Environment
(including Climate change)

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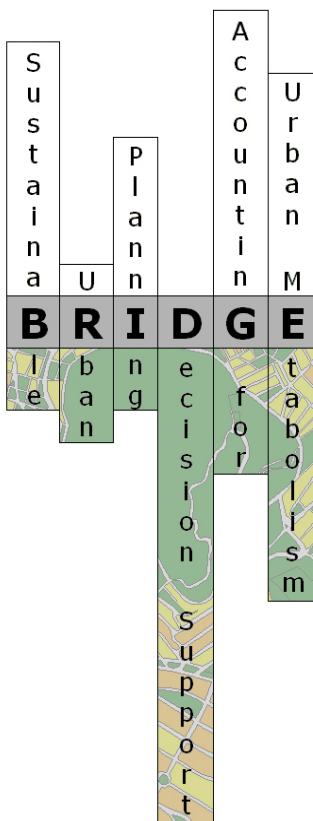
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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the document

This document is Deliverable D.2.3 **Protocol for Developing Communities of Practice in the context of BRIDGE**. The **aim of this document** is to provide the BRIDGE partners with practical guidelines on the launching and sustaining of Communities of Practices in the cities of Helsinki, London, Gliwice, Firenze and Athens.

1.2 Definitions and Acronyms

Definitions

Community of Practice: Communities of Practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.

Decision Support System: a computer based information system

Monitoring: the regular collection and analysis of information and data to assist timely decision making, ensure accountability and provide the basis for the valuing the outcome of the Community of Practice.

Acronyms

CoP	Community of Practice
DSS	Decision Support System

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1.4   Project Overview

Urban metabolism considers a city as a system and distinguishes between energy and material flows. "Metabolic" studies are usually top-down approaches that assess the inputs and outputs of food, water, energy, etc. from a city, or that compare the metabolic process of several cities. In contrast, bottom-up approaches are based on quantitative estimates of urban metabolism components at local scale, considering the urban metabolism as the 3D exchange and transformation of energy and matter between a city and its environment. Recent advances in bio-physical sciences have led to new methods to estimate energy, water, carbon and pollutants fluxes. However, there is poor communication of new knowledge to end-users, such as planners, architects and engineers.

BRIDGE aims at illustrating the advantages of considering environmental issues in urban planning. BRIDGE will not perform a complete life cycle analysis or whole system urban metabolism, but rather focuses on specific metabolism components (energy, water, carbon, pollutants). BRIDGE's main goal is to develop a Decision Support System (DSS) which has the potential to propose modifications on the metabolism of urban systems towards sustainability.

BRIDGE is a joint effort of 14 Organizations from 11 EU countries. Helsinki, Athens, London, Firenze and Gliwice have been selected as case study cities. The project uses a "Community of Practice" approach, which means that local stakeholders and scientists of the BRIDGE meet on a regular basis to learn from each other. The end-users are therefore involved in the project from the beginning. The energy and water fluxes are measured and modelled at local scale. The fluxes of carbon and pollutants are modelled and their spatio-temporal distributions are estimated. These fluxes are simulated in a 3D context and also dynamically by using state-of-the-art numerical models, which normally simulate the complexity of the urban dynamical process exploiting the power and capabilities of modern computer platforms. The output of the above models lead to indicators which define the state of the urban environment. The end-users decide on the objectives that correspond to their needs and determine objectives' relative importance. Once the objectives have been determined, a set of associated criteria are developed to link the objectives with the indicators. BRIDGE integrate key environmental and socio-economic considerations into urban planning through Strategic Environmental Assessment. The BRIDGE DSS evaluates how planning alternatives can modify the physical flows of the above urban metabolism components. A Multi-criteria Decision Making approach has been adopted in BRIDGE DSS. To cope with the complexity of urban metabolism issues, the objectives measure the intensity of the interactions among the different elements in the system and its environment. The objectives are related to the fluxes of energy, water, carbon and pollutants in the case studies. The evaluation of the performance of each alternative is done in accordance with the developed scales for each criterion to measure the performance of individual alternatives.

Several studies have addressed urban metabolism issues, but few have integrated the development of numerical tools and methodologies for the analysis of fluxes between a city and its environment with its validation and application in terms of future development alternatives, based on environmental and socio-economic indicators for baseline and extreme situations. The innovation of BRIDGE lies in the development of a DSS integrating the bio-physical observations with socio-economic issues. It allows end-users to evaluate several urban planning alternatives based on their initial identification of planning objectives. In this way, sustainable planning strategies will be proposed based on quantitative assessments of energy, water, carbon and pollutants fluxes.

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2 Communities of Practice in the context of BRIDGE

2.1 Context: the BRIDGE project

Urban scientists often note a lack of communication of new knowledge and its implications to end-users, such as planners, architects and engineers. Recently, however, increasing attention is directed to bridge the knowledge gap between urban scientists and professionals in the field of urban planning. To this end, the BRIDGE project (sustainaBle uRban plannIng Decision support accountinG for urban mEtabolism) has been launched. For more information on the objectives of the BRIDGE project see box 1 and the website of the BRIDGE project (http://www.bridge-fp7.eu/).

Box 1: Objectives of the BRIDGE project

The main objectives of the BRIDGE project are:
- To bridge the gap between bio-physical sciences and urban planners;
- To illustrate the economic advantages of accounting for environmental issues on a routine basis in urban planning decisions;
- To provide the means to quantitatively estimate the various components of the urban metabolism from local to regional scales;
- To provide the means to quantitatively estimate the environmental impacts of the above components;
- To provide the means to translate the above environmental impacts to socio-economic costs;
- To support the development of sustainable planning strategies to decouple resource use and economic development;
- To provide the means to optimise resources in urban planning;
- To involve local and regional stakeholders in validation of the project's achievements;
- To support the implementation of EU policy on urban environment.

The core of the BRIDGE project is the development of a computer based information system (DSS). The DSS aims to assist urban planners in decision making on sustainability aspects regarding the following components of urban metabolism: energy, water, carbon and pollutants. The use of the DSS by urban planners should help them to better incorporate specific sustainability aspects into their planning practices. In the BRIDGE project, urban scientists working in the field of bio-physics and urban planners will meet on a regular basis to exchange information on sustainable urban planning and to share experiences with (prototypes of) the DSS.

The BRIDGE project will use **Communities of Practice** as an approach to organize the interaction between professionals in the field of urban planning and urban scientists (BRIDGE researchers). The intention is to launch BRIDGE Communities of Practice in five case study cities i.e., in Helsinki, London, Gliwice, Firenze and Athens. The Communities of Practice will create a learning environment in which professionals in the field of city planning and BRIDGE researchers jointly search for opportunities for improving sustainable urban planning.

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Box 2: Communities of Practice

Communities of Practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. The members of a community deepen their knowledge and expertise in a particular area by interacting on an ongoing basis. Engineers who design a certain electronic instrument may find it useful to compare and discuss their prototype designs regularly. Frontline managers running a business might decide to meet each other and to learn form each other on new upcoming technologies. Those people do not necessarily work together every day, but they regularly meet because they find value in their interactions. When they come together they share information, insight and advice. They help each other to solve problems. They may create tools together, manuals or designs. Over time, they develop a unique perspective on their topic as well as a body of knowledge, practices and approaches. They also develop personal relationships. They may even develop a sense of identity. They become a Community of Practice (Wenger et al. 2002).

Via the Communities of Practice, the city planners will express their needs for and requirements of the DSS. Involving the future users in the design of the BRIDGE DSS will enhance its relevance and therefore, its final use by the city planners. The lessons learnt by the members of the Communities of Practice in the five cities will be shared, when they come together in the so-called *BRIDGE Umbrella Community of Practice*.

2.2   Objectives of the protocol1 and intended users

This protocol aims to provide the BRIDGE partners with practical guidelines on the launching and sustaining of Communities of Practices in the cities of Helsinki, London, Gliwice, Firenze and Athens. BRIDGE partners include the BRIDGE researchers and professionals in the field of urban planning.

