Critical Reporting for October 2011 – March 2012
Report on the cross-report assessment

Sources for the assessment / Critical reports available

Critical reports for the period **October 2011 – March 2012** were submitted from all pilot projects:

- **Emmen:** Barger Compascuum and the village entrances

- **Gothenburg:** Lövgärdet and Eriksbo

- **Hamburg** Steilshoop / GetMove

- **Sheffield:** Sheaf Valley Park and Firth Park (Ripples in the Pond)

- **Vlandern/VLM:** Transport axis Ghent-Bruges-Zeebrugge and land development project Nieuwenhove-Gruuthuyse

All reports do follow the structure of the revised pro-forma for this reporting period. Some partners answer the questions in one text but most partners answer each question separately. The reports have a length of 7 to 14 pages. Some partners delivered attachments with their reports – photos, leaflets, press coverage.

No more videos (apart from Emmen) are available for the pilots. Probably these walk-around videos won't be produced anymore.

Reflection on the achievements and their contributions to place-keeping

In the following the content of the submitted reports is summarised and structured corresponding to the systematic of the pro-forma. This part is not supposed to be a summary of the reports itself but a **synthesis and generalisation of the available information** on a slightly more "abstract level".

1. Aims, results and plans for the near future / Progress and achievements

As known from earlier assessment reports obviously all projects (and subsequently their reports) follow the **common process of project-development** from the general / wider idea (visioning / overall aims and objectives) over certain planning procedures on different spatial levels, the preparation of the implementation (e.g. tender-procedures) and finally the implementation itself, i.e. construction work on the ground.

Although MP4 is reaching its final half-year **place-keeping** is still a more or less abstract issue in many projects. Debates and agreements on place-keeping are placed after the completion of place-making activities, which is only happening at the moment in most places – although some projects at least think about place-keeping activities and needs in advance.

Due to the differences in **project-status and progress** of all pilot projects the focus of each report differs. The projects in Emmen, both pilots in Sheffield (Firth Park and Sheaf Valley), both pilots in Gothenburg (Eriksbo and Lövgardet) finalised their construction phase recently, others are close to finalisation (VLM / Oostcampus).

Some implementations were delayed due to changes in staff, re-organisation in administration, budget problems, strong winter weather or difficulties with contractors. The GetMove pilot in Hamburg is still waiting for the final approval of co-funding and will hopefully start with the place-making in April 2012 to implement the project within the MP4 lifetime.

The different **stages of project-development** achieved in the pilot projects are listed in the following:

(1) **Visioning**: --

(2) **Policy-making**: --

(3) **Plan-making**: VLM (Land Development Plan)

(4) **Preparation of implementation (place-making)**: Hamburg GetMove

(5) **Ongoing implementation (place-making)**: VLM (OostCampus and Cardijn Square),

(6) **Finalised implementation (place-making)**: Emmen, Göteborg-Lövgardet, Göteborg-Eriksbo (almost finalised), Sheffield Firth Park, Sheffield Sheaf Valley,

(7) **Preparation of place-keeping**:Göteborg-Lövgardet, Sheffield Firth Park, Sheffield Sheaf Valley; VLM Oostcampus

(8) **Implementation of place-keeping:** Emmen (at least in parts)

(9) **Evaluation:** Emmen is running ongoing evaluation – others will start with evaluation after finalised implementation – MP4 evaluation visits taking place in March and April will help to support the evaluation – Evaluation visit in Hamburg is at the end of June due to the delayed project-start

Some projects are in two stages of the project-development process because transition between the process-stages is fluent.

