



Connect Summary Report

Volume 1

COLM McCLEMENTS CONSULTING

Advising across Europe

Belfast, 10 November 2006

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Frances Murray, Laura Leonard, Carrie Duffy in Belfast City Council, acting on behalf of their Comet partners, Annika Hjelm in the City of Stockholm, Victoria Gonzales in the City of Valencia, Inga Sezenyte in the City of Vilnius, Bartlomiej Koziel, in the City of Rybnik.

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Colm McClements

Belfast, 10 November 2006

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- i. The Connect Project is funded by Measure 4.1 of the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (PEACE II) for Northern Ireland and the Border Counties of Ireland, with matched funding provided by the Comet Partners. The Report records the important and impressive learning and more salient experiences and messages emanating from nearly two years of mutual exchange between the Comet Region, and the cities of Stockholm, Valencia, Vilnius and Rybnik. The various visits and research give rise to invaluable insights and indications as to what is working well and how different city regions stand up to each other. Specific lessons have been indicated in each of the sections of the Report.

- ii. This Project is one of 18 such projects that seek to open Northern Ireland actors to wider European and international practices. This overall objective is consistent with the overall thrust of Northern Ireland's European Strategy 2006-2010 "Taking Our Place in Europe" that, indeed, was launched at the Final Conference of the Connect Project, 16 October 2006. In particular it is consistent with Objective 2 of that Strategy, namely "Raising Northern Ireland's Positive Profile throughout Europe"¹. The proposed future co-operative actions set out in Section 8 of the Report constitute a significant intention and contribution by the Comet district councils to support this Objective.

- iii. The draft of this Report presented at the Final Conference of the Connect Project, held in Belfast's Waterfront Hall, 16 October 2006, attended by over 150 delegates, including the Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service who inaugurated Northern Ireland's European Strategy and endorsed the work of this Project. Charles Landry, Author of "The Art of City Making" evoked a wide array of seminal ideas that together propose a challenging vision for city-region makers. Together with the draft Report of the Project itself, presented by Dr Colm McClements, these contributions acted as inputs to the three workshops held in the afternoon, focused on the key themes of urban regeneration, social and labour market inclusion and environment and sustainable development. On the day following the Conference, the nearly 80 overseas partners visited best practice examples relating to these issues in the Comet Region, and discussed the key challenges presented. On this basis the proposals for further

¹ Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, European Policy and Co-ordination Unit, Castle Buildings, Stormont, Belfast.

co-operation among the partners, elaborated in Section 8 of this Report, have been developed and will be taken forward.

- iv. Cities and city regions face new and significant challenges and opportunities. They are at the centre of Europe's attempts to regain global competitiveness and enhance the quality of life and sense of cohesion of its citizens. Most people live in cities and their metropolitan surroundings, most talent, capital, services, and knowledge gravitates to cities, most innovation takes place in or near dense urban centres. But a series of problems, related to longer-standing legacies of economic and social decline, also mean that cities and metropolitan areas struggle with the never-ending task to regenerate themselves.
- v. In the Connect Network, all of the partners recognise that challenges and opportunities can only be met within a framework of good governance and effective strategic planning. To this end, all of them in somewhat different ways, have committed themselves to improving governance and engaging citizens and to developing strategies that address citizen's concerns while drawing on effective expertise and best practice.
- vi. Looked at comparatively and holistically, we can classify the partner city-regions as follows:
 - **Comet** is a regional service and knowledge centre, addressing various legacies of the past, and also seeking to leap frog onto a higher developmental orbit.
 - **Stockholm** is an international, innovation-driven service centre of very major regional importance (i.e., within Scandinavia).
 - **Valencia** is a regional, innovation-driven centre, strongly focused on being an international gateway or cross-roads.
 - **Vilnius** is a land-locked, regional and cultural centre, on an emergent east-west axis, still struggling with restructuring and seeking to leap frog onto a higher developmental orbit
 - **Rybnik** is emerging from its past, eager to regenerate focussing upon new industries and new opportunities in both East and West.
- v. The city regions are all striving to better practice and more effective implementation of policies and strategies in the areas of **Urban Regeneration**,

Economic Development, Environment and Social Inclusion. In all of these areas they have been able to identify important practices and lessons that are of benefit to each other.

- vi Specifically, the Comet region, Stockholm, Valencia and Vilnius have all undergone far-reaching processes of urban regeneration characterised by distinctive approaches and preferences if somewhat similar underlying aims. Stockholm has put high environmental and design standards and strong, publicly driven planning requirements at the centre of its approach. Valencia has focused on flagship projects to revive economic fortunes of the city, Comet has pursued a policy of overall and neighbourhood renewal, with strong focus on the soft factors of urban regeneration, Vilnius has set culture at the centre to its urban renewal. In all cases there has been one or more clear powerful public champions or leaders, substantial mobilisation of the private sector, inter-institutional partnership and co-operation, citizen consultation and discussion and these appear to be indispensable elements of good practice. But the modes of financing, the manner of proceeding, the emphasis given to specific aspects (integrated transport, environment, culture, economic development) have differed.
- vii In the field of economic development, all of the partners are caught in some sense between legacies of the past (pronounced in the cases of Comet, Vilnius, Valencia) and prospects and challenges of the future, largely driven by more knowledge-intensive, globally mobile factors. All of them seek to be “at the centre” of some network or hub of knowledge, but clearly some, such as Stockholm, are more at the centre than are others. Key factors here are the overall capacity of human resources, of culture, of entrepreneurship, the density of and access to knowledge networks, the “openness” to new thinking. Stockholm and Valencia stand out here in terms of major flagship successes or clusters of innovation, but all of the other cities, though somewhat constrained by geography or history, seek to emulate best practice. To some extent there is evidence of attempts to specialise, eg on creative industries or information technology while remaining open to wider possibilities as a visitors or tourism center (Valencia, Vilnius).
- viii In the field of the environment, a body of best practice emerges from the projects visited by the Connect partners that focus on one or other aspect of

environmental protection or enhancement or more generally the issue of sustainable development. The example of Stockholm's Hammarby is illustrative here of the highest standards achievable. The approach presented is holistic and comprehensive. It is based on broad acceptance and education on the issues among the general public and this has allowed the City to go well beyond compliance. This has especially been reflected in regional and city planning documents, rules and instruments and sensitive policy areas such as transport, housing, urban and neighbourhood regeneration. Undoubtedly all the other cities can find much to learn from the Swedish experience.

- ix In the field of social inclusion, the Comet partners visited a number of projects in Vilnius, Stockholm and Valencia. Visitors to the Comet region saw a range of social integration projects in the context of Local Strategic Partnerships. A number of lessons emerge. A strategy for social inclusion is essential. This can be a component of a City strategy as is the case in Vilnius or it can be a separate strategy supporting the City strategy as is the case in Valencia. A clear direction and commitment is needed in order that resources can be mobilised. Projects and programmes are important and usually necessary, but unless these are anchored in a strategy that has ownership in the City results will be precarious. In Valencia great effort is made to engage all parts of the public service that interact with socially excluded groups so that they are sensitised to the specific needs and sensitive in the delivery of their services. Partnership is vital; it is essential that all of the socially excluded groups are engaged in an over arching partnership that gives a voice to the needs of socially excluded groups and gets that voice heard at the place where decisions are made. Capacity building of socially excluded groups is important. This is for individuals and for the groups as a whole. It is increasingly recognised that this requires investment. The development of representative organisations is a worthwhile one when it enables members of the group to understand, identify and explain their needs.
- x In Section 7, we record important lessons in terms of city governance and strategic planning that underlie success in key fields: there needs to be a culture and practice of strategic thinking and acting, of inter-institutional partnership and co-operation, a strong focus for leadership, a culture of risk-taking, and a clear definition and acceptance of roles and responsibilities.

- xi In the current Project much has been learned. But the process can and should continue. Specific issues and areas can be identified where the various partners can, should they wish, take their co-operation further. These cover all of the areas of the current project, in addition to use of EU Structural Funds and development of community relations. The possible directions for this co-operation are set out in Section 8. The outcomes here are based on extensive discussions prior to and during the Conference of 16 October 2006 and provide an initial set of actions for planning future and sustainable co-operations.

- xii All of the city-regions have systems in place that allow them to be informed of international and wider European developments. This is obviously manifested by their participation in the Connect Project but in all cases is much wider than this. This is part of the learning „city-region“ which all of them seek to be. The challenge for the Connect partners is how to turn this interest in exchange and partnership into a reality of practical results. In some instances this has happened already as evidenced by business interests visiting Valencia and the follow up visits by Environmental officers to Stockholm .It is hoped that by capturing and sharing the lessons and messages emerging at the October Connect Conference that the foundations will be laid for future co –operation.

- xiii This Report is to be read along with Volume 2 which provides a full description of some of the seminal experiences that have stimulated the ideas and outcomes of the Connect Project. Both have been made available on CD Rom and widely disseminated.

Section 1: Introduction

- 1.1 The Connect Project was established in 2003 at the initiative of the Comet Region, comprising the six district councils within the Metropolitan Area of Belfast. It is supported out of Measure 4.1 of the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (PEACE II) for Northern Ireland and the Border Counties of Ireland, with matched funding provided by the Comet Partners. Its aim is to establish a European Regional Network among the partners, encourage dialogue, exchange and co-operation, promote the image of the Comet Region and share its unique experience with partner regions and to ensure that urban issues are placed high on the EU policy agenda. Partner Regions are Stockholm, Valencia and Vilnius. There has been smaller scale involvement from the Polish City of Rybnik.
- 1.2 Over the period to May 2006 the Partners have been engaged in an intensive programme of visits, discussions and exchange of best practice, taken forward by a combination of Elected Members, Council Officers and Social Partners. Through the process the project has facilitated the development of close working relationships.
- 1.3 As with all such projects, a key challenge is to take time to reflect on the activity and pose some key questions, such as, what did we learn from discussions and visits? How can we apply what we have seen? Are there opportunities to develop new projects or ideas at home or to continue to work with our wider partners? This is a key purpose of this summary report.
- 1.4 To help address these questions, the Connect Management Team, in December 2005, commissioned a team of external consultants to undertake a research project which attempts to capture the learning and the key message from the project and to identify the potential for future co-operation.
- 1.5 The report which follows attempts to chart the journey to date and provide the basis for a discussion at the Connect Conference scheduled for October 2006. The conference discussion will in turn build the work to date, making the current report a live work in progress.

- 1.6 The report is structured as follows: Section 2 sets out the research approach adopted, Section 3 provides an overview of the development of City Regions to set the context, Section 4 provides a brief overview of the Connect Partners, Section 5 and 6 provide an analysis of the governance and strategic focus within each city region, Section 7 summarises the key lessons emerging, Section 8 suggests opportunities for future co-operation and finally Section 9 offers key conclusions, emanating from the entire Project including the Conference of 16 October 2006.

Section 2: The Research Approach

2.1 Introduction

This section sets out the approach adopted by the Connect partners in capturing and reviewing the lessons from the partnership experience.

2.2 Review Process

From the outset the Connect Project placed considerable emphasis on trying to capture what was emerging from the exchange process. Prior to each exchange, participants were briefed in terms of objectives and expectations, during exchanges formal and informal discussions were held to identify live issues. Following each exchange a summary report was produced.

This process was very constructive in capturing the benefits and lessons from each respective exchange as a live experience.

2.3 Gaining a wider perspective

Building upon this and to gain a wider perspective, the Connect Management Group in late December 2005, launched a tender for a comparative analysis on approaches to regional and local development, within the Comet region of 6 district councils in the Metropolitan Area of Belfast and among the Comet region and its partner region-cities of Rybnik, Stockholm, Valencia and Vilnius.

2.4 The research team and its terms of reference

The Research Team commissioned was led by Colm McClements Consulting Ltd and Associates (Peter Gay, and Joe McVey, Blueprint Development Consultancy). Two main objectives were identified in their bid, consistent with the Terms of Reference:

- To enable the Comet Local Authorities and more generally the Connect partners to propose practical solutions and best practice in appropriate development areas based on identified and processed experiences, within a local and EU policy and institutional context of which all participants are fully acquainted.
- To provide best practices and methodological approaches based on the Connect experience that will in fact guide the further practical work of the partners in various future configurations of interregional partnership and co-operation.

2.5 Research team approach

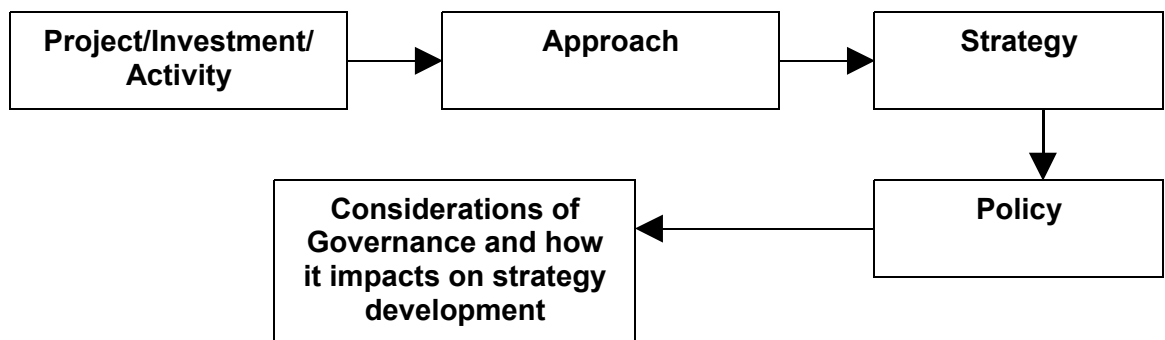
From early 2006, the Research Team has engaged with stakeholders in the Comet Region and in each of the partner City regions. This involved individual interviews with Connect Partners from the Belfast Metropolitan Areas Councils, both Staff and Council Members. This information provided the basis for site visits and discussions held with the Connect Partners as the research team visited Stockholm, Vilnius and Valencia. The information gained was supplemented by additional information gained from research and analysis.