Figure 1: *The BRIDGE project and Communities of Practice on sustainable urban planning.*

Two different but cross fertilizing processes

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[1] The content of this guide is largely based on Wenger et al., (2002). *Cultivating Communities of Practice: A guide to manage knowledge*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

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The Communities of Practice on sustainable planning and the BRIDGE project form two different entities. Each entity has its own specific process with specific objectives. However, the BRIDGE project and the Communities of Practice will overlap and cross-fertilise each other where it concerns the development of the DSS and the exchange on new (scientific) knowledge on sustainability issues in the field of urban planning.

Unfortunately, the Communities of Practices on sustainable urban planning have not been developed *before* the start of BRIDGE project. So, till now the urban planners have not yet had the chance to influence the focus of the BRIDGE project. Communities of Practices are a way to organise the articulation of city planners' demands. If the BRIDGE really wants to bridge the gap between urban scientists and urban planners than serious attention should be given to the launching of Communities of Practices on sustainable urban planning in the five case study cities. Without purposefully organising the process of articulating the needs of urban planners and their active involvement through out the project, BRIDGE will probably end up with tools on sustainable urban development that are of little use to urban planning practitioners.

2.3 Reading this protocol

This guide on the launching and development of Communities of Practice takes the learning process of its members as a starting point. Whenever it is felt that the BRIDGE project researchers and their activities could positively contribute to the learning of the members of the Communities of Practice, these BRIDGE activities are integrated in the learning process of the community members. Moreover, when it is felt that the BRIDGE researchers could benefit from the knowledge and experiences of the urban planners, the interaction between them is made explicit in this document.

Chapter 2 describes the concept of Community of Practice and its principles. This chapter gives some background information and frames the next chapters. Chapter 3 discusses the launching of Communities of Practice on sustainable urban planning in the BRIDGE case study cities in terms of objectives and activities. Annex 1 and 2 provide more detailed information on the methods that can be used in the launching of the communities. Chapter 4 describes the mature stages of the development Communities of Practice and chapter 5 addresses issues such as the measuring and valuing the Communities of Practice in the context of the BRIDGE project.

The guidelines for the launching and the further development of the Communities of Practice are described in a rather general way. This does not imply that the Communities of Practice in the five BRDIGE case study cities will follow the same development process. Each community will have its own specific learning process and its own specific relationship with the BRIDGE researchers. Therefore, this protocol should no be used as a recipe book, but as a set of inspirations that will help the user to launch and cultivate Communities of Practice in the context of the BRIDGE project.

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3 Communities of Practice: Concept and characteristics

In this chapter the concept of Communities of Practice is further introduced. Some characteristics are described and Communities of Practice are compared with other organizational structures. At the end of the chapter the development stages of a Community of Practice are discussed.

3.1 What is a Community of Practice?

Communities of Practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and who learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. Communities of Practice develop around things that matter to people. The members of a community deepen their knowledge and expertise in a particular area by interacting on an ongoing basis. Examples of Communities of Practice are a band of artists seeking new forms of expression or a group of engineers working on similar problems.

Three core dimensions of a Community of Practice

Not everything called a community is a Community of Practice. A neighbourhood for instance, is often called a community, but is usually not a Community of Practice. Three characteristics are crucial:

Figure 2:   *The three core dimensions of a Community of Practice*

The domain

A community of Practice is not merely a club of friends or a network of connections between people. It has an identity defined by a shared domain of interest. Membership therefore implies a commitment to the domain, and, therefore, a shared competence that distinguishes members from other people. A domain can be anything like 'tomato growing', 'urban planning', 'empowerment' or 'surviving on the street'.

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The community

In pursuing their interest in their domain, the members build relationships that enable them to learn from each other. They engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other, and share information. Members of a Community of Practice interact on a regular basis, but they do not necessarily work together on a daily basis. The Impressionists, for instance, used to meet in cafes and studios to discuss the style of painting they were inventing together. These interactions were essential to create a Community of Practice, even though they often painted alone.

The practice

A Community of Practice is not necessarily the same as a community of interest i.e., people who share the same interest. Members of a Community of Practice are **practitioners**. They develop a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, and ways of addressing recurring problems: in short a shared practice. This takes time and sustained interaction. A good conversation with a stranger on an airplane may give one all sorts of interesting insights, but that does not make it a Community of Practice. On the other hand, nurses who meet regularly for lunch in a hospital cafeteria may not realize that their lunch discussions are one of their main sources of knowledge about how to care for patients. In the course of all these conversations, they develop a set of stories and cases that become a shared repertoire for their practice.

It is the combination of these three dimensions that constitutes a Community of Practice. And it is by developing these three elements in parallel that one cultivates such a community. In line with the three core dimensions, a Community of Practice defines itself along three dimensions:

What it is about: its joint enterprise or focus;

How it functions: mutual engagement that binds members together into a social entity;

The capability it has produced: a shared repertoire (routines, artefacts, vocabulary, styles, etc.) that members have developed over time.

Communities of Practice are known under various names, such as learning networks or thematic groups. While they all have the three elements of a domain, a community, and a practice, they come in a variety of forms. Some are quite small; some are very large, often with a core group and many peripheral members. Some are local and some cover the globe. Some meet mainly face-to-face, some mostly online. Some are within an organization and some include members from various organizations, projects or networks. Some are formally recognized, often supported with a budget; and some are completely informal and even invisible. The concept of community of practice has found a rich and growing number of practical applications in business, organizational design, government, education, professional associations, development projects, and civic life.

3.2   Characteristics of a Community of Practice

This paragraph discusses the main characteristics of a Community of Practice.

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Potential benefits of a Community of Practice

Experiences show that the benefits of Communities of Practice include:

- Easy reuse of knowledge assets, for example through shared access to a repository of best practices, reference documents, presentations etc.;

- Improved professionalism;

- New and innovative ideas for products and services by sharing perspectives and integrating different types of knowledge and experience;

- Social capital i.e., mutual trust and a shared set of values, virtues and expectations necessary to build a network of social relationships - a community;

- Quicker responses to clients' needs;

- Increased job satisfaction.

Communities of Practice versus other structures

Communities of Practice are different from other organizational groups such as formal working groups, project teams or informal networks as shown in Table 1. They also differ from communities of interest, in which people tend to gather around a particular issue, which is not practice oriented.

Table 1: Differences between a Community of Practice and other organizational structures (van Winkelen, 2009)

	Purpose	Membership	Duration
Community of Practice	Developing members' professional capabilities by building and exchanging knowledge and experience	- More or less closed membership - Relatively small - Interaction based on willingness to contribute with knowledge and experience - Membership creates a feeling of belonging	Whilst there is interest by the members
Formal working group	Delivering a product or service	- Membership assigned by management - Members are committed to fixed agreements and tasks	Until there is no longer a demand for the product or service
Project team	Accomplishing a specified task within a specific period of time	- Closed membership - Members are committed to fixed agreements and tasks	Until the end of the project
(Informal) Networks	Collecting and exchanging information	- Relatively open membership - Membership creates relationships - Interaction based on information exchange	As long as people feel the need to connect

Just remember

Never start a Community of Practice without considering other organization structures. In case of a deadline, establish a project team. If the objective is to organize exchanges amongst as many people as possible, start a network. The moment a community is considered to be the most useful organizational form, the launching of it should be in line with the principles of a Community of Practice.

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3.3   Principles for developing Communities of Practice

Communities of Practice are voluntary and develop organically. What makes them successful over time is their ability to generate enough excitement, relevance and value to attract and engage its members. The main question is how to design and facilitate for aliveness?

Based on experience, a framework of seven principles is suggested to generate "aliveness" and energy within Communities of Practice. These principles acknowledge that, while Communities of Practice need to be spontaneous and self-directed, guidelines can be helpful in creating the conditions for them to flourish. The seven principles are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2:   Seven principles for generating aliveness and energy within a Community of Practice

Principle 1	**Design for evolution**	Allow new people to become involved and new interests to be explored. Accept that there will be different activity levels and different kinds of support needed at different times.
Principle 2	**Open a dialogue between members of the community and people outside the community**	Encourage a discussion between those within and those outside the community about what it could achieve.
Principle 3	**Invite different levels of participation**	Some people will be active in the community and some people will appear passive. Accept that contributions and learning take place in different ways.
Principle 4	**Organise both formal and informal events**	Relationships are formed during informal community events. Formal organized events are needed to help people feel part of a community. Both are important.
Principle 5	**Focus on value**	The true value of a community may emerge as it matures and develops. Community members should be encouraged to be explicit about the value being delivered. This may initially help to raise awareness and to sustain motivation over time.
Principle 6	**Combine familiarity and excitement**	Familiar community activities help people to feel comfortable in participating. Introducing new ideas to challenge thinking also stimulates interest and keeps people engaged.
Principle 7	**Create a rhythm for the community**	Regular events create points around which activity can converge. They encourage people to keep coming back.