2. Partnerships

Stakeholders and forms of partnerships

- Possibility to involve a new partner due to a proprietor-change with better results regarding the project aims and objectives (VLM)

- Personal change in a partnership can lead to complications or delays, e.g. a contact-person retired and it takes time to set up new working-relations (Lövgärdet)

- Importance of close communication and cooperation / internal working relationships between the different responsible public stakeholders (administration, council services, regional authorities etc.) (Emmen, Firth Park, VLM)

- Working relationships within public administration have been severely affected by budget cuts and restructures within administration (Firth Park)

- Communication with supra-local level stakeholders is useful/essential, e.g. with regional level regarding traffic management and maintenance of open spaces (Emmen, VLM)

- Private stakeholders close to place-making activities (e.g.. Neighbouring proprietors and shopkeepers) are involved or at least considered in the project (Emmen, Göteborg, Sheaf Valley, VLM)

- Key role of the Friends Group (FoG) for communication to the wider public (Firth Park)

- No formal partnership between FoG and City Council regarding management of the space achieved (Sheaf Valley)

- Relationship between partners has been strained due to delays etc. (Firth Park)

- Expectation that the place-keeping agenda might require or enable new stakeholders to be involved (Emmen)

- Expectation that place-keeping will further utilise relationships with community groups / FoG (Firth Park)

- Arrangements within a partnership are necessary regarding different roles and competences (Get Move Hamburg)

- Community stakeholders need support regarding technical issues (e.g. application-procedures) and to raise the awareness of things to do (Get Move Hamburg)

- Community not yet really involved in the place-making but an opening-event for the redesigned spaces and a meeting with the residents is envisaged (Lövgärdet)

Results of working in partnership

- A new proprietor of a large area (castle domain) helped VLM to reach one of the goals regarding the improvement of safe pedestrian- and cycle-routes

- Delegation of responsibilities from supra-local levels to the local level is possible, e.g. regarding traffic management (Emmen)

- Residents are maintaining a public footpath and shop / bar owners take care of the public grounds they are using as a seating area (Emmen)

- Private follow-up/subsequent investments and activities like refurbishment of buildings, redesign of private open space adjacent to the public space, organisation of market activities and fairs (Emmen)

- Friends of Group has been successful in obtaining a Big Lottery Grant for events and activities supplemental to the place-making (Firth Park)

- Events help to establish or strengthen existing relations/links, to "spread the word" and to reach new stakeholders (Firth Park)

Comments and recommendations regarding partnerships

- In the cooperation with private stakeholders (proprietors) it's helpful to have **legal influence or other strong competences/instruments** to be not only a public planning authority with a "nice-to-have" wish-list

- **Cooperation between professionals and communities** needs time to gain a mutual understanding and to collect experience

- **Cooperation with new partners** needs time to be established.

- **Budget-cuts** in public administration have a severe impact on working in partnership (e.g. lack of time for communication and add-ons, voids in knowledge base, increasing workloads)

- **Launch-events** to open the new places to the public and other public events are a good opportunity to closely involve community groups, residents and shop keepers, to raise awareness, to attract new potential partners and to create a sense of ownership and respect (Emmen, Sheaf Valley, Firth Park)

- **Private partners have different aims and interests than the public sector** – and their arguments are not transparent whereas the public side has to play with "open cards". Dealing with private stakeholders needs influence or "something to bargain with." Are win-win-solutions between public and private stakeholders realistic in practise? (VLM)

3. Governance / Engagement (involvement and activation of the community)

Activities and tools in place or planned

- To address youth it's important to use social media like Facebook or other Internet-activities (GetMove)

- Substantial funding from organisations and initiatives for the opening-event is possible (Emmen)

- Place-keeping is now included in the village council agenda as a regular topic (Emmen)

- Head of school will hopefully stay part of place-keeping meetings to get the school more involved (Lövgärdet)

- Stakeholders working in the neighbourhood shall be contacted and involved, e.g. the animal farm and after school activities (Eriksbo)

- The organisation "Regional Landscape" is organising a Family Day in May 2012 which might help VLM to communicate their goals and objectives for the area (VLM)

- A public event for the opening of the redesigned space in Oostcampus is planned for Mid-June (VLM)

- FoG continues to be a conduit for the flow of information from the Council to the wider community. They are also integral to the management and governance of the site and the wider Park (Firth Park)

- Considerable changes in public administration have effects on the project, e.g. change in personnel, budget cuts, staff reductions, transfer of responsibilities etc. These changes will mean that more and more pressure will be put on the Friends group (Firth Park)

