SULPITER FREIGHT QUALITY PARTNERSHIP GUIDELINES

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1. Introduction

One way to work towards optimizing goods transport within, to and from urban areas is to establish a "Freight Quality Partnership" among the relevant stakeholders. The purpose of this document is to guide any interested party through the process of establishing and running such a partnership.

This document is written as part of the SULPiTER project. The acronym stands for "Sustainable Urban Logistics Planning to Enhance Regional Freight Transport" – as the full name of the project is. 14 institutions in seven functional urban areas across Central Europe, plus a number of associated partners, have joined for the project which runs from June 2016 to May 2019. SULPiTER is financially supported by the Interreg Central Europe program of the European Union.

Setting up Freight Quality Partnerships in each of the functional urban areas, with the intention to trigger the process also in other agglomerations, is one of the specific aims of SULPiTER. But it is not the only aim, and the topics are closely related to each other. Therefore, this document is especially closely related to the "Strategy for Stakeholders Engagement in Sustainable Urban Logistics Plans for Functional Urban Areas". However, for a Freight Quality Partnership it will need different partners, and they will cooperate in a different way.

2. Towards a Freight Quality Partnership

2.1. What exactly is a "Freight Quality Partnership" ("FQP")?

Before we set up a Freight Quality Partnership ("FQP"), we should be roughly clear about what we intend to achieve. So, what do we mean by a "Freight Quality Partnership"?

Wikipedia has a rather short answer: "**Freight Quality Partnerships** or FQPs are groups of transport operators and local authorities that come together to deal with matters of freight access and deliveries in a particular location." However, that is not very precise. It also seems to be a statement made by the Wikipedia author as a result of his or her observations, which in the article results in the notorious addendum: "Citation needed".

Nevertheless, the Wikipedia article is a good starting point. After checking the available literature, and combining it with the targets of the SULPiTER project, in practice we can get beyond that simple statement. Apparently, whatever the local details, the FQPs have all or almost all of the following in common:

- They are <u>cooperations</u> of stakeholders in logistics.

- The cooperation is <u>formalized</u>, i.e. there is an agreement that it will be continuous and deal about specific topics with specific partners.

- Among the stakeholders are <u>people from the public as well as from the private sector</u>, and each represents his or her institution.

- There may/should be stakeholders <u>from other parts of the society</u>, e.g. research or the broader public.

- The stakeholders <u>meet on a regular base</u>.

- The stakeholders <u>debate questions of logistics in a structured way.</u>

- The <u>target</u> is to <u>make logistics in the area more sustainable.</u> In our case, the area is the "Functional Urban Area, see next chapter.

- The members of the FQP <u>work towards solutions</u> in projects which may include one or more members, and on which the progress is monitored by the FQP.

- The members of the FQP also work towards solutions that include the public sector, for example through changes in infrastructure and regulations.

At this point it should be noted that a FQP is defined by its function, not by its name. It may thus exist locally under a completely different name.

2.2. What exactly is a "Functional Urban Area" ("FUA")?

In our context we deal with freight logistics questions from the point of view related to the use of public resources such as land or space. Our standpoint is beyond that of a single institution. Therefore, we must answer the question which geographical area is to be considered relevant. The SULPiTER project has chosen the "Functional Urban Area" as the most relevant spatial area to deal with in this context. So, what is it and why did we chose it?

A "Functional Urban Area" ("FUA") is the city plus its hinterland of commuter suburbs and lesser towns, together forming an agglomeration. There is an official definition of the FUA, by OECD: "The definition of urban areas in OECD countries uses population density to identify urban cores and travel-to-work flows to identify the hinterlands whose labour market is highly integrated with the cores."   That would be the "catchment area" or "hinterland" of an urban core. The applied methodology results in well-defined areas, which are listed as FUA for each country.

However, the degree of exactness and formalization used by OECD may be beyond a pragmatic approach of a project dealing with local and regional freight flows, which is to make business and public interests meet within a certain area. The important point in the context of logistics is that **the functional urban area is defined independently of political boundaries.**

There is a lot of goods logistics going on in such Functional Urban Areas: Proximity increases business and transport volumes. Furthermore, much of the long distance transport is collected locally, brought to an interface, gets reloaded for the long distance run into another region, and then again uses interfaces to get onto delivery trucks for the last mile. Logistics companies typically use one interface for each agglomeration, and from there mostly serve the Functional Urban Area. Thus, the FUA, as the OECD defines it, correlates very well with the area of relevant local goods flows, including regional industrial interaction as well as delivery flows.

When dealing with Freight Quality Partnerships, we will keep in mind that we always need to consider the whole urban area, not just a central core.

2.3. Why should a Functional Urban Area have a Freight Quality Partnership?

We want to optimize goods transport in the region, not per se but reach an overall optimum: Transport demands of shippers and receivers meet problems of operators meet objectives of planning institutions meet objectives of the various players within the civil society meet different hierarchical layers of actors in a Functional Urban Area.

We could assume that this is a typical "ecology vs. economy" conflict. Fortunately, there is more to it:

- Logistics activities have a great effect on employment.

- Logistics jobs for the most part will not be shifted to other countries.

- Therefore, logistics jobs are more secure than industrial jobs.

