



network for
the dissemination
of knowledge
on the management
and organisation of
large infrastructure
projects in Europe

May 2008

#4

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**NETLIPSE BOOK
PUBLISHED
SEE PAGE 4**

Newsletter #4: The start of a new beginning

This newsletter marks the end of the (first) NETLIPSE project and contains information on the last Network Meeting, views on 4 years of NETLIPSE and insight into the follow-up of the project.

The last Network Meeting (Turin) was attended by more than 60 people and hosted by the Structure of mission for the Lyon-Turin new railway link. Mr. Jonathan Scheele, EC's Director of Transport Logistics, TEN-T and Co-modality DG TREN, opened the meeting and praised the NETLIPSE project for its research and networking activities.

During the Peer Review, a body of external experts evaluated the NETLIPSE research approach and results. The Peer Review was lead by Mr. Karel Vinck, EC TEN Coordinator. A short overview of the peer results is given in this newsletter. In short, the panel verified the NETLIPSE research approach and results and is very interested in the follow up of the project, especially the development of the Infrastructure Project Assessment Tool.

Finally, the NETLIPSE future was discussed, including setting up a proposal for the coming 2,5 years and submitting it to the EC for funding. The wish to continue the NETLIPSE initiative was felt by all who have been involved in this unique project. As such, a next Network Meeting will be organised October 21st and 22nd in Zürich. In August you will be able to find details of this meeting on the www.netlipse.eu website.

On behalf of the Communication Team, I would like to thank you for all your enthusiasm during the past years in realising the NETLIPSE project and look forward to collaborating with you in the coming years.

Pau Lian Staal

**A future for
NETLIPSE?**



Leendert Bouter



Marcel Hertogh

Looking back

The Network Meeting in Turin organised by the Observatory of the Turin-Lyon project 17-18th April 2008 and the publication of our book 'Managing Large Infrastructure Projects' mark the end of the current NETLIPSE project. NETLIPSE has been even more of a learning experience than we expected. At the beginning of the project, we expected to end the project by describing results obtained in a 30-page brochure. In hindsight, we have ended up publishing a 260-page book describing all the main findings, best practises, lessons learnt and interesting information of the 15 projects researched.

During the two-year project, we have experienced growing interest in the NETLIPSE network. The attendance at meetings increased. At the Kick-Off meeting in London, 20 people attended representing 7 different countries; in Turin over 60 people attended representing 9 countries. In the four newsletters and via our website, we have informed you about the projects' progress and results. We have even been contacted for information, via the website.

So what now?

Is this it? Do we conclude that the last two years were very interesting, we had a good time,

let's spend time on other things? Or is there a future for NETLIPSE? The answer to this is: YES! We think there is a very definite future for NETLIPSE! So, what are our plans? At the final network meeting different members of the European Commission let us know that there is a need for the development of an Infrastructure Project Assessment Tool (IPAT). In addition, some member state representatives also showed their interest. And partners are asking for the continuation of the network.

NETLIPSE: the next step

We will establish a 'Not for Profit' Foundation. The Foundation expects to have a positive influence on Europe's economy and wealth by improving the deployment of Large Infrastructure Projects. For this purpose, the NETLIPSE Foundation will focus on developing the IPAT. Besides that, it will actively support the knowledge network that has been initiated in the NETLIPSE project. The Foundation will do this through the dissemination of experiences and knowledge on the management and organisation of LIPs in various forms, such as trainings, network meetings, studies and site visits.

We would like to thank all those who attended the four NETLIPSE Network Meetings for your enthusiasm and

inspiration; and your helpful views on the results of the projects studied. We would also like to thank all the interviewees and people from the projects for their openness and their willingness to share their best practises and lessons learnt, which formed the basis of our results.

We hope you have enjoyed reading the NETLIPSE newsletters and participating in the discussions at the network meetings and that you are interested in reading all the results as described in the NETLIPSE book, published 5th June. Maybe it will inspire you to use some lessons in your own work and in this way to improve the execution of your projects.

We look forward to cooperating with you in the near future during the next NETLIPSE phase. Let's keep in touch!

