

VITAL TOWNS APPROACHES FOR INTEGRATED URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Manual of Good Practices

Jointly for our common future



INDEX

1.	ViTo – A Project for Historical Towns in South East Europe	3
2.	Challenges as Motives for Integrated Urban Development	6
2.1.	Challenges for Small and Medium Size Towns in the European Context	6
2.2.	Integrated Urban Development in South East Europe	8
3.	ViTo – General Recommendations for Integrated Revitalisation Processes	10
3.1.	Integrated Urban Development Requires Interdisciplinary Management Teams	11
3.2.	Diagnosis Determines Common Visions	12
3.3.	Participatory Processes for our Common Future	14
3.4.	Exemplary ViTo Outputs – Steps towards Integrated Urban Development	15
3.5.	Good Governance Strengthens the Empowerment of Civil Society	17
4.	Lessons Learned by Partnership	19
4.1.	Socially Embedded Urban Development	20
4.2.	Engines of Integrated Revitalisation: Organising Development Process through Professionally Diverse Teams	20
4.3.	Reconciliation of Interests: Private Ownership, Financing and Public Benefit	21
4.4.	Planning and Implementing Revitalisation in Regional Context	22
5.	What Remains for Future Projects?	23
6.	List of References	24



I.ViTo – A PROJECT FOR HISTORICAL TOWNS IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE

*“Coming together is a beginning,
keeping together is progress,
working together is success.”*

Henry Ford

During a period of 36 months eleven partners of eight South East European countries worked together to bring forward an integrated urban development plan based on the built cultural heritage. The ViTo-partnership developed integrated revitalisation approaches with regard to the local requirements, tested and established new methods and instruments to enhance the empowerment of the civil society and broke new ground to strengthen the local identity with our cultural heritage.

This booklet offers all readers, experts and decision-makers a quick idea of the procedure of integrated revitalisation processes and illustrates every working step with exemplary good practices of the ViTo-project. Detailed information and project results can be obtained from the enclosed CD-ROM.

In any case we wish you enjoyable reading of practical ideas and suggestions for your further work.

Best regards,
ViTo-Partnership

The ViTo-project addressed the problems of small and medium size towns (SMESTO) rich in cultural heritage which represents an asset for future development. Historical towns with their cultural heritage have particular assets to shape space as regional centres through which they can support a more balanced spatial development in South East Europe (SEE) which is a diverse region in terms of economic development, social processes and problems (demographic imbalances, poverty, migration, etc.), of the structure of urban systems, of institutional frameworks and of political structures.

Thus, highly complex tasks are:

- preserving cultural heritage,
- using those assets to promote economic development locally and also in a wider region,
- remaining the scene of community life.

A need for an integrated approach toward urban development was defined at the beginning of the project. Development strategies based on the Leipzig Charter principles, and new ways

ViTo IN A NUTSHELL

The ViTo-project rests upon the European regional development principles that consider small and medium size towns as

- places to live, work and public spaces
- centres for/of community life;
- centres of public and private services,
- engines of regional growth that should tackle the existing imbalances of the economic and service disparities within the South East Europe programme area.

To fulfil such a highly complex role, the project aims at:

- developing historical towns to remain attractive places by preserving their heritage,
- improving the quality of public spaces and meanwhile,
- retaining their role as regional centres, i.e. foci of economic activities (increasing diversity of economic functions/services), social inclusion and identity.

The ViTo-project reveals the diversity and also the specific problems of the program area through the involvement of project partners who plan and implement revitalisation in various social, economic and environmental conditions, and in different institutional contexts.



View of Xanthi (Greece)

of urban governance were proposed to manage the realisation of concepts and to apprehend urban development as an on-going task. As many of the municipalities in South East Europe lack the capability to use, adapt and manage this unique resource in the context discussed above, the project objectives were:

- supporting the development of new urban governance structures by implementing pilot measures,
- raising the awareness of local and regional stakeholders of the importance of a cross-

FACTS AND FIGURES OF THE ViTo-PARTNERSHIP

Project runtime:
September 2009 August 2012

11 project partners from 8 countries:
Austria, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia

Implementation of pilot projects in:

Arad (Romania),
Banská Štiavnica (Slovakia),
Chisinau (Moldova),
Graz (Austria),
Marche Region (Italy),
Oradea (Romania),
Ptuj (Slovenia),
Teramo (Italy),
Xanthi (Greece),

sectoral territorial cooperation and of social participation.

For this, the project aimed at supporting the capacity building of local governments and other stakeholders to build good urban governance based on cooperation of stakeholders, and put it in practice. This process was supported by the transnational cooperation to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and best practices (including ViTo pilot project experiences) as well as to work in parallel on different tasks of urban development with higher intensity and thus with a broader added value for the SEE space. The ViTo-project was built upon and capitalised earlier experiences of INTERREG IIIB CADSES (such as those of the ADHOC project) in developing innovative approaches to sustainable renewal of historical towns in the changing socio-economic contexts, and also of Hist.Urban in supporting the development of competitive historical SMESTO using built heritage.

- Local lessons as well as transnational experiences ('best practices') were considered and adapted to and tested in different/changing conditions to improve local governance and management practices in SEE;
- Planning documents and analyses elaborated during the earlier projects were the bases for further planning and implementation of revitalisation in the local ViTo-projects;
- Local revitalisation projects (renovation, pedestrianisation, etc.) were continued;
- Cooperation based on local, regional and transnational networks, established during earlier projects, was strengthened and extended.

The approach of the ViTo-project toward the complex challenges and problems of historical SMESTO in South East Europe rests on three pillars.

1. Local revitalisation processes – pilot actions – and transnational cooperation are going on hand in hand: local steps based on the



View of Fabriano (Italy)

transfer of knowledge and the exchange of ideas on urban planning and development in transnational workgroups and workshops, while local experiences and lessons provide a feedback to transnational debates and urban policies.