Through this process the Research team was able to get a clear sense of what was memorable, what caught the imagination of delegates during and after their respective visits. This approach offered the opportunity to consider with delegates in their home environment what actually made an impression and what would they wish to pursue as an interest to their respective Local Authority.

2.6 Learning Framework

Urban regions and cities are faced with specific opportunities and challenges, and caught to some extent between managing the past and present while facing into a potentially promising but somewhat uncertain future. Against this background, the Connect Project has sought to focus initially on the empirical, i.e., on what has actually been done in terms of specific activities, projects and investments. (See Figure 1).

Figure 1: Direction of Learning and Exchange



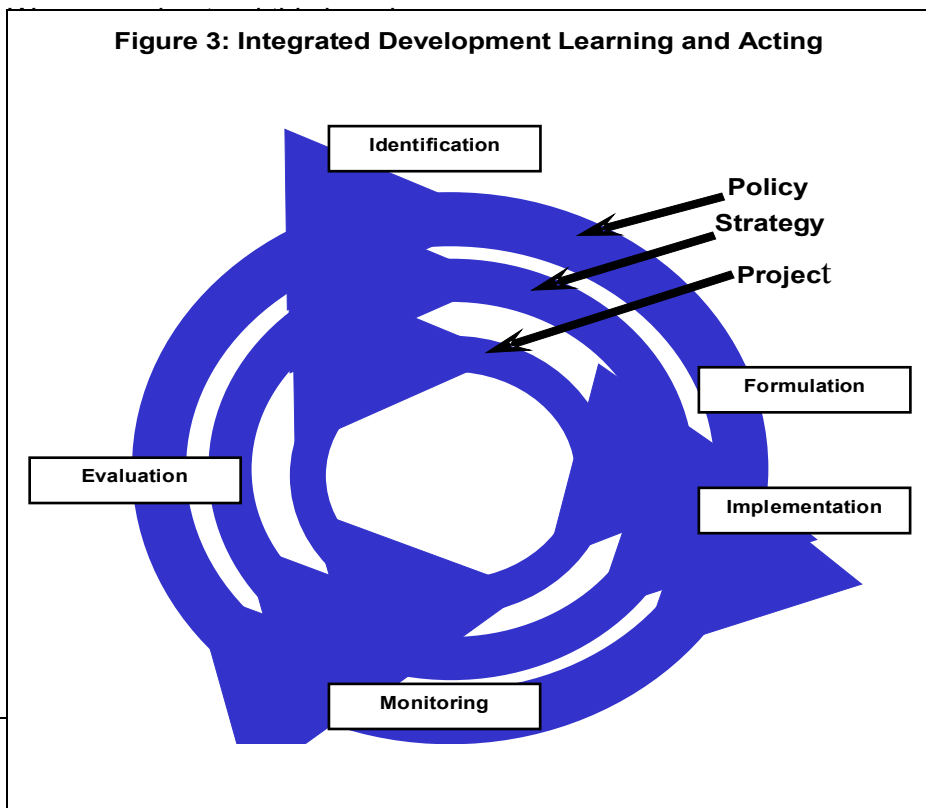
From this, the Partners have sought to understand the underlying approach adopted, and working back further, understand and compare the different strategic objectives and intended results behind the various activities. Inevitably this has meant looking at and understanding the different systems and processes of governance and the different modes for developing strategic approaches in each of the cities.

In terms of content, the exchange has focused on a mix of process (“**how and why**”) and specific development issue or challenge (“**what**”). This means the main areas of exchange are as follows

Figure 2 Exchange Process

Process	Development Theme/Area
Governance: Structures & Systems Resources and Competence Process	Urban Regeneration encompassing: Physical and Social Regeneration
Strategic Planning and Development Approaches Scope of Various Plans Process	Economic Development with focus on: Innovation and creative sectors
	Environment including: Environmental protection, enhancement and more generally sustainable development
	Social Inclusion including: Labour Market participation

Figure 3: Integrated Development Learning and Acting



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Whether at project, strategy or policy level, ideally relevant actors should be following the steps from one stage to the next; to ensure that they respond to priority problems and challenges with appropriate responses in an efficient and effective manner: to learn from what they are doing well and not so well and to implement corrective actions with regard to existing and future projects, strategies and policies. **This is the ideal of the “learning city”**. In the various visits, discussions and meetings, the key partners and individuals involved in the Connect Project have sought to learn from each other in several different manners:

- Comparison of the same or similar
- Identification of the difference, and working back from projects or activities, investigating the underlying strategic intent, policy parameters and ultimately, problems and systems/processes of governance that explain different activities and approaches
- Within these parameters, reviewing what has worked, why and how it could work, subject to adaptation elsewhere.

In this sense the partners have already been responding to the call by the European Commission for city and metropolitan areas to engage in debate and mutual learning about key areas facing them, so they can design and implement more appropriate policies and strategies². The Connect Network and Project responds to the call of the European Commission to “promote the exchange of experience and best practice... [and to] bring forward new investment that helps urban areas realise their full potential”.³ It also responds to the overall thrust of the revised Lisbon Agenda and in particular its overall emphasises that Europe needs to regain competitiveness in order to better ensure its distinctive social model within a global context. In this respect, cities and city regions – the areas where most of Europe’s population now live – provide a primary focus for innovation and experimentation.

2.7 Summary

Summary

The research approach adopted combined consultation with Partners, site visits, research and analysis. It was intended through this process to focus on **what** was happening, **why** and **how**. In turn this information would be placed within a learning framework above. Using this framework the research team’s intention was to identify and capture the lessons and messages emerging and identify the opportunities for future co-operation.

In turn the work to date will be debated and enhanced at the Connect Conference scheduled for October 2006 in Belfast.

Section 3: City Regions: Development and Challenges

² All of the cities are committed to developing “sustainable communities” through a process of sustainable urban development that “...integrates economic, social and environmental goals with good public services...” and which depends on “...local partnerships including public, private, voluntary and community interests...” Commission Staff Working Paper, “Cohesion Policy and Cities: The Urban Contribution to Growth and Jobs in the Regions”, Brussels, November, 2005, p. 1.

³ Idem, p.2

3.1 Introduction

This section attempts to chart the development of city regions and highlight the internal and external challenges facing these at present. This is offered to place the Connect Partners' experiences in context.

3.2 Urban Realities – Urban Futures

Europe's cities and metropolitan areas face big challenges! This is the key consideration underlying the work of the Connect Network. No city is an island and no city can resolve all of the issues facing it alone. Even in the perspective of competition, each still needs to know what standard it needs to be striving towards, what level of performance or success it should try to reach. Within a more co-operative perspective, all of Europe's cities have an important contribution to make to overall European prosperity, cohesion, peace, stability and quality of life.

3.3 Contemporary Urban Realities in Europe

European culture and civilisation has long been characterised by close-knit self-organising communities that have planned and regulated their joint economic, cultural and social life. The first Greek and Roman cities distinguished between public and less public (private) life and developed and modes of behaviour, communication and organisation on how to regulate and sustain the "common" or "public" good.

From Ancient Times down through the Middle Ages and with accelerated pace in the industrial era that first marked Western Europe; most of these cities were established on rivers. These natural channels provided crucial elements of sustenance and nutrition and important modes of transport. In modern times, cities at the mouths of rivers became important ports, trading centres around which rural populations settled and became urbanised.

As organised, internally structured centres of trade, commerce, later industry, and continuously government, European cities have provided the most enduring focus for material enhancement known to man. Over time, this essentially European model of organisation has become embedded in almost every culture on earth.

In the Industrial Era of mass production and mass markets, requiring large numbers of relatively low-skilled, purely technical workers, cities became essentially centres of a worker-population, and over time money and management gravitated to the suburbs.

That model of economic development is now at or near a close in Europe: modes of production are more decentralised and networked, labour inputs are characterised by quality and performance rather than by quantity, and overall the knowledge and soft organisational component required at every level has sharply increased. Instances of invention have given rise to processes of continuous innovation and improvement, involving many actors tapping into widely available and diffuse knowledge, and searching for means to harness it to practical advantage. With post-industrial forms of innovation, process and product are inseparable; organisation is much more relevant to performance than any isolated component or input.

3.4 New Opportunities

As the European and other developed economies move to a post-industrial, increasingly knowledge driven, service mode, it is evident that cities re-emerge as a favourable *locus* for this phase of development:

- Most cities have long been home to concentrations of the most educated and skilled, even if many cities also contain significant concentrations of below average skilled persons
- Population density and physical, educational, financial and infrastructural endowment inevitably facilitate the conditions for growing entrepreneurship and innovation: as a general rule these cannot easily be replicated elsewhere
- The above average concentration of cultural activities inevitably attracts mobile skilled persons, who often are required for innovative or entrepreneurial activities
- Systems of governance and service delivery tend to be more cost effective in dense urban areas and public goods can be shared more easily.

- Cities are the natural gateway to other regions, countries and to the wider international space: as such they are essential gateways to innovation, human and financial capital, know-how, in short everything that in any way is mobile.
- Most cities by default or design are the main generator and driver of prosperity in their region: many, especially the more successful, act as a powerful magnet to and within the region. Developing cities and metropolitan areas is still the critical path to regional development.

In the context of the new paradigm that opens for cities, one can identify a set of past and present challenges and a set of future threats.

3.5 Looking to the Past and Present

- The historical divide affecting all cities, traditionally seen in class terms, between those with labour to offer and those with capital to invest, mediated by an ever increasing middle class of managers and professionals now reaches new levels of complexity and potential conflict. A knowledge–driven economy by definition offers its first opportunities to the skilled and educated: access for others is significantly more problematic.
- The technically skilled left redundant by the decline of the industrial production era remain concentrated in urban centres: already struggling to adapt, they find the requirements of a new knowledge economy ever harder to adapt to.
- Social and cultural policies, driven by public policy, that seek to address the above tensions, are paradoxically affordable and sustainable only if the economic benefits of the new economy can be very substantial: on the other hand, excessive burdens on enterprise and innovation risks killing the goose that may yet lay the golden egg, by undermining business competitiveness.

3.6 Looked at in terms of globalisation the picture is still more complex:

- Almost all significant factors of comparative advantage – that would put one city or location in a stronger position than another – are mobile. More than anywhere else they reside in people, in their ideas, and in what they can create, develop and implement acting in a favourable and flexible network. By definition the key components of this “network” – highly mobile, talented and sought after persons – can practically go anywhere in the world that will have them. In this situation, cities are constantly in a talent competition, seeking to attract and retain, individuals and teams of know-how that will drive economic development and thus maintain or even lift the quality of life
- In a global world, human resources of the kind described need to be carefully used and nurtured, and developed. In short successful cities need to be putting in place the mechanisms that will allow for this: they cannot simply seek to attract talent, they must also develop talent and provide the on-going conditions where teams of talented people can perform to their fulfilment. In other words, they need to invest in the systems of education, learning, enterprise and innovation for the talented as well as for everyone else.
- Finally in a globalised world, “accessibility” to sources of capital, knowledge, know-how, human resources is essential and requires an upgrading of traditional infrastructures (road, rail, and air) and access to the information highways that are the “new rivers” on which cities must prosper.

3.7 Looked at in a social and environmental perspective

- All societies and cities have always had to invest in looking after their young and old, but seldom if ever have societies faced such a daunting challenge as today: demographics mean that fewer and fewer will be required to support more and more. For cities this presents significant challenges. On the one hand, provision of social support is likely to be easier in cities than outside cities, on the other hand, self-help culture traditionally is weaker in many cities and the practical problems of loneliness and exclusion abound.

- Art (what man produces) and nature (what is given) have often been in tension. But our world is the first to face the reality of substantive and irreparable damage to its ecology as a result of man made activity. Nowhere is this issue more dramatic than in cities: cities produce significantly more pollution than elsewhere through economic, social, leisure-based activities and the general organisation of individual and collective living. From this reality there results a series of hard choices for cities and citizens related to what they buy, how they consume, how much and often they travel, to how they design their homes, neighbourhoods, spend their leisure time.
- In particular the issues of mobility and accessibility present a complex challenge to all cities. In some senses the responses are clear: both the downside economics of congestion occasioned in large part by private (car) transport and environmental and health considerations argue very strongly and convincingly for innovative and effective systems of integrated public transport. On the other hand, and despite the overwhelming evidence, this is an issue that collides with engrained notions of individual freedom and mobility. Though many cities have invested heavily in public transport, few have found it possible, politically or socially, to challenge the role of the car and the many implications it has for how cities are designed and organised.

3.8 Summary

City Regions are increasingly recognised as motors and drivers for success. Such success is not inevitable and the foundations and conditions for success and sustained development need to be planned and implemented. Within Cities and wider city regions, challenges and tensions exist. Learning how each City Region responds to such challenges is at the heart of the exchange process. The challenge for partners is to identify what is happening, why, what are the conditions for success? What are the governance and strategic frameworks?

Section 4: Overview of the Connect Partners

4.1 Introduction

This Section provides a brief overview of the Connect Partner Regions. This is offered to place the City Regions in context, highlighting the historical and current contrasts and areas for comparison. A summary table (Table 4) is provided at the end of this section.

4.2 The Comet Partners

The Councils of the Metropolitan Region (COMET) initiative was established in 2002 as a means of fostering greater collaboration between the Councils in the Belfast Metropolitan area, namely Belfast, Carrickfergus, Castlereagh, Lisburn, Newtownabbey and North Down. COMET acts as an effective sub-regional development initiative enabling its members to:

- Collaborate on social, economic and environmental issues.
- Put forward a shared response on policy issues at a regional level.
- Take advantage of the opportunities from Europe for funding of sub-regional initiatives.