Leendert Bouter

NETLIPSE, Chairman of the Executive Board General
Director Centre for Public Works Rijkswaterstaat,
Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Watermanagement

Marcel Hertogh

NETLIPSE Project Manager Director AT Osborne B.V.

Day 1: due to the rain, the NETLIPSE group enjoys listening to the enthusiastic tourguide at the Palazzo Madama; Museo Civico d'Arte Antica



Highlights...

The Turin Network Meeting held in April 2008

After over two years of intensive work across a whole range of water, rail and road projects, along with the inevitable challenges of different cultures and working relationships, the team of NETLIPSE gathered in Turin to review progress. The objective was to confirm that the task, as agreed with the European Commission, would be completed fully. The team has undoubtedly bonded. It has faced an enormous challenge of gathering information about major transport investments and their delivery. But the job has been delivered and well done to everybody involved. Not only have the projects been analysed but key features have been drawn out and are now contained in the final report.

It was clear that NETLIPSE has a sound skill and knowledge base. This may be the first time that such a comprehensive look has been made into project practices, focussing

on management and organisation in Europe. One of the findings was that little has really been done to share experiences from one project to another. Indeed, in reading the data captured from the 15 Projects, there is much to choose from and some difficulty deciding where to start!

The Opening Day

However, let us briefly describe the proceedings. The opening session took place in a room within the city centre but with the civilised sound of trams passing by beneath! Mr Saverio Palchetti, head of the Structure Mission for the Lyon Turin new rail link, welcomed the delegates and gave a detailed insight into this project. It dates back to 1996 and is a very major engineering task across two countries (one third French and the other Italian), through some very sensitive areas. Stakeholder management was a major issue. The Susa Valley



Day 1: Director TEN-T European Commission, Mr. Jonathan Scheele



Saverio Palchetti, Head of the Structure of mission for the Lyon-Turin new railway link



Antônio Lemonde de Macedo, Frank Wadenpohl and Eddy Westerveld listen to the discussions.



NETLIPSE Panel: Pau Lian Staal-Ong, Stuart Baker, Geert Teisman, Marcel Hertogh and Leendert Bouter (next to Karel Vinck, Chairman Peer Review Panel)



Mario Virano, Commissary of the Osservatorio Valle di Susa opens the meeting whilst Saverio Palchetti looks on.

Observatory was established as a means of resolving disputes with local interest groups and individuals in a very historic and sensitive area, where opposition was high. Although the creation of such of an organisation generated some delay, it has proved worthwhile. Safety and security considerations were playing a dominant role, especially where the tunneled sections were concerned. It was interesting to note the problems arising from seeking to get reasonably accurate traffic forecasts and the extent to which the existing and traditional rail routes would be affected. We know only too well how other transport projects had generated far more business than was expected – and sometimes vice versa!

This was followed by Mr Jonathan Scheele, Director of the TEN-T European Commission, dealing with his perspective on the future and the potential role of NETLIPSE. He was pleased to see Switzerland included, situated, as it is, in the very heart of Europe. Delivery of the NETLIPSE report was timely. With the European Union now exceeding two dozen member states, along with demands for increased quality and timely delivery of transport links, the disciplines recommended by NETLIPSE would be invaluable. He felt that there was a need to look at projects at a very early stage, to determine if they were robust and worthwhile pursuing. Would they succeed? What could NETLIPSE contribute in the future to ensure timely and cost effective delivery in geographically and politically diverse areas? There was encouragement from the Commission for NETLIPSE to enter a second phase although there was a bidding phase, to compete for funding and an expectation that some support should come from other governmental and private sources.

The day also contained a presentation about the Dutch Maaswerken project which dealt with the navigation of traffic along the River Meuse. However, this proved to be a complex matter, involving issues of flood control and understanding the effects of climate change over a transport corridor, covering 42 local authorities and two countries. A further briefing was provided by Mr Johann Herdina, who as Project Manager described the progress with the German Unterinntalbahnhof scheme.

