiences and create favourable impressions (Clermont Ferrand, Opole)

- An increasing amount of information is available as a result of urban audits, and cities need to consider how they can make use of this information (Trondheim)

4. Feedback from interviews concerning TRKC

The discussions about TRKC covered a wide range of issues, from detailed comments about present TRKC products to potential developments to TRKC that might occur at some point of the future (after the current project has finished). Key points are presented below in terms of: general points; points concerning the TRKC Policy Brochures; and points concerning the TRKC Thematic Summaries.

4.1 General points

- None of the interviewees had heard of TRKC

- There is a need for a clear concept as to how TRKC 'slotted into' the overall world of information for transport professionals (Clermont Ferrand)

- The TRKC website needs to provide easy access to national websites (Clermont Ferrand, Uppsala, Rome)

- The importance of being (and appearing) "up-to-date" was stressed (Vienna)
    - There is inevitably a time lag if only contracted project information is provided on the website, as at present (Opole)
    - Up-to-dateness is of particular importance for technical innovations (Opole and Vienna)

- Many of the discussions concerned issues concerning language:
    - Suggestions were made that all primary information on the TRKC website should be available in French and German (i.e. the website architecture, the policy brochures and the thematic summaries) (Clermont Ferrand) and also in Italian (Rome)
    - Guidance and worked examples could be provided in member state languages (Uppsala)
    - Language barriers were seen as particular problems for public sector technicians and older politicians (Rome)
    - It was recognised that if all project materials were to be translated there was a greater problem in keeping them up-to-date (Vienna)
    - There is a need to separate English reading-ability from English writing-ability. In Norway, for example, most people would not have a problem in

accessing TRKC information in English. However, many would not feel confident at writing in English, thus having an impact if TRKC is seeking contributions from city politicians/administrators. For their full participation, it would be necessary for them to contribute information in Norwegian, with someone translating this information into English. Given that Norwegian cities, such as Trondheim, have a reputation for implementing innovative measures (e.g. road pricing), such participation is highly desirable (Trondheim).

- It was suggested that 'official' concrete city plans should be given on the TRKC site. By doing so, information could be made available two years earlier than if information is restricted to the output of formal contracted projects. This is particularly important when the city is developing innovative projects (Opole)

- It was suggested that TRKC could in future help with partner networking (Rome)
    o TRKC could provide information on potential partners and provide a platform for organisations to find partners for future transport-related projects
    o TRKC could also provide a platform for 'ideas, opportunities and brainstorming'
    o As an example of these two functions, a city administrator might post a message on the TRKC site saying the city wants to operate a new system in the next five years and would like to know who wants to cooperate.

- TRKC could provide films of demonstrations for downloading (Clermont Ferrand)

- TRKC has an important role in helping 'the public' to access information, thus (hopefully) helping to provide back-up for the views of local planners. This is a particularly strong reason for the TRKC website to be multilingual (Clermont Ferrand)

- It was suggested that TRKC could have a link to EUROSTAT urban audit information, which provides a 'trigger' for public and professional interest. In general, TRKC needs to think how it fits in with the 'world of urban audits' (Trondheim)

4.2 Concerning Policy Brochures

- It was suggested that there should be more diagrams/graphs in the brochures and that some current text (particularly text mentioning numbers) could be replaced by diagrams or graphs (Vienna)

- There is a general need for precision about terms such as 'urban transport' and 'long-distance transport' (Vienna)

- There is need to think carefully about what the purpose of each picture is in all of the brochures. (Vienna)

- There is a need to be clear about whom the policy brochures are aimed at (Those wanting more information? Those wanting tasters? Policy-makers / senior officers?) (Vienna)

- It was suggested that the policy brochures could include a section focussing upon economic, social and policy benefits, which could be entitled 'What will be the impacts if I do this in my city?' (Rome)

4.3 Concerning Thematic Summaries

- The Thematic Summaries are most relevant for technicians. If technicians have problems in understanding English, it is important to translate them (Rome)

5. Relevance to CityMobil activities

Various of the above points in Sections 3 and 4 have particular relevance to the 'CityMobil aspect' of the study. These points are gathered together as follows:

5.1 Obtaining information

- Concerning activities linked to their involvement with CityMobil, interviewees would expect to obtain information from other CityMobil partners
    - o both 'formal' technical information
    - o and 'informal' information that might not be public (e.g. 'this is what went wrong')

- This was the main reason that they were participating in CityMobil.

- Such 'first hand' and 'expert' information was always seen to be superior than any information that could be found on an internet site (e.g. TRKC).

5.2 Broadcasting information

- An important aspect of TRKC for 'CityMobil activities' is as a vehicle for broadcasting information to the outside world
    - o letting the world know of their progress

- As a result of this point, the TRKC website (and its policy brochures / thematic summaries) should be 'seen to be up-to-date'
    - o since the cities want the outside world to be aware of their progress as soon as possible

- Also, it would help the cities if their (advance) **plans** could be featured on the TRKC website
    - o particularly concerning innovative measures (such as CityMobil activities)
    - o alongside **results** of implementations (as currently shown)

5.3 'Sharing' information between city actors

- City transport professionals and technicians clearly like to have public support to carry out new measures
    - o particularly if these are seen to be 'innovative' such as in CityMobil.