- The role of residents in maintenance of open spaces (place-keeping) has to be clarified – one possible strategy is to hand over more/all responsibilities to the residents (Emmen)

Comments and recommendations regarding governance / engagement

- **Lack of capacity (limited support) within the Council** to support the FoG to realise their full potential (Sheaf Valley)

- **Long-lasting administrative procedures stress the motivation of community groups** and have the danger that active people stop their engagement (GetMove)

- A small group or even only single persons are not enough to realise a project – **you need active initiators but also a substantial support from a larger group** (GetMove)

- The closer the involvement of community members the higher the chance to develop a **sense of ownership** (Emmen)

- Danger to put **too much pressure on community groups and to delegate too much responsibility** due to budget cuts in the public sector FoG in the danger of carrying out work the Council ought to be doing but can't/won't due to increasing budget restrictions. **FoG can't substitute the reduced public/council activities.** (Firth Park)

- **Ongoing communication** is necessary to keep local stakeholders active and involved (Eriksbo)

4. Finance

Funding available / Additional funding / Budget cuts etc.

- FoG successfully claimed additional funding of place-keeping activities from the Big Lottery Sustainability Grant - 3.500 GBP for events and activities (Firth Park)

- Youth initiative is applying for donations from foundations and other sources (GetMove)

- Additional public funding for minor additional place-making activities not secured yet (Sheaf Valley)

- Increased funding for place-keeping (repair and maintenance) available in Gothenburg from the citywide Municipal budget since 2012. The Municipality increased the available budget at 20 % for the whole city. Park and Landscape Administration is reporting to the responsible politicians how they suggest to invest and what they actually do with the additional funding (Eriksbo and Lövgärdet)

- Mixed funding for the pilot from different sources (MP4 and the Hamburg Programme for neighbourhood management (RISE) can complicate application regulations and prolong the approval procedures and subsequently the implementation (GetMove)

- MP4 investment generated additional investments from local government, the province, national government and NGOs in other activities in the area (Emmen)

- Severe impact of budget cuts in public administration on governance and partnerships – see above (Firth Park)

- Financial contributions from shop owners and local groups for events and maintenance (Emmen)

- Additional private funding (approx. 12.000 €) from shop owners in Oostcampus for place-making of their properties, i.e. fencing for safety reasons and improved green infrastructure (VLM)

- Level of interest in the event space will hopefully ensure resourcing for management (Sheaf Valley)

- Place-keeping activities shall be funded from generated income from Basketball events (GetMove)

- Due to the "pre-emption right" VLM was enabled to buy private land and to use this for bargaining with a private proprietor – but funds for this legal instrument are limited, which is critical especially when land values are high (VLM)

- Funding of a project/area might cause jealousy within an organisation if others receive less for their projects/areas (VLM)

- To reduce costs and to improve the maintenance the administration is aiming at a "sense of ownership" of the community and an easier reporting-system to public administration if something is broken, damaged and the like in form of information-plates with a phone-number and a number to identify the space (Eriksbo and Lövgärdet)

Comments and recommendations regarding finance

- Active role of the **community in claiming for additional funds** can be successful, especially if these funds are not available for other stakeholders like the public sector

- It's possible to raise **additional funding once the public funding is available** as a pre-requisite

- **Funding approval** sometimes takes a lot of time – and it's even more complicated if **multiple-funding** is envisaged and you need the first approval to apply for the co-funding from other sources

- Some **legal instruments require substantial funding**, e.g. the use of pre-emption rights by the Council or other public administrations

- If funding is only **available for a restricted time**, this might influence the timing of the whole process and implementation

- **Additional funding** is needed **for place-keeping activities** beyond normal public standard – a change in funding culture is needed if open space improvements are to be sustained

- **Private investments** are not always invested in the "perfect way" but in things that are in the interest of private stakeholders

- **Budget cuts in public administration** have a severe impact on projects on the ground

- **Generated income from event spaces** might help to resource management / place-keeping

5. Policy

Policies in place / policy changes etc.