The COMET region as a whole has higher levels of economic activity and lower rates of unemployment and economic inactivity than the rest of Northern Ireland. Belfast has an economic activity rate more than 5% below the NI average and unemployment of over 5%, with more than 2 out of 5 long-term unemployed. However of the 53830 VAT registered businesses in NI, 13645 (25.3%) are located in the COMET area, 44% of these businesses are in Belfast.

Comet is one of three sub-regional development initiatives led by local authorities in Northern Ireland, the others being CORE in the North East and SEED in the South East. The primary focus for Comet thus far has been on local and regional economic development opportunities.

The Comet partners differ on terms of scale of the Local Authority, population and respective priorities. What provides the common ground is the realisation that together, a wider Metropolitan partnership, provides a strength and synergy to bring about prosperity and opportunities to the wider area.

4.3 Rybnik

Rybnik is situated in the Southern part of Poland in Silesia Voivodeship and has a population of 140,000. The City acts as a link between Upper Silesia and the Czech Republic. Nine million consumers live within a 100km radius.

The City region occupies an area of 14,826 ha with 70% described as forests and rural areas. The City region is well connected with a well developed rail network, road infrastructure and close to 3 international airports.

Traditionally associated with heavy industry the City region is focussing increasingly on trying to develop a mixed economy. The economic structure of the area has overcome a considerable transformation with a shift from heavy industry to small indigenous enterprises. This is evident across services, manufacturing and construction. Mines are still a dominant feature of the economic landscape. Attracting foreign and direct investment has been a priority with the creation of enterprise and industrial zones and targeted tax incentives.

Efforts to attract investment and to diversify are aided by the strong emphasis on education both secondary and tertiary. There is a strong emphasis on prioritising graduates and on the development of language skills. This move is supported by the City Region being home to 3 Universities.

4.4 Stockholm

Stockholm is the current and historical capital of Sweden. The Swedish Kingdom belongs to Europe's most stable and long-standing political entities. Not since the 17th Century has it had an extensive empire, but its influence in the Nordic area has always been strong. Swedish communities still inhabit parts of Finland and previously Estonia.

Peace and prosperity very much go hand in hand in Sweden. The country has managed to stay out of most of Europe's internal conflicts of the twentieth century and this external stability is also reflected in a very high internal stability, characterised by relatively low crime rates and the absence of social upheavals.

Stockholm is the capital city of a highly successful EU member state with a relatively distinct social and economic model going back decades. This is characterised by extremely high levels of public expenditure and investment (and therefore high levels of taxation) in addition to strong sense of individual entrepreneurship.

The City of Stockholm (i.e., the municipality) like all Swedish municipalities is the corner stone of local and national democracy: it is to the municipality, rather than to the national government that citizens look for answers to their daily concerns and to which they pay, by far, the bulk of their taxes. The higher county structure holds relatively little sway in Sweden outside of transport and even in the metropolitan area that combines the City of Stockholm and neighbouring municipalities, county governance and co-ordination is relatively weak.

Stockholm conforms to the Nordic model of high added-value growth, driven by competitive factors such as knowledge and innovation and sectors such as international financial services. In this it is extremely close to Helsinki (Finland). Its strength is underpinned by huge outlays in education, high overall participation rates in the upper levels of educational achievement and a system of innovation and scientific research that though somewhat different than that in neighbouring Finland, is nevertheless very effective. Consultancy, IT and retail account for more than half of all jobs in Stockholm and in general the business sector is quite diversified with significant financial and business sectors. Another growing sector is the “creative sector” defined as operations that create and/or provide creative experiences: tourism, media, fashion, music, design, film and art. The level of education among the workforce is in general high with one quarter of employees having completed university education of at least three years duration. Stockholm is a typical “smart” compact city, with 90% of its population living in relatively low-level apartment blocks of high quality.

4.5 Valencia

Valencia is a significant city in Spain. Spain itself is a constitutional monarchy since the restoration of democracy in 1976. The country has had a painful history in the modern era. It declined as an imperial power already in the nineteenth century with the loss of most of its colonies in Latin America. Within the country there have been significant tensions along a series of political,

ideological, cultural, ethnic and religious fault lines, culminating in a devastating civil war in 1936-39. Like Sweden, Spain did not participate in the Second World, but since its return to democracy has enthusiastically embraced European integration and is a member of NATO. Since 1976 Spain has enjoyed a level of peace, stability and democracy unknown for much the 19th and 20th century.

Valencia is the capital of the Autonomous Region of Valencia, one of the 17 Autonomous Regions established in Spain under the 1976 Constitution and subsequent laws. It is significantly more economically advanced than the national average. The city is a significant presence in the lives of local citizens with important strategic, investment and implementation tasks in the areas of planning and economic development and housing.

In Spain the higher regional level (the Autonomous Region of Valencia) possesses very extensive powers devolved from national government. As such it is a significant actor and one with which the City does and must work very closely to achieve its goals.

Valencia belongs to the small group of Spanish cities which is fast developing as a service oriented, visitor- focused, innovation-driven city. It seeks to optimise its geographical position, pleasant location, and historical and natural assets while focusing on connecting into the globalised factors of innovation and international commerce. It is decidedly service-focused with industry and agriculture together representing a mere 6% of overall employment.

Valencia has enjoyed strong economic growth over the last decade, much of it spurred by tourism and construction industries. Valencia's port is one of the busiest on the Mediterranean coast and handles 20% of Spain's exports. The main exports are food and drink, furniture, ceramic tiles, fans, textiles and iron products. Valencia's manufacturing sector focuses on metallurgy, chemicals, textiles, shipbuilding and brewing. Unemployment is lower than the Spanish average. Small and medium sized industries are an important part of the local economy.

4.6 Vilnius

As the Capital City of Lithuania, the development of Vilnius needs to be placed in its historical context as a Baltic City emerging from Russian control, to that of a modern European State Capital. Vilnius sees itself as a bridge between East and West, building upon its new European status, but with the link to Russia and its hinterland providing an economic, cultural and social background.

Vilnius has a population of 600,000. Within a radius of 50 km., 800 thousand people live in the Vilnius metropolitan area. A population of 1.6 million people live in the combined counties of Vilnius and Kaunas, which form the main urban axis of Lithuania and the centres of which are separated by only 100 km. The current surface area of Vilnius is 402 square kilometres. The population density is 1469 residents per sq.km.

16 million inhabitants of Lithuania, Latvia, Byelorussia, Poland, and Russia live in the region of Central and Eastern Europe, 300 km around Vilnius. The closest neighbours of Vilnius are as follows: Minsk (170 km), Riga (280 km), Kaliningrad (350 km), Warsaw (460 km). The distance between Vilnius and the Baltic Sea is 300 km. Vilnius is located next to the geographic centre of Continental Europe. This provides significant market potential.

The Old Town, historical centre of Vilnius, is one of the largest in Eastern Europe (360 ha). The most valuable historic and cultural heritage is concentrated here. Because of its uniqueness; the Old Town of Vilnius was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1994.

The City is the industrial and investment centre of the Country. Local and foreign investment is concentrated on the City. In terms of revenue generated, taxes collected and contribution to the Lithuanian gross domestic product, Vilnius is a key driver in the success of the Country. Employment rates are higher than the Country average, with the highest concentration in the senior sector.

As a centre for development, the City offers opportunities in the New Town. Two concerns here are the infrastructure in terms of the road network and the planning framework which are perceived as slow and restrictive.

Table1: City Region Overview

Key Indicators	Comet Region	Rybnik	Stockholm	Valencia	Vilnius
Population (currently estimated)	641, 638 in the Metropolitan Area (estimate 2004)	140,000	743,000 Metropolitan Area: 1.8	800,000 Metropolitan Area: 1.6	@600 thousand, 800 thousand people live in the Vilnius metropolitan area.
Surface Area (in km. sq)	960 sq km	1,480km sq	6,500km sq	23,256 sq km	402 sq. km
Geographical Setting	North West Europe, located the East of Northern Ireland	South West Poland	Northern Europe, South East of Sweden	Eastern Coast of Spain, Mediterranean	The City is situated in South-eastern Lithuania
Main “functional” characteristics of city or area:	Metropolitan area of Belfast, capital city of Northern Ireland	Regional Capital	Capital City	Centre of Metropolitan area of Valencia, Capital of Province of Valencia	Capital city, industrial, investment and commercial centre
Main relevant other public actors (e.g. State or Region)	Regional Government Departments Social partner Government Agencies	Central Regional Government	Municipality – City of Stockholm National Government	Valencia Municipality Valencia Autonomous Regional Government National Government	State Government/Regional County structure
Active Population (absolute numbers + % of overall population)	402,332 people gainfully employed (62.7%)	n/a	815,000- People gainfully employed 72%	472, 000 in the city of Valencia Note: The population of the Valencia metropolitan area is 1.6 million Economically active 59%	Vilnius County labour force – 434,900 activity rate 71.3%
Unemployment Rate: absolute and %	26164 individuals unemployed, 4% of population	13%	TBC	8.5% (for the Valencia region, 2.2% lower than the national average)	12.5% in Lithuania with Vilnius at 7.2%.

Key Indicators	Comet Region	Rybnik	Stockholm	Valencia	Vilnius
Main economic sectors	Services (79%) Manufacturing (12.5%) Construction (5.5%) Other Sectors (3%)	Industrial services/trade construction	Services (46%) Manufacturing, Energy and Construction (11%) Public Administration (7%) Personal and Cultural Services (12%) Education and Research (12%) Health and Care Services (12%)	Commerce (41.5%), Professional & Artistic (24%) Services incl. tourism (22.4%) Construction (6.2%) Industry (5.9%) Agriculture (0.3%)	Service Sector 72%, Manufacturing 20%, Construction 7%, agriculture and forestry 1%.
% participating secondary education (16-19)	50.1%	50%	78%	61.5%	86.5%
% completing university (or equivalent) education	19.2%	n/a	30%	11.1%	23.3. %

4.7 Summary

The above brief overview highlights the contrasting features evident within the Partnership. Historical background, culture, development determine that the Partners are at different stages of city region development.

- Comet is a regional service and knowledge centre, addressing various legacies of the past, and also seeking to leap frog onto a higher developmental orbit.
- Rybnik is emerging from its past, eager to regenerate focussing upon new industries and new opportunities in both East and West.
- Stockholm is an international, innovation-driven service centre of very major regional importance (i.e., within Scandinavia)
- Valencia is a regional, innovation-driven centre, strongly focused on being an international gateway or cross-roads
- Vilnius is a land-locked, regional and cultural centre, on an emergent east-west axis, still struggling with restructuring and seeking to leap frog onto a higher developmental orbit

Such differences provide the dynamic which makes exchanges of interest. The challenge to the partners is to move to a level of understanding of how the City Region operate, what structures and processes are in place to drive success.

Section 5: Governance Structures and Systems

5.1 Introduction

This section places the governance arrangement within the Connect Partners in context, highlighting its development, current operations and the lessons emerging and possible success factors.

For the purposes of this Section we will understand governance as:

The formal and informal structures, resources, systems, practices and the inter-play between all or any of these as they refer to managing the public good according to its economic, social, cultural dimensions.

It is about how society in general and communities – international, national, regional, local – carry on the business of living together in an organised and beneficial manner.

All five city regions provide quite distinct modes of governance. The following provides a brief overview of the development and current governance structure with some lessons offered at the conclusions.

5.2 The Comet Region

The 6 Local Authorities which comprise the Comet Partnership operate within the structures established by the 1973 Northern Ireland Local Government Act. This established 26 Local Councils in Northern Ireland with a limited role in terms of power and responsibility.

The absence of Regional Government in Northern Ireland and a devolved Assembly has resulted in a complex system of governance involving direct rule Ministers, 11 Government Departments covering such key activities as health, education, regional development and social development.

The Comet District Councils operate within a region with strong regional government. Powers that are frequently located in European municipalities are located in various departments of regional government. The Councils have no direct authority over housing, planning, policing, roads and infrastructure. Economic development, whilst being a function of the Councils at local level and specifically for small and community led businesses, is

primarily a function of Invest Northern Ireland which is an agency of the regional government.

Councils act as the facilitators of development, working in partnership with the various agencies of regional government and social partners.

Partnership working has become embedded in the way in which Councils and Regional Government work; without it, the separation of powers into many agencies would inhibit development. A further aspect of interest is the strength of the social partners from the voluntary, community, and trade union sectors. They have played a significant role in the development of social partnership.

A strong example of partnership in action is the Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP) which brings together a range of actors, led by the Council to address local regeneration and social inclusion. There is a range of similar partnerships covering housing, community development and safety, policing and disability to name a few.

At a local level the influence of local municipal authorities was for many years restricted due to limited powers and resources. New economic development powers introduced in 1992 and a stronger sense of partnership working have allowed Councils to develop a wider sphere of influence in development, tourism, arts, regeneration and environment .This has allowed local authorities to play a catalytic role in the development of significant initiatives such as the Gasworks in Belfast, Mossley Mill in Newtownabbey and the Carrickfergus Marina

Presently the Local Authorities are preparing for the Review of Public Administration which will see changes in structures and greater power devolved to new larger Councils.

5.3 Rybnik

The development of Governance structures here needs to be placed in the context of Poland's emergence from Communism to a democratic society. In 1975 Poland was divided into 49 provinces each with its own capital city. Since 1999 the situation has been transformed to 16 Provinces, 308 Counties, 65 Cities (with County status) and 2489 communities.

The current emphasis within Poland is on decentralisation to the local level. There is a question mark over the extent to which this is balanced by the decentralisation of funds. The local community focus is primarily on the delivery of local services, such as public education, health care and infrastructure. The community is controlled by a locally elected Council and Mayor. Each Council is elected for 4 years with the number of Councillors ranging from 12-30 depending upon population.

Above the local level of communities, the County administration provides a level of strategic direction and control directing resources into the key areas of health and education. In turn the County level comes under the direction and scrutiny of the regional Voivodship government administration. While established with defined powers, the Voivodship takes its direction and financial support from the Central Government.