- If the public can access TRKC and see that such innovation has been carried out elsewhere successfully, the local authority is 'validated'

- Similarly, when there is a change in political administration, it is helpful to 'point' newly elected politicians to the TRKC website
    - o particularly if innovative measures are seen to be financially or politically "risky"
    - o or associated with the previous administration.

6. Stage 2: Methodological design of reading/ questionnaire survey

In mid-July 2009, all CityNetMobil Reference Group cities were invited to participate in a 'reading/questionnaire' survey. The invitation also contained summary information about TRKC. In order to participate in this survey, it was necessary for a city contact to download and read eight TRKC documents from the TRKC website (one Policy Brochure and seven Thematic Research Summaries). The contacts were then asked to complete short questionnaire on these documents, indicating how useful each document was to their activities in CityNetMobil. The questionnaire is provided in the Annex. The CityNetMobil cities were asked to return their completed questionnaires by the start of September (a reminder was sent to all city contacts in mid-August).

As stated in Section 1, the eight TRKC documents involved were:

- Policy Brochure
  - Transport and the Environment
- Thematic Research Summaries (TRS)
  - Environment
  - Transport Management
  - Land Use Planning
  - User Aspects
  - Vehicle Technology
  - Urban Transport
  - Other Modes

CityNetMobil contacts were asked to score each document in terms of one of the three following categories (and to give reasons for their score):
  - Very useful
  - Moderately useful
  - Not useful

The questionnaire also asked for suggestions about future TRKC products.

7. Results of reading/questionnaire survey

Given that participation in the survey involved downloading and reading eight documents, it was not expected that a large number of cities would participate. In fact, the following three cities accepted the invitation:

- Vienna
- Vantaa
- Santa Margherita Ligure

This section provides the responses of these three cities, as provided in their completed questionnaires. Of relevance to the response of Santa Margherita Ligure City Council is that it has a project in CityNetMobil called S.M.I.L.E. MOBILITY (S=Santa; M=Margherita; I=Innovation; L=Local; E=Evolution), which has the development of the following as its main project goals:

- a web portal for an easy access to the mobility services
- an integrate control system for bus/taxis/urban police fleets
- an integrate system for information about mobility
- electric car sharing - Project TWIST -
- 2-3 cable railway or inclined lifts
- 1-2 automatic guided systems on the main axis

7.1 Summary of responses

Table 1 provides a summary of the responses of the three cities to the eight TRKC documents. It can be seen that there is frequently a variety of responses for a particular document. The reasons for these responses are given below.

	Vienna	Vantaa	Santa Margherita Ligure
Policy Brochure			
Transport and the Environment	Moderately useful	Not useful	Very useful
Thematic Research Summaries			
Environment	Moderately useful	Not useful	Moderately useful
Transport Management	Very useful	Not useful	Moderately useful
Land Use Planning	Very useful	Moderately useful	Moderately useful
User Aspects	Partially useful	Very useful	Not useful
Vehicle Technology	Moderately useful	Very useful	Very useful
Urban Transport	Very useful	Very useful	Moderately useful
Other Modes	Moderately useful	Very useful	Very useful

Table 1: Responses of CityNetMobil Reference Group Cities to questionnaire on usefulness of TRKC documents

7.2 Policy Brochure: Transport and the Environment

- Vienna
    - Moderately useful. Only few projects related to urban public transport
- Vantaa
    - Not useful. Only common information. There was no information of future urban transportation mode and nothing about how to carry out a city study for CityMobil vehicles.
- Santa Margherita Ligure
    - Very useful. The S.M.I.L.E. project is formed of several initiatives aimed to reducing CO2 emissions and to improve quality services in urban transport.

7.3 TRS: Transport Management

- Vienna
    - Very useful. Many projects related to urban public transport
- Vantaa
    - Not useful. Only common information. There was no information of future urban transportation mode and nothing about how to carry out a city study for CityMobil vehicles
- Santa Margherita Ligure
    - Moderately useful. The targets of S.M.I.L.E. MOBILITY Project are to increase the attractiveness and services for tourists and to control and limit the use of the private cars.

7.4 TRS: Land Use Planning

- Vienna
    - Very useful. Many projects related to urban public transport
- Vantaa
    - Moderately useful. Good basic information of impacts of land use on transportation in urban environment.
- Santa Margherita Ligure
    - Document is moderately useful to define the issues concerning the development of innovative services for parking for non residents and their choice to public transport

7.5 TRS: User Aspects

- Vienna
  - Partly useful. Only some projects related to urban public transport.
- Vantaa
  - Very useful. Good information of human aspects in transportation including new urban transportation modes
- Santa Margherita Ligure
  - Not useful. No connection with S.M.I.L.E. Mobility Project.