2. ViTo-partners adopted an integrated view to urban development: cross-sectoral and cross-level (scale) approach; moreover, social and regional embeddedness was considered as a key issue during the whole revitalisation process.

3. By adopting an integrated view, revitalisation was considered as a part of a wider, long-term and on-going urban development process, that was reflected also by the structure of the project; local planning and implementation processes supported by scientific experts and transnational exchange of ideas (WP2) were achieved through the following steps:

- Analysis of local conditions for revitalisation, as well as of local, regional and national planning and policy contexts (WP3);
- Integrated planning of revitalisation based on trans-nationally defined criteria and common visions set up locally (WP4);
- Implementation of local pilot actions,

discussing local management practices at transnational meetings (WP5);

- Development of new governmental approaches based on local experiences (WP6).

Through such steps, the ViTo-project supported the transformation of urban spaces to meet the needs of local societies as well as of visitors of partner towns by enhancing the functions and the vitality of the centres, and also by displaying historical heritage as a source of local and European identity. Moreover, local planning and development practices were supported through the capacity-building of the institutions involved in revitalisation process by multi-scalar networking, permanent learning, and in general, revealing new contexts for interpreting and managing historical heritage as an asset. Finally, the ViTo-project provided knowledge for adjusting national and European policies to the specific needs of small and medium size towns of South East Europe, to promote a more balanced and sustainable socio-spatial development in this highly diverse and crisis-hit region.

2. CHALLENGES AS MOTIVES FOR INTEGRATED URBAN DEVELOPMENT

2.1. CHALLENGES FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZE TOWNS IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT

Due to the profound and overall changes in the macroeconomic and social conditions, European economies have had to face with the falling behind other more competitive regions of the global economy, with the uncertainty of the



View of Banská Štiavnica (Slovakia)

business environment, and with the increasing socio-spatial differences at regional and local scales during the last two decades. The highly uneven socio-spatial development – which was reinforced by the financial and economic crisis – manifested itself also in a divergence of economic performance at macro-regional (European) scale. In response, the role and the scope of urban and regional policies have been redefined also at European scale. In this context, the network of small and medium size towns is regarded as a basis for a new, polycentric spatial development to counteract the existing spatial processes dominated largely by the “Pentagon” and by metropolitan regions. European regional development should be based on:¹

- the complementary development of urban functions and networking of regional centres, to provide better and accessible services of general interest and thus, improve business milieu and quality of life locally;
- the cooperation of cities and their hinterland, involving all interested actors in urban regions.

¹ Cf. ESDP (1999); Territorial Agenda (2007)



View of Ptuj (Slovenia)



View of Arad (Romania)

Due to the diversity of challenges and problems that SMESTO face, and to their vulnerability stemming from their limited resources and bargaining power, the sustainability of future development of small and medium size towns has been stressed increasingly in series of urban development documents from the Green Book on urban environment (1990) to the Leipzig Charter (2007). To have sustainable communities – and a sustainable European urban network –, the Leipzig Charter proposes strategic thinking and a holistic approach in urban and regional policies that should be based on:

- the consideration of economic prosperity, social cohesion and healthy environment as equally important,
- the appreciation of all aspects of cultural heritage.

The emerging concept of future regional development (Horizon 2020) in Europe is also based on the idea of sustainability, and focuses on integrated urban development and innovative local actions addressing economic, environmental and social challenges, and protecting the European cultural heritage. Recent, as well as future European urban policies consider historical heritage as:

- a set of built structures – buildings, layouts, urban spaces – that should be preserved due to their historical values and (local, national, European) identities attached to;

- a set of scenes to building/preserving communities promoting socially sustainable local (regional) development;²
- a source of the development of tourism-related industries;
- an asset for a face-lift of historical areas and enhancement of the value of urban space, promoting local investments;
- in a broader sense, a source of individual and local (community) autonomy rooted in the Medieval history of European cities.³

Due to the high immaterial and material value and to the vulnerability of historical heritage, the latter must be considered as a specific asset for future development, while its use and adaptation to changing needs should be based on:

- a strategic approach considering the needs of residents, economic actors and neighbouring communities;
- the cooperation of experts from different fields and institutions operating at different institutional levels;
- keeping the balance between preservation and use, and between diverging interests;

² Cf. Scheffler, N. (2008)

³ Cf. Weber, M. (1986)



View of Teramo (Italy)



View of Chisinau (Moldova)



View of Oradea (Romania)

• a permanent feedback and transparency for preserving community interests.

These problems and needs are shared by the group of small and medium size historical towns realising their revitalisation schemes in very different local, regional and national contexts within the framework of the ViTo-project.

2.2. INTEGRATED URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE

Uneven development and persisting socio-spatial differences within Europe have been subjects to an on-going debate for a long time; nevertheless, recently, European regional policy has been re-conceptualised due to the increasing spatial differences and to the diversity of problems, due to the:

- EU enlargements (2004, 2007),
- and to the socio-spatial impacts of the recent economic crisis.

The above turns changed (extended)

- the set of problems (the objects) spatial policies have to deal with,
- the territorial scope of interventions,
- and also the conditions of implementation, due to the increasingly diverse institutional and political contexts.

This diversity of the “landscape” of European cities and regions, as well as the spatial concentration of economic power is reflected by the socio-spatial processes and the restructuring of the urban network in South East Europe (SEE). The majority of the regions within the SEE area are considered backward by European scale in terms of economic performance, incomes and innovation potential.⁴ Moreover, the financial and economic crisis hit the local economic basis of regions and towns of the area in particular, increased social (spatial) inequalities, and enforced major cutbacks in public financing. The impact of the crisis was perceived as a threat to social and economic sustainability of future development, and also as a constraint on recent revitalisation processes in terms of shrinking public financing and institutional capacities also by ViTo towns.