The day ended with two slightly light hearted debates, but both with a serious message. The first was on the merits of introducing new technologies within large infrastructure projects (the meeting agreed that these should be sensibly included, despite the risks, otherwise no progress would ever be made). The second debate covered the subject that project teams never wanted to learn from each other. The meeting felt they did, but there was also much to be done to link those willing to learn - hence NETLIPSE!

The second day

A Peer Review

The second day took place in a hotel and did not have the sound of trams! It was very much about exploring the many findings of NETLIPSE, but was also dominated by a "peer review" examination, to check the robustness of the whole exercise. The latter was chaired by Karel Vinck, TEN coordinator with the European Commission, along with other senior project managers and academics, specialising in the subject. It was a most valuable occasion, as those leading with NETLIPSE were cross-examined in depth about the practices employed and the rationale behind the conclusions. There had been a remarkable degree of consistency throughout the interviews collecting knowledge from each of the 15 projects. Whilst NETLIPSE achieved a clean bill of health, some useful issues arose. Although the projects examined did not embrace all the member countries of the EU, the spread of activities reviewed gave a good representation of the issues faced by all concerned. Matters like establishing consistent standards were raised, so as to allow



Day 2: Professor Hans-Rudolf Schalcher and Professor Geert Teisman highlight the best practices and lessons learnt on the management and organisation of large infrastructure projects.

Karel Vinck,
EU TEN Coördinator ERTMS

projects to be compared on a similar (like for like) basis. The value of risk management was also discussed along with the importance of alerting early those further up the chain of responsibility of problems or potential obstacles. The conclusion was that the work undertaken had been very useful and should be continued.

The Book!

Of particular importance during the second day was a presentation on the publication of the TEN Book containing the full results of the NETLIPSE study work, led by Professor Dr. Hans-Rudolf Schalcher and Professor Dr. Geert Teisman. Marcel Hertogh gave a summary of where NETLIPSE2 might go and the challenges ahead. Further details of the Peer Review are described on page 9. _

NETLIPSE book published



All results from the 2-year NETLIPSE research project have been described in the book 'Managing Large Infrastructure Projects: Research on Best Practices and Lessons Learnt in Large Infrastructure Projects in Europe'.

About the NETLIPSE project, information is given on how the project was organised as well as the project scope. In addition, the book gives detailed insight into the research methodology and most important results obtained at the fifteen large infrastructure projects researched.

Best practices and lessons learnt on objectives and scope, stakeholders, financial management, organisation and management, risks (and opportunities), contracting, legal consents and knowledge and technology are described in detail. The NETLIPSE book contains practical information on the results obtained. In addition, an overview is given of all the rail, road and waterway projects researched.

More information can be found on www.netlipse.eu. The NETLIPSE book can be ordered via the website or via mel@atosborne.nl ISBN/EAN 978-90-810025-2-3, € 29,50 (excl. shipping and handling.)_

Some highlights from NETLIPSE

From Tony Francis, Department for Transport London

I have been involved with NETLIPSE almost from the start; well actually when Han Kok appeared at our then London office with this rather imaginative idea that we should do some work, for the European Commission, on major infrastructure projects. As Stuart Baker has mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter, we were, at the time, heavily engaged in delivering the modernisation of the West Coast Main Line. That had become just slightly more than an eight hour day! More like 12 or more, and not just confined to Monday to Friday. It took some convincing to add NETLIPSE to our work portfolio.

Anyway, it has worked. NETLIPSE has been delivered, NETLIPSE 2 is under development and the railways of the United Kingdom go on being expanded. The West Coast project, although not immune from challenges, is achieving what it set out to do; carry many more passengers and much more freight. I have learnt much and hope to go on doing so; the concept of lifelong learning is with us. I see many organisations struggling with quite small schemes. Not understanding the need to define the problem, finding the right solution to that problem and controlling the specification are just some of the issues to watch. No longer are schemes built totally with one source of funding; the engagement of the private sector is almost compulsory. This is no longer confined to just civilian projects; the UK's Royal Air Force new fleet of transport and mid air refueling tankers - a very vital front line military element - are being supplied and managed by the private sector.