- For more demanding logistics activities, the required qualifications must be available.

- Goods mobility is a precondition for a thriving economy and good consumption in a conurbation.

- Extent and organization of goods transport is much less documented than passenger transport.

- Traffic growth can only be controlled by knowing about the economic causes.

- Traffic shift from road to rail is no sure-fire recipe for success.

As a result, there is much more in optimizing urban logistics than just the immediate ecological aspects, and also there are more conflicts than just those between the monetary optimum and the goods of the society. It will therefore make sense for all stakeholders to talk to each other.

3. Existing Freight Quality Partnerships – the London Example

The "mother of all FQP" is London. To be precise, there are several Freight Quality Partnerships in that city, which differ in size and scope. For an overview, see https://www.centrallondonfqp.org/

Although cities in other parts of the world grew faster over the past decades and have bypassed London both in number of inhabitants and in geographic dimensions, London still is one of the world's main agglomerations.

"Its estimated mid-2016 municipal population (corresponding to Greater London) was 8,787,892, the largest of any city in the European Union, and accounting for 13.4% of the UK population. London's urban area is the second most populous in the EU, after Paris, with 9,787,426 inhabitants at the 2011 census. The city's metropolitan area is the most populous in the EU with 13,879,757 inhabitants, while the Greater London Authority states the population of the city-region (covering a large part of the south east) as 22.7 million. London was the world's most populous city from around 1831 to 1925." (Wikipedia: "London")

Among the special features of London, which may be relevant in the context of goods transport, is its multicentric structure. Although there is a "City of London" (more or less the historic old town), the districts around it also have many qualities typical of inner cities or even downtowns. Another feature is the lack of multi-lane highways in or around the inner areas – most traffic follows an extensive grid of historical streets, which are narrower than in other agglomerations of similar size.

The FQP for Central London makes a concise statement on its website, which therefore is quoted verbatim (from https://www.centrallondonfqp.org/central-london-fqp-1/; **highlighting** of passages by the author of this report):

"We cover the City of London; London Boroughs of Camden, Islington, Southwark, Lambeth; Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea; and the City of Westminster.

This is a public/private partnership, set up to develop a common understanding of, and to encourage innovative solutions for, freight transport and servicing activity in central London. It is an ongoing forum to develop:

- An **understanding of freight issues** in central London.

- **Sustainable solutions for freight access and services issues** in central London, taking full account of local economic, environmental and social factors.

- **Responses to proposed initiatives** affecting freight and servicing.

We were **established in 2006** by Central London Partnership and Transport for London and we're **currently based in the Transport Studies group at the University of Westminster**. As well as the central London boroughs, other key stakeholders include:

- **Service providers** - freight transport, distribution and service companies and their industry associations, including Freight Transport Association, Brewery Logistics Group and Association of International Couriers and Express Services.

- **Local businesses and employers** - receiving deliveries and requiring services such as retail outlets, restaurants, bars and pubs, supermarkets and corporate businesses.

- **Other public sector organisations** - Greater London Authority (GLA) and the Metropolitan Police. Residents and visitors to central London.

Membership of CLFQP is free of charge and open to individuals and organisations that have an interest in improving freight movement and servicing activity in central London."

The group meets four times per year. It deals with individual questions of urban goods distribution, such as curbside availability, as well as with goods transport policy questions and questions of available urban space for logistics functions. Minutes are publicly available on the website.

The "larger half" of the people at the last meetings appear to represent public institutions and associations, most of the members from the private sector represent large international companies. This may stem both from the complex administrative structure of London and the strategic role it plays as a location for delivery operations.

Funding of CLFQP is by the Central London Transport Partnership and industry partners.

4. A Freight Quality Partnership for our functional urban area

4.1. "Customizing" the idea of a Freight Quality Partnership

Regions such as Functional Urban Areas have their individual set of Taking experience into account, it becomes clear that we must set our own targets and find our own ways to run a partnership. Of course, much of this develops over time: Targets change during any partnership, and they depend upon the interests of the active partners. On the other hand, the partners needed for a partnership depend upon its targets. So, how to start the FQP? And how to run it?

We want to set up a Freight Quality Partnership, because we understand there is a need for it, resulting from a certain situation the functional urban area is in. Therefore, the first set of topics and targets is to be derived from the situation as we find it.

"What is our specific problem or set of problems in the functional urban area?"

Then we check the type of partners we need for an FQP, and for the actual partners.

4.2. Running the Freight Quality Partnership permanently

How do we run the FQP? It boils down to be efficient in the regular meetings, to produce results that you, the members of the partnership, as well as interested outsiders would all assume to be successes. So, let us assume that after an initial phase there now is an established partnership, at least working as a table of regulars, and there is a number of topics which the members of the FQP have decided to be relevant and are willing to work with.

At this point, the job of running the FQP includes the need to invite for the meetings, structure them, and to write minutes. However, that is what every group needs if it meets on a regular base. Let us look at the specifics of a FQP:

- Setting priorities

A group can only handle a limited number of topics at any given time. So, even if there is an ambitious list of issues to deal with, it makes no sense to start with everything at the same time. To set priorities, you may consider:

- Which topics fit into the larger political agenda of the institutions involved?
- Which topics are likely to result in at least a reasonable level of success?