The diversity of socio-spatial processes set highly differentiated conditions for urban development which is based on a sustainable use of historical heritage within SEE. Such differences are reflected in urban policy discourses⁵, by earlier project experiences⁶, and also by ViTo-partner towns’ summaries (local SWOTs).

⁴ Cf. ESPON I.4.1

⁵ Cf. Széleányi, I. (1996); Kempen, R. (2005)

⁶ Cf. Hist.Urban Transnational Manual

Differences are defined in the following terms:

- Urban development is hindered by uncertain and/or deficient legal conditions, by shrinking local and national funds, by a lack of experiences in networking, external funding and in management, and also by a weak social basis for community-level schemes in new member states.
- National policies and institutional frameworks for regional and urban policy also comprise a variegated landscape in the urban development. Distinct institutional contexts and their consequences have been discussed at European level⁷, but characteristics of SEE countries were specified further in the ViTo-project:
 - National policies and planning systems in SEE have common traditions rooted in the European history; nevertheless, distinct development paths resulted in different models of sharing and organising power (decentralisation vs. centralisation);
 - The role of the regional level in the planning process is highly diverse in South East Europe;
 - Local planning activity is embedded into a hierarchical system/process in each country, but municipalities in centralised administrative and planning

systems often lack financial resources and capacities to think and act cross-sectorally and regionally;

- The way that planning framework is put in daily practice is influenced largely by the organisational and professional background of particular countries and localities; SEE countries and municipalities are in different phases of learning and capacity-building, and smaller towns are hit by this problem more heavily.

The ViTo-project reflects the diversity of South East Europe and provides lessons by:

- Displaying a wide range of problems related to urban development in general and to the preservation and the use of historical heritage;
- Interpreting urban development issues in different national, regional and local contexts, and showing how European policies work in practice – providing feedback and lessons to policy-makers;
- Supporting the exchange of knowledge and ideas born in diverse contexts within SEE.

⁷ Cf. Kempen et al (2005); Tosics et al (2009)

3. ViTo – GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTEGRATED REVITALISATION PROCESSES

Within a framework of the INTERREG IV B Project “ViTo” all partners elaborated and implemented integrated approaches of revitalisation processes for different thematic aspects in their towns. An integrated approach is not only important for the development of large-scale urban concepts, but also for the elaboration and development of smaller-scale concepts, projects and measures. Thereby, the involvement of different actors with appropriate methods oriented at the planning stage was focused on in the project.



View of Graz (Austria)

Experiences of the partnership show that an integrated approach is important for every single working step, from the analysis to the implementation. It supports a balanced involvement of different interests and concerns. This applies to matters of sectoral planning, privates, NGOs and stakeholders that have to be taken into account during the whole planning and implementation process. It seems appropriate that an integrated approach and the inclusion of all interests and concerns is taken under consideration at an early planning stage. Furthermore the whole planning, decision making and implementation process should be organized and transacted in an open and transparent way for all involved parties. This supports the acceptance especially during controversial planning aspects and decisions.

A holistic, cross-sectoral and transparent planning process at each planning stage could:

- include and weigh all aspects and interests = prevention of spatial conflicts,
- exploit synergies and avoid duplication of effort = effective usage of resources,
- implementation orientated urban policy = sustainable securing of the quality of life in the city and its region,
- intense participation of stakeholders and citizens = obtainment of acceptance.

Integrated approaches mean a coordination of territorial, factual, temporal and urban policies with the involvement of affected stakeholders, actors and public.

In the following chapter experiences, results and recommendations of the ViTo-partnership concerning the classical planning steps:

- establishment of a management team of the process,
- analysis of the current situation, and
- planning from objective setting to definition of the implementation schedule, are shown.

In addition, the results and outputs of the ViTo-partnership are synaptic and shown to enable interested readers to get in touch with individual interesting partners.

3.1. INTEGRATED URBAN DEVELOPMENT REQUIRES INTERDISCIPLINARY MANAGEMENT TEAMS

The first key working step for the elaboration of revitalisation concepts, projects and measures is to establish a management team.

GOOD PRACTICE: MANAGEMENT TEAM – GRAZ (AUSTRIA)

LEADER OF THE MANAGEMENT TEAM

Responsible Authority: Urban Planning, Graz
Function: Professional management of the ViTo-project
 Coordination of the management team
 Communication with administration and politics/political bodies

MANAGEMENT TEAM (STEERING GROUP)

Members:

- Department of Transport Planning,
- Department of Green Space and Water,
- Youth and Family Services,
- Department of Economic Development and Tourism,
- Unit for Integration,
- City Management Graz,
- “Stadtbauverwaltung” (responsible for urban development and planning, coordination of EU-Programs, building construction, barrier-free planning),
- Office for Citizen Participation

Function:

- Professional consulting and support of the management team,
- Professional consulting and support of the external experts, which are responsible for the local project implementation (e.g. participatory process, elaboration of measures).

The main tasks of the management team are:

- leadership of the integrated revitalisation process (e.g. moderation, coordination, facilitation, processing of key decision-making information),
- planning and coordination of the integrated revitalisation process (e.g. definition of working steps, key actors, stakeholders, methods of involvement in the planning process, scheduling),
- organizational issues (e.g. coordination/preparation of meetings, workshops, press materials or distribution of tasks to third parties),
- close contact to political decision-makers,
- monitoring and evaluation of the integrated revitalisation process.

Generally there are two main different opportunities to establish a management team.