I can recall the relative innocence with which we pursued certain projects in decades past. We got them delivered but how much easier if the knowledge that has now been accumulated by NETLIPSE was available.

There are simple issues, such as remembering that the completion of some physical work is not the end - it might be the means to an end - but that is all. The work really begins when it is "open for business", making it work and achieving the objectives. Indeed, having clear objectives is one of the cornerstones, noting that the life of a major infrastructure will be long and will see many political and economic changes.

There is no one solution to achieving success; the bank of knowledge held by NETLIPSE will offer guidance and allow sponsors and project managers the chance to determine the right way forward. Look upon the matter as sailing a ship. NETLIPSE offers some charts, covering parts of the sea which was previously uncharted.

The captain or project leader needs to determine a course, but using the advice of NETLIPSE will identify where obstacles exist or where the water is too shallow (ie the money might run out!).

It is essential to hold a firm "business case", which ensures that the funding provides a pay back (either commercially or with social benefits). How many times have I listened to a public authority with a bright idea, but with no real evidence that a not insignificant amount of public funding can be justified.

Keeping in with the neighbours is important - or rather stakeholder management is vital. Although it will not be possible to have everyone "on side" ensuring there are no surprises and being as open as possible are certainly essential prerequisites. The relatively small investment in this business will pay significant dividends. I can think of some schemes where poor stakeholder work has prevented or at the very least delayed or undermined progress.

Just remember also that things will go wrong; a project will be judged not on what went wrong but how it manages in recovering from such a crisis. There are plenty of both good and bad examples to examine.

Finally, to use a comment from a passionate European, the wartime British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, "this is not the end, it is not even the beginning of the end, but it is perhaps the end of the beginning".

On to NETLIPSE 2!_

Tony Francis



NETLIPSE research results

a few examples

LIPs are complex in several ways. From inception to realisation these projects regularly take two decades or more. With a length of often tens or hundreds of kilometres it is an enormous task to design the work and to construct it. Most projects require different kinds of new technologies. The projects have an important impact on the environment and numerous shareholders and stakeholders are involved. In addition, the number of internal requirements (safety, noise-levels and aesthetics) and external requirements (health and environment) are continually increasing. As the project task is becoming more complex (people, planet, profit), the quality of the administration and the management of these projects have to improve correspondingly.

Knowledge exchange in Europe is scarce

The NETLIPSE research shows unambiguously that knowledge exchange in Europe is scarce. When comparing the projects we found that often similar challenges are faced. The chance to learn from other projects is a terrain yet to be developed. At the beginning of the NETLIPSE project, we expected that cultural differences would make it difficult to compare the fifteen projects. Yet the research proves that many lessons learnt and best practices are independent of the specific national framework conditions, context and cultural habits. In fact, there are many similarities between the best practices and lessons learnt found in the 15 projects. The partners involved in the NETLIPSE project are now convinced that a network that focuses on knowledge exchange can work.

Integration for success

Another result of the NETLIPSE research is that LIPs must be conceived, managed and operated as an integrated whole, focussing not only on the completion of a physical project as an end in itself, but also on stakeholders involved. LIPs are an important link for European transport and on a higher level contribute to economic and social sustainable growth of our society.

Key success factor in the organisation and management of LIPs is a dual focus between ‘control’ and ‘interaction’. Control focuses on the internal world of the project and the project team, requiring adequate (processes for) planning, risk management, financial engineering and scope definition. Mature control mechanism and verification should be developed.

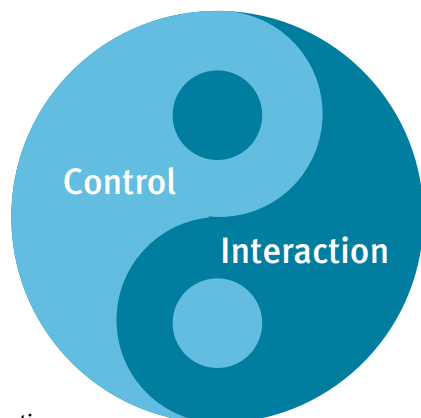
Interaction is related to the external world of society. Two elements are essential: an open culture and the ability to adapt to changes within the context.