- Is there a mix of topics that would involve all (or almost all) of the stakeholders?
- And which topics are the stakeholders themselves most eager to engage in?

Over time, this will result in changing topics.

- **Following the work on individual topics**

Usually, good meetings are followed by minutes which include a to do list with responsibilities. But that is not enough. The Freight Quality Partnership includes people who have intense daily work to do. In logistics, this may be especially demanding in the short run. Therefore, participants may have made a commitment at a meeting, just to learn back in office that something urgent has happened. Then another urgent thing happens. And so on. Only when the invitation for the next meeting arrives, they will find out that something should have been done on this obligation.

A typical move in this situation then is to do just something towards the goal. And at the next meeting, the person will report that he or she has not achieved the goal, but contacted someone to debate the next step with. The step itself will not have been done.

To anticipate this situation, anyone who in earnest is willing to run an FQP will have to ask for updates regularly. This may annoyingly look like doing the job by oneself, although it had been delegated. But that notion is misleading: It is most important to make the individual participants do something. The FQP will work as a partnership only if everybody is and remains involved. Any additional work for the organizer should be seen under that aspect.

- **Setting dates and deadlines**

The operational need of checking and stimulating the work of the members was already elaborated above. But there also is a strategic need. Each topic needs something like a timeline, implicit or explicit and whatever rudimentary. There should be an understanding about the time a topic will take to be elaborated and the results implemented. This is necessary not only for pressing on the agenda, but also for understanding where the topic is heading, and, when dealing with the whole number of topics the FQP is working on, where the FQP is heading, and how it is about to proceed.

- **Closing a topic when successfully implemented (to know that there was success!)**

Like any other institution, a successful FQP has the tendency to work continuously. This may result in a loss of feeling for achievements. However, it is very important, for the cooperation as well as for the relation with the outside world, to announce any success that is achieved along the way. Best is to be explicit about it.

Often, successes are not as easily visible as one might think: The FQP may be working towards the implementation of some larger plan, which may not be successful yet. However, some elements may be implemented by one or more of the institutions along the way. Have an eye on these small successes!

For every topic, large or small, that is considered done, make the success explicit and then make sure that it is explicitly taken off the agenda. This will in the short run boost morale. In the long run, someone will appear and ask for the past achievements. Wound up in the middle of some debates, you are not likely to remember all of them, let alone value them properly. Great if then there are explicit statements about the various successes to be found in the minutes!

- Closing a topic when no further advancement can be expected

Sooner or later, this topic or that will meet a dead end. You will find that the same arguments are exchanged throughout a meeting, and the to do's for this topic are not likely to bring forward any more progress. You yourself will feel reluctant to bring up the topic again. Most likely, others feel the same.

Whatever the reasons for the lack of progress: If nobody can see of a way to move forward, the topic gets toxic and must be removed from the agenda. This should be done explicitly. Make a decision that the topic will not be pursued any more, and state whether that decision is permanent, for the time being, or until some condition, which is outside the control of the FQP, has been met. With such a decision, it is much easier to focus on something else – and to take up the issue again, should circumstances change.

- Introducing new topics

Of course, with some topics being successfully implemented, and most likely some others abandoned, there will be a need for new topics. Be prepared to have a shortlist ready. Debate potential topics with some key stakeholders and generally with people from institutions which may be interested in such a topic, even before you officially bring it up. (But at that stage do not accidently make promises about the handling of an issue which only the FQP can make!)

Make sure that you always listen to the group as well as to the "outside world" for new issues!

And do not fall for some traps regarding new issues. One of them is bringing up new topics only to cover up lack of success on other topics. This kind of actionism is to be avoided. If you feel there is not enough success, this should be openly debated and not covered by dealing with increasingly erratic new topics! Another trap is to bring up topics just to extend the life of the FQP – to invent topics of really lesser importance, while there may be a feeling that nothing important remains to be done.

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▪ Introducing new members / handling a turnover

Over time, people and institutions will change their level of involvement. They may disappear from view or no longer really be active. That can of course be seen as an indirect voting about the FQP, if it reaches across the board. However, more likely it will be part of a continuous process that all institutions face. Therefore, you should systematically think of people and institutions which can replace those which at present work within the FQP. The FQP itself can probably handle this process well when it gets openly involved.

Another reason for new members, and a very important reason, is the improved knowledge an FQP reaches over time. You will find out that there are some important stakeholders nobody thought about before. Not everything really is obvious. Someone in an institution may have an important role regarding goods transport, and this appeared only by coincident – although the coincident was made far more likely by the systematic work of the FQP.

And then there will be institutions which may not have been very interested in the beginning, may not have taken part although invited, but will go for an active part once they find a chance to represent their interest, or simply because there was a staff change. Watch out for signs of this and utilize it! By the way, increased interest also is a sign that the FQP is on the right track.

4.3. Which public sector Stakeholders do we need?

There are several ways to search systematically for the relevant public institutions:

• By spatial hierarchy,

• by the scope of their responsibility, and

• by the legal or administrative influence they can have in their field.