On the one hand the management team could be attached to one administrative department and consists of experts from one sector, for example departments of urban development and urban planning. This procedure indicates a sectoral orientation of team. Due to the fact that integrated approach thrives on the involvement and participation of all affected departments and stakeholders, an intensive dialog and coordination process with all other affected departments of disciplines specialised in this line of action require an extended coordination effort during the whole project. Furthermore, a sectoral orientated management team needs to make sure not to neglect individual concerns from other departments or stakeholders (due to a lack of information or erroneous interpretation), because this can enhance the susceptibility, especially of controversial projects.

On the other hand, the advisable variant is to constitute an interdisciplinary management team. The composition of an interdisciplinary

management team should reflect all most affected departments in the way of representation.

Apart from the composition of the local management team, it is necessary to appoint a leadership of this kind of cooperation. The leader should be responsible for the coordination of the management team, meetings, rules, results, etc.

The responsibility of implemented decisions for individual measures and actions remains with the respective political decision-makers.

3.2. DIAGNOSIS DETERMINES COMMON VISIONS

A diagnosis determines how to follow the planned steps. It brings to mind the determining and limiting factors, building structures, economic features, environmental situations, and answers the questions, such as what currently exists in which shape, what is characterising, “coining” the area, what is missing, etc.

Analysis is the first step of strategic planning used to assess the development potentials and general circumstances, and a context to develop its results which are the basis for strategy and plan formulation. There are various methods available for performing an analysis in urban development planning; SWOT analysis being the most widespread. It was used also for the ViTo-project. SWOT analysis is easy to perform and easy to understand. It allows early estimation and systematization of development factors. It can be used as a tool in participative process; moreover, it encourages discussion even among experts. It is fast to execute and cost efficient and therefore suitable also for small actions or projects.

SWOT analysis is carried on in a group of participants presenting, exchanging and developing ideas on development factors (argumen-



View of a Pedestrian Zone in Chisinau (Moldova)

tative method, brainstorming). If a group of participants consists only of experts it is called an “expert SWOT”. A team of experts should have deep knowledge of the state and trends of the problem. The team should be interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral. A “participatory SWOT” is carried out, if the group consists of stakeholders or representatives of residents. Participative SWOT is a useful tool at conducting the participation process.

	internal factors	external factors
positive factors	strength	opportunities
negative factors	weaknesses	threats

A condition for a successful SWOT analysis is a general vision or broadly defined development objectives, or – to put it simple – we need to know what we want. The vision is used as a yardstick against which to evaluate factors (define their direction). First step in conducting SWOT analysis is the analysis of system attributes and their evaluation as strengths or weaknesses from the point of view of the plan/strategy makers and the point of view of target groups. A deep analysis of the situation and trends is unavoidable for a successful SWOT

GOOD PRACTICE: SWOT-ANALYSIS – TERAMO (ITALY)

As a good practice the SWOT analysis made by Teramo could be emphasised. Teramo conducted the analysis which was divided into the following thematic fields: culture, urban structure, social aspects, economic aspects, infrastructures and transports, tourism and environment. The presentation of results also followed this structure. The SWOT analysis in Teramo was participatory one and representatives of numerous interest groups were included in the analysis: cultural institutes, banking foundations, cultural associations, professional orders, corporate body and territorial institutions. Here is a very short summary of Teramo SWOT analysis:

strengths:

- presence of Cultural Institutes,
- historical-architectural and archaeological heritage,
- presence and the activity of the cultural associations and the voluntary service,
- lack of social conflicts, low crime opportunities:
- banks and their funding,
- technology innovation in research institutes,
- proximity to mountain and seaside tourist resorts

weaknesses:

- lack of strategies common to the entire cultural sector,
- commercial and administrative operators,
- lack of maintenance of the roads, of the historical and environmental goods,
- lack of services and inadequate services for the prosperity of the historical centre threats:
- distance to major transit corridors,
- economic crisis in Italy

opportunities:

- banks and their funding,
- technology innovation in research institutes,
- proximity to mountain and seaside tourist resorts

threats:

- distance to major transit corridors,
- economic crisis in Italy

analysis. Second step is the analysis of political, economic, socio-cultural, technological, legal, ecological (PESTLE) factors, and evaluation as positive or negative and as internal and exter-

GOOD PRACTICE: VARIOUS INSTRUMENTS OF PARTICIPATION – ARAD (ROMANIA)

Social participation in the preparatory, the planning and also in the implementation process was being promoted by the municipality of Arad. The formation of a pedestrian zone was widely advertised locally. Stakeholders, like residents, owners and visitors of the area, enterprises and residents from other districts of Arad, were involved in the early planning phase through articulating their ideas and opinions in a **questionnaire survey**. The survey results were considered by the planning company which prepared the detailed plan for the area.

Furthermore the detailed pedestrian zoning plan was introduced at a local forum organised by the municipality in November 2010, and **electronic communication channels** were opened for the public. The public forum attracted about 40 participants. Basically, the reorganisation of traffic, together with the extension of underground parking facilities, and more greenery in the area were appreciated by the participants.

nal. Development factors are in this way distributed among categories: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. In the third step factors within each of the four categories are arranged according to their importance. The following table shows the typology of development factors according to direction (positive – negative) and origin (internal – external).

The analysis of local conditions shows some similarities in Southeast Europe, despite the relative heterogeneity of the programme area. The following table shows a good practice.

3.3. PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES FOR OUR COMMON FUTURE

In addition to the operational planning procedure it is particularly important to initiate participatory processes. The ViTo-partnership focused on the involvement of the main target audience for urban transformations and modifications; these are usually the inhabitants and businesses. In order to get all the needed infor-

mation to make balanced and sustainable decisions and to enhance the transparency of urban development strategies, concepts and their implementation, it is advisable that municipalities conduct participatory planning processes. Furthermore in many cases, the effectiveness of the planning processes could be improved by involving stakeholders, and last but not least the participation is an essential factor to win over private investments for urban projects. Therefore it is advisable to start the participation at an early stage of the planning process. If the analysis is carried out by experts, it is necessary to promote an exchange with all the affected stakeholders concerning the analysis results.