- Temporary public programmes mean support-resources (funding, manpower, expertise) are available for a limited time only (GetMove)

- Supporting a youth-initiative in project-development is a challenging process (GetMove)

- Citywide strategy (ER) for urban areas was further developed as an approach for villages and is now transferred to other villages in the Municipality (Emmen)

- Town Council acknowledged officially that "the public space domain" (place-making and place-keeping) is a joint responsibility of town council and citizens (Emmen)

- The legal instrument "pre-emption right" helped to have more influence in negotiations with other stakeholders and increased the influence on the development ("We had something to bargain with in our negotiations with private proprietors") (VLM)

- "Non car access" promotion in the city centre had influence on place-making and helped to gain extra funding (Sheaf Valley)

- Project is part of the city-wide Green and Open Space Strategy – and a key output to the North East Community Assembly's Community Action Plan (Firth Park)

- Considerable changes in public administration have effects on the project, e.g. change in personnel, budget cuts, staff reductions, transfer of responsibilities etc.

Comments and recommendations regarding policy

- **Impact of policy effects** on the situation on the ground cannot be underestimated, e.g. budget cuts, staff reduction, change in legislation, change in funding schemes, management procedures

- **Legal instruments** could improve the basis for negotiation with private stakeholders if the public sector has nothing else to offer – sometimes the option or the threat to use a legal instrument can convince private stakeholders to cooperate, e.g. pre-emption rights

6. Evaluation

Note: No references to the MP4 evaluation visits in March/April 2012 included in the reports and in this assessment

Evaluation in place to assess the process and results

- Time restraints and conflicting priorities mean that evaluation is not at the top of the agenda in this and other projects (Firth Park)

- Capacity to monitor the site and the developments in detail is unavailable as a result of budget cuts (Sheaf Valley)

- Ongoing evaluation with alderman, responsible staff from the public sector and resident groups – both in plenary sessions every six month and in smaller meetings – a learning process for both sides involved, i.e. community and council. Monthly meetings of the village-platform (Emmen)

- No evaluation yet because physical work has to be finished first (Oostcampus, Eriksbo) or the project implementation has to start at all (GetMove)

Comments and recommendations regarding evaluation

- Help, assistance and guidance regarding evaluation is requested – a guideline or how-to guide for evaluation and monitoring

- Some partners realise that they should evaluate their projects in general and want to do so, but they don't know yet how to

- Evaluation is not yet a priority for practitioners – it's seen as additional work and not as a tool to improve their work or as a tool to convince politicians based on results and effects

- It would be useful to evaluate and monitor the effects of budget cuts over the coming years to see whether and how they influence the level of maintenance of open spaces

7. Lessons learnt from implementation in practice so far

Place-keeping

- The process to set up a place-keeping strategy requires more time than expected, due to uncertainties about roles and responsibilities with some of the stakeholders – but now place-keeping is a regular topic on the agenda of all relevant stakeholders (Emmen)

- Place-making is a lot easier than place-keeping (Lövgärdet)

- Without special promotion an attractive event space can gather a lot of interest and public awareness (Sheaf Valley)

- A new/redesigned space requires more maintenance and place-keeping efforts than a run-down infrastructure to keep up the quality. To retain the new qualities more commitment from the responsible public staff is required and also more commitment from the local stakeholders / community to take care of the space (Eriksbo)

Participation / Community-involvement

- Delegation of responsibilities to a single person or to rely on a single person is dangerous if this person leaves the process – the personal basis of community activities should be broader (GetMove)

- Gaining broad understanding and support for the "joint responsibility" is taking time (Emmen)

- Visible changes and ongoing activities could help to gain more active support from the community, e.g. the FoG won new members since opening of Sheaf Valley – "Inspiring first phases can galvanise a community" (Sheaf Valley)

- It's essential to keep the community group involved and up to date with <u>all</u> project developments – even when the place-making is finished. Ongoing funding requirements, reports, events and evaluations has required constant communication channels to be kept open (Firth Park)

- Other projects could learn from the well-established lines of communication in the pilot (Firth Park)

- Even if projects and plans are communicated in advance and asked for comments, things could change once construction work / implementation is starting on the ground (Eriksbo)

Finance

- Due to budget regulations place-making investments had to be realised quickly/early (Emmen)