7.6 TRS: Vehicle Technology

- Vienna
  - Moderately useful. Most projects interesting for vehicle builders and operators, only a few for transport planners.
- Vantaa
  - Very useful. New vehicle concepts were interesting (cybercars) TRS: Vehicle Technology

- Santa Margherita Ligure
  - Documents are very useful because S.M.I.L.E. Mobility is based on high-tech in urban transport and services.

7.7 TRS: Urban Transport

- Vienna
  - Very useful. Many projects related to urban public transport
- Vantaa
  - Very useful. Transportation systems in the future was interesting to read (PRT).

- Santa Margherita Ligure
  - Moderately useful because there are several references to future transport systems, for example electric cyber cars. In particular there are references to new power propulsion systems and automatic driving systems.

7.8 TRS: Other Modes

- Vienna
  - Moderately useful. Only some projects related to urban public transport
- Vantaa
  - Very useful Interesting about PRTs

- Santa Margherita Ligure
  - Very useful in full compliance with S.M.I.L.E. Mobility project: Automatic Drive Control Systems, Innovation in Power Propulsion, Environmental Sustainable.
  - In a high level tourist town, it is important to have high quality level services to offer to inhabitants and tourists. Innovation contributes to increased quality.
  - Innovative measures are a natural improvement on the old way to offer services.

7.9 Recommendations for future TRKC products

The only city to make a recommendation on future TRKC products was Vantaa, who recommended:
- Studies about how to plan and take in use new vehicles as PRTs in urban transportation, tackling the question:
- What are the differences between the conventional transportation and automated systems in different aspects, not only technical?

7.10 Conclusions and next steps

The main conclusions that can be drawn from this survey:
- A wide range of opinions was shown by three cities with respect to the various TRKC documents.
- Not surprisingly (given the nature of CityNetMobil) documents concerned with technology were considered to be the most relevant to the cities´ CityNetMobil activities.
- The responses show that there is a potential for a CityMobil Policy Brochure. This possibility will be investigated further in the future.

Annex: TRKC Questionnaire for CityNetMobil Reference Group members

Dear CityNetMobil Reference Group member

A link is given below to the new TRKC Policy Brochure (Transport and the Environment). Furthermore, links are given below to seven TRKC Thematic Research Summaries (*the documents are obtained by right-clicking on the link*).

Please look through those documents that (from their titles) you think would be useful to your work in CityNetMobil and which could support solutions to your local transport problems.

Please then indicate, for each documents that you have examined, whether it is "very useful", "moderately useful" or "not useful" for your work as a CityNetMobil Reference group member. Please also give reasons for this assessment.

Please return completed questionnaires to Paul Timms (p.m.timms@its.leeds.ac.uk) by September 4th.

Thank you very much

Policy Brochure

Please indicate how useful you found the following Policy Brochure:

Policy Brochure on Transport and the Environment http://www.transport-research.info/Upload/Documents/200908/20090818_124030_53136_TRKC_Transport_and_the_Environment.pdf	Very useful Moderately useful Not useful

Reasons for assessment: ....

Thematic Research Summaries

Please indicate how useful you found the following Thematic Research Summaries:

Environment Thematic Research Summary http://www.transport-research.info/Upload/Documents/200810/20081017_172826_89882_TRS%20environmental%20aspects.pdf	Very useful Moderately useful Not useful

Reasons for assessment ....

Transport Management Thematic Research Summary http://www.transport-research.info/Upload/Documents/200608/20060831_121554_45908_transport_management_D2E_issue1-0.pdf	Very useful Moderately useful Not useful

Reasons for assessment ....

Land Use Planning Thematic Research Summary http://www.transport-research.info/Upload/Documents/200608/20060831_121310_49243_land-use-planning_D2E_issue1-0.pdf	Very useful Moderately useful Not useful

Reasons for assessment: ....

User Aspects Thematic Research Summary http://www.transport-research.info/Upload/Documents/200608/20060831_115338_67931_User-aspects_D2E_3-5__issue1-0.pdf	Very useful Moderately useful Not useful

Reasons for assessment: ....

Vehicle Technology Thematic Research Summary http://www.transport-research.info/Upload/Documents/200608/20060831_121748_17638_vehicle-technology_D2E_issue1-0.pdf	Very useful Moderately useful Not useful

Reasons for assessment

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Urban Transport Thematic Research Summary http://www.transport-research.info/Upload/Documents/200608/20060831_104953_18140_urban_D2E_issue1-0.pdf	Very useful Moderately useful Not useful

Reasons for assessment

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Other Modes Thematic Research Summary http://www.transport-research.info/Upload/Documents/200608/20060831_111731_26955_other-modes_D2E_issue1-0.pdf	Very useful Moderately useful Not useful

Reasons for assessment

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Any other comments on the eight documents

Recommendations for future TRKC
products…………………………………………………………………..

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN TO PAUL TIMMS (p.m.timms@its.leeds.ac.uk) BY
SEPTEMBER 4th

THANK YOU.