This offers the opportunity to adjust the analysis results to local demands, and ensures a planning process which is supported by an overwhelming local majority before the objective-setting and implementation phase starts. For the involvement of non-administrative institutions and citizens exist different methods concerning the objective of the participation. The objectives of the participatory process can be divided into information, consultation and joint decision, whereas the say of the participants becomes from objective to objective increasingly important.

Most of the ViTo-partners started a participatory process with the involvement of the affected population during the analysis or planning phase. The kind and methods of participation varied from information meeting to planning workshops with interested people who want to contribute their ideas to the future development.

The major target groups of the participatory processes in the ViTo-partnership are the residents, property owners and retailers located in the project areas. This can be attributed to the objectives of the participatory processes which should:

- raise the interest in revitalisation,
- collect ideas,

- support joint development of strategies and solutions,
- and improve the civic and democratic engagement as support of the public sector.

The majority of project objectives can be deduced from the analysis of the project area, which gives hints concerning the strength and weaknesses and the local needs, wishes and concerns. Subsequent to the analysis phase starts the planning process with

- the elaboration of objective-setting,
- a discussion of strategies/concepts and possible alternatives for the objective achievement,
- formulation of measures, and
- definition of appropriate instruments and methods to implement the measures.

The project objectives should comprise the prospective economic, social, cultural and environmental situation of the area. As a first working step it could be appropriate to develop a vision, which implies the envisaged objectives. A vision is a positive image of the future which fosters the motivation of all those who are involved in and concerned by the planning and implementation process. However, this procedure requires a concretisation of the vision into objectives in the next working step.

After the objective-setting, strategies and concepts, which document the way how to achieve the objectives, should be elaborated. During the elaboration process possible alternative strategies should be critically discussed. The balance between the pros and cons should be a minimum condition for the decision of the final strategy or concept.

The formulation of measures is the next step of the project concretisation. All measures should include the definition of responsibilities, time frame and required budget. Due to the fact that the implementation of measures depends on different aspects, such as financing, active citizenship and regulations, it is recommended to set up priorities for the measures. Especially

the implementation of short-termed and visible measures can enhance the motivation and interest of the persons who are involved in or affected by the planning process.

3.4. EXEMPLARY VITO OUTPUTS – STEPS TOWARDS INTEGRATED URBAN DEVELOPMENT

All the activities carried out during the ViTo-project and the results reflect the individuality of the ViTo-towns with their different needs for action. This points to the fact that all ViTo countries have a different historical urban development (comprising the planning mentality), cultural characteristics, political priorities and tense financial situation. In summary, the results

GOOD PRACTICE: RESULTS – PTUJ (SLOVENIA)

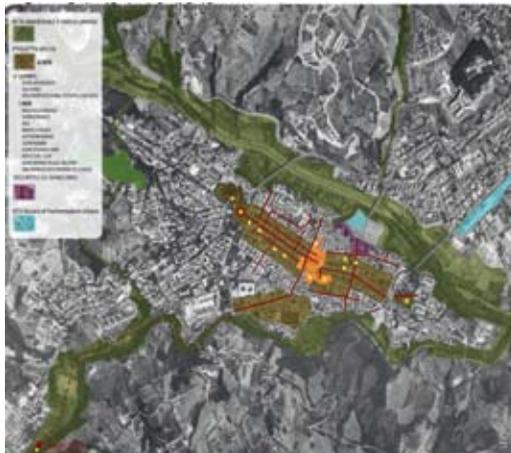
The local ViTo-project supports the town to carry on the renewal and revitalisation of the historic town centre under consideration of energy-saving measures.

Within the framework of the ViTo-project Ptuj drafted an architectural plan and concept of the Town Square revitalisation, carried out an Urban-architectural workshop as well as, the local energy concept for the municipality of Ptuj, developed a catalogue and guidelines on the energy efficient reconstruction details of the cultural heritage buildings for private owners, and elaborated a conservation plan for the Town Hall of Ptuj. All the results fit into the strategic concept which targets on the improvement of the historical town centre as a modern and lively place with high quality of life for its inhabitants and visitors alike.

and priorities of the ViTo-partners are as multifarious as the European Union. The results vary from strategic planning to guidelines in order to enhance private investment and the implementation of single measures which depend on the existing planning basis and needs for action. Nevertheless, all project partners were working with an integrated approach. That means

INTEGRATED REVITALISATION CONCEPTS

- Revitalisation plan for the historical town centre (Teramo)
- Integrated Urban Development Concept of Straßgang and St. Peter (Graz)
- Integrated revitalisation plan for the historical centre (Arad)
- Elaboration of an Integrated regional development concept with particular regards to heritage and culture as engine for tourism and economic development (Fabriano/Marche Region)
- Pilot development plan to reform historic city centre (Xanthi)
- Urban development plan (Banská Štiavnica)



Revitalisation Plan Teramo



Revitalisation concept of squares in Ptuj

FEASIBILITY STUDIES

- Feasibility studies for the urbanisation, revitalisation, renovation and conservation of the cultural heritage (Oradea)
- Critical survey and reconnaissance of the cultural heritage of the historical centre (Teramo)
- Analytical research study related to the revitalisation of the historical town centre as a public-private partnership (Chisinau)



Revitalisation Concept of the castle in Banská Štiavnica

PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES

- Workshops with local authorities on proposals for urban development (Xanthi)
- Empowerment of the civil society (Graz)
- Public consultation for the pedestrian street (Arad)