Mature management of LIPs asks for a hybrid approach combining control and interaction. For example: clear contracts are essential but must be supported by joint solutions if the end outputs of the project are not to be compromised. Another example: it is important to implement a system of risk management that focuses on threats, but this is not sufficient. Risk management should also focus on opportunities, opportunities that often are the result of interaction with stakeholders. And last: the dual approach is needed to cope with the ever changing context, for instance from new legislation, changing policies (for instance tunnel safety after the tunnel disasters in the Alps) and changing governments during the long planning and realisation periods of LIPs.

The NETLIPSE research found that in the batch of 15 projects, the ‘control’ part is better organised than the ‘interaction’ parts. The ‘hard factors’ are better organised than the ‘soft factors’. The projects are not very open to optimisations, opportunities and new ways.

Managing innovations

LIPs offer a challenging playing field for innovations, such as new technologies or contract arrangements. However new technologies have a high risk profile and need to be managed according to the specific needs of the project or as an innovation. Ideally innovations should be managed as separate projects or sub-projects – however this is often not the case. _



An interview with Han Kok



Han Kok

Perhaps you could describe to our readers something about yourself, your background and achievements.

My first job, besides on Saturdays as a postman, was a virtual civil engineer at a real estate developer/constructor named OGEM. That was in 1977. During this period, I ceased studying at the polytechnic school in Rotterdam for a while. Then in January 1978, I was asked to go to Saudi Arabia, but I decided to start as a constructor at the engineering office of the municipal works of Rotterdam. During the evenings, I picked up my studies again in between full time work and continued this way for a further five years. I was very happy to get through the final exams! I stayed at the municipal works for 18 years, but with very different projects, such as the construction of the metro and a large railway tunnel through the city centre of Rotterdam. During this time the project management department became aware of the importance of stakeholder management. The rail tunnel project (Spoortunnel) in Rotterdam was the first project where I could prove that stakeholder management is more than public relations or communications in general. Convincing the project organisation that investing in stakeholder management is worth every guilder (it was before the Euro!) was in the beginning probably the biggest challenge

What was the highlight of your career?

I had a lot of very exciting moments during my career, it's hard to pick out one. Let's give it a try:

My first meeting with Professor Mrs. Riek Bakker is one. She was, and probably still is, a very tough woman, loved by a lot of people because of her determination, but I'm sure that also a lot of people were afraid of her. In 1992, she was director of the city development office in Rotterdam with over 500 employees. Mrs. Bakker asked me to become the communication manager of one of the most exciting projects in the Netherlands ever, "The Kop van Zuid" including the new Erasmus bridge. I wrote her a letter with my requirements and she invited me in her office. I had never met her before. She immediately fired off a question: "Nice project don't you think?". I said: "Well, yes." "So will you come to work for me?", she continued. I said "Listen, I wrote a letter to you with seven demands and...she interrupted me; "That's all OK". She asked me again: "So will you come to work for me?" "Well, yes" I answered. "Ok", she said and we shook hands. I think, it took about three minutes and 20 seconds. That conversation was the beginning of three very interesting years at Kop van Zuid. Besides that it gave me the opportunity to visit the rest of the World as Mrs. Bakker loved to travel.

Bring us up to date with your work

In 1995 I was asked by the ministry to become communication manager of The Betuweroute, another difficult, but very interesting project. Getting the communication organised was something which took a lot of time. I worked at this project for seven years. I think it was during 2002 when Marcel Hertogh phoned me and asked for an interview about how the Betuweroute project was dealing with stakeholders. We had this discussion and out of this NETLIPSE grew.

Later I took care of the public relations aspect of NETLIPSE. I contacted the European Commission and searched for projects that could be of interest. In this way we found Stuart Baker, Tony Francis, Hans Rudolf Schalcher, Saverio Palchetti and the other key members of the project team.

In 2003, I left Rotterdam behind and moved to Bern in Switzerland to start a new firm. I still work in communication but with a large accent on project finance. Besides this, I'm involved in a company called "Serious Gaming", a new way of using interactive simulation through computer game technology. I also do due diligence on projects that seek financing from private investors.