Of course, what we are looking for are the responsibilities and the potential influence. The description in this manual nevertheless is based upon hierarchy as a first step when regarding public institutions. This is, because a spatial hierarchy exists in every country. At the very least, there is a local level of administration and a national level. Usually, there also are intermediate levels, which we may call "regional", no matter how they designate themselves.

4.3.1. Local administration

Wherever we live and work, we all are aware that there is a local administration. Its tasks vary widely among the member states of the European Union. However, a local administration usually has a number of relevant responsibilities in the field of transport. In some cases, it will have an

institutional role in the organization and development of passenger transport, but not in goods transport. Nevertheless, the local administration can have influence in goods transport flows, including urban distribution. It executes rules according to the decision of the municipal council, regarding access at all or certain times, parking areas, emissions etc.. Local authorities are more concerned with the transport implications of freight movements as opposed to how it is organized.

But even if there is not (yet) a very specific in-depth knowledge about the specifics of goods transport and the way it is organized, there may be a political will to deliver more sustainable and efficient outcomes. This can perhaps be done by indirect and "soft" measures, although it may not be clear from the beginning, which instruments the local administration has – and how to use them.

All in all, we will want to look for responsibilities in the fields of

- road planning and construction,

- traffic management,

- transport policies,

- environmental care and emission control.

These responsibilities may be spread across several divisions of the administration and may also be found in departments of economic development and promotion. All in all, the local administration will have an understanding about traffic levels – often separately for passenger cars and goods vehicles. This will be the result e.g. of traffic counts. The administration may also know the main origins and destinations of goods traffic. This type of analysis, however, does not tell much about the reasons behind the goods transports, or how they are organized and managed. Such understanding needs additional knowledge and interpretation.

Within the local administration, there usually is a department promoting the local economy. It is not the job of those people to know traffic figures, but their general expertise may help to interpret them:

- What kind of traffic goes where?

- What is actually transported?

- From where does the goods traffic come and where does it go?

This kind of knowledge typically is not formalized. It may require some thinking and debate, and this may not result in hard facts. Nevertheless, if the road and transport departments have traffic figures, the debate may result in some good interpretations.

Key questions to any local administration are:

- Does a mobility plan exist?
- Does it explicitly cover goods transport?
- Does it analyse goods transport flows?
- Does it suggest measures and which ones?

The department of the administration that has set up such a plan (or that is about to do it) is of course a key stakeholder.

4.3.2. Neighbouring local municipalities

Transport problems do not end at city limits. This is why we are dealing with a Functional Urban Area, not just with one town or whatever local administrative unit. You therefore will have to include people from neighbouring administrations. It is not enough to just assume that, because the problem affects the whole region, you may just deal with some regional administration. Usually, the local administrations have such an impact on transport and land use issues that you have to include them.

On the other hand, this way the number of potentially relevant actors may be out of proportion. For example, Stuttgart Region is a conglomerate of 179 municipalities, of which more than a dozen are towns of more than 20,000 inhabitants. Even including all of them may blow any operating partnership.

A first step to solve the problem is to involve the administration of the region's main city. There is no way to replace these contacts by whatever competent and helpful regional institutions! Use your local contacts with that city to check its (informal) information and engagement policy regarding its neighbours. This can be a most critical issue – usually, old conflicts exist, regarding topics as well as persons or institutions. It can easily happen that any communication between any actor and the main city (including a Freight Quality Partnership in formation) may step on some neighbour municipality's toes by accident. Fortunately, on the other hand there normally also are well established practices to handle such conflicts.

You will then probably have to select some neighbouring administrations to deal with in the beginning. There is no sure-fire receipt to do that right, but you will find some indicators: Important municipalities for a Freight Quality Partnership are those

- which traditionally host important logistics operators,
- which generally have a high amount of goods traffic,

- which are known for conflicts in transport and land use with regards to logistics,
- which are known to deal with issues in a cooperative way,
- and which have a relevant size compared to the regional transport and logistics issues.

This sounds like a lot, but the topics usually come "bundled". You may find that much of the regional issues in principle appear within perhaps just half a dozen relevant municipalities.

However, dealing with municipalities may be the most complex political issue – you deal with institutions that have been neighbours for long, often for centuries, that cannot avoid each other, and that might in other fields go for conflicting targets. They may look at each other with a mix of cooperative spirit and fierce competition. The people representing the municipalities may not want to tell you all these complex issues, and for sure they will not inform you about them in any systematic way. Make sure you do not get trapped along these lines! Whenever you inform any municipality about anything you do, and whenever you think that involvement of another municipality would result in a valuable improvement, check every step with the municipalities you are mainly working with, and get yourself an opinion about the implications of any suggested strategy for each of them!

4.3.3. Regional administrations

The Functional Urban Area will extend past its main town or city. It will make up a larger part or all of some in question will be located within a larger entity, which may be designated as county, department, planning region, province, region, etc.. Those acquainted with the standardized spatial levels throughout the European Union will know some of these levels as "NUTS 1" to "NUTS 5". In practice we may find even more levels in some countries. The reason for existence of each of these intermediate levels is for them to deal with a set of responsibilities in one field of administration or another. Each of these intermediate levels therefore has its own field of responsibilities. It is quite likely that goods traffic and logistics questions touch the interests of one or more such regional institutions. The main point here is to check that out.