5.4 Stockholm

The key factor concerning governance in Stockholm is the power of the Municipality based upon its resources and competency. The City Administration has 46,000 employees, and a huge budget. Within the municipality the City Administration has established 18 District Councils as front line providers of services holding 60% of the Budget. Supporting the structures are Municipal Companies responsible for key infrastructure e.g., housing, water supply, sewage, and management of school properties, economic development and tourism. The Municipality (City) and its District Councils encourages high levels of participation in setting the City agenda. The City of Stockholm (i.e., the municipality) like all Swedish municipalities is the corner stone of local and national democracy: it is to the municipality, rather than to the national government that citizens look for answers to their daily concerns and to which they pay, by far, the bulk of their taxes. The higher county structure holds relatively little sway in Sweden outside of

transport and even in the metropolitan area that combines the City of Stockholm and neighbouring municipalities, county governance and co-ordination is relatively weak.

5.5 Valencia

The Spanish system allows for these levels, National, Regional and Municipal. With respect to Valencia the Municipality is perceived as the main driver for development. A key aspect of this is the strong partnership with regional government, semi state agencies and the private sector. Valencia would also be noted for the power and influence of the elected major as a driver for change.

The National Government has responsibility for basic legislation and coordination of general planning for economic activity, mining and energy systems; however the legislation clearly states that all activity not expressly attributed to the State by the Constitution may be granted to the Autonomous Communities (Regional Government)

The competences of the regional government are wide covering health, employment, housing, social services, tourism, justice, environment, business support, transport infrastructure, culture and sport. The government is elected directly by the citizens of the territory. The City Council or municipality, known in Spanish as the Ajuntamento is a large powerful organisation with a wide range of competence and 70 departments. It covers housing, policing, social affairs and planning. It employs 5.283 staff.

The City Council has a directly elected Mayor. The current mayor has publicly committed Valencia to be the backbone of the Valencia region and an exemplary European and Mediterranean City, competitive in international markets. The Council has a strategic development unit – ‘Centre of Strategies and Development of Valencia’, this unit is specifically charged with the implementation of the City strategy.

The Council and the Regional Government have a close and effective working relationship. They collaborate across the whole range of City activity and many large projects such as the reconstruction of the old town are carried out by the City and Regional Government working together.

There is also a range of some 30 agencies operating at City and Regional level. These include the City of Arts and Sciences at Valencia, the Feria (Fair) of Valencia, Employment Service and the REDIT technological association. These agencies cover a wide range of activities, most of them impacting in some way on the City strategy; collaborative working between the City, Regional Government and the agencies is well established and a feature of the way business is done in the City.

5.6 Vilnius

The governance of Vilnius city is coordinated by the following institutions: the Vilnius City Council (representative) and the Director of the Municipality's administration (executive). The Municipality's control is carried out by the Controller of the Vilnius City Municipality.

The City Council consists of the representatives of the municipal Community, elected in accordance with the procedures determined by statute. After the elections of the municipal councils on 22 December 2003, Vilnius City Council now consists of 51 members. The Council has eight committees whose main functions are to review issues and submit responses to the Council for consideration.

The committees also oversee the communal commissions. Twenty nine commissions have been set up; these include; the Administrative Commission, Commission for Review of Petitions, Strategic Planning Commission and also commissions such as the Urban Development Commission and the tourism Development Commission.

The Mayor and Deputy Mayors are elected by the Council. The Director of Administration manages the administration of the Municipality. He /She is recommended by the Mayor and appointed by the decisions of the City Council on the basis of political trust.

The Municipal Controller is selected in the open competition for the period of five years in accordance with the procedure set out in Civil Service Law. The Controller directly oversees the use of the municipal budget and carries out internal auditing.

Vilnius City municipal administration implements decisions of the city Council, the Mayor and the College and provides technical services to them.

At a local level Neighbourhood provide a structural territorial division of the municipal administration, operating in a certain territory of the Municipality. It is headed by the Vilnius has twenty one neighbourhoods. The neighbourhoods provide public services to the residents in their territory.

**Table 2: OVEVIEW OF GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES
KEY ACTORS**

	COMET	RYBNIK	STOCKHOLM	VALENCIA	VILNIUS
National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unitary state with devolved legislative and executive powers to elected assemblies in Scotland, Wales, and in principle N. Ireland 	Elected National Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unitary State with strong local (municipal) government including taxation issues. National Government is compact and in most areas sets fundamental policy to be implemented at lower level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Spanish constitution specifically states that only those competences that are enshrined in national government are to be held there; all others to be at regional level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elected Government.
County Level/Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional administration of 11 departments, in principle to be governed by elected, devolved assembly. Specific arrangements for North-South, East-West co-operation. “Devolution” currently in suspension. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County structures exist but with limited powers and budgets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22 counties have limited budget and powers, confined mainly to health and, in case of Stockholm, transport. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Government is very important with a wide range of competences; health, employment, housing, social services, tourism, justice, environment, business support, transport infrastructure, culture and sport. The government is elected directly by the citizens of the territory. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 Counties limited power.
Municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Belfast and Lisburn both have City status. The system of Government control at present leads to a limited one. The role is changing and will change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elected locally. The role of the Mayor and his team is important. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City Council is the supreme decision making body, with extensive powers and huge “own resources” derived from taxation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Municipality is a key driving forces in economic and social development, working in partnership with the regional government, with a directly elected Mayor. It has huge ‘own resources’ derived from taxation and is able to organise major loans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elected locally. 60 at present. The role of the Mayor and his team is important.

	COMET	RYBNIK	STOCKHOLM	VALENCIA	VILNIUS
District Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District Council varying in budget and size. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City Council delegates 60% of budget and activities to 18 District Councils tasked with local delivery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are many small municipalities in the Valencia region (539) and those in the greater Valencia metropolitan area work closely in partnership with Valencia municipality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not significant
Metropolitan Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing recognition of the role of the metropolitan region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited role beginning to emerge over the past ten years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ad hoc, generally functional co-operation arrangements with surrounding municipalities and county level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The role of the Mayor is central to metropolitan governance; the mayor leads the process, sets direction and often brings their own people as leaders of development into employment in the municipality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong leadership role provide by the Mayor and team
Municipal Companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agencies/some established by Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited role evident 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant recourse to municipally owned companies as means to deliver front-line services and utilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broadly similar to Stockholm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evident in Public/ Private Partnership
Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong feature of the local administration. Social inclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing evidence of partnerships with the private sector /investors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City Council is main focus for local development and services. Works on consultative, transparent basis, but assumes strong lead role in most areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absolutely central to success. The partnerships between the municipality, regional government and key agencies such as the Feria and Chamber of Commerce are fundamental to developments. Co financing and resource sharing are the norm. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Becoming of increasing importance related to the work of the neighbourhoods.

GOVERNANCE:
Table 3: KEY PROCESS SUCCESS FACTORS

PROCESS	COMET	RYBNIK	STOCKHOLM	VALENCIA	VILNIUS
Focus of public responsibility and leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasingly the Local Councils are assuming this role. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evident in values and themes in strategic planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided massively by City Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The directly elected Mayor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set by Council, driven by Mayor.
Synergy between actions/actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasingly evident. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasingly evident. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political programme of City Council provides main basis for various actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actions between the main partners are coordinated through partnerships and synergy is palpable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasingly evident.
Common aims and values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evident within Council Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evident in Strategic Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided by the political programme and various strategies. Strong emphasis on equality, transparency, citizenship and social/environmental well-being. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided by the parallel political programmes of the Regional Government and the Municipality. Strong emphasis on the shared goals of the strategy for Valencia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong central leadership, tying into central and regional Government.
Strong internal co-ordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evident in Council Strategies, not at City area level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited evidence for this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong decision-making and executive control from City Board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong decision making and executive control from the Mayor's department distributed through the development departments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong decision-making and executive control from City Board.
Social partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very well advanced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong commune level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong tradition of Scandinavian social partnership, active engagement with citizens locally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing rapidly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginning to emerge.
Economic Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasingly evident as Councils take on the development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasingly evident in role in enterprise zones/tax 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong co-operative ethos between municipality and business sector, more generally social partnership has strong 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong partnership ethos between the municipality, business sector and the agencies that promote 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginning to emerge, Council, Admin/private sector

	remit.	incentives.	economic role, nationally.	development.	development focus.
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5.7 Summary

It is evident that each partner brings with it differing experiences and approaches to governance. Current structures and the division of resources and power enable each City Region to perform differently.

In all city-regions, there is scope for improving overall metropolitan governance. In Valencia and Comet, success is largely dependent on close co-operation with higher regional government.

With respect to COMET the current diffuse structures and powers make leadership and delivery difficult and thus necessitate partnership. The broad swathe of powers relating to education, social services and even health, which in the Comet Region are exercised by various statutory bodies, belong to the core of municipal governance in the other City-Regions.

The Comet partnership has particular strengths in the development of partnerships, influencing rather than driving change, but rarely delivering services.

Resources, leadership and scale allow Stockholm, Valencia and to a lesser extent Vilnius to set and to a large extent deliver a City region agenda. In these city regions, municipal power and resources drive overall development. All continental municipalities have significant tax-raising powers. The continental

Municipalities without exception have significantly broader functions and corresponding structures and resources than any of the Comet Region district councils.

Among the city regions, only in the case of Spain and Comet is there a significant higher (i.e. regional) level of governance with substantial powers. However in Spain the regional level of governance is built on the devolution of national powers to the regional level: in Northern Ireland it is built on both a devolution of national powers and an assumption of traditional powers of local government. In practice this means that the regional level in Northern Ireland is extremely strong with regard to the exercise of powers and use of resources, and in principle its legislative powers are also relatively strong.

Since usually the municipality is a strong institution among most of the City Regions, then it follows that within these city regions, initiative and power will be less diffuse than in the Comet Region. Effectively, the municipality and its mayor, though to varying degrees, has the power and resources to initiate and lead large public sector interventions across many areas to a significantly greater extent than is the case in Northern Ireland (or indeed even in local authorities throughout Great Britain or Ireland). Correspondingly, partnership functions in a somewhat different manner in the partner city-regions as compared with Comet. It is not essentially a necessity in the face of fragmented sources of power, authority, competence and resources but rather a manner in which to increase participation and local democracy (Stockholm) or a manner in which to mobilise economic resources (Valencia).

Section 6: Strategic Development

6.1 Introduction

This Section focuses upon the approach to strategic planning, based upon the systems of governance outlined above. It highlights “how” strategies are translated into action in the various regions.

6.2 The Comet Region

The process of strategic planning is embedded within all Councils and Agencies of government. Local Authorities have taken the lead in developing strategic and sectoral direction. The challenge to Local Authorities has been the gap between aspirations, resources and control. Outside a limited sphere of control, all Local Authority strategic effort must fit within a range of national, regional and sub-regional strategies. As Local Authorities gain additional power and influence there will be greater opportunity for setting and delivering on the Local Authority agenda.

Strategies in the Comet region are developed using internationally recognised models such as Bryson. The strategies are prepared by each implementing agency, often with professional support from consultants, but normally with consultants acting as facilitators of an inclusive process of environmental scanning, widespread consultation, and coordination with partners and linking priorities to government and EU policy.

6.3 Rybnik

A City Master Plan was developed in 1996 and updated and revised in 2000. This was undertaken through a process of strategic workshops involving Local Leaders supported by stakeholders and the City’s Administration Unit. The work was facilitated by external experts.

The results of the process, was the development of a City Region Framework setting out the Vision, Mission, Value and key Strategic Themes. In turn these are broken down into priorities and actions. The three strategic themes adopted are: Rybnik: Regional Centre, Rybnik a Centre for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises and thirdly Rybnik: Quality of Life.

The strategy was adopted in 2000 and has been updated in 2005.

6.4 Stockholm

Strategic Planning has a long history in Sweden, dating back to the 1930s. It has always been characterised by a strong orientation towards land use and spatial planning with an increasing focus on the “green agenda” as well a strong quality of life focus, especially on the provision of suitable housing. Against this, economic development and the maintenance of a competitive base able to sustain these high ambitions has had to fight its corner like the rest. Planning tools in Stockholm are highly sophisticated and expert-driven: however the emphasis on transparency ensures wide consultation and input into plans and programmes.

An overarching plan was developed, City Plan 99. This was developed over a six year period of intensive consultation. It has not however commanded unrivalled dominance and it is fair to say that in Stockholm, there exists no single strategy or plan that oversees all aspects.

6.5 Valencia

A strategy to develop the City to 2015 was created in 1995 but it has been outgrown with many of the objectives having already been achieved. An updated strategy ‘A City for Investment, Visiting and Living In’ was prepared and published in 2005.

The main goals of the strategy are:

- To make a success of every aspect of the America’s Cup
- To take advantage of the opportunities the event offers for economic, technological and human progress
- To stimulate and consolidate the rationality and viability of a range of related projects to provide a backbone for the continuation of progress after 2007.

There are 5 themes of the strategy:

- City that has entered the Age of Information
- City of Innovation and Creativity
- Good transport connections and access to the principal markets
- One of the biggest logistic centres in Southern Europe
- A City for visiting

The strategy is implemented in partnership with the Regional Government and Regional Agencies through the Council's 'Centre for Strategies and Development of Valencia'.

There are a number of 'flagship' projects which are designed to give expression and visibility to the strategy and to act as facilitators of further development. Examples are the City of Arts and Sciences, the Convention Centre, the regeneration of the old town, the Turia River Park, the FIVEC knowledge management system and the development of innovative businesses from Universities and Technological Centres.

The development process is led by both the Municipality and the Regional Government, working in partnership together and with other agencies. Both the Municipality and the Regional Government have applied their own resources and European Investment bank loans to development projects.