Workshop in Graz

BROCHURES AND INFORMATION DOSSIERS/FILES

- Catalogue of energy efficient reconstruction details of the cultural heritage buildings (Ptuj)
- Guide of good practice for the rehabilitation of buildings in the historical centre (Oradea)
- Cultural tourism guide in 5 languages (Arad)
- Manual book of the local cultural heritage for students in 5 languages (Arad)



Good Practice Guide for rehabilitation of buildings

UPGRADING MEASURES

- Establishment of a pedestrian street (Arad)
- Set up of itinerary around Hermitage of Valleremita with support of the Franciscan community and installation of signposts and information boards (Fabriano/Marche Region)
- Revitalisation of public space and green spaces, open traffic access (pedestrian, bicycle), fitness route, neighbourhood centre, empowerment (Graz)



Upgrading measures in Arad

that they took into consideration the issues of affected departments, stakeholders, property owners or privates. Therefore, workshops were realized, information was spread, affected actors and departments were involved. The ViTo-results can be divided into results which are apparent, like the greening or the designation of a pedestrian zone, and into strategic or conceptual results with an immediate effect, like a “Catalogue of energy efficient reconstruction details for the cultural heritage buildings” which provides information on the appropriate restoration for property owners. Furthermore results like a common vision for the further development of a town are one of the first steps to a development strategy. Likewise, apparent results can also have immediate effect. For example, the designation of a pedestrian zone can entail private investments because of the increasing attractiveness of the area and real estate.

The following pages give an extract of the ViTo-results, divided into the kinds of results and partners. A complete list of all ViTo-results can be found on the CD-ROM enclosed.

3.5. GOOD GOVERNANCE STRENGTHENS THE EMPOWERMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY

A large number of the ViTo outcomes are of strategic or conceptual nature, which determines the further development in the form of visions, development guidelines, planned projects or measures. These embedded future-orientated objectives should be concretized, if not already done, and implemented in the next years. In these matters, as in the case of apparent results of ViTo, the actions are mostly addressed to the administration as well as NGOs, private households or/and stakeholders in the following ways:

1. Administration is responsible for the main planning aspects under consideration of all interests, whereas privates/NGOs are responsible for the main implementation

steps (e.g. fitness route, neighbourhood centre in Graz, more details found on the CD under WP6 action 5),

2. Different parties are involved in the implementation process (e.g. a concept to improve the pedestrian zone and unify the central square with pedestrian zone in Xanthi; more details found on the CD under WP6 action 5),
3. Public-Private-Partnership (e.g. a pedestrian zone as a PPP-model in Chisinau; more details found on the CD under WP6 action 5),
4. and Public-Social-Private-Partnerships (e.g. a set-up of itineraries around Hermitage of Valleremita with support of the Franciscan community and the involvement of disadvantaged staff in Marche Region; more details found on the CD under WP6 action 5).

An intensive cooperation between all these parties was and will be required, also in the future. Within the framework of the ViTo-project the local or regional administration mostly acts as the project engine of the initiation, planning and implementation process, and is also a contact point and consulting partner for all involved parties. Likewise it is possible that non-administrative institutions, which work in the field of public interest and collaborate closely with the local and regional administration, take over the function of a project engine, like the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Xanthi (Greece), SVIM-Regional Development Agency of Marche Region (Italy), and Plai Resurse-Regional Development Agency Chisinau (Moldova) for the ViTo-project. The ViTo-project has shown that (local) regulations could accelerate or decelerate the planned actions which is particularly applicable to investments for revitalisation (e.g. public financial support for the restoration of a private building). Therefore networks, exchanges and cooperation between all key actors must be

GOOD PRACTICE: COOPERATION BETWEEN PUBLIC INSTITUTION AND NGO – FABRIANO (ITALY)

In the past the Marche Region promoted and financed a huge project of revitalisation and structural restoration of the historical building - Hermitage of Valleremita. In synergy with this process, the Vito-project offers the opportunity to promote the Hermitage of Valleremita as tourism destination.

The regional development agency of Marche Region (SVIM) signed in May 2011, an agreement with the Franciscan Community (local partner) which envisages two main implementation steps:

1. realisation of communication/promotion campaign of the pilot-area (installation of signposts and information boards on different roads in proximity of the Valleremita)
2. effective establishment of the Way of the Cross with barrier-free access.

Regarding the integrated-polycentric development the revitalisation process and improvement of the Hermitage has an important contribution to qualify the cultural, natural, religious and tourism offer of the Fabriano municipality.

promoted. This is further of special importance for the enhancement of civic commitment and the implementation of projects with public-private-partnership models.

“Good governance” approaches, which strengthen the empowerment of the civil society, are becoming more and more important in times of economic insecurity as they decrease financial scopes of the municipalities and states. Good governance can be described by the following characteristics: “participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law.”⁹ The requirements of good governance are similar to the claims of the Leipzig Charter. Hence, aspects like participation, transparency, planning and implantation on equals terms are preconditions for successfully integrated development approaches and good governance.

4. LESSONS LEARNED BY PARTNERSHIP

The ViTo-project was set up to support local development projects which protect and use the historical heritage in a sustainable way, and in this way, to improve the quality of life in small and medium size towns and in their hinterland. A number of lessons were drawn from local actions and also from transnational cooperation of project partners who planned and implemented local revitalisation schemes.

The project was considered by project partner towns as a source

- of new information and knowledge,
- of inspiration for interpreting local processes in new contexts,
- of adopting new approaches
- and also of changing the existing institutional practices.