The regional level, especially if assigned with administrative competences, is particularly interesting because it concerns a wider territorial scale on which logistics phenomena and operations happen, in the sense that city logistics often does not only concerns the "last miles" but business, organizational and logistics processes on a wider territorial scales. It may include one or more county administrations, and/or a specific additional "regional" administration. On the other hand, the "region" may be larger than the Functional Urban Area, so while we will

deal with representatives of the region for our work, in that case we will not consider that entire region relevant.

A word of caution may be in place here. It holds true for dealing with any administration, but perhaps most so with intermediate (regional) levels: We tend to believe automatically that we understand the administration in our own country well, since we have experienced it and we have debated politics. In practice, however, the complexity as well as the specialization of administrations may easily get beyond our comprehension, even when we are experienced administrators ourselves. So, the general understanding that we know local politics and administration may be misleading.

We may know something about our local administration. For the regional levels, their responsibilities may not be so clear at first, not even to an experienced project manager with a background in handling regional questions. Not all levels have parliamentary bodies, and some levels exist only for a narrow scope of responsibilities. We may therefore find out about the existence of not only additional administrative bodies with specialized competences, but even about additional administrative levels, even in our own national context, as soon as we search for them.

First, try to list all existing levels. Then, the next step is to check each level for some basic responsibilities and explicitly for any responsibility in the context of transport, economy and planning. This includes a check of possible fields where interests collide or where synergies are possible. A good way to start checking out the relevance of these levels is to talk to an experienced regional administrator with technical expertise in the subject.

Also, it is important to check out whether the local or regional administration has created any other body related to the subject (agency, etc.), which may be responsible for policy design or implementation in a certain field. Such agencies etc. may cover the fields of energy, innovation and development, and they may be either public bodies or private-public partnerships.

Another question is whether these intermediate levels have their own power for decision making, or whether they are just administrative bodies which carry out decisions made at national or local level. Through this you learn about the ties of that administration with other levels or institutions. Generally, it is very useful to remember for each of these intermediate levels whether they basically carry out local tasks (just for a larger area) or national tasks (just for a subdivision). In many countries, e.g. in Germany, by constitution there is a strict division between national and local affairs. The intermediate levels will therefore often clearly lean to one of the two sides, depending on the context.

Most likely, from an administrative point of view, stakeholders for a certain topic will be found in some intermediate levels, but not necessarily in all. On the other hand: Except in very small countries, if no regional stakeholders are mentioned to the project team, this should raise suspicion. More likely, there will be quite a number of relevant regional associations and intermediaries.

4.3.4. Chamber of Commerce

The chamber of commerce typically relates to an administrative area, e.g. a city, county or region. In some countries, membership is compulsory, in other countries the chamber depends on the contributions of companies which joined voluntarily. Also, the scope of activities varies. In some countries, the chamber of commerce can – and does – join economic activities, in others it keeps strict neutrality. Also, the chamber may or may not have a budget of some size for own project activities or research.

Any neutrality policy of a chamber will result in a self-limitation regarding any institutional engagement, at least to a certain degree. It must be understood that this limitation can be the result of a legal restriction because membership is compulsory, and even without that legal restriction a limited engagement may be a key to the chamber's success as an institution. Therefore, any such restraint does not necessarily mean a lack of interest, or a lack of engagement on the side of the staff, but will be a rational policy choice, and the chamber will stick to it. Trying to press a chamber of commerce into undue action without checking out its status and policy could be counterproductive. But even within such institutional limitations, if they apply, the chamber could play an important role:

The chamber in any case is a relevant stakeholder in all questions regarding transport, trade and manufacturing. Its specialists for each field may have little executive power, but they typically make up for this with their broad organizational knowledge. Within the regional or local chamber of commerce, you may well find the widest knowledge of the field and its actors as a whole, and the people working for the chamber will also be aware of the "hot" political issues around the topic, both on regional and national level.

The officers at the chamber of commerce usually also have the explicit task to promote the economy. Different from the situation of their counterparts within the public administration, the chamber staff does not have to balance its statements to reflect the society as a whole – this, in democratic theory, is done by the sum of all organizations that raise their voices. This means that the chambers typically can be rather outspoken about the interests of their members and the regional economy. As a result, good relations with these experts usually are a big asset.

4.3.5. Business associations

In Europe, there usually are business associations for just about any topic. Therefore, it is worthwhile to check the local situation for the relevant associations. Just as a general guideline: The topic of urban logistics touches business associations in the field of

- retail,

- trade,

- transport,

- logistics, and perhaps

- manufacturing.

There may be competing associations trying to cover the same field. But even in this case it is quite likely that the main clientele of each association or organization may be somewhat different and rather specific. For example, one association may be the first choice of those logistics companies which are of a certain size, while the other association is where mainly the independent truck drivers are organized. Furthermore, a number of institutions may represent companies which engage in specific segments of logistics. Some associations or organizations may not appear to be very important at a national level, but might have a very active and highly professional regional role or a most knowledgeable regional representative.

Neither the website nor the publications of an organization may explain these issues. A good relation to the local chamber of commerce is one of the best starting points to define the right associations that need to be engaged – besides asking the organizations themselves and some of their members, of course.