6.6 Vilnius Strategy Development

The development of the Vilnius City Strategic Plan 2002-2011 was undertaken through a number of distinct phases from the development of a City Vision, through consultation and negotiation, identification of priorities and the establishment of a monitoring framework. This took place over several months with considerable efforts made to engage with stakeholders

The Vilnius City Municipal Council approved the Vilnius City Strategic Plan 2002, in June 2002. With the following priorities:

- Increasing the international competitiveness of Vilnius,
- Developing a new economy,
- Creating an advanced society,
- Development of the transportation infrastructure.

The plan is implemented and monitored through the strategic planning unit. The strategic plan is available in translation and on line (<http://www.vilnius.lt>)

**Table 4: STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS
KEY SUCCESS FACTORS**

	COMET	RYBNIK	STOCKHOLM	VALENCIA	VILNIUS
Overall agreed vision underpinning single overall strategy or hierarchy of strategies	Many independent strategies exist linked to central government priorities	City regional strategy	There is a clear vision but it may not always underpin all strategies	There is a clear shared vision, led by the Municipality	There is a clear shared vision, led by the Municipality
Inclusive, consultation process supporting strategy development	Considerable emphasis placed upon local and stakeholder consultation	All strategies are extensively consulted	All strategies are extensively consulted upon and based on multi-disciplinary, expert approach. Public authority however takes a decisive lead role.	All strategies are extensively consulted with the main stakeholder agencies	Extensive consultation
Identification of clear aims and objectives	Yes	Yes	Yes	Clear	Yes
Identification of clear themes	Yes	Detailed Themes and objectives	Yes	Clear and Transparent	Detailed Themes and objectives
Strategy identifies clear means and mechanism of delivery	Usually but not always.	Yes	Usually but not always.	The strategy sets out the mechanisms of delivery through the agencies that are co-working on it. Flagship projects are a key part of the delivery mechanism	Usually but not always.
Strategy defines clear and concrete results	Usually but not always	Yes	Usually.	The published strategy sets out clear and concrete results (Valencia, a City for Investing, for Visiting and for Living In, published CEVD 2005)	Yes including Flagship projects

6.7 Summary

Successful City Development may not need a single over-arching, all-encompassing plan but all cities require at least a clear sense of where they are going and what landscape they are travelling in. This is a practical political requirement to elicit support from citizens for public policy and is a requirement of transparency and good governance.

It is vital that there is broad consensus on the main themes of the plan and it is necessary to work at creating this consensus in order to facilitate coordination of effort.

Partnership between the key organisations that are engaged in City Development is central to success. Without partnership, effort will be fragmented and opportunities will be missed. At a minimum, each partner must know how their programme fits into an overall strategy; success requires more co-ordination and a synergistic approach with the sharing not just of goals but of resources.

A clear driving force is a success criterion; this does not have to be a single person such as an elected Mayor, it can be a strategic group.

Implementation of a strategy requires staff resources; success requires that a skilled dedicated team is engaged in driving the strategy.

Successful strategies need to be holistic and inter connected; key objectives should interlock and be supported by enabling objectives; the strategy must hang together as a consistent whole in a way that convinces citizens that results will be achieved.

Results are important; citizens must be able to see results happening on the ground; communication of results is vital.

Flagship projects, while not essential to a successful strategy can, when well planned, act as multipliers of results over a long time period.

Section 7: Lessons and Messages Emerging on Main Themes

7.1 Introduction

This section offers an analysis and summary of the key issues emerging from the comparative review of the 5 Partner City Regions. It focuses on good and best practice where the city regions have learned from each other. We cite a small selection of the 10 case studies that will later be made available.

7.2 It is informed by the exchange visits, local consultations and discussion and visits to the Partner Cities. A number of themes emerged which lend themselves to comparisons. As identified at Section 1, the research approach set out to place what was seen and experienced within a learning framework.

This suggested a framework as follows:

Figure 4: Learning Framework

Key Themes	Urban Development	Economic Development	Environmental Development	Social Inclusion
What	Physical and social regeneration	Innovation and creativity	Protection and sustainable development	Minority Inclusion, Citizenship and Social and Labour Market Inclusion
Why & How	Governance/Strategic Planning and Development Structures/Resources/Process/			

7.3 In focusing upon the what, i.e., what was seen and experienced, the practical examples and case studies detailed in the appendices are the key projects that were showcased. Naturally these proved to be memorable and those which fired the imagination and the hope that some aspects could be implemented at home.

7.3.1 Theme 1: Urban Regeneration and Renewal

All of the cities and city regions provide examples of best practice in the areas of urban regeneration. All of them understand that urban regeneration is a deliberate and sustained intervention, necessarily led by the public authority, against the almost automatic tendency, with each new episode of development, for urban *degeneration* and a nomadic relocation of activities onto the fresher, greener pastures. They all accept that urban regeneration is about sustaining living and working spaces in spite of a high degree of economic and social change. They recognise that it must be sustained and strategic, that it requires strong not weak governance, and colossal, co-ordinated and sequenced interventions – if it is to have real impact. They also accept that the key aspects of good governance and good strategic planning as described above need to prevail in large measure.

We can identify the following particular strong practices in the case of Hammarby and Laganside. We see something similar in Valencia’s re-development and in the overall redevelopment of Vilnius’ Old Town.

Case Study Resume 1 - Hammarby – Stockholm: - The Vision

The vision of the main stakeholders – City of Stockholm, Stockholm Water Company (public utility) and Fortum (semi-public District Heating Company (City has a large share-holding)) was to develop the extensively polluted brownfield site as a mixed residential centre, forming a cohesive but open community. The distinctive option taken was to:

- Make use of the most distinctive resource in the area – namely the surrounding water;
- Preserve green areas as much as possible;
- Avoid further urban sprawl;
- Optimise existing infrastructure from neighbouring areas;
- Above all, create an environmentally sustainable community, effectively master if its own sustainable eco-system.

Progress to Date:

- A population 20,000, living in around 10,000 residential units, by 2016 (today around 10,000 live in the area);
- A local economy offering 10,000 workplaces (today 3,500);
- A city within the City, but open as well as cohesive;

- Services and infrastructure to include: own schools, pre-schools, 2 high-schools, clinics, special facilities for senior citizens;
- Living area was to border the freshwater Hammarby Lake and water generally was to be used as an important quality of life and visual resource;
- Traffic is to be kept at a minimum and public transport and accessibility prioritised.

Case Study Resume 2 - Laganside & Cathedral Quarter – Belfast

Established by the Government in 1989, the Laganside Corporation has had a remit to tackle the social and economic regeneration of an area of inner city Belfast straddling the River Lagan. Using public investment as a catalyst to secure private development capital, Laganside's aim has been to open the door for new investment, new jobs, new homes and a wide range of recreational and social opportunities.

Whilst its primary focus has been the regeneration of a previously under utilised area along the River Lagan, Laganside has also recognised the importance of the economic, social and regional cohesion aspects of regeneration through its Community Strategy. Working in 14 of the most deprived wards in Northern Ireland, Laganside has supported initiatives that address needs in, and will directly benefit, these areas. Initiatives supported have included Jobs fairs and employability skills programmes targeted at those presently furthest away from the labour market.

Progress to Date:

Laganside has secured:

- Over £800 million of investment in the area
- 12,000 jobs
- 175,000m² of office space
- 60,000m² completed retail/leisure space
- 700 completed housing units

The Cathedral Arts Quarter

Located within the Laganside area, this area of inner city Belfast is so called due to its close proximity to St Anne's Cathedral. Traditionally an area

occupied by small creative businesses such as jewellery makers and fabric workers, the area had fallen into disrepair, with many derelict buildings, and was in need of a facelift.

With support from Laganside and working through local developers, the area has gone through a transformation in an attempt to create a cultural hub, an area that would combine a location for the arts with cafes, bars and restaurants.

Progress to date:

- Improving the physical appearance of the area through the relaying of traditional cobble stones.
- Building of new commercial, retail and residential properties.
- The Cotton Court development, providing affordable accommodation for a range of arts, crafts and community groups.
- The annual Cathedral Quarter Arts festival that has helped raise the profile of the area.
- Commissioning of public art features.
- A spire for St Anne's Cathedral.

Key Lessons:

With regard to governance, there needs to be a strong, cohesive, almost intransigent will to pursue the course of action decided to its fulfilment. Stockholm' Hammarby district provides a clear exemplar of this form of good governance – transparent, consultative, decisive, interventionist especially with regard to the definition of the fundamental conditions and outcomes of regeneration and city development.

The approach needs to be holistic and comprehensive since the problem is generally multi-faceted. No one element is usually strong enough to ensure a sustainable positive dynamic and many, initial investments, are inherently precarious and risky simply because the overall context remains so unfavourable.

Public sector intervention is especially necessary to define and to safeguard the strategic vision, and precise rules for planning and investment, including design, environmental compliance and so on. Public sector needs to work

cohesively. If there is no single institutional focus (as is this case in the Comet Region), then a partnership-approach is required. This will however inevitably have practical limitations in terms of coordinating detailed actions on the ground. This is a powerful reason for why Laganside Corporation was required. In the absence of a powerful focus for public-led action, there will always be a real danger of smaller, spread out developments, many of them lacking any overall logic in terms of the kind of city people want.

The private sector should be mobilised and where the market can deliver, it should be involved in preference. But the rules of the game need to be set by the public not the private sector. Even in cases of private ownership of land, planning and design rules need to be set in function of the overall vision. The private sector is usually able to adapt to the prevailing regulatory regime: it only requires the challenge. This is well understood and applied in Valencia (Turia Park), Stockholm, Belfast (Laganside).

It is not possible to regenerate on the basis of poor quality. By definition regeneration is about changing the paradigm of decline. This cannot be done by offering something that will be “avoided” by those able to choose better elsewhere. Therefore regeneration inevitably means going up market. However this can be balanced appropriately by public service and social obligations with maintenance of high design standards. This is well understood and applied in Valencia, Stockholm, Belfast (Laganside).

Sustained investment in effective public transport and measures to limit congestion are key to successful cities. This is seen in a positive perspective in Stockholm and Valencia. Poor public transport inevitably defines the city space as essentially a place for cars to get through, posing problems for pedestrians, forcing people to flee city centres as options for living.

In Stockholm successful, holistic and comprehensive urban regeneration and development is possible only because the city has been able to finance its interventions from taxes. In the absence of a strongly competitive sector to the economy these kinds of investments would have been much more difficult. Moreover housing, driven directly by the City’s own housing companies, is part of a holistic neighbourhood approach, which plans out the type of area in advance, ensures accessibility, defines design and environmental standards: it

is not simply about “more housing” and empty spaces. The task is to build a city or enhance a city, not to build yet another “estate”.

More generally, in the field of economic development, all of the partners are caught in some sense between legacies of the past (pronounced in the cases of Comet, Vilnius, Valencia) and prospects and challenges of the future, largely driven by more knowledge-intensive, globally mobile factors. All of them seek to be “at the centre” of some network or hub of knowledge, but clearly some, such as Stockholm, are more at the centre than are others. Key factors here are the overall capacity of human resources, of culture of entrepreneurship, the density of and access to knowledge networks, the “openness” to new thinking. Stockholm and Valencia stand out here in terms of major flagship successes or clusters of innovation, but all of the other cities, though somewhat constrained by geography or history, seek to emulate best practice. To some extent there is evidence of attempts to specialise, e.g., on creative industries or information technology while remaining open to wider possibilities as a visitors or tourism centre (Valencia, Vilnius).

7.3.2 Theme 2 Economic Development

In this area, the Project focused somewhat on innovative and creative sectors, corresponding very much to the knowledge-economy. On the basis of what the Project saw, Valencia stands out as a clear success with its daring, risk-taking ambition. Nevertheless there were developments in other cities that the Project did not see: most notably the Kista Science Park in Stockholm, home to Ericsson and other high-tech brands that are the modern back-bone of Swedish economy and social model. A further aspect of interest was the efforts to develop tourism in Vilnius based upon new opportunities and the promotion of cultural and sustainable tourism

Case Study Resume 3 – Valencia – FIVEC

FIVEC is one of the projects being driven by the Mayor, aimed at creating a strategic “City of Innovation and Creativity”. The Project aims to develop the technological capacity of the region through the Universities, technological centres and technological firms. The plan is to use the Council as an intelligent customer of technological services. Each of the 70 departments of the Council is required to ensure that it is using the most modern efficient technologies available. FIVEC will be a bridge between the Council’s departments as customers and the technological suppliers of the region, through a web portal

that will be continually updated. In this way local technological firms will find customers in the Council which will enable them to commercialise their technologies so that they can be sold further afield. Key partners in the project are: REDIT - a technologic association composed of 16 Technologic Institutes promoted by the Generalitat Valenciana, Feria Valencia (Fair) - the oldest institution organizing trade fairs in Spain, the Valencian Chamber of Commerce, the University and Polytechnic of Valencia.

Progress to Date

A detailed assessment of the technological needs of each of the 70 Council departments has been completed, documented and entered into the web site. Concurrently a second analysis of all of the technologies available in the technological centres, forms and Universities is being completed so that a full directory of technologies available in the region will be available.

A Knowledge Management System is being designed that will open a communication channel between suppliers and users of technology. It will enable Council departments to identify sources and providers to identify those departments whose needs could potentially be met by their technologies. The vision is that this will establish the necessary relations between customers and providers, leading to the growth of existing businesses and the creation of new spin off businesses from the Universities and technological centres.

A second, but closely related component of the knowledge management system is dedicated to the emergent biomedicine sector which has been identified as a major future engine of economic growth. Eventually this will be extended to new businesses in the electronic, new materials and new forms of energy sectors. This second component will add new support services such as aid in developing the business plan, validation of the technology, structuring the project to enable it to approach the financial community and sport for initial financing through 'business angels', industrial partners and venture capital.