Thus, the ViTo-project delivered outputs which manifested themselves not only in the revitalized historical spaces, local documents for further development and new networks of cooperation, but also in new ideas and practices which should change local and regional

GOOD PRACTICE: DEVELOPMENT OF A SCHOOL PROGRAM FOR TEACHING LOCAL HISTORY AND ITS HERITAGE – ARAD (ROMANIA)

In Arad, the strategic aims of revitalisation are improving the quality of life of residents, strengthening their identity and attracting tourists by face-lifting of public spaces and using them for festivals and cultural events.

Thus, involving local people in planning and development was a key issue in Arad. Young people were defined as a specific target group, having a major role in making the town centre lively, culturally diverse, and also as citizens who want to participate in local development processes in the future. To achieve this, the youth was involved in planning the traffic reorganisation through an NGO (a local biking association).

Moreover, the Cultural Department of the municipality and the ViTo-project team initiated a cooperative work involving municipal officials (architects, cultural and education fields) and external experts (NGOs, the city museum and local schools) to develop a curriculum to teach local history and cultural heritage in primary and secondary schools. The program is under development and to be introduced as a pilot project in two or three local schools, using hard copy materials and also digital tools.

⁹ United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific: What is Good Governance? www.olev.de/g/UNESCAP-governance.pdf, last review: 27.03.2012

contexts of urban development in long term by providing lessons for many historical small and medium size towns throughout South East Europe.

4.1. SOCIALLY EMBEDDED URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Integrated approach towards planning and implementing urban development provided a conceptual framework for local actions as well as for transnational cooperation in the project. In the ViTo-project, a particular emphasis was put on the involvement of citizens in planning and implementing revitalisation – a key issue for the integrated urban development. ViTo towns are in different stages of setting institutional framework for social participation, ranging from identification of stakeholders for actual projects to regular cooperation between planning bodies and local networks of citizens. Nevertheless, empowering local people to shape planning and development processes was considered highly important by all partners for:

- identifying problems and potentials of historical areas,
- getting new ideas for urban development and organising them into an action scheme;
- seeking for compromise – managing conflicting interests to set a sustainable development path in historical areas;
- setting up a common vision for revitalisation as a basis for social support and mobilisation of private funds;
- “learning” new ways of urban governance.

Nevertheless, involving citizens and maintaining their interest was considered also highly problematic and led ViTo-partners to the following conclusions:

- To keep citizens involved, they must be well informed about the results of the on-going project – the outputs “must be seen”;

- For stimulating regional cooperation, local networks of target groups must be approached and mobilized to reconcile different interests and support coordinated actions of individuals and institutions within urban regions;
- The depth and intensity of social participation depends largely on the attitude of local political leaders – their willingness for accepting the results of public discourses can stimulate, but also can undermine social participation;
- Involvement of external experts might support social discourses and the definition of common goals;
- Supported by professional expertise and political leaders, concerted local initiatives might enhance the scope of local planning and change national policies;
- Social participation in revitalisation should be considered as a long-term learning process for citizens and must be supported by introducing historical heritage in education programs and by organising forums and exhibitions for the public.

4.2. ENGINES OF INTEGRATED REVITALISATION: ORGANISING DEVELOPMENT PROCESS THROUGH PROFESSIONALLY DIVERSE TEAMS

The setting up of local project teams was one of the first steps of revitalisation. Project teams were interpreted – however, not explicitly – as key actors by ViTo town experts. Such teams hold a specific position due to:

- Their local embeddedness – team members have a deep and overall view of local and regional processes, they are involved in local and regional networks, and experience urban problems in their everyday practices;
- The diversity of their professional relations operating at national and transnational scale;
- Their accumulated project experiences.

GOOD PRACTICE: AN INNOVATIVE TEAM IN A SMALL TOWN CONTEXT: EXPLOITING PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS FOR REVITALISATION – BANSKÁ ŠTIAVNICA (SLOVAKIA)

The revitalisation process in Banská Štiavnica was initiated and coordinated by a small local project team including experts from various municipal departments, as well as external experts to cover fields that were key issues for revitalisation, such as tourism and management. Based on their knowledge of the local society as well as on some innovative ideas they were able to motivate residents to think about the future of the towns and define their specific needs (“Win 10 thousand Euros to realise your idea”). Moreover, the group had a combined expertise (local and external) in project management to involve local as well as EU funds to begin new development actions, keeping residents motivated (results could be “seen”). Despite the change in local leadership in 2010 (that might break the development process in most of SEE countries), the local team was able to convince decision makers about the relevance of the development strategy, turning politicians’ interest slowly towards supporting and assisting the whole process instead of being “neutral” actors.

The lessons on the role and operation of local project teams suggest that:

- The networks in which teams (their members) are involved are important resources of knowledge and information, they mediate new ideas and innovations;
- Professionally diverse teams are more efficient and can respond to local and regional needs, e.g. by combining external expertise with local resources;
- Cross-sectoral cooperation within project teams stimulate informal cooperation and in the long term changes the structure of urban governance.

4.3. RECONCILIATION OF INTERESTS: PRIVATE OWNERSHIP, FINANCING AND PUBLIC BENEFIT

The sustainability of revitalised urban spaces and the revitalisation itself depends on the

GOOD PRACTICES: A LOCAL INITIATIVE FOR CHANGING REGULATIONS ON FINANCING THE RENOVATION OF HISTORICAL BUILDINGS – ARAD AND ORADEA (ROMANIA)

As the majority of towns in new member states, Arad and Oradea had to face problems of financing revitalisation stemming from changing ownership: the majority of owner-occupants had no resources for renovation, while foreign owners were out of the reach of local bodies. Moreover, municipalities lacked resources to initiate extensive public works, and national regulations forbid the use of public money for supporting private property development.