Besides general associations of trade and retail, there may be a local initiative in which the retailers of the city engage. Such initiatives may even exist for specific areas of the town/city. Membership is usually not mandatory. These initiatives may be purely aimed at local marketing, on a more or less professional level, but even if their core activity is limited they may have a good overview on the key players in urban retail trade.

In summary, the key advice is: When looking for relevant partners among business associations, you may find there are more than the initially obvious, once you research the whole range of organizations – an approach which is strongly recommended.

4.4. Which private sector Stakeholders do we need?

We need stakeholders that represent the relevant regional logistics activities and that are eager or willing to debate them. What we will not achieve (and actually do not need) is any kind of completeness. More important is diversity! Therefore, find a list of possible categories of stakeholders that may be relevant.

Receivers of logistics services:

- Retail / trade: Small shops, single sourcing business, chain stores.

- Industry: Small businesses, larger enterprises, branches.

- Gastronomy: Individual enterprises, chain/franchise enterprises.

- Large institutions: Hospitals, administration, university.

Suppliers of logistics services:

- Craftsmen: Serving stores, construction sites, households.

- Logistics operators: Truckload, LCL (less-than-carload).

- Courier, Express, Parcel: Serving businesses and households.

Associations:

- Craftsmen: Chamber, business associations.

- Logistics operators: Forwarder association, logistics association, trucker association.

- Trade: Chamber, retail associations, business club.

Selecting stakeholders is a continuing process. In SULPiTER, we start with a list from filling in the template developed under D.T2.1.1.

4.5. Specifics and personalities

4.5.1. What are the specifics of public sector stakeholders?

At this point, something must be said about the **organizational culture within larger administrations:** Planning, road traffic and local economic affairs may be handled in different divisions of the local administration. These divisions have different tasks which must be handled in different ways. As a result, you may find quite different organizational cultures within the same organization.

Even within a single public administration, experienced observers know immediately whether they deal with a group of **engineers**, a group of **legal experts** or a group of **managers**.

- The **engineers** strive for facts which include computable numbers.
- The **legal experts** will go for facts which describe a desired behaviour.
- The **managers** will prefer to deal with the relations between people or institutions, their interest and responsibilities.

Because these approaches differ so basically, while any contribution from one type of person may in earnest be targeted at the needs of a person from another group, it may not fit into that group's scheme of handling a topic. Therefore, it could be difficult for people from these different cultures to establish consensus and good working relationship.

In practice, in order to deal with a topic it is most helpful to understand the likely needs of all three types of experts, as well as their approaches. The best way is to structure one's own contribution in anticipation of the type of response you are likely to get. Engineers, legal experts and managers all appreciate if they find the topic prepared in a way that allows their contribution really to make an impact. Such adequate preparation is among the responsibilities of you as a project team member.

4.5.2. What are the specifics of private sector stakeholders?

We need to understand the stakeholders, both as individuals and in their role (representing their business and its interests), in order to judge their statements. People who are successful in their job are so not by coincident, but they have developed useful ways of thinking. Private businessmen (owners and manager) often are:

- Hands-on businessmen.
- Practically minded people.
- Interested in improving their own business.
- Interested in fencing off threats to their business.
- Focused at their core business.
- Working in a competitive environment.
- Competing not always head-on, but by expanding niches.

As a result, many businessmen have a **strong preference for short-term solutions.** That can conflict with any attempt towards sustainable solutions, or with anything that needs confirmation in a political decision process. However, it does not mean that they believe the long term solution is wrong. It is just not their immediate business interest, and they may be more at ease if they learn that they can leave such long-term topics to others.

Also, businessmen tend to see **the heart of the matter at their core business.** It may mean that solutions, as obvious as they may look to outsiders, simply appear out of scope for them. On the other hand, when asked to explain a broader field, they may instead revolve their explanation around the segment in which they do business. That is a bias we all have to a certain degree, since we all consider our work relevant. But it must be understood to judge the information we receive.

Furthermore, businessmen will always tend to protect their core business. It means that they will give away only selected information about it, and they will not allow anybody to intrude. As a result, they will likely be ready to **cooperate on common issues, but not on their core business.**

Private stakeholders also prefer a stable environment to work in. They face ever-changing competition, and they want to place their own ideas. Their investments need to pay off during a certain period, which usually is several years of more. Any disruption to the framework conditions is viewed with deep distrust, even if the change does not immediately disadvantage a private player. On the other hand, if change is inevitable, they will be most eager to learn about it early. You will often find that, while they may not like the change, one thing they like even less: Uncertainty!

So, they may accept chance if they learn about it on time and if it gives them stability for their plans. And, of course, if it is some kind of change they can profit from.

Keep this in mind when evaluating the persons, their answers and their roles!

4.5.3. Which personalities do we need? And which to avoid?

In the interviewing phase we have the chance to look not only for the right mix of competences, but also for the right mix of personalities. For competence beyond their core business, we are looking for people with these features:

- They look into medium and long term issues.

- They view the topic not only from their own business point.

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- They deal openly with the topic of competition.