Chapter 3 and 4 provide ideas and examples on how to operationalise these principles through specific activities and facilitation methods.

Stages of community development

Communities of Practice move through various stages of development characterized by different levels of interaction among the members and different kinds of activities (figure 3).

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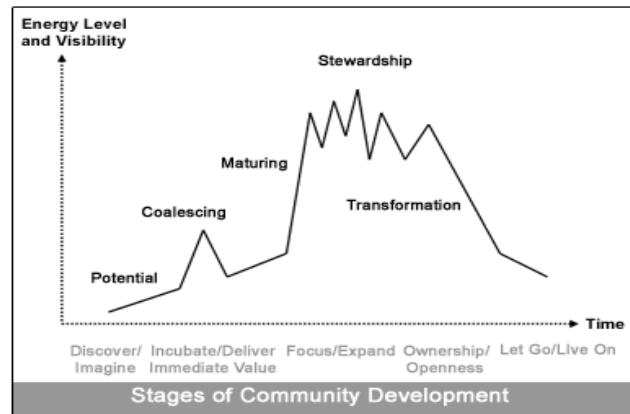Date: 30/11/2009
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Figure 3:   *Stages of development of a Community of Practice characterized by different levels of interaction among members (Wenger et al, 2002)*

Potential or orientation stage: Communities of Practice typically start as loose networks that hold the potential of becoming more connected. People face similar situations without the benefit of a shared practice.

Coalescing stage: As members build connections, they coalesce into a community. When they come together, they recognize their potential.

Maturing stage: Once formed, the community often grows in both membership and the depth of knowledge members share.

Stewardship stage: When mature, communities go through cycles of high and low activity, just like other living things. During this stage, communities often take active stewardship of the knowledge and practices they share and consciously develop them.

Transformation stage: Sometimes a dramatic event, a sudden influx of new members, or a fall in the level of energy calls for a radical transformation, perhaps a return to an earlier growth stage, or even the community's ending. The community is no longer central, but its members still remember it as a significant part of their identities.

Chapter 4 elaborates on the first two stages of the Communities of Practice on sustainable urban planning in the context of the BRIDGE project. Chapter 5 combines the mature, stewardship and transformation stages of development. Both chapters 4 and 5 are largely informed by the characteristics and principles of Communities of Practice as described in chapter 3. Special attention is paid to tensions caused by a deviation between the needs of the BRIDGE project and the needs of Communities of Practice. The learning process of the community members in the five case study cities is taken as a starting point. When it is felt that the BRIDGE work package activities could positively contribute to the learning of the Communities of Practice, these BRIDGE work package activities are introduced into the learning process of the community members. The other way round, each time it is felt that the BRIDGE researchers could benefit from the knowledge, experience and interests of the city planners, the interaction between these two groups is purposefully organised.

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4 Launching Communities of Practice

This chapter provides guidelines to get started with Communities of Practice on sustainable urban development in the BRIDGE case study cities i.e., Helsinki, London, Gliwice, Firenze and Athens. Chapter 4 is divided into two. Paragraph 4.1 addresses the *orientation stage* of the Communities of Practice. Specifically, it describes the major activities to be carried out, the role of the BRIDGE community coordinator, the potential members of the Communities of Practice and their kick off meeting. Paragraph 4.2 deals with the *coalescing stage* of the Communities of Practice on sustainable urban planning. It highlights the activities and roles specific to this development stage.

Noteworthy is that diverse approaches to supporting Communities of Practice have been adopted by different organizations: some see them as largely emergent phenomena; others have adopted more deliberate strategies to design and manage the shape and purpose of Communities of Practice. When launching and sustaining a community, it is tempting to develop a detailed plan of activities, roles, membership and requirements. However, as a Community of Practice is fundamentally a self-organizing collection of volunteers, planning a community is more a matter of finding the triggers to catalyze its learning. The overall goal of the early stages is to promote community development around the three key dimensions: *Domain, community* and *practice* by 1) identifying the focus of the community; 2) building relationships among members and a sense of belonging; and, 3) identifying specific topics that would be of high interest to the members.

Just remember

The user of this guide should keep in mind that the development of the Communities of Practice in the five BRDIGE case study cities is likely to be different from each other. Each community will have its own specific learning process and its own specific relationship with the BRIDGE researchers.

4.1   Orientation stage

In the orientation stage of a Community of Practice, the chances of developing loose networks of people into a community are being explored. The orientation stage might take 3-6 months. This period will be different for each community in the five BRIDGE case study cities.

The Communities of Practice of BRIDGE will begin with an informal group of people who loosely network on sustainable urban planning. The key issue at the start of the communities is to find enough common ground among its potential members for them to feel connected and see the value of sharing insights and problems concerning sustainable urban planning. In one city it might be a specific urban planning topic such as transportation. In other cities it might be 'sustainable urban planning' as a shared domain of interest. At a certain point, the idea of forming a community is brought into this loose network; it will redirect people's attention. They start to see their own issues and interests as something that is shared and they will see their relationships in the new light of a potential community. When a sense of a shared domain develops, the need for more systematic interactions will emerge. In the orientation stage, a community coordinator plays an important role.

Table 3 indicates the key activities that need to be carried out in the orientation stage of the Communities of Practice in the five BRIDGE case study cities. The table also shows the people involved in the activities, the

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facilitation methods that can be used and the link with the BRIDGE project. The three activities will be described in more detail in the next paragraphs.

Table 3: Orientation stage of a Community of Practice in the context of BRIDGE

Orientation stage: Possible activities, persons involved and methods				
Possible activities	**Who responsible**	**Who involved**	**Methods/tools**	**Prerequisites from – link with BRIDGE**
Identifying and contacting a potential community coordinator	The BRIDGE case study leaders	Colleagues and other people working in the field of urban planning	Exploring one's own networks and that of colleagues	• Information on the BRIDGE project • (First part of the) Protocol to develop Communities of Practice in the context of the BRIDGE project
Identifying and interviewing prospective community members	• BRIDGE community coordinator And: • The BRIDGE case study leaders	Potential community members	• Guide for interviewing potential members of the Communities of Practice (annex 1 this document) • Snowball method	• Information on BRIDGE • Information on Communities of Practice in the context of the BRIDGE project
Community kickoff meeting • Define the domain in relation to sustainable urban planning and to identify important issues in the domain; • Help the planning community to define common knowledge needs • Discussing priorities in sustainable urban planning objectives and indicators	Community coordinator	• First set of (potential) community members • BRIDGE researchers of WP 6, WP 7 and WP 5 • Alterra Community of Practice researchers	• 'Field' visit • Community members share and discuss problems and future challenges in their sustainable urban planning practice (e.g., sub group discussions) • Drafting work plan for the Community of Practice	• Preliminary insights from WP 2 will be used as input for discussion • Focus of the DSS will be addressed

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Identifying and contacting a (potential) community coordinator

One of the first activities in the launching of a Community of Practice will be the search for a community coordinator. The quality of a community coordinator's leadership is an important factor in a community's success. The community coordinator is a community member who helps the community to clarify and focus on the domain, to build and maintain relationships and to further develop its practice. In the context of the BRIDGE project, the persons who are responsible for the relationship with the urban planners in the cities of Helsinki, London, Gliwice, Firenze and Athens could identify and contact potential community coordinators. It might be possible that the BRIDGE case study leader, who is responsible for the relationship with the urban planners, decides to become the community coordinator him/herself.

In the orientation stage, the community coordinators will perform a number of key functions and carry out activities such as:

- Identifying existing (informal) networks, groups of professionals and/or individual professionals who (are willing to) exchange on sustainable urban planning issues;

- Discussions with potential members to discover the issues they share;

- Help the community members to imagine how increased networking and knowledge sharing on sustainable urban planning could be valuable;

- Help the community to define the domain as well as important issues in the domain;

- Help the community to define common knowledge needs;

- Help the community members to build relationships;

- Bridge the cultural differences between the BRIDGE researchers and city planners;

- Plan and facilitate community events.