- Some funding can be very difficult to acquire and funding requirements are not always easy to fulfil (Sheaf Valley)

- Multiple funding causes specific challenges and problems regarding application procedures, approval timing etc. (GetMove)

- If an area or space is neglected for a longer time you have to invest more money than into "normal" renewal projects – but even if you invest a lot it's uncertain whether the people in the area will notice this or not (Eriksbo)

Framework / Project-management

- Significant delays on site caused by contractors have an impact on all stakeholders involved. An internal dialogue within public administration to avoid such problems in the future would be useful – like a lessons learnt workshop for the project team and contractors (Firth Park)

- Mistakes in the plan-making for construction caused problems in the implementation of the place-making, e.g. use of wrong soil, planting of too small trees (Lövgärdet)

- Internal Public Project Management Systems are causing trouble (Firth Park)

Policy

- Transfer of the ER participation model from urban settings to village settings was successful (Emmen)

- Without the legal instrument of the pre-emption right VLM would have had nothing to bargain with in negotiations with private proprietors (VLM)

- Political changes can lead to budget cuts and changes in public programmes which make the implementation of projects on the ground more difficult (Sheffield, Hamburg)

Other issues

- Communication and cooperation with private stakeholders are difficult and challenging for the public sector. If the demands of a private stakeholder are too high the public sector can't agree. Meanwhile public arguments and objectives are more or less transparent, private interests aren't. (VLM)

- New features / functions in open space shall attract new users to the space to improve the attractiveness of the space, e.g. outdoor fitness area and barbecue facilities in Gothenburg or event space in Sheffield

- Artificial grass on outdoor sport grounds seem to be very attractive for young people – at least this is so in Sweden

Indicators for project progress

The requested **quantitative indicators** for project progress of the investment sites are focussing mainly on **project promotion and dissemination** as requested for the MP4 activity reports. These are mostly figures regarding the number of people reached through certain activities. Some remarks on these figures are:

- Most partners deliver no figures regarding these indicators - or only in parts

- Sources for figures are sometimes not clear (how were they measured / counted)?

- Some figures seem to be very general, e.g. all inhabitants of an area reached through activities or benefitting from improvements

- Benefits not measurable before the investment is finished – and even then it's obviously difficult

- Economic benefits are difficult to measure at all

A more qualitative remark on the project progress and effects of place-making is:

- More activities in the open spaces after place-making (and even before construction is finalised) are visible and recorded (although not officially counted)

For this report a question regarding **all specific project indicators** was added, these are the ones set up for evaluation fairly early in the MP4 process. Only Emmen and VLM answered this question and delivered figures or at least comments – many other partners seem even not to know these indicators (!!!) This issue might / should be solved or at least discussed at the evaluation visits.

As an input for WP 4.1 the reporting pro-forma included also questions regarding the **qualitative retroactive evaluation** of on the ground-benefits, transnational learning and reflection. These questions will be further assessed in greater detail in WP4. Some remarks from this section double the answers from the section above.

- **Ownership** of large parcels of land can improve communication because you have to contact less proprietors – at the same time it can impede cooperation because there are not many alternatives if the small number of proprietors is not willing to cooperate (VLM)

- **Funding sources** need to be signed before committing funds (Sheaf Valley)

- **Winning tender** for Firth Park came well under budget and allowed additional elements to the contract

- It doesn't save money using **lower quality in areas with high rates of vandalism** (Lövgärdet)

- **Learning from MP4 partners and transfer of ideas**: Participation activities in Emmen transferred to Gamlestaden in Gothenburg

General remarks on the assessment of all reports

Some general remarks on the form and content of the submitted reports:

- **Authors of the report and source of appraisal:** Mostly project-managers involved in the implementation are the authors. Appraisal/assessment of process mostly subjective personal view, partly views from others were included. The support of the academic pairs is obviously helpful and improving the content of the reports – although some comments from academics left unanswered in the report

- **Reflective and critical reports or only documentation:** Most reports are more reflective and critical than the first reports – but still this is obviously a difficult task for practitioners to reflect their own work. While some critical remarks have been made, they are quiet often not the main focus of the reports. Answers do not always relate to the questions and some questions remain unanswered.