For working in a group, a stakeholder also needs some other skills. We should look at:

▫ Good standing in their branch or industry.

▫ Decision maker in their own business regarding logistics interface.

▫ Communication skills.

Look for diversity

Yes, counter to the typical situation in logistics meetings and counter to the grammatical form used in this text, there are **women who deal with logistics questions in their businesses.** Continue to look for more expertise until you have included them.

Personalities to avoid

Not everybody who is ready and willing to give help can contribute something significant. Some people, while eager to communicate, have flaws in our context, which are not immediately obvious.

There may be the person who has been ousted by his peers and grabs our project as a chance to get back in. That is not easy to recognize through an initial early interview and will just show later.

Two other personalities may however surface early on:

- The "one-trick pony", who eagerly tries to improve the world (or our region) by suggesting one "simple" solution. He has perhaps been promoting it for decades, often at the expense of alternative. His peers are tired of him as well as of his solution, but he does not give up and may even leave a rather convincing first impression.

- And then there is the "Junior" or "Senior", who does not yet or no longer have authority in his business and instead prefers to sit in meetings. This, however, may or may not be a problem. Such people may be rather knowledgeable, seriously interested, skilled in communication and can be an asset for the meetings. You must make a judgement, together with the members or the Freight Quality Partnership.

To cut it short: You can look for many abilities in people, but you will not get everything. Therefore: **Watch out for those who match the positive categories best!**

5. Handling the FQP Meetings

5.1. What to expect from individual meetings

Individual meetings of the Freight Quality Partnership can

- discuss any regional goods transport related topic, adding new viewpoints or aspects,
- produce new ideas or suggest improvements,
- show the interests of individual stakeholders or groups of stakeholders in a topic,
- make a decision to work towards a specific target,
- make weak points in the project work surface in time and help to improve them,
- and decide about topics which are finalized.

But there are limitations to what a single meeting can achieve: Usually, during a single meeting, an assembly will not come up with an idea, define it in an operative way and then already decide about it. Thus, if a decision is needed, input must be provided to decide upon. This input may then, through debate, be improved, changed, or even discarded completely by the members of the Freight Quality Partnership. But, usually any of these outcomes is better than just waiting in vain for a new topic to emerge in any operational form.

The participants can make suggestions how to proceed and with whom to proceed, but they cannot make the decision to operate anything that needs the formal involvement of individual institutions. This must be negotiated between the meetings and will with all likelihood include other people as well as other institutions. It is important to keep records of these meetings, whatever informal they may be.

5.2. Documentation

A clear documentation of the meetings is a must and a key responsibility. It should therefore remain in the hands of the organizers. Of course, members of the round table should have the chance to add aspects.

Keep the documentation short enough to be read by decision makers. Name the results and the key arguments (pro and con) that lead to them, so that all participants find their main viewpoints and interests reflected. Meandering debates should be brought to the point and summarized. Include a list of next steps and responsibilities.

5.3. Specific situations anticipated

Not all situations which may arise can be named beforehand. However, some which may be considered typical, are named and elaborated below. It is important to have an eye upon them and be prepared, but they should not frighten the moderator.

5.3.1. High Expectations

Expectations play a major role in the perception of a Round Table. Unrealistic expectations therefore can be a risk.

Many people, among them business managers, are used to a very distinct process of meeting, exchange of views, finding a common ground and then coming to binding decisions about future cooperation. If they discover only step by step that the results of the FQP meetings by themselves will not produce the solutions, but "only" come up with suggestions for solutions, to be further negotiated, they may get frustrated.

A Freight Quality Partnership can in principle bind its partners legally, but will best avoid that for a cooperative approach wherever possible. And of course it cannot bind others. It is not the place to tailor the results in the exclusive interest of a specific stakeholder, and neither is it per se the ultimate answer to urban traffic, urban logistics and everything. It is better to be clear about this aspect right from the beginning. After all, a suggestion from a FQP to an outsider, e.g. an authority, should well have more authority than a suggestion from one individual stakeholder. And it should be convincing to its members, so that they themselves apply their own proposed measures.

Another expectation of participants may be that a Round Table will be a great opportunity to let all other stakeholder understand and agree upon one's own view on a subject. That is not likely to happen. It must be made clear that conflicting interests will result in different views and different priorities. A FQP can work towards mutual understanding, but it should not eliminate the notion of different and conflicting interests. A main point therefore is to ensure that, as a minimum, all views are respected, both during the meeting and in the documentation.

Furthermore, there may be fear among some participants that their position will be that of a minority or represent a weaker interest and may therefore get lost in the formulation of local actions or a local goods mobility plan. Remember that in many cases a minority view actually can be a good addition. For a concrete action, or for inclusion into an urban goods mobility plan, a measure need not always reflect the view or the interest of a majority. As long as it does not

contradict other measures or a current policy head on, there is quite a chance that it can be included.

5.3.2. Existing conflicts

Many of the local stakeholders have met before, at other occasions, including meetings. They have institutional roles that in some cases represent conflicting interests. They therefore have a history of meeting and debating these conflicts and standpoints.

A FQP should have no problems with explicit statements about interests and institutional roles of the participants. To the contrary, it is necessary that the interests become clear and are explicitly stated. The moderator should at this point make clear that these standpoints and interests are respected.