It is not always possible to identify and encourage a person to fulfil the role of a community coordinator at the very start of a community. It is possible that a coordinator will be identified after the first gathering of the community.

Just remember

Good community coordinators:
- Are knowledgeable and passionate about sustainable urban planning;
- Are well respected by the community members, both by the city planners and the BRIDGE researchers;
- Are not necessarily leading experts in the field of sustainable urban planning, but do have interpersonal skills for networking and the ability to facilitate the articulation of the professional needs of the community members on sustainable urban planning;
- Are able to facilitate the community members' learning on sustainable urban planning by making use of tools and models provided by the BRIDGE project and by using his/her own repertoire of facilitation methods.

Common community coordinator failures:
- The coordinator does not make the time to perform his/her role as community coordinator;
- Too little attention is paid to individual relationships and informal networking with community members. Too much focus on the formal meetings;
- When coordinators do not have the knowledge to understand the technical issues in the community it is difficult to take the initiative to move the community forward.

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Identifying and interviewing potential members

According to Wenger, et al. 2002, the challenge of launching a community is not to start with a completely new community but to identify and encourage already existing but slumbering 'communities'. The value of using one's own social and business networks and those of others for identifying these slumbering 'communities' cannot be underestimated. Besides the already existing informal networks, individual professionals can be looked for as well. In the BRIDGE context, one might in particular think of:

- Colleagues, informal groups or networks of professionals sharing a concern for sustainable urban planning (and who regularly meet on this topic);

- Potential users of the BRIDGE Decision Support System: staff members and other professionals dealing in their work with energy, water, carbon and pollutants;

- Data providers for BRIDGE Decision Support System: staff members and other professionals dealing in their work with energy, water, carbon and pollutants.

BRIDGE researchers are peripheral members of the community; especially for foreign researchers it will not be possible to participate very often. However, especially BRIDGE researchers from WP 2, 5, 6, 7 and 8 might contribute to the communities' learning.

The snowball sampling technique can be applied to continue the process of identifying potential members of the BRIDGE community[1] (Heckathorn, 1997). Ask the first set of potential members of the BRIDGE community who else could be interested in joining the community. Then follow up with these new people. Repeat this method of requesting referrals until one feels to have gathered enough people.

A useful approach in recruiting members to participate in the BRIDGE community of practice is to "interview" them. This process is not used to screen out potential members, but to discuss the community's potential value to the individuals and to their organizations. The interview aims to dig deeper into the potential member's areas of interest and what he or she feels should be the priorities for the community. Additionally, the interviews are a good way to identify and recruit future leaders, as it may unveil skills one may otherwise not have recognized. They can also help to build relationships and to create trust between the members and the coordinator. The coordinator (or the BRIDGE partner who is responsible for the relationship with the urban planners or both) can also decide to organize an informal meeting with different prospective community members together. Annex 1 presents issues to be addressed in the first discussions with potential members.

The Community kick off meeting

When potential community members and a preliminary area of interest have been identified, it is time to hold a first meeting. In case the previous actions were carried out through interviews, the kick off meeting will be the first gathering of the prospective community members. Preferable, the kick off meeting will take one day and should be the start of regularly scheduled meetings, which help to anchor the community. To create a sense of community and familiarity it is helpful to have the group meet in the same place for each meeting.

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Participants of the kick off meeting should include:

- The (potential) members of the Community of Practice i.e., professionals working in the field of sustainable city planning;

- A BRIDGE researcher who is involved in the design of the BRIDGE DSS;

- A BRIDGE researcher who is involved in developing insight on the needs and demands of the planning community in the context of sustainable design (WP2);

- A BRIDGE researcher on Communities of Practice;

- A BRIDGE researcher of WP 5.

A successful kick off meeting addresses both content issues and relational aspects. The results of the interviews with potential members form the basis for the design of the kick off meeting. It is important that the kick off meeting is different from an ordinary workshop. The kick off meeting should facilitate the exchange of knowledge and ideas in a way that fosters the motivation of the participants for being a member of the BRIDGE community. Annex 2 describes the BRIDGE community kick off meeting in terms of possible activities and facilitation methods. The BRIDGE researchers specializing in Communities of Practice (Work package 2) will be available to assist in designing and co-facilitating the community kick off meeting.

Just remember

The results of the kick off meeting should be:
- Agreement on the focus (domain) of the community and a first set of issues the community will address;
- Agreement on how the members are going to organize themselves (community);
- Agreement on the next activities that will be carried out by the community (practice);
- The start of building relationships between the members.

It is a challenge to avoid that the kick off meetings are dominated by the agenda of the BRIDGE project. The chosen domain of the community does not necessarily fully correspond with what the BRIDGE project is able to offer. The main challenge in this stage of development of the Community of Practice is defining a focus that is of interest to all community members, and helping them to imagine how increased networking and knowledge sharing could be valuable. The challenge for the BRIDGE researchers is to make the potential benefits of the BRIDGE project explicit, for example, the DSS and scientific knowledge on sustainable urban planning.

Different levels of participation

After the interviews with potential community members and the kick off meeting, the community coordinator will have a first impression who is really motivated for joining the Community of Practice. It is good to realise that people participate in a community for different reasons and in different ways. Because people have different levels of interest in the community, one should not expect all community members to participate equally. Good community architecture invites different levels of participation. Firstly, there is a small core group of people, who actively participate in most of the community's activities. The core group takes on small projects, identifies new topics the community should address and moves the community along its learning agenda. Usually the core group forms about 10% of the entire community.

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At the second level there is a group of active members (Figure 4). These people attend community activities on a regular basis and form about 20 % of the entire community. The third level: most of the community members are peripheral and rarely participate. Instead, they keep to the sideline watching the interaction of the core and the active members. Some remain peripheral as they feel their contributions are not appropriate for the whole. Others do not have time to participate more actively. These peripheral activities are essential to the community as the people on the sidelines are usually not as passive as it looks. They might have private discussions within their own organization about community topics. Members with a specific expertise can find themselves in the peripheral area for a long time. The moment their specific knowledge is needed, they usually become active members.
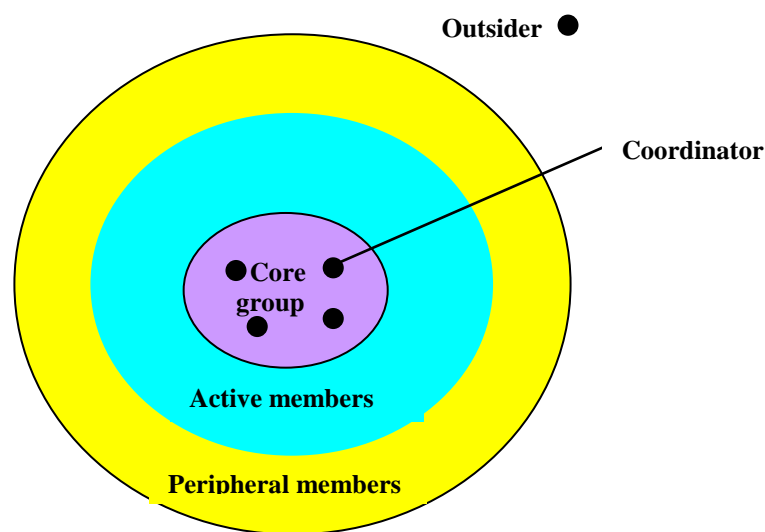

Figure 4:   *Different levels of participation in a Community of Practice*

4.2   Coalescing stage

When there is sufficient common ground to continue as a Community of Practice, the community will launch itself more formally, thereby beginning the *coalescing* stage. In this stage of development, the community members start to see the value of coming together. Knowledge and experiences are intensively shared. The start of the *coalescing* stage will be different for each Community of Practice in the five case study cities. It might take 3-6 months to begin this stage of development.

Major challenges of the coalescing stage for the Communities of Practice in the five BRIDGE case study cities include:

- Allowing members to build relationships, trust, and awareness of their common interests and needs;

- Fostering the (professional) development of community members (best practice, lessons learnt, tools, decision support systems);

- Managing the relationships between the community members and their formal organizations;

- Benefitting from the knowledge of BRIDGE researchers and preliminary outcomes of the BRIDGE project;

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- Linking up with each other through the umbrella Community of Practice;

- Maintaining the liveliness of the community by combining familiarity and excitement.