To enhance their scope, Arad and Oradea cooperated to develop new regulations for the protected areas, and proposed indirect tolls for stimulating renovation of buildings: in Arad, an allowance on local property tax (5 years) is proposed to owners to renovate façades; in Oradea, the owners of historical buildings have to pay tax that is put in a common fund to finance façade renovation. Nevertheless, the efficiency of such tools is not clear yet, and local experts expect more results of new national regulations on built cultural heritage (Act 153/2011) that is built upon local experiences and inputs of historical towns.

balance of public and private interests which manifested themselves in ViTo towns as problems of:

- financing (who pays for planning and implementing renovations, traffic re-organisation, modernisation of infrastructure, etc.);
- regulations (how to get and/or help owners preserve and develop).
- use (controlling transformation of public space into private/semi-private).

ViTo towns faced with all aspects of problems related to the involvement of private actors (funding). Nevertheless, due to the diversity of legislative background and of financial scope of municipalities, different aspects of private-public partnership were emphasised:

- New member states and Moldova still struggle with tangled ownership in implementing revitalisation schemes which hinders steps toward protection and sustainable use of historical heritage;
- For the same groups of partners, more relevant and sophisticated regulation is needed in urban planning and private-public partnership, to stimulate investments;
- Besides regulative and financial tools, knowledge transfer is also important for supporting private investments in historical heritage;
- A combination of public and private funding is a key for sustaining revitalisation process; for this, a consistent public financing based on various resources (EU, national, regional), clear regulative framework (PPP) and a well-defined integrated local strategy are needed.

GOOD PRACTICE: REGIONALLY COORDINATED REVITALISATION SYNERGY OF URBAN CULTURAL INDUSTRY AND RURAL HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT – MARCHE REGION (ITALY)

The Region Sviluppo-Marche acted as a key agent in developing a diverse cultural landscape and promoting polycentric development in a backward region in Italy. Regional bodies took the role of coordinating the planning and management due to the complex nature of setting up and implementing a development strategy focused on tourism, cultural heritage, rural development and urban revitalisation simultaneously. The parallel and interlinked revitalisation of Hermitage of Valleremita and the historical centre of city Fabriano contribute to qualifying the cultural/natural/religious tourism offer in the region. Clearly, the decentralised structure of territorial administration and regional development supports such initiatives, enabling regional bodies to exploit their diverse expertise and multi-scalar relationships of specialised institutions and local actors.

4.4. PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING REVITALISATION IN REGIONAL CONTEXT

The regional context was considered highly important by all ViTo towns:

- As an asset to capitalise on for the development of tourism and cultural industries;
- In more general terms, as a source for growth of local economy in the long run.

Nevertheless, planning and implementing revitalisation as regional processes was a problematic issue. Transnational discussions and local projects took lessons from the whole SEE area as well as from European policies:

- The difficulties of defining urban regions is the basic problem which hinders cooperation;
- Such difficulties are characteristic mostly of new member states and Moldova, being rooted in regulations (centralised state power), and lacking institutions' supporting bottom-up initiatives in regional development;
- Countries with multi-level governance models do benefit from the introduction of spatially integrated approach, as they have working institutional framework – as well as personal networks as a source of knowledge and trust – to manage problems and needs of towns as well as of their hinterland.
- In new member states, a clear definition of common interests/goals and setting-up of a regional institution to realise them might prevail against centralised structures.

5. WHAT REMAINS FOR FUTURE PROJECTS?

The arrangement of healthy, sustainable and liveable towns is a continuous process with a permanent adjustment concerning new challenges at local, national and global levels. Faced with these challenges innovative instruments, exchange of good practices and experiences between key actors, as well as the compliance and advancement of civil society empowerment are the main parameters to attain these objectives. In view of the current trends of an increasing migration from rural to urban areas requires more and more a sustainable and future-oriented development of towns. Integrated revitalisation processes of town centres in connection with the improvement of the attractiveness in the fields of habitation, retail, tourism and so-journ quality can help to promote our towns as economic and cultural poles of growth with excellent living conditions. Furthermore revitalisation processes, like valorisation of old or vacant houses in the historic town centres or the renovation/restoration of inefficient buildings, can support the proposed priorities of the prospective structural policies, which will presumably also proclaim the reduction of CO₂ emissions, decrease and monitoring of the environmental pollution, and economical use of resources.

Moreover, the current discussion concerning the next funding period 2014 to 2020 shows that the sustainable and integrated development of towns is of crucial importance. It is planned that five per cent of the European Regional Development Fund budget allocated to each member state should be invested in integrated actions of a sustainable urban development. Therefore a new instrument, named ITI (Integrated Territorial Investment) will be established and shall ensure the implementation. The ITI-tool allows the pooling of funding of different priority axes of one or more operational programs for multi-dimensional and cross-sectoral interventions¹⁰. The introduction of this tool illustrates the growing importance of integrated approaches as holistic development approaches.

In the context of the mentioned aspects, and considering the cohesion policy objectives, additional exchange of experiences between key actors of urban development in Europe as well as the advancement of innovative instruments concerning urban development are important parameters to achieve the goal of sustainable European towns.

¹⁰ Cf. European Commission: Integrated sustainable development. Cohesion Policy 2014-2020.

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PARTNERS in ViTo project:

SLOVENIA

City Municipality Ptuj

University of Primorska
Science and
Research Centre

ROMANIA

Municipality of Arad

Municipality of Oradea

SLOVAKIA

Banska Stiavnica Municipality

HUNGARY

Research Centre for
Economic and Regional Studies
Institute for Regional Studies
Hungarian Academy of Sciences
Bekescsaba

AUSTRIA

Municipality of Graz,
Department of Urban
Planning

ITALY

Sviluppo Marche –
SVIM inc., Ancona

Municipality of Teramo

GREECE

Chamber of Commerce
& Industry Xanthi

MOLDOVA

Plai Resurse
Chisinau Municipality