5.3.3. Egos and personalities

When you go for the main stakeholders, or for renowned specialists in their field, you will work with people who have made successful career moves in their field. They therefore can be expected to know their field well. If you consider them fit for the round table, they happily will be outspoken about their point of view. Doubtlessly, these are strong personalities. These people often will not fear conflicts and sometimes may even go for conflicts to reach their targets.

This sometimes is not easy to handle in meetings or assemblies. We must understand that the ability to make a position heard in a complex environment is a necessary personal precondition for progress, both for the involved persons and their institutions. So, when they go for a conflict, this often is not meant to be obstructive. It may well mean just that they want their position to be recognized.

On the other hand, during a conflict, these strong personalities will make great efforts to ensure that, besides their own person, neither their standpoint nor their institution will leave the field as losers. You will have to predict this behaviour already when approaching and selecting the stakeholders, and you should make sure they never get embarrassed by really losing a debate in public, but can always keep their face. The public, as well as the members of the FQP, both will likely be able to draw their own conclusions.

5.3.4. Knowledge

The more people learn about a topic they are interested in, the more it may appear to them that there still is quite a lot they do not know at all. This means that knowledgeable people may be rather modest in relation to their knowledge, while people with just some partial bits of knowledge may well be rather outspoken about their perceived insights.

Urban logistics is a rather complex field, with more aspects than one would expect at first. During the work of the FQP, it therefore may become obvious to some that the view of this or that stakeholder does not consider important aspects, simply because that person did not think about them. This is a perfectly normal situation. Probably all of us have made that mistake, even in public. However, explicitly pointing at it can be embarrassing to that person. Usually, it is enough not to pursue the issue further – most participants will understand the situation. And the affected person may find it easier to adopt some of the other participants' wisdom if not publicly urged.

In this context it should be mentioned that there is a general tendency among people to take their own view of a topic for the whole thing, or at least for the heart of the matter. That means they believe to have an overview, just because they are knowledgeable about their own professional field. The risk is to completely blank out the problems that will arise, just because such problems may root in another field. Within a Freight Quality Partnership, other professional views will be added, and thus the individual view may get enlarged. Therefore, there often is no need to correct such a standpoint explicitly. The sum of views and standpoints will broaden all viewpoints, of course including those of the organizers or the readers / writers of these lines.

5.3.5. Active interest of the participants

The members of the Freight Quality Partnership will join for various reasons and motives. While active interest is what the FQP needs, it cannot always be taken for granted. Worse than that, a lack of active interest may not be openly stated. In practice, if a participant has no active interest for continuation, a typical action may be to send a deputy to the next meeting and an excuse to a follow up.

The best answer is to check whether any other potential participants would be originally interested, and how to approach them. Also, it is a good idea to check the own agenda: Are there topics ahead which are more interesting? Can we sharpen the agenda in their interest? Else, the lack of interest will usually mean that sooner or later there will not be a reasonably strong consortium to do anything reasonably.

Perhaps even more dangerous than the visible lack of active interest is the hidden lack of interest. In this case, the attendants may all come, perhaps because they do not want to embarrass the inviting organization, or, in the worst case, just to watch each other's move, mainly to ensure that nothing will result out of it that could harm their own interests.

If member behavior suggests such intentions, it is a good idea to talk to the stakeholders about the situation also between the meetings. They may be more outspoken about their real intentions, and there may still be common ground. And, of course, in any Freight Quality Partnership the level of interest varies among the participants. Up to a certain degree, that is very much okay.

In practice, another and perhaps more typical scenery would be: The project work – in our case: The Freight Quality Partnership – somehow seems to run empty, the debate does not produce the desired results but just repeats viewpoints and arguments. A clear structuring of the agenda then often helps. Also, in order to close the debate about the ever-repeating points, summarizing and explicitly asking for solutions can also be useful.

5.3.6. Political support

The Freight Quality Partnership needs active political support from at least some key public stakeholders. However, over time the political support may diminish or disappear. This may have several reasons:

There may be a change in policy. Such changes can happen: There may be a new local administration or a new basic parliament decision. People and parties new in office will go for their own (new) agenda. They have an inherent interest to prove they reversed some old politics, they may want to establish some different people or institutions, and in their first months or years they are still learning about the importance or benefits of existing institutions.

Sometimes this results in head-on collisions, which the established institutions lose, at least in the short run. More often, experienced administrators will try to keep their topics out of the focus of the new politics, until the newly established people have made their points to the public. Meanwhile, it is usually best to check whether and where there still is some common ground. It may be a good idea at this point not to do that via persons who are prominently tied to the previous administration or the previous basic decision. After all, if these people could reverse a new policy, although they were elected out of power, what would be the use of elections?

It makes more sense to check out whether the work of the Freight Quality Partnership actually could be helpful to the new political stakeholders, and how to make them aware of it. That usually needs both time and patience, but changes can also be chances.

Credits

The work on these guidelines would not have been possible without the descriptions of the work in existing Freight Quality Partnerships, be that by the partners themselves or by some scientific report. Also, we have exploited the work of previous projects (name C-LIEGE! Others?). (Anyone else to thank?)

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