Developing the core group and strengthening relationships between community members

The coalescing stage is a critical time for building *the core group* and for further developing the relationship between community members. During this stage, community coordinators often feel a pull to involve members who are likely to become peripheral members (members who participate very irregularly) or to attract new members. However, during the coalescing stage building new membership is less important than developing the core group. It is through collaboration between the core group members that the community will discover the added value of coming together.

The core group of a Community of Practice consists of people who (are willing to) actively participate in most of the community's activities. The community coordinator is a member of the core group. Usually the core group forms about 10% of the entire community. The core group members decide on the objectives and design of the community meetings, they take on small projects together and identify new topics the community should address. Through activities during the entire coalescing stage, a group of actively participating city planners will develop themselves into a core group.

It the coalescing stage, the sharing of knowledge and experiences amongst the community members is important to *strengthen relationships* between them and to develop an awareness of their common interests and needs. On the one hand, it is important to make the practical knowledge explicit, based on the experiences of the community members. On the other hand, bringing in new knowledge from BRIDGE researchers can provide novelty and excitement that complements the familiarity of (everyday) urban planning practices. Coordinators need to look for opportunities to generate value early in the community's life. For instance, they can try to link people who have problems with others who may have solutions.

The meetings and other activities of the Communities of Practice in the five BRIDGE case study cities after the kick off meeting will be planned and designed by the community coordinator in collaboration with other core group members. If needed, assistance could be provided by the BRIDGE Community of Practice researchers. To benefit from the knowledge of the BRIDGE researchers and preliminary outcomes of the project the community coordinator should be in close contact with the BRIDGE case study leader.

Table 4 shows a number of key activities to carry out in the coalescing stage of the Communities of Practice in the five case study cities. The table also shows the people involved in the activities, the facilitation methods that can be used and the link with the BRIDGE project. Th next paragraphs will explain these activities in more detail.

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Table 4: Coalescing stage of a BRIDGE Community of Practice and possible activities

Coalescing stage: Activities, persons involved and methods				
Possible activities	**Who responsible**	**Who involved**	**Methods/ tools**	**Prerequisites from – link with BRIDGE**
Developing the core group and strengthening relationships between community members	Community coordinator	Community members	Informal talks, meetings, excursions	Protocol to develop Communities of Practice in the context of the BRIDGE project
Next community meetings: • Deepen the analysis on current urban development practice • Sharing of manuals, tools, indicators that are in use by community members for sustainable planning • Developing a learning agenda • Learning about the use of specific urban metabolism models • Agreeing on indicators for monitoring and objectives concerning sustainable urban planning as input for DSS development • Discussing and assessing alternative planning options for a real life project with the use of a prototype of the DSS	Community coordinator / core group	Community members If needed: • BRIDGE Community of Practice • BRIDGE researchers of WP 4, 5, 6 and 7	Sets of indicators agreed upon by the community members in the five case study cities Prototype of the DSS	Sets of indicators agreed upon by the community members in the five case study cities Prototype of the DSS
Participation of the five Communities of Practice in the BRIDGE umbrella Community of Practice • Agreeing on indicators for monitoring objectives in the domain of sustainable urban planning as input for DSS development • Trying out a prototype of the DSS	BRIDGE researchers of WP 8 and WP 5	Community coordinators of the communities in the five cities and a few core group members of each community BRIDGE researchers of WP 7 and 6		

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Deepening the analysis on current urban planning practices to develop the learning agenda

The community coordinator and the core members of the community could decide to focus a next meeting on a more detailed analysis of current urban planning practices in the light of possible future developments. It might be considered to use of some of the models BRIDGE researchers are working with. These models might serve as a new pair of spectacles that makes planners to look at their planning practices in a different way. Moreover, the community members might be interested in sharing the methods, tools and procedures that they use in sustainable urban planning. The outcome of the analysis will help to further define the learning agenda on sustainable urban planning of the communities.

Agreeing on indicators for monitoring objectives in the field of sustainable urban planning as input for DSS development

In case the community members feel the DSS that will be developed in the BRIDGE context could be of use to them, there is need for a more detailed discussion on indicators that could be used to verify the extent objectives in the field of sustainable urban planning are achieved. The indicators will serve as input for the development of the DSS. It is likely that the more the DSS is informed by indicators put forward by the community members, the more the DSS will be of use to them.

Identifying and carrying out joint projects in the field of sustainable urban planning

During the community gatherings the need for joint actions or small projects might emerge. It is important to enhance the community members to become engaged in practical and small joint projects with (quick) tangible results. Moreover, community members who have specific problems can be linked with others who might have solutions.

One (or two) of the real life project plans could be used to experiment with a prototype of the DSS. For example, such a real life project might deal with the development of a green park in the city. With the help of the prototype DSS various planning alternatives could be assessed from a sustainability point of view.

Participation of the Communities of Practice in the BRIDGE umbrella Community of Practice

At the end of the coalescing stage a BRIDGE umbrella Community of Practice will be organised to enable the members of the five Communities of Practice to:

- Exchange the first experiences with their communities;

- Jointly discuss emergent issues in relation to sustainable urban planning;

- Agreeing on indicators for monitoring objectives in the domain of sustainable urban planning as input for DSS development;

- Trying out a prototype of the DSS.

Just remember

The more the activities in the coalescing stage are dominated by the agenda of the BRIDGE project (e.g., agreeing on the sets of sustainable urban planning indicators, experimentation with (prototypes of) the DSS, the more the group will become a consultative platform rather than a Community of Practice. It is a challenge in this stage of development of the Community of Practice to further define a learning agenda that goes beyond the scope of the BRIDGE project.

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5 Mature stages of Communities of Practices

The previous chapter focussed on how to get communities up and running, this chapter deals with how to help communities grow and to assist them to truly integrate with the professional work of the community members. Wenger and his colleagues (2002) call these stages of development 'maturing' and 'stewardship'. The final stage is called 'transformation', and it can both lead to a revolutionary renewal of the Community of Practice, or to its end.

5.1 Maturing stage: Building a communal identity

In the maturing stage, the main issue for the community shifts from establishing value to establishing an identity. The question is no longer whether the community can work but rather what it wants to become. It is no longer an issue how the members can help each other, but what that they feel responsible for.

Placing the domain in context

At this stage, the community takes a broader perspective and looks at its domain as a whole. Questions the members need to address include: Where does our domain fit in the broader scheme of things? What do we have to do to fully take care of it? This kind of self-consciousness and the visibility it brings also raises the need to clarify the role of the community in the organizations and departments the community members are working with. Moreover, they need to make the role explicit of the community in relation to other groups or networks. The communities need to clarify expectations both internally and externally. It needs to present itself to the 'outside world'.

Expanding the membership

Becoming a mature community also means that membership is no longer ad hoc. Caring for a domain goes beyond a circle of acquaintances. However, the community members have to ask themselves who else should be involved. The members need to make sure the community is not limiting itself to a small club of friends. Growth at this stage can be quite rapid. The community needs to accommodate newcomers who may find that joining the community is daunting. It also needs to preserve the quality of relationships that made it successful in the first place.

Establishing standard practice and continued development of a learning agenda

A shared practice is no longer the emergent property of a set of interactions in which members discuss problems and share ideas and insights in the field of sustainable planning. Building a coherent body of expertise means addressing both the known and the unknown aspects in the field of sustainable urban planning. The community needs to set standards for established knowledge and recurring problems and to find ways to fill the gaps in its knowledge. Once a community understands what knowledge it has and what knowledge it needs, it can take an active role in further defining its learning agenda.

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5.2 Stewardship stage: Developing knowledge strategically

Stewarding a domain of knowledge in the field of sustainable urban planning requires a strategic approach to knowledge development. The community members need to address questions such as: How relevant is the knowledge we developed on sustainable urban planning to the strategy of the organizations or institutes we are working for? How do we organize ourselves so that our community becomes a steward of knowledge and practices that are relevant to our organizations or institutes?

Achieving influence and sustained relevance

Mature communities need to establish their authority and achieve influence with respect to sustainability in urban planning. The relevance and survival of a community of practice depends on a mutual interaction of the community members with colleagues in the organizations and institutes they work for.

