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RIGA: Developing multimodal mobility points in Riga with the help of stakeholders

The first mobility point in Riga is planned to be implemented as a pilot project in the VEF territory within the framework of the EU-funded project cities.multimodal. cities.multimodal's goal of which is to promote multimodal and sustainable mobility in the urban development. cities.multimodal is commissioned by Riga Municipal Agency "Riga Energy Agency" (REA). The VEF territory is a multifunctional area (commercial, public and residential spaces) with a wide range of transport infrastructure. The information and involvement of all mobility stakeholders in the territory was therefore necessary to carry out the mobility point project.

1. The process description of the Stakeholder meetings

The choice of the stakeholder meeting method

The introduction of a mobility point involves the involvement of various stakeholders such as the Department of Transportation, Public Transport operators, the Maintenance Department, car and bike sharing companies, local companies and, of course, members of the public and local communities. It is therefore necessary to bring together the views and interests of the stakeholder group to develop and implement the Mobility Points concept.

Organising stakeholder meetings is one of the most appropriate and relevant tools in this context: It is the process by which an organization involves people who may be affected by the decisions it makes

or can influence the implementation of the decisions. Stakeholders may support or oppose the decisions, be influential in the organization or within the community in which it operates, hold relevant official positions or be affected in the long term. For each new policy tool addressed, a stakeholder group must be created in order to ensure that the urban project not only the level of the project leader, but also reaches the level of the organization and the stakeholders. Meetings are often educational and informative, covering general topics or new changes.

Mobility point: a partnership and a multimodal project

The concept of a mobility point can be defined as a combination of forms of sustainable mobility (public transport, shared car, shared bike, bike parking, electric scooters, e-car charging) and features that make sustainable mobility easy and attractive. Mobility points are being built in different European cities and Riga is not an exception, mainly because it increases the use of various forms of public transport, improves the quality of the urban environment and the living environment and, as a result, increases the value of real estate in the adjacent area. Finally, mobility points are improving the “first and last mile” mobility solutions, and therefore reduce the incentive of private transport in urban areas.

Challenge and purpose of the stakeholder meeting

With these stakeholder meetings, the objective for REA was to set up action for implementation of the VEF Mobility Point taking in count the stakeholder’s interests. The goal was also to inform and involve stakeholders in the implementation process. This method developed guidelines for the implementation of the Riga Mobility Point, as well as a conceptual solution for the VEF area (which was selected by the city of Riga as a pilot area to install the first mobility point).

The purposes of these four meetings were numerous. In addition to informing and the discovering the mobility point concept, it was necessary to identify the scope of action, the needs and the stakes. It was equally important to think about the actions and partnerships to be set up while making sure to have the support of all the players around the table.

2. The implementation of the Stakeholder meeting

The steps of organising the stakeholder meeting procedure

Four official meetings were planned to take place during one year, from 2018 November to 2019 December. For each meeting, one week of preparation was needed by REA to organise and plan the stakeholder meetings. A well-organized meeting is key to make a positive impression on stakeholders and the following steps were used during the process:

- Identify the specific purpose of the stakeholder meeting, as well as the specific audience. For example, plan a meeting for suppliers to address changes in the internal purchasing process or a meeting with shareholders to keep them updated on an upcoming corporate merger. Use this purpose and the specific audience as a planning tool for the meeting.



- Write an agenda that covers each portion of the meeting. Determine how to begin the meeting, present the information and wrap up the meeting. Include key points on the agenda is planned to be covered to serve as an outline for presenters and the meeting attendees.
- Write a list of questions or discussion topics that enables organisers to gain feedback from the stakeholders attending the meeting. Determine what type of information you want to obtain from attendees beforehand. An example of information that might besought is feedback on current products or services, as well as suggestions for how to improve them going forward.
- Assemble documents to be provided for stakeholders at the meeting. Provide handouts for relevant information, such as the past year's financial information for shareholders or investors.
- Schedule the meeting for a time and location that works for the majority of the attendees involved. Choose a location with enough space to comfortably hold the number of people and facilitate the type of activities planned.
- Call the meeting to order on time so it doesn't run long. Follow the agenda and stay on schedule as much as possible while allowing participants the chance to provide their input.
- Send out a copy of the minutes to all who attended the meeting as a method of following up. Encourage the participants to follow up with any questions or concerns after the conclusion of the meeting.