- **Reflection of difficulties/obstacles/failures:** Some reports explicitly mention difficulties and obstacles and some raise clear questions for the MP4 partnership. Although this could be improved this will be a remaining task for the evaluation visits as this was the final critical report

- **Transnational learning / use of MP4 expertise:** Only very few explicit questions for the partners were raised (see below). Transnational learning is obviously difficult in the day-to-day practise – you need personal contact with transnational partners to make use of this opportunity. It seems to be not realistic to expect that practitioners include this actively in their day-to-day work

- **Evaluation:** Systematic evaluation has not been carried out in almost all projects yet – and it's uncertain whether this will happen at all before the end of MP4. Difficulties to measure benefits, especially economic benefits

Relevant questions for the MP4 partnership

Only very few issues and questions are raised explicitly in the critical reports or "between the lines". These questions shall be discussed at the evaluation visits and at the final partner-meeting in Hamburg.

- What kind of experience do partners have regarding the involvement of youth, e.g. regarding contracts between youth or between youth and other stakeholders (GetMove)

- Are win-win-solutions between public and private stakeholders realistic in practise? (VLM)

Final conclusions and recommendations

Reflecting the results of the fourth critical reporting period the following conclusions and recommendations can be made regarding critical reporting/presenting in general and for MP4 evaluation procedures, especially the ongoing evaluation visits (WP4).

- The **support from academic partners for the implementers** regarding the critical reporting is obviously helpful and improving the outcome.

- **Critical presenting of projects at partner meetings is easier and more fruitful than reporting on your own:** The presenting gives the opportunity to collaboratively discuss each pilot between the partners if sufficient time for this exercise is available as it was in Edinburgh and Bruges. This rule applies also for the evaluation visits.

- **Evaluation of projects is a challenging task** and obviously fairly new for all partners involved

These conclusions, recommendations and consequences are based on a cross-report assessment carried out by Stefan Kreutz / HCU Hamburg in March/April 2012. Academic partners had the chance to comment on the draft report.

Critical Presenting for October 2011 – June 2012

At the **final Partner Meeting in Hamburg** the "Critical Presenting" of the MP4 pilot projects is on the agenda (26./27.6.2012) for the very last time. Due to the fact that this will be the final presentation, the timespan covered in the presentation shall be extended to **October 2011 – June 2012** to cover all information and all experience made up to that point.

After the very positive presentation of pilots at the Edinburgh and the Bruges meeting we hope that we will have sufficient time for this topic again. Three hours should be reserved on the agenda for presentation of and debate on all projects from Emmen, Gothenburg, Hamburg, Sheffield, Vlanders and maybe Aarhus. This would mean approx. **20 minutes per pilot project for presentation and joint debate**

Nonetheless, regarding the obvious need for a collaborative transnational debate on the implementation of the pilot projects, it's very important that the presentations are **well prepared, short and explicit, well visualised and follow a similar outline**. Therefore an outline for the critical presentations will be available again for all pilot projects (like for the last meetings).

It's also highly recommended to **raise precise questions** for comments from the partners.

Although it would be preferred probably not that many implementers of projects will participate in this final partner meeting.

The following comments shall help you to prepare your final critical presentation. Please consider the questions when you prepare your presentation. A model presentation with a rough outline is available.

And remember we have only 20 minutes per project for presentation and debate!

- What are the most important results?

- What are the final steps envisaged – what will follow after the end of MP4?

- Refer to both place-making and place-keeping activities: What was done and what was achieved?

- Try to be really reflective and critical! Don't tell a simple "success story" but tell the full "true story" and report on difficulties, obstacles and failures in the process (What worked, what didn't and why?) What kind of recommendations do you want to make for the MP4 final outputs?

- What kind of final questions do you have to MP4 partners?

- What kind of input / support do you need from the transnational partnership?

- Please use visual material (e.g. pictures, diagrams, video) for a quick and easy understanding of the project by "outsiders"

Stefan Kreutz / HCU Hamburg – 17.4.2012