Gaining influence for the communities is about becoming engaged in strategic dialogues with colleagues outside the Community of Practice. It is about participating in decision making and setting agendas. Through these interactions, the communities will not only adapt to their formal working environment, they will also change it.

Balancing intimacy and openness

In the course of the stewardship stage, communities tend to become more complex social structures. The established relationships between community members should not become a barrier to potential new participants. The communities need to establish a system by which newcomers can be recruited and integrated into the community in order to bring in new blood. It needs to develop new leaders to share the load and reinvigorate the community.

Updating practice

A community must constantly update its practice and keep its knowledge base up to date, while still preserving the knowledge it has accumulated.

5.3 Transformation stage: Renewal or ending

Because of the open-enededness of a Community of Practice, it is sometimes difficult to know whether a community has reached the end of its journey or whether it is just in a temporary slump. The key to a successful conclusion is to carefully assess what the organization and the members need from the community and to check whether renewing or stopping the community is necessary.

Recognizing the change

At a certain point in time, the domain of sustainability in urban planning may no longer be considered relevant. Maybe the domain is overlapping with another domain so much that the community does not have a distinct identity anymore and it needs to merge with another community. Or it might be that the community members have lost interest to interact for other reasons.

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Closing gracefully

Even when community members do not have the energy to keep the community fully active, some of them may still hope to remain connected. Assessing people's real energy for staying connected and how to accomplish this helps to create realistic expectations.

Establishing a legacy

Even though the community itself may have outlived its usefulness to its members, the knowledge products such as the DSS, sets of sustainability indicators, protocols etc. may still be useful to the organization or institutes the community members officially work for and to others.

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6 Monitoring and valuing Communities of Practice

Communities need to monitor and value their performance to know how they are doing and to guide ongoing efforts to become more vibrant and effective. In this chapter we make a distinction between a regular monitoring of the learning process (internal processes and activities) and valuing the outputs of the Community of Practice (assessing the relevance of these outputs outside the Community of Practice).

6.1   Monitoring the learning process

Monitoring is considered as the regular collection and analysis of information and data to assist timely decision making, ensure accountability and provide the basis for the valuing the outcome of the Community of Practice. It is important that the community members, including the community coordinator, are aware of the learning process they are going through. Monitoring the community's learning process can reinforce members' participation and provides a basis for adapting approaches and prioritizing activities.

A common pitfall in monitoring learning processes is that many data are collected without being used. Data collection for monitoring is costly, therefore, it is important to consider carefully what data and information the community (and other stakeholders) need to improve the functioning of the community. The monitoring should support decisions on, for example, what activities to undertake, who else to involve, how to facilitate the interaction between the members, and how to manage conflicts.

The following issues should be considered to develop a monitoring system that provides the needed information at an appropriate cost.

For whom and what purpose to monitor?

The people who will use the monitoring results are predominantly the community members, including the community coordinator. The members might require different data than the community coordinator. Community coordinators might want to know which community activities are valuable to the community members and community members might like to know what new insights they have gained through interacting on a regular basis. Senior managers are usually more interested in the value of the outputs of the community.

What to collect, how and when?

This step involves identifying what needs to be observed regularly, what data need to be collected, how and how often. Experience shows that the more community members are involved in deciding what to monitor, the more they will finally make use of the monitoring results and as such, the more the monitor will serve as a learning tool in itself. In Table 5 we will give some examples of what could be monitored in the context of the BRIDGE project.

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Table 5: Examples of what aspects of the communities' learning could be monitored in the context of the BRIDGE project and how

Possible issues to collect data on	Possible indicators to use - possible questions to respond to	Methods /tools to collect the data
Domains of a Community of Practice		
Domain	• To what extent is sustainability in urban planning a shared concern? • To what extent can 'sustainability in urban planning' be regarded as the domain of interest of the community? • Has a learning agenda been defined? If yes, what's on the learning agenda? • To what extent has the domain been refined in the course of the process?	• Observations during meetings of the community • Interviews and informal talks with community members
Community	• Who are the members of the community and what is their background? • Why have they decided to become a member ? • How often do they interact and why? • To what extent is the community a loose network/ to what extent do the members feel connected to each other? • To what extent has a sense of identity been developed by the community? • Have common stories or "inside" jokes been developed? • To what extent do the community members give suggestions on what to discuss in a next gathering? • Do the community members meet each other informally beyond the formal meetings? If yes, what issues do they discuss? If not, why not? • Does the community meet without the presence of BRIDGE researchers? If not, why not?	• Observations during meetings of the community • Interviews and informal talks with community members
Practice	• What practical issues in relation to sustainable urban planning do the members discuss? • What practical issues do the members want to learn about jointly? (Procedures, skills, decision making etc.) • To what extent are the community members using the new procedures /tools/techniques in formal planning procedures? • How can the relationship between the Community of Practice and the various organisations where the community members are employed be described?	• Observations during meetings of the community • Interviews and informal talks with community members

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Social learning[1]		
History of the situation	• What are the accepted ways of doing things in relation to (sustainable) urban planning? • Which historically important events, culture, policies or institutions frame routines in urban planning?	• Observations during meetings of the community • Interviews and informal talks with community members • Review of policy papers
Stakeholders and stakeholding[2]	• Who are the members of the community and what is their background? • What are the objectives, aims and/or aspirations of the participants within the community? • To what extent do members discuss about who is "in" and who is "out"? To what extent is there consensus about who is "in" and who is "out"? • To what extent do the members share the same view about the concept of sustainability? • To what extent do the members share the same view about the reasons for unsustainable urban planning? What changes in perceptions concerning these reasons can be observed over time? What caused these changes? • To what extent do the members share the same view about what is desirable? What changes in perceptions concerning what is desirable can be observed over time? What caused these changes? • How does the interaction with the other community members affect the energy level of individual members? • To what extent are the community roles and responsibilities identified?	• Observations during meetings of the community • Interviews and informal talks with community members
Facilitation	• What is the role of the community coordinator in the gatherings? • What is the role of the community coordinator in between the formal meetings of the community? • To what extent do the community members share their knowledge and experience? • To what extent are members assisted to learn through joint actions and joint reflections? • To what extent are the community members encouraged to act as co-producers of the Decision Support System and other tools/procedures that	• Observations during meetings of the community • Interviews and informal talks with community members

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[1] Adapted from the learning framework which is being used in the project 'Social Learning for the Integrated Management and Sustainable Use of Water at Catchment Scale' (http://slim.open.ac.uk/page.cfm). Social learning is seen as a dynamic process which enables individuals to engage in new ways of thinking together to address complex and uncertain problems.

[2] *Stakeholding* expresses the idea that individuals or groups *actively* construct and promote their stakes in relation to those of others (http://slim.open.ac.uk/page.cfm)

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	aim to improve sustainable planning practice? • What type of learning activities do the members prefer? • Does the community coordinator have sufficient time and resources to fulfil his/her task?	
Understanding ecological constraints	• How do planners/urban professionals understand urban metabolism and the role of people in it? • What is the role of scientific knowledge in their understanding and what is the role of informal or tacit knowledge?	• Observations during meetings • Interviews and informal talks with community members

Table 5 gives some examples of what could be decided on to monitor in the context of the BRIDGE project. The list of examples is by no means exhaustive. Each community can have its own monitoring system.

Just remember

Often, monitoring of Communities of Practice focuses on the collection of too much data of which a part is not used. In the end, people will loose faith in the monitoring and the system will collapse. The community coordinators need to discuss carefully with the members what to monitor on a regular basis and why. The examples of what to monitor in table 5 can be used to guide this discussion. It should be avoided that a community coordinator or community members need to collect data that will not serve their own interest.

The usefulness of regular monitoring of the learning process will be higher if applied in combination with valuing the outcome of the Communities of Practice.

6.2 Valuing the outputs of Communities of Practice

Besides regular monitoring of the learning process it is important that both the community members and the people supporting the community (funders, facilitators) are aware of the value the community generates for the members' business or professional work. Measuring the communities' value can legitimize their function and existence, reinforce members' participation and provide a basis for adapting approaches and prioritizing activities.