The results of the first meeting consisted of an action plan for stakeholder activities for the implementation of the VEF mobility point in the cities.multimodal project by 2020 and long-term activities beyond 2020 and planning of the next meeting.

How to select and identify a group of relevant stakeholders?

The meetings are typically targeted at the most influential stakeholders, such as shareholders, executives or partnering companies. Meetings for different types of stakeholders are also an option so you can tailor the information presented based on how the stakeholder influences the company. REA identified a list of key stakeholders, according to the role they would play in relation to their professional position and how they would be involved in the project and the planning process of mobility points. Following partners were invited for these stakeholder meetings:

- Municipal departments and members of the public and local communities (including REA)
- LMT (Latvijas Mobilais Telefons), the most influential mobile operator in Latvia
- PILLAR management, one of the leading real estate companies in Latvia
- VEF cultural centre
- Sixt Bike, a bike rental company
- Car Guru car sharing company.
- A research company which presents the definition of a mobility point, its functions, and examples abroad



Mobility service providers and Riga City Council units were invited, as they play an important role in the conceptual development and implementation of such a mobility point.



Stakeholder meeting

The practicalities: communication and budget

Once the stakeholders were identified, REA sent official letters and emails to this target group to invite them to the stakeholder meeting. It was also a way to explain the attractiveness of the mobility point concept and the stakeholder meetings. During the four meetings, all the information was sent through emails, which is the easiest way to inform people involved. Later we contacted them by phone if they didn't reply to emails. At that point, there was no need for a media coverage, because stakeholder meetings are moments of exchange, discussion and reflection, in order to agree on a common vision of the mobility point. Therefore, there was only internal coverage.

The cities.multimodal project is financed by European Regional Development Fund, Riga city budget and state budget co-financing. No special budget was allocated for the stakeholder meetings, it was a part of the global budget for cities.multimodal project. The installation of the mobility point will be carried out in a sequenced manner in 4 stages, from 2020 to 2024. Some facilities will also be the subject of temporary installations to test their effectiveness.

3. Follow-up of the stakeholder meetings

During each meeting, discussions and agreements were noted on the "protocols", a summary of the meeting was therefore made at the end of each meeting, including key points of discussion, agreements and future proposals. Based on these protocols and conclusions, REA established technical solutions and concrete proposals for the mobility point, which will be suitable for all stakeholders. At the end of the 4 meetings, REA sent final Action plan for implementation of the mobility point concept and technical solutions to all the participants of the stakeholder meetings. The following is a non-selective list of proposals that stakeholders have come up with:

- Mobility point infrastructure – user friendly bike rack, bike repair station, public transport integration infrastructure, scooter sharing platform;
- Mobility point green solutions – lighting, “Off grid” solar battery system;



- Installation of information display (neighbourhood information, municipal information, mobility information, advertising, etc.);
- Electric charging station possibilities with “off grid” concept;
- Garden facilities (bench, waste bins, design and information signs, etc.).



Conceptual solution proposal for the VEF mobility point

Recommendations to other cities who are interested in the stakeholder meeting method

- Stakeholders meeting are also a way to avoid conflict and to assure the support of all the stakeholders on a new project.
- The most important point is to succeed in raising stakeholder interest in the mobility point concept. Information about the project upstream is therefore essential, as it allows stakeholders to realise the relevance of the project, and thus to ensure their support around the project.
- The main challenge of stakeholder meetings is to succeed in mobilising stakeholders around a common project, and therefore to succeed in putting individual professional interest aside. However, it is also a way of taking into consideration all the issues and imperatives of the various stakeholders. A good balance must be found between a collective project and individual interest.

What made the Stakeholder meetings successful?

- The long-term commitment of stakeholders
- A dynamic of common work and project, despite different professional interests

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