Case Study Resume 4 -- in Vilnius --Tourism Development

The development and rationale for tourism is set within the strategic plan, **Goal 1.5: To develop the tourism industry**. This has a number of sub themes, to improve conditions for the organisation of international events and tourists' accommodation, to actively market Vilnius' tourism services and products and to develop an IT infrastructure for tourists to access information

The two major boosts to the tourism figures have been provided by independence and the second with accession. This has resulted in a major increase in overall visitor numbers figures from a very limited base. A further boost will be offered in 2009 with Vilnius acting as the European capital of Culture. Currently the Tourism Team is working to build a new Vilnius "Brand".

The current focus is upon 3 areas, Cultural Tourism, Business /Conference and Short Breaks.

The City is trying to raise standards and quality of service at all levels, hotels, restaurants, tour guides, operating licences and quality standards. A New tourism website is also being developed.

The Mayor and Council are totally behind tourism development seeing the external image of Vilnius and the benefits to the economy. Budgets have increased year on year. The model is similar to NI i.e. working with the regional tourism authority with some private public partnerships.

In considering the development of Tourism to date there are a number of best practice elements including;

- Involvement and commitment from the Municipality – very high
- Involvement of regional authority and private sector – very high
- Commitment to sustainable tourism respecting cultural environment and heritage – very high
- Commitment of infrastructure – very high
- Willingness to learn and network – very high

Key Lessons

Policy: FIVEC has been developed with the Mayor as the driving force as a means of promoting economic development in innovative and technological industries. The policy aim is to grow the high technology sector to become one of the main drivers of the economy. It will take at least three years before there will be evidence that this policy objective is being achieved.

Partnership: The aim has been to create a new partnership bringing the Universities, technological centres, agencies that support business and the Council together in order to achieve the goals of all of the partners; namely to support the development of the technology sector.

Council implementation: In the first year the target is that 30 (out of 70) departments will use the system and contract for the use of new technologies. This is a clear evaluation point.

Business: A key evaluation point will be the extent to which businesses registered with FIVEC find that they can access customers in the Council who will give them a fair hearing and opportunities. The number of businesses successfully trading with the Council and, the volume of business and the technological level (advanced and innovative rather than pre- existing) will be another evaluation point. The number of jobs created in businesses registered with FIVEC will also be a factor; particularly graduate jobs.

More generally, we can see the following lessons from this and other initiatives in the Connect Network (Hammarby and Kista Park in Stockholm, and Vilnius' One Stop Visitor Project in Vilnius).

Cities must be “networked and linked”: In a knowledge-driven, global economy, all worthwhile investment and most high quality human resources are mobile. Innovation and invention itself cannot be contained exclusively: it spreads out from the brains and hands of those who made it. It is essential always to keep “on the move”; shifting upwards in the belief that creativity does not have limits. The entire knowledge infrastructure in any city or region must be “clued in “, connected to the main flows of knowledge, contacts and capital. This applies to centres of learning and research, to their teaching as well as

their research, to all significant business and even public administration, all systems of governance. In short all activities need to be “internationalised” at least to the extent that their actors are keeping up with international best practice, latest developments. This is what we see in Valencia and Stockholm.

With regard to science and technology driven innovation, applying to all or any aspects of product or service development or application or process, a full infrastructure needs to be in place. The role of Institutions of Higher Education and Technological Centres is critical in partnering development agencies in the commercialisation of innovation and creativity. Key in this regard is the availability of skills. To feed the economy with future skills – against a backdrop of changing demography and an ageing population - it is necessary to draw in creative people languishing in inactivity or unemployment. This is what we see in Stockholm, Valencia.

Public development bodies need to be extremely targeted in their support of fast-growth, potentially internationalised companies, offering customised support, facilitating access to venture capital, providing assistance through the innovation process, facilitating linkages.

Business support and expertise from public utility companies and development agencies needs to be sharply focused to promote winners. There is a move away from broad generalist agencies to those focussing on specific aspects of economic development. Support must be “smart” to be effective.

Innovation and risk taking, the classic characteristics of entrepreneurs are evident in the development of projects, such as the creative sector in Botkyra (Stockholm). This is also evident in the public sector with the Municipal Authority deciding on a course of action and risking much to bring it to fruition. Example here would be the, in Hammarby Sjostad in Stockholm and the approach to the America’s Cup in Valencia.

The creative industries in particular provide an easy bridge from innovation and art to tourism, culture and visitor attraction. In this sense there can be certain elasticity in the “creative sector” that helps underpin broader urban

regeneration, tourism, industrial or simply cultural activities. We see this in Stockholm, Valencia, the Comet Region and Vilnius.

The development of tourism within Vilnius and other Baltic Cities has parallels with the development of Tourism development in Northern Ireland and particularly Belfast. Moving from very negative, limited brand awareness to that of interest .The challenge to Vilnius and again in Northern Ireland is to ensure that the infrastructure and products to be delivered are in place to ensure that the initial interest/curiosity is sustained. The Partnership model is again in evidence with Municipality working with the Regional Tourism Authority and increasingly with the private Sector

7.3.3 Theme 3 Environment

A body of best practice emerges from the projects visited by the Connect partners that focus on one or other aspect of environmental protection or enhancement or more generally the issue of sustainable development. In fact the Connect partners usually experienced environmental issues in a wider development or regeneration context and in this respect, it is more suitable to speak in terms of sustainable development.

The example of Stockholm's Hammarby (see above) is illustrative here of the highest standards achievable. The approach presented is holistic and comprehensive, value-based and sustainable development features strongly as a core considerations.

While not exclusively focused on the example offered by Stockholm and specifically the Hammarby project, there were a number of key issues and lessons.

Key Lessons:

Lowering the overall level of Co2 emissions is principally but not exclusively achieved through reduced car use (therefore a major issue in relation to urban development, transport), and overall reduced energy and especially fossil energy use – this has implications for the design of housing, office buildings and the priority given to renewal energy sources

It is essential to reduce the production of waste and eliminate landfill. This is possible through increased levels of waste minimisation, re-use, re-cycling and pollution-free incineration (in this latter regard, the experience in Stockholm of generating heat and capturing emissions is interesting)

Use of green spaces needs to be kept to a minimum and care must be taken to improve the overall natural and physical context of living.

More generally, the following lessons emerge from Hammarby and other projects (e.g., the commitment of Valencia municipality to 'green' public transport with all of its buses fuelled by natural gas).

Since sustainable development is now a main element of EU and domestic

policy, it obviously cannot be addressed in a piece-meal manner; a holistic approach involving legislation, regulations, standards and mutually interlocking measures buttressed by developing public awareness is needed. Seeking to reach compliance or better through narrowly focusing on single issues or instruments (landfill, renewals, heating insulation) is unlikely to be successful, in terms of the narrow objectives and still less in terms of the overall thrust of sustainable development.

In Stockholm, it is through a holistic and strategic approach to sustainable development – based on broad acceptance and education on the issues among the general public – that it has been possible to go well beyond compliance. This has especially been reflected in regional and city planning documents, rules and instruments and sensitive policy areas such as transport, housing, urban and neighbourhood regeneration.

Sustainable development is not all about costs: its alternative (i.e., non-compliance, partial compliance and even compliance itself) also have costs relative to a vigorous embrace of sustainable development

Beyond the required compliance in terms of water, waste water, waste and air quality, effective environmental management requires pro-activity and some creativity with regard to building aesthetics and design, optimal land-use, transport connectivity, energy policy and waste reduction.

Citizens need to understand what sustainable development is and why it is important. They must understand that pollution is not free and must be paid for.

Beyond environmental protection it is also possible to enhance the natural environment by harnessing to positively to citizens' expectations for leisure and quality of life.

More generally excellent design that uses and enhances the beauty of the surrounding waters in Hammarby (as in Turia Park in Valencia or Lagside in Belfast and the Marina in Carrickfergus) protect and enhance a natural asset. Development is sustainable when it enhances the natural environment without damaging it both in the present and in the future.

7.3.4 Theme 4: Social Inclusion & Labour Market

The need to build social inclusion so that all potentially socially excluded groups and individuals have access to pathways to education, training, employment and a meaningful role in society is a common feature of all of the cities. All of them are strongly committed to social and labour market inclusion even though their social and labour market models are quite distinctive.

Each City has specific strategies and programmes for social inclusion, reflecting the similar challenges of each location. These are typically: low educational achievers, immigrants and ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and those who are unable to find work.

Case Study Resume 5 - Valencia - 'I Plan for Immigrants Integration'

The vision is that Valencia is a city that welcomes and values immigrants, assists them to integrate and to access all of the human benefits that citizens enjoy; i.e. employment, education, housing and the ability to articulate their needs through association and for their associations to enter into partnership with others and the Council so that they become fully socially included.

The obstacles to integration include immigrants' inability to understand the culture of the city, its language and customs. It was necessary to develop skills that enable them to find employment, to access all social services and to associate and to develop their own community organisations. Equally important was to develop positive attitudes to immigration amongst Valencian native citizens.

The challenge for the City authorities and the wider public sector was to integrate their services to make them easy for immigrants to access and to work in partnership with the range of immigrant community organisations to build social inclusion.

Progress to Date

The I Plan for Immigrant Integration is a fully fleshed multi factorial working strategy with 8 objectives, each buttressed by The Valencia Immigration Support Centre. Specific activities include; to monitor ,measure and understand the nature of immigration in the City, the provision of information and advice, Coordination, Council Staff training, Promoting intercultural working, Promoting integration projects at school and community level, Prevention of conflicts, Translation and interpretation, Building multiculturalism in other Council departments, not just Social Services and Training and Employment.

Key Lessons

The Comet partners visited a number of projects including the Fostering Social Partnership programme of Vilnius, the Lunda Nova and Botkyrka projects of Stockholm and the Social Integration programmes of Valencia. Visitors to the Comet region saw a range of social integration projects in the context of Local Strategic Partnerships.

A strategy for social inclusion is essential. This can be a component of a City strategy as is the case in Vilnius or it can be a separate strategy supporting the City strategy as is the case in Valencia. A clear direction and commitment is needed in order that resources can be mobilised.

Projects and programmes are important and usually necessary, but unless these are anchored in a strategy that has ownership in the City results will be precarious. In Valencia great effort is made to engage all parts of the public service that interact with socially excluded groups so that they are sensitised to the specific needs and sensitive in the delivery of their services.

Partnership is vital; it is essential that all of the socially excluded groups are engaged in an over arching partnership that gives a voice to the needs of socially excluded groups and gets that voice heard at the place where decisions are made

Capacity building of socially excluded groups is important. This is for individuals and for the groups as a whole. It is increasingly recognised that this requires investment. The development of representative organisations is a worthwhile one when it enables members of the group to understand,

identify and explain their needs.

The process of social inclusion is one of capacity building at an individual level as well as at a group level. The normal definition of social exclusion is that an excluded person is not on any established pathway that can lead to an inclusion outcome, for whatever reason. Social inclusion therefore focuses on helping people to find and enter pathways.

The Lunda Nova case study (Stockholm) is an example of how those not on pathways are encouraged and supported to enter relevant and tailored pathways that start where the individual is. The Valencia case is similar, it involves the marshalling of training, and advice and support in a way that is acceptable to the person who has failed to enter those pathways that work for the majority.

The Botkyrka case (Stockholm) shows that a range of vehicles can be used to develop life and work skills and the all important confidence to start learning. In Botkyrka the vehicle is circus skills. In the Comet region similar programmes exist using journalism, arts, crafts, sport and child care as vehicles. The principle is the same; to engage people in learning using an appropriate vehicle for developing social, interpersonal, learning to learn and personal organisation skills. Allied to this is a thorough analysis of the hurdles that prevent people from entering pathways. Where the hurdle is disability as in Vilnius and the Comet region, effort is placed on support so that the disability does not inhibit learning. Where the hurdle is child care, the solution is often to engage socially excluded people themselves in providing it.

The Local Strategic Partnerships of the Comet region and the community councils of the Vilnius programme show the importance of engaging communities in the identification and resolution of their problems. In considering the Comet and Vilnius work it is reasonable to suggest that here in both we see a continuum with the Comet region benefiting from 10-15years on investment in social partnership and community development while the Vilnius municipality is at the beginning of this journey.

7.4 The Role of Governance and Strategic Planning

Moving from what to the why and how raises questions of how the City Regions are organised, where are the levers of power, resources and systems to deliver. Building upon the overview of governance and strategic planning offered above and informed by the practical evidence, a number of issues and messages emerged.

- **Leadership:** Posing the apparently simple question of who is in charge and who is setting the agenda, received differing responses. In Stockholm, Valencia and to a lesser extent Vilnius the answers are clearly lies with the Municipal Authority. With respect to the Comet Partners, attempts at leadership in setting the vision is evident, however the structures and the diffusion of power makes movement from vision to delivery challenging and requires highly effective partnerships between all stakeholders) to move from vision to delivery. In contrast the public expectation and responsibility for implementation clearly lies with the City Administration in Stockholm, Valencia and Vilnius.
- **Resources and Responsibilities**
With relevance to what is possible in terms of how a City is to be run, stakeholders need to be balanced in terms of who has resources, who has responsibilities and who makes the demands. A debate among stakeholders, who do not share directly in all of these elements, at least to some degree, is likely to be unreal. In Stockholm taxation and Representation go hand in hand: citizens pay very significant taxes directly to the City Administration and expect their political leaders to use these resources wisely for their good.
- **Risk Taking**
Marrying risk and responsibility can be a powerful tool. The results are evident in a number of the projects in Stockholm, Valencia and Vilnius. With respect to the Comet Region, some would argue that the system of governance, the layers of interested parties and checks makes direct, swift action more difficult. In the Comet region, the system of governance and the large number of stakeholders with specific mandates and resources requires that stakeholders work together in partnership in projects that carry a measured risk.

- **Learning and Connected Cities**

All the parties, in their involvement with Connect and a range of transnational partnerships and relationships show a great willingness to look outward to learn and benchmark.