To make the outputs of the Community of Practice explicit, the results of the monitoring should be linked to the work or business the community members are professionally involved in. Wenger and his colleagues (2002) have developed a method to evaluate the outputs of the Community of Practice. This valuing method starts with the activities of the Community of Practice and follows their effect through the application of knowledge products in the professional practice in order to create value for community members themselves, their customers and other stakeholders. Stories appear to be a good way to explain the linkages between community activities, knowledge resources and performance outcomes (see figure 5).

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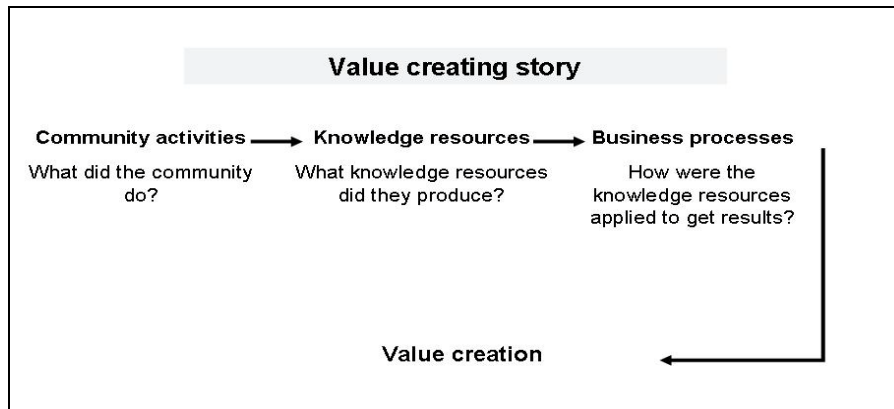|	
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Figure 5:   *Value creating story as a method to evaluate the output of a Community of Practice*

Stories to value the outputs of Communities of Practice

A story consists of three main elements (Wenger et al, 2002) (Figure 5):

- The knowledge development activity/ies (e.g., workshop, field visits) to solve a problem, to meet a challenge or to learn a new skill;

- The knowledge resources or knowledge products (e.g., relationships, insight in best practices, procedures or a decision support system) generated via the activities;

- How these knowledge resources were applied to create value.

To make the story more complete, it helps to describe the initial problem or challenge and to explain what would have happened without the community. Such stories depend on the community members' involvement, because only they can tell what knowledge outputs they obtained and how they have put it into action. A good story describes how the knowledge resources were developed and applied.

> **BRIDGE CoP in Helsinki: an imaginary story of value**
> In the context of the BRIDGE project, an *imaginary story* could begin by describing how various urban professionals in Helsinki were working individually on a project management guide to improve the sustainability in planning. These professionals started to hold monthly gatherings to discuss about common sustainability issues. Their meetings generated: 1) insights in best practices regarding sustainable urban planning; 2) stronger relationships between professionals in the field of water management, energy; 3) forestry and urban planning and 4) a project guide for integrated sustainable urban planning. The new insights and project manual were applied by the urban professionals. The new way of working eliminated a lot of duplicate work and improved the sustainability of projects.

Good stories have a number of additional benefits. Besides documenting how communities build, share and apply knowledge assets, stories provide recognition for the community members, they reinforce the importance of making one's practice visible in the organisation or network and they help building a culture that values knowledge sharing and innovation.

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In order to avoid that one will just collect isolated events and generate unrepresentative insights, the community coordinator could conduct a series of interviews with a sample of community members to systemically capture of a range of community activities. Whenever possible, the community coordinator should also capture quantitative indicators e.g., from reports. Ultimately, the causal stories and additional data should be aggregated to summarize the total value of community initiatives.

Likewise, what has been mentioned for the monitoring of the learning process (5.1), evaluation of the outputs of a Community of Practice is expensive. Therefore, it is worth considering carefully what the community and other stakeholders need to learn from the evaluation and where to focus scarce time and resources.

Experiences with evaluating the outputs of Communities of Practice show that values include:

- New knowledge created in the community;

- Easy reuse of knowledge assets, for example through shared access to a repository of best practices, reference documents, presentations etc.;

- Improvements in process performance;

- Innovative ideas for products and services;

- Quicker response to clients' needs by providing access to the expertise needed to solve problems;

- The community's role in recruiting and retaining talent;

- Social capital i.e. mutual trust and shared set of values, virtues and expectations, necessary to build a network of social relationships - a community;

- Increased job satisfaction.

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Annex 1: Guide for interviewing potential members of the Communities of Practice[1]

This interview guide can be used in the discussion with potential members of the Communities of Practice in the five BRIDGE case study cities. It will help the community coordinator (or the BRIDGE case study leader) in setting the idea of becoming a Community of Practice in order to:

- Find out whether a Community of Practice would be an appropriate approach for organizing the interaction amongst city planners and BRIDGE researchers;

- Identify potential members of the Community of Practice;

- Determine a topic which is interesting enough to draw (other) participants.

The discussion can take various forms such as a face to face semi structured interview or an informal lunch. The issues discussed in the interview address the three core dimensions of a Community of Practice:

1. The definition of the focus (area of shared inquiry) and of the key issues to be addressed by the community (Domain);

2. The relationships among members and the sense of belonging (Community);

3. The body of knowledge, methods, stories, cases, tools etc. the community should develop over time (Practice).

Issues and questions to address might include:

- What is the BRIDGE project about? (including preliminary ideas on Communities of Practice on sustainable urban planning, BRIDGE focus on the development of a Decision Support System)

- What could be the benefits of joining the community for the person(s) in question? (Think of: 1) exchanging knowledge and experiences with other community members; 2) jointly developing new tools or perspectives for improving planning practice and 3) taking advantage of sharing knowledge with BRIDGE researchers)

- Would you be interested in joining a Community of Practice that is focused on sustainable urban planning? Why /why not

- Would you be willing to share your knowledge and experience on sustainability issues in urban planning?

- What do you think the goals of this Community of Practice should include?

- Do you think the domain 'sustainable urban planning' is either too broad or too narrow to be of interest to you? If so, how would you shrink or grow the concept?

- What are the hot issues or the burning questions the Community of Practice should address?

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[1] This interview guide is based on Etienne Wenger's "Cultivating Communities of Practice; a quick start-up guide. http://www.ewenger.com/theory/start-up_guide_PDF.pdf (accessed March, 2009).

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- Who are (other) specific groups (formal and informal), teams or persons that would be particularly interested in this community?

- What types of information or new skills would you hope to gather from this Community of Practice?

- Do you have an interest in helping to further develop this Community of Practice? Which responsibilities or roles are you interested in?

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Annex 2: Ideas for the kick off meeting of the Communities of Practice

Annex 2 describes the community kick off meeting in terms of possible programme, activities and facilitation methods.

Objectives of the kick off meeting

The objectives of the kick off meeting include:

- Developing agreement on the focus of the community and a first set of issues the community will address (domain);

- Making the link between the Community of Practice and the BRIDGE project explicit; i.e., the potential benefits and risks for the community;

- Developing agreement on how the members are going to organize themselves (community);

- Developing agreement on the next activities that will be carried out by the community members (practice);

- To start building relationships between the members;

- To fosters the motivation of the participants for being (or becoming) a member of the community.

The chosen domain of the community does not necessarily fully correspond with what the BRIDGE project is able to offer. The domain can be wider than the scope of BRIDGE project, but also narrower. The main challenge in this stage of development of the community is defining the scope of the domain to interest people, finding people and helping them to imagine how increased networking and knowledge sharing could be valuable.

Facilitation

- The results of the interviews with potential members (see chapter 4) form the basis for the set up of the kick off meeting;

- A successful kick off meeting addresses both content issues and relational aspects;

- It is important that the working approach used in the kick off meeting will be different from the approach in ordinary workshops. The kick off meeting should facilitate the exchange of knowledge and ideas in a way that fosters the motivation of the participants of being a member of the community;

- The community coordinator or the person, who is within the BRIDGE project responsible for the contact with city planners, will facilitate the kick off meeting. He /she can ask for assistance of the BRIDGE Community of Practice researchers.

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Possible programme and activities of the community kick off meeting (1 day)

Possible programme elements of the community kick off meeting might include:

- Introduction of the participants;

- Introduction to the idea of becoming a Community of Practice;

- Introduction to the BRIDGE project;

- Strengths, weaknesses and challenges in the field of sustainable urban planning (field excursion – discussions);

- Discussing priorities in sustainable urban planning, sustainable urban planning objectives and corresponding indicators;

- What do we, as community members, want to focus on. What are the burning issues we want to address?