Well, good luck with your ventures. You are a busy person. How do you relax?

Life does not consist of work alone. I take the opportunity in my free time for jobs like painting my boat in Rotterdam. This is a real steel Dutch vessel from 1976. (Sometimes I am afraid I will lose the struggle against rust!) or do some reconstruction on my house in Bern, which dates back to 1606. When reading, it is probably a National Geographic, of which I have over 70 years completed. Maybe travelling and meeting new people and cultures is my greatest hobby.

I am looking forward to the second stage of NETLIPSE. I think the challenge is to prove that the knowledge of the NETLIPSE research can really be of help to improve the management of future projects.

Many thanks._



Stuart Baker

'The experience has been better than any training course might have been to me!'

A Personal Perspective on NETLIPSE

from Stuart Baker (UK Department for Transport, Deputy Director, National Rail Projects). Another of the founding fathers!

My first introduction to NETLIPSE was in 2004 when I was contacted by those with the initial concept of the research project. The plan was explained to me. At the time, I was in the UK Strategic Rail Authority and responsible for funding and sponsorship of the West Coast Main Line project. This was a job with considerable pressure to achieve delivery of valuable outputs to deadlines of September 2004 and December 2008. This was a two stage plan which I had brought together.

Given all the pressures with a very large project, I was initially sceptical about NETLIPSE and wondered how there might be benefit to me and my organisation by being involved. However, I was slowly persuaded that there would be significant personal and company gain from us being involved and we signed up as a consortium partner to bid for the EU research work.

So – what has been the experience?

Was that decision to join NETLIPSE justified? I believe that the resounding answer to that question has been yes. There has been a huge learning experience for me and for members of my team, bringing totally new perspectives on major infrastructure projects. Helping to lead the research on projects across Europe, whether highway or new railway, has enabled me to understand different methods of funding, development, consent and stakeholder strategies and project execution. Similarly, my experience in the UK has, I believe, enabled me to understand the European projects quite rapidly and to ask quiet and probing questions, while doing the research.

Several knowledge and training gains for me come to mind, which have already led to risks being better controlled in the UK and brought a return back to my organisation. Working on the review of the Bratislava Ring Road and understanding the currency exchange problem on a PPP section of that road has made me very wary of this issue on my own multi-billion pound train replacement project. Generally, the research work has brought me, as a funder and sponsor of projects, a much better understanding of the issues facing a variety of project delivery organisations. Systematically studying the findings of the 15 projects and analysing the best practices and lessons learnt so that I could write the draft of section of the TENs brochure, has been a major leaning experience. In the hard work of the day to day job, I had never had this opportunity to stand back and think through some key issues.

The experience has been better than any training course might have been to me!

Through the network of individuals with many different backgrounds and perspectives, I have learnt a great deal through the informal conversations and very much value the friendships made over the last few years.

In short, I believe that I have been able to contribute knowledge and experience to the NETLIPSE work. On the other hand, the practical tasks have been excellent at developing my experience and bringing to us in the United Kingdom, a clearer knowledge of what makes major projects work well. _

The Peer Review

In order to verify the NETLIPSE project research methodology and research results, a Peer Review Panel was organised at the final Network Meeting in Turin.

The Peer Review Panel consisted of professionals who are experienced and affiliated to the world of large infrastructure projects and represent different relevant backgrounds and nationalities, but who had not been directly involved in the NETLIPSE research. The questions posed to the Peer Review Panel were:

1 Is the Methodology used sound?

- Structure
- Independency and competence of the researchers
- Accuracy check of the case study reports
- Research sample (mix of project phase, country, scale and type (modality))
- Process of research of 15 projects
- Process of research of each project

2 Is the quality of the research sufficient?

- Is the analysis of the results valid?
- The quality of the research in respect of the time available?
- What is the value for practise?