- **Co-ordination**

Related to the above successful implementation requires the drive and power to pull agencies and people together. While reflecting the leadership role of the City Administration and the Mayoral Team, this needs to be backed by resources and power. Again this can be seen with respect to Valencia and Stockholm.

- **Stakeholder Involvement**

While initially at variance with concept of leadership and power there were examples at a strategic level of promoting mutual interdependence and contribution. This was also evident in the encouragement of citizenship participation in Stockholm, in the promotion of neighbourhoods in Vilnius. Facilitated by local district councils these mechanisms have the potential to focus service delivery on need.

- **Co-operation**

This is particularly important in situations where there is a clear distance between responsibility, authority and resources. This was evident with all partners with regional, agency and private sector partners all working with the City Administration.

- **Decision Making**

For the above to work effectively, there needs to be a transparent and clear decision making process. While process and accountability are important features of the decision making with respect to Stockholm and Comet, in Valencia and Vilnius, there appears to be an urgency to move from concept to delivery.

7.5 Strategic Planning and Development

Across the 5 Partners the approach to strategic planning and the value placed on the process and implementation varies. This is in part for historical reasons and the balance of power and resources between national regional and city regional interests.

While acknowledging this, the success of the projects highlighted are in part based upon the strategic planning process evident, key elements highlighted included:

- **Establishing a Vision**

This clearly sets out where the City region wishes to be in 10-20 years.

Each metropolitan region has set out its vision for the future. In the Comet region this happens through a set of interlocking strategies, rather in one overarching statement as is the norm in the Connect partner cities.

- **Consultation**

Each Partner showed a commitment to a comprehensive consultation process engaging all sectors.

- **A Hierarchy of Plans**

Each City Regional plan relates to wider national and regional priorities.

The Comet region out of necessity must work with a series of interlocking strategies and this poses challenges of connectivity. Each City and Regional plan relates to wider national and regional priorities. The challenge is to link these strategies so that there is synergy and not duplication or competition. There is therefore a key task of linking the strategies of all of the key stakeholders with their distinctive mandates.

This is one of the challenges of city governance which we can see taken up in different ways. The learning from the exchange visits is that the lead Council is normally best placed to do this, in cases where there is a strong regional authority, partnership between region and city is crucial.

- **A Bias to Delivery**

Where this is most evident is in the focus on priority themes or deliverables for example the development of the Hammarby project and large scale regeneration initiatives in Valencia and moving the City

Administration in Vilnius under one roof. Within the Comet region the partners have each had a strong bias to delivery, the integration of the strategies of all of the key stakeholders will remain a challenge; one that is recognised in the current plans for the changes in public administration coming into effect in 2009.

7.6 Summary of Key Lessons and Messages

The focus on key themes illustrated by a wealth of project showcased clearly provides a range of issues and success factors across the areas of regeneration, sustainable development and social inclusion.

There are of course differences of scale and emphasis in each of the city regions. However it is possible to develop a check list of key success elements and the conditions of bringing this about through effective governance and strategic planning.

All of the cities come out well – not only because they have achieved much but also because they are fully conscious both of the challenges and of the conditions – in terms of governance and strategic planning – for meeting those challenges.

Section 8: Towards the Future

8.1 Introduction

The many lessons and possibilities, only some of which are recorded on this Report, emanating from the Connect Project are substantial. A strong culture of learning among the Connect Partners has been established. Even more important is what individuals and the relevant institutions will do with what they have learned. Best practice lessons can only ever be a source of inspiration to actions – in another context than that in which the original practice was developed.

Before, during and subsequent to the Conference of 16 October 2006 the partner regions have discussed how to build on the co-operation they have already put in place. Several papers were circulated with various ideas, intensive discussions took place during the conference. The results of this are clear: there is a real perspective of extended and deepened co-operation among the city-regions, and concrete steps have been identified to explore this further with a view to consolidating it. If we look at the model below according to which the city-regions envisage their joint learning, then in many respects it is clear the co-operation to date has focused on awareness and knowledge exchange. Further co-operation will want to focus more on know-how exchange and in transfer of lessons directly into policy and practice in each administration or other participating entity.

8.1.1 Process

Incremental Learning and Application

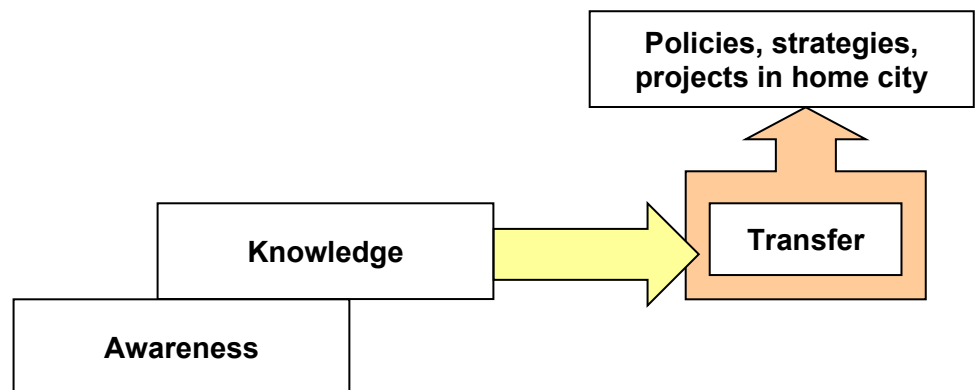
The learning process between cities may begin from any number of starting points and from any one of the three levels of policy, strategy and project/activity. It will usually move through a number of phases:

- **Awareness** : of actors and factors related to the starting point chosen (a project)
- **Knowledge**: that is developed through discussion, reporting writing, visioning, brainstorming, both with the other partners and especially back at home, within the context of one's own city.

- **Transfer:** this arises after knowledge has been processed, embedded in the internal, “home” network and gives rise to application to current projects, strategies and policies. This is where the real “impact” of interregional cooperation is to be found. Transfer can be to other individuals, institutions but almost always will have a particular issue or set of issues as its focus.

The internal “home” networking stages and the transfer may need to be supported in certain cases, since the real danger is always that what is learned is lost under the pressure of more immediate events.

Figure 5: Learning Process



As a city-region moves through these stages, then further issues may arise for further interregional co-operation – areas and issues which require more operational, practical and detailed responses, or still further elements of strategic consideration. Both of these may be articulated in two directions:

- They may involve some actors within the Network, agreeing on a more applied form of co-operation which by definition may not interest or benefit the others.
- They may alternatively take on a more structured, institutional character where, knowing each other much better, partner regions are ready to

commit to a more ambitious, targeted programme of learning, exchange of practical co-operation.

In truth it is quite clear the Connect can and may do both: public authorities may more easily be attracted to the latter option, but should not underestimate the benefits, even particular, to be derived from the former, which emulates somewhat the logic of a classical “business contact”. At any rate, the public authorities have an important opportunity to learn both with regard to those issues that most fall into their competence and to facilitate the efforts of partners within their own region or city to reach out further and to develop knowledge and expertise.

8.1.2 Funding

The EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (PEACE 2) has provided the financial support to get the Connect Network off the ground. This Programme will continue into the future with reduced resources. The precise activities it will fund are subject to on-going consultation, but it would be coherent with the spirit of that programme that support continues to be given to the kinds of activities supported under Measure 4.1. Other support for interregional exchange is foreseen by the European Commission in the context of future territorial co-operation (initiatives such as URBACT), the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development and indeed on-going exchange initiatives such as Leonardo and Socrates.

8.1.3 Possible Opportunities for Future Learning and Exchange

In this section is described eight areas that have emerged from the various discussions of different actors.

Urban Regeneration

1. *Proposed Co-operation 1.1: Major, Integrated urban regeneration schemes*

- How to design, develop and implement **major** integrated (ie multi-faceted) urban regeneration schemes

Examples of such schemes discussed in the Conference workshop are:

- Laganside, including Gasworks and Cathedral Quarter
- City of Sciences, Valencia
- Hammerby, Stockholm.

Interested Parties

Current municipal partners and especially – Valencia, Stockholm).

Main issues could include:

- Role of public and private sectors
- Mobilisation of private sector
- Financing
- Role of good design and demanding aesthetic and environmental requirements
- Challenge of building into such large projects a social inclusion or bias to disadvantaged communities.

Specific “experiences” relevant to future co-operation: In addition to the above projects, specifically:

- GEMS project, part of Laganside, i.e Gasworks Employment Market Service – which succeeded in proactively training persons from 6 disadvantaged neighbourhoods, ensuring their chances of later recruitment and employment related to Gasworks regeneration was improved (over 800 were in fact employed).

2. Proposed Co-operation 1.2:

Entrepreneurship for disadvantaged communities incl. women and immigrants

Belfast City Council indicated its desire to develop an URBACT project focused on promoting entrepreneurship for disadvantaged groups and communities.

Interest was shown in this from delegates in Vilnius, Rybnik, Valencia. This will also be of interest to colleagues from Lunda Nova in Stockholm (not present in group).

The current Footprints - Womans Centre project, focused on empowerment, social economy project, woman's Info Network could be one of several experiences underpinning this possible co-operation.

In principle this could be a separate co-operation or be subsumed into a wider co-operation (eg co-operation No 1)

Interested Parties

Belfast City Council, Stockholm (Lunda Nova), others to confirm

3. Proposed Co-operation 1.3: Innovation and Information Society Project

Interested Parties

Valencia, Stockholm

Main issues could include:

- Fostering creation of technology-based enterprises (Biotechnology, nanotechnology)
- Develop eGovernment Initiatives
- Wireless City initiatives

Main project activities: exchange and planning meetings between relevant city officers

The impetus for this project derives from the City of Valencia. It proposes to share with interested partners how it has initiated the above kind of projects in Valencia.

4. Proposed Co-operation 1.4: Promoting Entrepreneurship in Creative Industries and Social Economy

- Art of Creative city making including role of cultural experiences and specifically of festivals
- New methods in creative entrepreneurship and city making.

Interested Parties:

Stockholm (Botkyrka), Belfast (Development Department Economic Initiatives. Cathedral Quarter (Bear Initiative Carnival), Valencia.

Environment and Sustainable Development (incl transport)

5. Proposed Co-operation 2.1: Waste management, energy from waste, specifically learning from Hammerby. Awareness development for the public on waste minimisation and recycling (a priority for all, including Stockholm).

Examples of relevant projects which could inspire this co-operation are:

- Stockholm: Hammerby Eco Village, Use of renewable energy, recycling household waste (90%), Sustainable transport
- Valencia: Integrated public transport using eco fuels, reducing/eliminating emissions
- Vilnius: Reduction of pollutants in river waters and discharge to the sea
- Rybnik: Waste water systems to EU standards
- Comet: North Foreshore, developing existing landfill site into an urban park and waste recycling facility
- Belfast: Renewable energy (energy from waste)
- North Down: Recycling education centre, waste transfer centre and recycling centre.

Interested Parties:

Belfast, North Down, Valencia, Rybnik, Vilnius, Stockholm (see details at end of this section).

Main issues could include:

- Energy from waste, includes methane, non polluting incineration and other options. BELFAST/ VALENCIA / RYBNIK
- Waste separation, including recycling to minimise land fill: COMET / RYBNIK (Rybnik keen to learn from others' experience including risks, mistakes as well as good practice)
- Developing public awareness. All recognise this as the key point in making recycling schemes work. Stockholm still have some problems with public understanding of and commitment to recycling and minimisation; main problem being some people either refusing to sort waste properly or not knowing how to do it. All cities share this problem.
- Waste recycling centres. Vilnius wish to learn from the North Down recycling centre; also the waste sorting and dispatch centre.

Note: North Down have a recycling rate of 24%, targeted to reach 40% by 2010, compared to Stockholm's current 90%. All want to learn from Stockholm's experience in achieving this 90%.

6. Proposed Co-operation 2.2: Public transport, use of renewable and /or non polluting fuels, encouragement of public transport use instead of cars

Each city has slightly difference interests, set out in the table below:

Belfast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to minimise car use in the City. Belfast are interested in learning about car pooling, greater bicycle use, disincentives to bringing cars into the city and incentives to use public transport.
Valencia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to use greener fuels for public transport and other forms of transport, including lorries and other vehicles that must enter the City. How to encourage bicycle use
Stockholm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to minimise the impact of construction sites and lorries needing to enter the City Stockholm already has a 6th Framework project with Madrid on bio fuels for public transport and this could be interesting for the other cities Stockholm has a new car pooling system that is being introduced that provides guaranteed parking.
Rybnik	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to limit car use in the City centre and how to encourage collective transport (car pools).
Vilnius	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wishes to join in learning in all of these areas

7. Proposed Co-operation 2.3: Waste water management - Learning from each other in areas such as sewage sludge purification and recycling

Interested Parties:

Belfast, North Down, Valencia, Stockholm, Rybnik, (Vilnius)

Main issues could include:

- Sewage sludge: The issue is 'how to purify it to the point where it can be used as a form of compost' Valencia has experience in this which it is willing to share with the other cities; the most interested are Vilnius and Stockholm
- Public awareness / education. Stockholm believes that a key problem affecting waste water is how the public behave; i.e. what they put into the sewage system. Stockholm believes that there is a potential

project in identifying which substances are inhibiting purification and then having a public awareness campaign

- Valencia are interested in all possible ways of water re use and recycling as being a Mediterranean city with low rainfall, provision of clean water is a challenge that must be met if the city is to grow
- Rybnik needs specific help on minimising nitrates in waste water

8. Proposed Co-operation 3.1: Multi-themed Exchange on Social Inclusion and Active Labour Market Policy

Note: many ideas have been presented and discussed in this area. For some of the partners, the exchange needs to respond to their needs to develop knowledge. For others the need relates more to application of particular approaches. Taking the starting point as that articulated by the participants themselves, we see a need to develop a broad-based exchange that for the immediate future needs to explore both policy and practice across a series of sub-themes falling within this area. The process of design of such a co-operation will doubtless give rise to further precision.