- What do we want to get out of the community? What is our primary intent of coming together?

- How are we going to organize ourselves?

- What are we going to do the next time we meet?

Ad 1. Introduction of the participants

There are many ways to organise the introduction of the participants. Try to choose a method that immediately shows that this meeting is different from other meetings. The method 'What do we share' might be a good choice (see box 1 for a description on the method)

Box 1: 'What do we Share?'

What can be achieved?
- Participants being introduced to each other
- Give insight in the diversity in the group
- Give insight in what the group members have in common
- To build group dynamics

Time required
- 0.5 -1 hour depending the size of the group

Materials needed
A relatively large conference room

Procedure
- Start with something the entire group has in common
- Divide the group into two and ask the members of both groups to discover something they have in common. Exchange on the outcome
- Again divide the two groups into four and ask the members of the groups to discover something they have in common. Exchange on the outcome
- Continue this procedure till there are only pairs left. These pairs will tell the others what they have in common \
- The facilitator winds up by highlighting a number of differences and communalities.

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Ad 2. Introduction to the idea of becoming Community of Practice

With the aid of an example (e.g., The Impressionists) the following will be explained

- What is a Community of Practice and what not?

- The 'benefits' and 'costs' of becoming a Community of Practice;

- How to become a Community of Practice on sustainable urban planning?

The leaflet with background information on the BRIDGE project will be made available to the participants.

Ad 3. Introduction to the BRIDGE project

- The objectives and scope of the BRIDGE project;

- The DSS and preliminary choices made;

- Showing Green city as an example of a DSS;

- What has the BRIDGE project to offer to city planners and what not?

The leaflet with background information on the BRIDGE project will be made available to the participants.

Ad 4.   Our urban planning practice: Strengths, weaknesses and challenges

A joint fact finding on the urban planning practices of the participants could be organised. This joint fact finding activity is about sharing and developing knowledge on sustainable city planning in an interactive way. The aim is to develop a shared experience and shared knowledge. Meanwhile, it results into a better understanding of each others' experience and ideas. The joint fact finding on sustainable city planning could be organized in the form of a field excursion. An excursion in which several participants present aspects of their work they are proud of and/or aspects they feel sorry for /anxious about from a sustainability point of view. The field excursion could be combined with a clear task for the other participants. For instance, the participants can be asked to form subgroups and to take pictures of what they perceive as strengths of the current planning practice, of perceived weaknesses and of challenges for improvement.

In a plenary session, printed pictures will shared and discussed. A synthesis of the results of the field excursion can make explicit:

- Shared and differences in perceptions of weaknesses in the current urban planning practice from a sustainability point of view;

- Shared and differences in perceptions of strengths in the current urban planning from a sustainability point of view;

- Shared and differences in perceptions of challenges for improving sustainable urban planning practice.

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Ad 5.   Discussing priorities in sustainable urban planning, sustainable urban planning objectives and corresponding indicators (BRIDGE WP 5)

In case the community members feel the DSS that will be developed in the BRIDGE context could be of use to them, their priorities in terms of sustainable urban planning objectives and indicators should be discussed. The indicators will serve as input for the development of the DSS. It is likely that the more the DSS is informed by indicators put forward by the community members, the more the DSS will be of use to them.

Ad 6.   Define the domain and identify a first set of engaging issues

The results of the field excursion combined with the outcome of the discussion on the preliminary findings on sustainable planning strategies and biophysical processes derived from the BRIDGE project can be used as input for the discussion on the domain of the community. The first description of the domain is done in a way that it really engages potential members rather than it determines the final shape:

- Focus on the dimensions of the domain that are important to city planning *and* to the city itself. Managers and other 'bosses' are more likely to give support when the community focuses on such issues;

- Focus on aspects of the domain the community members will be passionate about and not (only) on those aspects the BRIDGE project can provide;

- Define the scope wide enough to bring in new people and new ideas, but narrow enough that most members will be interested in the topics discussed.

The discussion on the domain can be done in subgroups first and then in a plenary session. Next, based on the domain a set of issues or core questions that the community members want to address are identified through a brainstorming session (see figure 6).
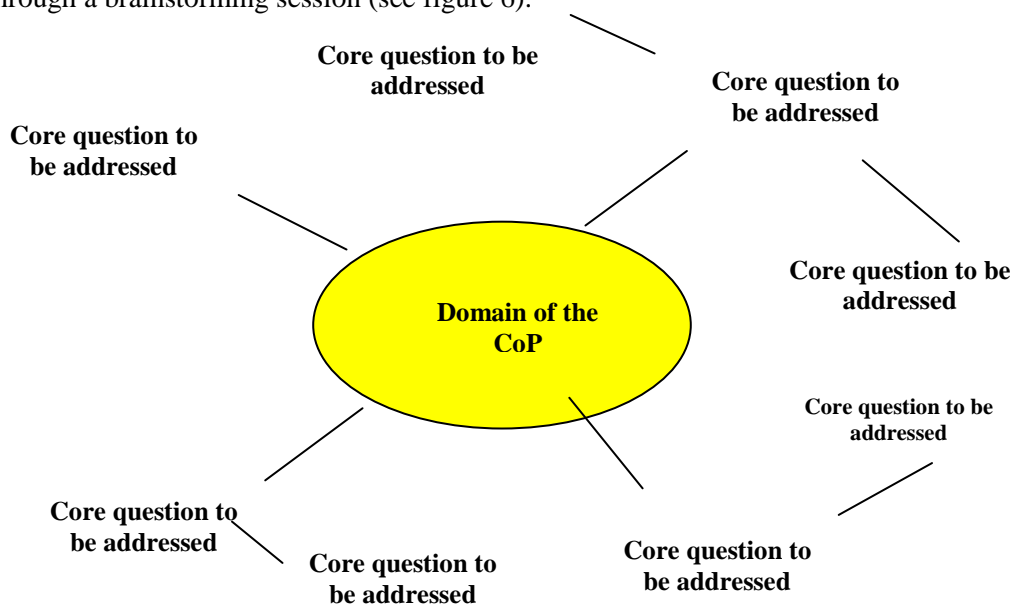

Figure 6: Identifying core questions the community members want to address

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There needs to be a check whether the formulated domain and issues are attractive enough to the members of the community in order for them to remain engaged. Moreover, the needs for a DSS could be clarified. These issues form the first part of the community's learning agenda.

<u>Ad 7. What do we, as community members, want to focus on? What are the burning issues we want to address?</u>

It could be useful to combine the discussion on the domain with a discussion on the primary intent of the community. Communities of Practice can start with different intents. Some communities start off with the intention to help each other solving everyday work problems (*helping communities*). Other communities decide to focus on developing, validating and disseminating best practices (*best practices communities*). There are communities which prefer to develop and steward tools, insights and approaches needed by members to improve their profession (*knowledge stewarding communities*). There are also communities that start with the intention to develop highly innovative solutions and ideas (*innovation communities*).

<u>Ad 8. How are we going to organize ourselves?</u>

Issues that could be addressed:

- Legitimize the community coordinator: most of the work of the community coordinator, such as networking, is invisible to the community members. Therefore, the role of a coordinator can be very unrewarding. However, the work of networking, planning and facilitating meetings is of crucial importance for the success of a community. The community coordinator is more likely to take his/her role as coordinator seriously when his/her role becomes recognized and rewarded;

- Different levels of participation. To discuss the members' level of participation use can be made of figure 4 in Chapter 4;

- How do we inform and keep contact with our city counsellors, board members and our colleagues?

- How often the community does want to meet? When will the next meeting be?

<u>Ad 9. What are we going to do next time we meet?</u>

It is up to the members of the community to decide on its next activity. BRIDGE researchers and the BRIDGE case study leader could give ideas on how to deepen the analysis on current urban planning practice as a way to further develop a learning agenda. For example by:

- Further discussing indicators that will be used as input for the development of the DSS;

- Discussing real life plans for projects from sustainability point of view;

- Specific models or other types of scientific knowledge that could be used a new pairs of spectacles to help planners to look at their practices in a different way.