Members of the panels

Members of the Peer Review Panel were:

- Chairman - Karel Vinck; TEN coordinator, EU
- Antonio Calabrese; Professor, Politecnico di Milano
- Peter Hansford; Executive Director, The Nichols Group
- Marian Hantak; TEM Project, Central Office, UN
- Karl Johann Hartig; Project Manager, Vienna Central Station
- Johann Herdina; General Manager, ÖBB Bau AG
- Saverio Palchetti; Intergovernmental Commission for the – Lyon – Turin Line
- J. Rodney Turner; Professor ESC Lille & Kemmy School of Business, Limerick

Members of the NETLIPSE Panel were:

- Leendert Bouter; Chairman, NETLIPSE Executive Board, Ministry of Transport (NL)
- Stuart Baker; Divisional Manager, Department for Transport (UK)
- Marcel Hertogh; NETLIPSE Project Manager, A T Osborne
- Hans-Rudolf Schalcher; Professor, ETH Zürich
- Pau Lian Staal; AT Osborne
- Geert Teisman; Professor, Erasmus University, Rotterdam

Structure of Peer Review

The Peer Review took place in the form of a 2-hour panel discussion: one panel of people directly involved in the NETLIPSE project. The Peer Review was chaired by a respected person not directly involved in the project – Karel Vinck, TEN Coordinator.

All Peers posed a few questions, to which the NETLIPSE Panel was given the opportunity to respond to. At the end of the session, the Peers were asked to give their final judgement about the projects. In summing up, Karel Vinck stated that the Peer Review Panel was unanimous in its view that the work undertaken had been very useful and should be continued. The EU is facing economic, political and social challenges which can be significantly eased by the development of effective infrastructure projects of the sort to which the (to be developed) Infra Maturity Tool and the associated NETLIPSE research could contribute. _

Peer Review Panel: Saverio Palchetti, Peter Hansford, António Calabrese, Marian Hantak, Karl Johan Hartig, Rodney Turner and Johann Herdina.



NETLIPSE “TWO”

When NETLIPSE started, all involved thought it would be an intensive two years worth of activity followed by presentations of the findings to the European Commission, offering guidelines to support future investment in capital projects. That is indeed the case and the conclusions are now being finalised, to meet the requirements of the Commission. In the normal course of events, that is the end of the matter.

What has become clear, however, is that the volume of material and knowledge obtained and still potentially to be "unearthed", is enormous. Possibly, for the first time there is a significant "bank" of facts on both good and bad practice in developing and managing major infrastructure projects, which can be shared with a wider audience, to the benefit of all concerned.

Much debate has taken place as to the future of NETLIPSE. Should there be one?

The need for advice and guidance appears strong. Europe still requires further improvements to the transport systems, if it is going to continue with sustainable economic development, which the population rightly seeks. For example, with limited funding and increasing legislative complexities being imposed on such work, the sharing of best practice appears essential. And they are only two of the challenges facing completion of a project!

Work now progresses towards the concept of a "not for profit" Association or Foundation. This would be able to offer a means of exchanging high quality information on the whole subject of major infrastructure projects. It would be a centre where individuals, private and public organisations throughout the European Union could access a bank of knowledge to support them throughout the life of a project.

The focus is on an educationally based institution, delivering knowledge and skill development throughout the European Union.

Amongst many ideas is that of including the concept of "flying doctors", to assist with problem solving over a particular project. Such issues might involve a technical or political matter, a query over stakeholder engagement or indeed finance. Such information needs to be accessed using the latest state of the art technology - meaning in particular an easy to use interactive web site, although it must never ignore the "human touch" - the ability to meet with like minded individuals and learn first hand.

NETLIPSE 2, as it is currently known, should ideally also offer the "Infrastructure Project Assessment Tool" along with first class training opportunities for managers and indeed assessors of those involved in such work.

The next steps involve some busy months ahead, turning the whole idea into reality.

See www.netlipse.eu for news._

NETLIPSE Calendar:

21 + 22 October 2008
November 2008
9 - 11 November 2008

NETLIPSE meeting Zurich
TEN-T Conference
NETLIPSE Presentation IPMA-World Congress in Rome

For more information on the NETLIPSE project please see the website www.netlipse.eu, or contact the Project Manager:

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