Interested Parties:

Belfast, Lisburn (LSP), Valencia, Stockholm (representatives of Spanga-Tensta), Rybnik, Vilnius.

Main issues could include:

- **Process and Governance Issues related to Social Inclusion**
 - Development of partnerships between Local authority/NGOS/Social partnerships. In particular, how this works in practice on the ground
 - How communities are involved in local governance and democracy
 - The experience of working successfully with Vulnerable groups in Society i.e. those with social, health problems

- **Specifics:**
 - **Integration of migrants** and ethnic minority groups by utilising the arts and culture
 - Use of **new technology** including the internet and e-learning as a tool to help integration, employment and learning and would be keen to identify a possible partner in this area
 - Development of **Young entrepreneurs** as a way of building up the indigenous business culture and of keeping talent at home
 - Social firms and working with those most vulnerable including those with mental health problems or disability
 - Development of an active labour market that lifts individuals and communities from welfare to employment
 - Working with children and youth
 - Cultural issues and the importance of culture as a basis of joint projects
 - Social economy – start ups and incubation - Getting children interested in entrepreneurial activities (should like collaboration)

Examples of relevant projects which could inspire this co-operation are:

- The **PIPS Project** and **Stepping Stones** as both clearly take a holistic approach to well being and support and this is an approach which would be of interest to Stockholm.
- The **Social Economy projects** such as GEMS have potential for replication .What was particularly impressive was the focus on Outreach programmes
- **Ormeau Business Park** and the focus on New Entrepreneurs and Start-ups
- **Valencia – youth project, social enterprise.** Keep young graduates in the City by lending support via incubation units etc.
- **Vilnius community transport.**

Section 9: Conclusions

9.1 Introduction

The various visits and research give rise to invaluable insights and indications as to what is working well and how different city regions stand up to each other. Specific lessons have been indicated in the previous chapters. Here we present an overall assessment as conclusion.

One word of caution is however appropriate. The Connect Project was not a “mutual evaluation“. Any comparisons made do not claim to be underpinned by full evaluation rigour. Rather they correspond to how the participants and consultants have viewed the various experiences “in the round“, taking account of the various elements of policy, strategy and approach to implementation of which they are aware. In other words, such lessons could at some future stage be refined, even somewhat re-assessed or corrected. But they are enough to inform current actions and future intentions for further co-operation.

9.2 The draft of this Report was presented at the Final Conference of the Connect Project, held in Belfast’s Waterfront Hall, 16 October 2006, attended by over 150 delegates, including the Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service who inaugurated Northern Ireland’s European Strategy and endorsed the work of this Project. Charles Landry, Author of “The Art of City Making” evoked a wide array of seminal ideas that together propose a challenging vision for city-region makers. Together with the draft Report of the Project itself, presented by Dr Colm McClements, these contributions acted as inputs to the three workshops held in the afternoon, focused on the key themes of urban regeneration, social and labour market inclusion and environment and sustainable development. On the day following the Conference, the nearly 80 overseas partners visited best practice examples relating to these issues in the Comet Region, and discussed the key challenges presented. On this basis the conclusions set out below – as well as the concrete proposals for further co-operation of the previous chapter - can be said to have been subject to rigorous discussion and form the settled view of the partners.

9.3 Of the five city-regions, all are important regional or national centres, extending into wider metropolitan areas. In general terms, all faces somewhat common issues of governance, planning and a series of issues related to the

role and future prosperity of cities within the European and global economy. Looking in greater detail, there are significant differences – in terms of systems, processes and relations of governance, in approaches to strategic development and planning and in the specific approaches to particular problems.

- 9.4 Some have had a significantly more difficult past than others: in this sense Stockholm represents a strong focus for stability and democracy almost unrivalled outside of Scandinavia. Vilnius and Rybnik are emerging slowly but with great confidence to be part of an enlarged Europe, linking confidently into Eastern Europe and Russia.
- 9.5 The Belfast Metropolitan Area (Comet Region) is typical as a city-region to the extent that it is under-going a process of identifying wider metropolitan as opposed to city-specific issues and problems. Like similar city-regions such as Stockholm, various forms of ad hoc partnership provide the main responses to metropolitan issues.

The Comet Region compares very well with European counterparts in the design and delivery of specific initiatives and projects in urban regeneration, social and labour market inclusion, growth of creative industries, community development and social economy. Economic and social regeneration drive its strategic planning processes. Compared internationally, the Comet Region could improve its efforts in sustainable development and knowledge-based growth.

The Comet Region's processes and tools for strategic planning compare well internationally. Its systems of governance are markedly more complex and diffuse than in the other city-regions. Unlike all other counterparts, there is no overall champion within the BMA (or even in Belfast City) which combines political, legal, technical, financial competence. No other city region in the Project possesses such an array of institutions largely or wholly beyond the scope of municipal government.

- 9.6 Among the partners, the role of “empowered champion“ is largely assumed by the local council – especially in Stockholm, to a large extent in Valencia,

somewhat less in Vilnius and Rybnik. The Comet Region is unique in that local government has almost no tax-raising powers or own resources.

The combined regeneration of Belfast Port Area, Gasworks and Cathedral Quarter provides a first class example of best practice in integrated urban regeneration and compares very well with the more ambitious initiatives undertaken in Stockholm and Valencia. Many other initiatives in the Comet Region – though representative of good practice –are dependent on broader strategic developments if they are to bear fruit.

The Comet Region has embraced the idea of partnership more fully than elsewhere. All of its various strategic plans are characterised by partnership, especially in the elaboration stage. However, many of its partnerships are somewhat “socially”focused and straddles consultative and delivery roles. Its form is somewhat unique to the Northern Ireland. Its many manifestations offer interesting and innovative approaches to other European Regions, and could help broaden citizen involvement in public and especially municipal affairs. Equality and gender issues are as high on the agenda in the BMA as in Stockholm.

The Comet Region is an emergent metropolitan region, successfully changing itself for the better but with significant work yet to do. It needs to do more to connect adequately with future knowledge-based sectors, and improve the quality and especially quantity of its education and skills to be more like Stockholm or Valencia. It needs to rationalise its institutional responses to the requirements of change. The results it has achieved and the successful processes it has developed make it a strong learning example to city regions undergoing significant and complex change and restructuring such as Vilnius and Rybnik.

- 9.7 Stockholm offers undisputed leadership in sustainable development, especially with regard to integrated transport systems and overall accessibility within and to the City Region: it also achieves very high levels of quality of life, energy efficiency and environmental enhancement throughout its development strategies. It has been able to sustain its competitiveness through its knowledge-based, innovating sectors which sustain its valued quality of life model. As in Valencia, its strong city government is able to drive

large development, set sometimes uncompromising targets, and generally mobilise the private sector on its, rather than their conditions.

9.8 Valencia belongs to the “up and coming” European cities. Through very strong political leadership, significant resources and a strong risk-taking culture it competes to be a regional centre for innovation and knowledge-based entrepreneurship, tourism and services. It has achieved impressive results through the rapid implementation of major flagship projects that have transformed the city. The City Administration leads and mobilises the private sector and its capital. It works very closely and positively with the wider Regional Government. The City has a track record of realising ambitious projects rapidly.

9.9 Vilnius shares a common bond with Rybnik emerging from a centrally controlled state and economy to a more democratic and investment driven economy. While different in scale and ambition both City regions clearly demonstrate a willingness to be innovative in promoting their respective regions, be outward looking seeking external investment and embrace new democratic structures by bringing about rapid change Vilnius’ ambition is evident in its reorganisation of its City Administration, in promoting tourism development and in its position as the designated European capital of culture in 2009.

This is matched by the respective city administrations willingness to look outside to learn and share best practice. While both have much to learn from the Connect partners equally those in the COMET region about to face a major upheaval could learn much from the willingness to embrace change evident in both Vilnius and Rybnik.

9.10 All of the city-regions have systems in place that allow them to be informed of international and wider European developments. This is obviously manifested by their participation in the Connect Project but in all cases is much wider than this. This is part of the learning “city-region“, which all of them seek to be.

9.11 The challenge for the Connect partners is how to turn this interest in exchange and partnership into a reality of practical results. In some instances this has happened already as evidenced by business interests visiting Valencia and the follow up visits by Environmental officers to Stockholm .It is hoped that by capturing and sharing the lessons and messages emerging at the October Connect Conference that the foundations will be laid for future co –operation. The proposals for future co-operation set out in chapter 8 provide the opportunity to move beyond connecting to transferring.

APPENDIX 1

Reference/Links

Sources Consulted

Website

Government Departments

Agriculture and Rural Development
 Culture and Leisure
 Employment and Learning
 Education
 Enterprise, Trade and Investment
 Environment
 Health, Social Services & Public Safety
 Office of the First Minister & Deputy First Minister
 Regional Development
 Social Development

www.dardni.gov.uk
www.dcalni.gov.uk
www.delni.gov.uk
www.deni.gov.uk
www.defini.gov.uk
www.doeni.gov.uk
www.dhsspsni.gov.uk
www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk
www.drdni.gov.uk
www.dsdni.gov.uk

Other Government sites

A Shared Future
 New Targeting Social Need
 Priorities and Budget
 Review of Public Administration
 Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service (NINIS)

www.asharedfutureni.gov.uk
www.newtsnri.gov.uk
www.pfgni.gov.uk
www.rpani.gov.uk
www.ninis.nisra.gov.uk

Local Authorities

Belfast City Council
 Carrickfergus Borough Council
 Castlereagh Borough Council
 Lisburn City Council
 Newtownabbey Borough Council
 North Down Borough Council
 The Planning Service

www.belfastcity.gov.uk
www.carrickfergus.org
www.castlereagh.gov.uk
www.lisburncity.gov.uk
www.newtownabbey.gov.uk
www.northdown.gov.uk
www.planningni.gov.uk

Case Studies

Laganside Corporation
 North Down and Ards Institute
 Stepping Stones
 Island Arts Centre
 Connect Project

www.laganside.com
www.ndai.ac.uk
www.steps-stones.org.uk
www.islandartscentre.com
www.theconnectproject.co.uk

Documents

COMET Interreg Development Plan 2005-2007
 Belfast City Council Corporate Plan 2003-06
 Carrickfergus Borough Council Corporate Plan 2005-09
 Newtownabbey Corporate Strategy 2001-06
 North Down Corporate Plan 2002-06
 Laganside Corporate Plan 2004-07

Valencia

Generaliat de Valencia
Ajuntamento de Valencia
Port of Valencia
Valencia case study

www.gva.es/jsp/intro.jsp?idi=3
www.gva.es/jsp/portalgv.jsp?deliberate=true
www.valenciaport.com/cultures/es-ES/
www.rec.org/REC/Programs/Telematics/CAPE/goodpractice/trnsprt/pdf/valenciaen.pdf

Valencia: a City for Investment, for Visiting and for Living In (Centro de estrategias y desarrollo de Valencia)

Vilnius Strategic Plan
(<http://www.vilnius.lt>)

2002-20011

APPENDIX 2

Key Contacts

Copy: Annika Hjelm, Stockholm City Council, annika.hjelm@stadshuset.se	Coordinator	
Spånga-Tensta, work with integration, etc.		
Jack Kindberg director, Spånga-Tensta city district administration, Stockholm jack.kindberg@spanga-tensta.stockholm.se	Spånga-Tensta city district administration Tenstagången 55 S-163 04 Spånga SWEDEN	office +46 8 508 03 023
josefin.wangel@stockholmvatten.se	GlashausEtt	
Anna Nordlander information co-ordinator, Lunda Nova Business Center, Spånga-Tensta city district administration, Stockholm anna.nordlander@spanga-tensta.stockholm.se	Lunda Nova Business Center Box 4066 S-163 04 Spånga SWEDEN	office +46 8 508 03 409
Mats Perner manager of City Planning department, Stockholm mats.perner@sbk.stockholm.se	Stockholm City Planning Administration Fleminggatan 4 S-104 20 Stockholm SWEDEN	office +46 8 508 26 644
Hammarby-Sjöstad:		
Erik Freudentahl , manager of the information centre in Hammarby Sjöstad glashusett@hammarbysjostad.se		+46 8 522 137 00
Åsa Sellebjerg manager of administration, Katarina-Sofia city district administration, Stockholm (Worked with the planning of Hammarby Sjöstad) asa.sellebjerg@katsof.stockholm.se	Katarina-Sofia city district adm Östgötagatan 10 S-102 64 Stockholm SWEDEN	office +46 8 508 13 032
Creative Industries:		
Peter Nyberg Chair of Botkyrka City Planning Council peter.nyberg@botkyrka.se	Botkyrka Municipality Office Munkhättevägen 45 S-147 85 Tumba SWEDEN	office +46 8 530 614 29 mobile +46 708 86 12 91
Karin Lekberg Subtopia, Botkyrka karin.lekberg@botkyrka.se	Subtopia Rotemannavägen 10 S-145 57 Norsborg SWEDEN	office +46 8 530 619 52
Valencia: Victoria Gonzales innova@valencia.es	Urząd Miasta Rybnika Wydział Rozwoju, Promocji Gospodarczej i Integracji Europejskiej	Office +48 32 42-23-011

Andreu Llambrich (FIVEC) Andreu.llambrich@fivec.org Ernesto Faubel cartoinf@valencia.es Pere Climent Bolinches Felipe Alcala cai@valencia.es	w. 7230 - Rybnik, Poland	
Vilnius		
Inga Sezenyte international Relations inga.sezenyte@vilnius.lt		
Sigitas Barcargalia Sigitas.bargalia@vilnius.lt		
Nijolle Beliukeviliene Head of Tourism/Development		
Nijole Giedraitiene, Advisor to the Mayor Rybnik		
Barłomiej Kozieł Urząd Miasta RybnikaWydział Rozwoju, Promocji Gospodarczej i Integracji Europejskiej e-mail: gospodarka@um.rybnik.pl		