



Communication in Urban Planning

A brief survey on the opportunities for remediation projects





Summary

Within the context of the communication aspect of the CityChlor project, we saw a need for an exploratory survey concerning communication opportunities for urban planners and project leaders. Soil contamination and soil remediation works are often part of their projects. The aim of the survey was to find out:

- what kinds of communication steps they resort to in their projects
- how they currently look upon communication concerning soil remediation
- if and where there exist synergies in, or possibilities for, communication

For this survey Cibe Communications approached urban planning associations (VRP, CUB, SRL, SRU and BNSP) in order to collect input and gather contacts. The CityChlor project partners provided contact data and interviews were done with individuals in charge of projects or with urban planners in Flanders, Wallonia, the Netherlands, Germany, and France. Then the information-gathering scope was broadened by first establishing a process for the project managers and the planners to follow, subsequently to determine where in the process communication and participation can play a role. This made it possible to search out possibilities for communication in remediation projects in a subsequent phase.

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1 Introduction

1.1 CityChlor and the integrated approach

Space is scarce in Europe. Even in the subsurface it is getting busier. Large-scale soil and groundwater contamination with chlorinated solvents are often an obstruction for urban developments. The traditional way of dealing with polluted soil and groundwater does not work in all cases and is not economically and sustainable feasible. In urban environments multiple contaminations with chlorinated solvents are often mixed with each other and spread underneath buildings. This not only leads to technical problems for remediation, but also to liability and financial discussions and hence has an impact on society. An integrated approach and area-oriented approach is needed to tackle the problems. The CityChlor project has demonstrated that remediation and sustainable development can evolve on a parallel timescale.

An integrated approach combines all aspects that are relevant to tackle the problems that pollution with VOC in urban environment causes. Depending on area, site and context different aspects together or parallel to each other can be used. Not only technical solutions are included, but also socio-economic aspects as urban development, communication, financial and legal aspects, time, space, environment and actors (active & passive) have to be handled.

CityChlor did not remain at single case remediation, but looked at the area as a whole in a bigger context: the area-oriented approach. A technical approach that makes it possible to remediate, monitor and control multiple groundwater sources and plumes within a fixed area.

1.2 CityChlor and technical innovations

The managing of knowledge and technical innovations are one of the key to achieve a sustainable city development. A development project has to cope with loads of information coming from different disciplines in different (technical) languages and with different uncertainties. With chlorinated solvents, the knowledge about the pollution will always have a certain uncertainty that can have an impact on the course and the costs of the remediation. An efficient 'managing of knowledge' will try to decrease this degree of uncertainty.

CityChlor therefore also worked on the technical aspects of characterization and remediation. The conventional techniques that are applied for investigation and remediation have their limitations dealing with chlorinated solvents. Promising innovative techniques exist, but do not easily find their way to current application. This barrier is often caused by lack of knowledge on different levels. Experts and contractors do not always have the means to invest in experiments with new techniques, authorities are reluctant to accept techniques of which the results may be uncertain and clients aren't eager to pay for experimental techniques.

Dissemination of knowledge can break this deadlock. CityChlor therefore collected experiences from field application of innovative techniques and implemented itself a number of techniques in pilot projects. For the detailed outcomes, the reader is referred to the specific reports.

CityChlor - "new solutions for complex pollutions" <http://www.citychlor.eu/>

2 From steps to opportunities

2.1 The process is central

In a great number of European countries, the approach to major planning projects has currently arrived at a fork in the road. Today, Flanders, the Netherlands, and Germany are experimenting with methodologies to tackle complex projects in a manner different from the past and are using procedures that offer more guarantees for an efficient and qualitative process, oriented towards the realisation of a planning or investment project within an acceptable term and offering a maximum supportive platform. Resources and financing in turn need more efficient applications. The acceleration of processes needs to be realized by, for instance, conducting parallel research, evaluations, and procedures as, likewise, by the integration of public enquiries concerning the processes.

Initiatives such as Organic Regional Development (The Netherlands), Route Planner for Investment Initiatives (Flanders)... may be placed within such a context.

All manner of initiatives are attempting to go through a gradual process, from fixing problems and objectives, across the input of parties with an interest and their participation, the weighing and funnelling of feasible alternatives, to the concretisation of the solution and its implementation. In the process, they keep mindful of the necessary management and the monitoring of it following the realisation.

A process-oriented approach to investment projects requires specific custom-tailored applications. Each situation is unique and each context displays its very own characteristics. Hence, it is not possible to foresee all eventualities in advance, and this includes the communication process pertaining to the planning or investment project in casu. Nonetheless, this is not a reason for urban planners, projects leaders, or investors not to communicate systematically. The key lies in the 'when' of the communication. That, in turn, is dependent on the phase that the project has reached, the context and the history wherein it is evolving, and the aim of the communication.

2.1.1 The project phases

Legislations, administrations, permit and licence requirements, regulations, etc. of course differ from country to country. But also within one single country, the differences may be significant, depending on the nature of the project (ecological impact, environmental stresses, safety (e.g., SEVESO enterprises), living quality, landscape aspects...). In the 'traditional approach', a succession of various surveys and examinations and procedures is required, coupled to a whole set of decision-making moments at various administrative and departmental levels and of public enquiries. A drive, however, has been started towards a more efficient (read: speedier, with less of a demand on resources and time, fewer steps to go through) process. Within this drive, we can detect a guiding thread that runs throughout all of the steps in the trajectory and which all project developers, urban planners, consultants and advisers, political decision-makers, and citizens (in concert or separately) need to pass through:

- the exploration phase
- the investigation phase
- the elaboration phase
- the implementation phase

One might argue about fine-tuning or further nuancing of the above division, but we are using it purely as a tool, a search engine for moments of communication.

Most countries are of the opinion that communication and participation do play a central role in these four steps. The degree of importance accorded to these aspects differs from country to country, as also from project to project. The manner in which to actually approach this is a debatable point; there exist a host of ways and views and quite a bit of disagreement. Nonetheless, we find a strong movement which considers it essential that the choice be made for a transparent approach to the process, meaning that all of the selected choices be duly justified and defended on convincing grounds. And that these choices can be consulted by one and all. But, yes, there remains a bit of a gap between the wish and the practice, in this instance wider than in that. Nevertheless, in many places decisions may swing one way or another.

2.2 Exploration of a project: first levers for communication

A planning or investment project starts with the tabling of a problem or an opportunity. The purpose of the exploration phase is twofold: on the one hand, to arrive at a clear-cut formulation of whatever problems may exist and of the objectives for a project, supported by as many interested parties as possible and, on the other hand, to map out the main outlines of the process. On the basis of such modalities, the competent authority may offer, or withhold, its engagement to start up an effective process. The next step in the process leads to the investigation phase.

This phase is a stage of testing the waters. In most instances, there is not yet question of introducing real formal consultation at this point. Informal consultation is sometimes advisable in order to bring via such participation the formulation of the problem and the project's objectives in sharp enough focus.

Steps that are generally taken during this phase are:

- exploration of policy questions
- exploration of the terrain in casu
- delineation of the process structure, making up process notes
- drawing up agreements
- organisation of the participants
- communication about the process

At the conclusion of these exploratory steps, a decision is ready to be taken: will a project be effectively started? When the answer is positive, the investigation phase will commence

From a communicative viewpoint, we find points of contact in the organisation of the participation and the communication about the process.

2.2.1 Participation towards a breakthrough

Public participation refers to the involvement of citizens, companies, and social organisations in the preparation of the decision-making process. In this manner, the ideas and interests of the general public will from the very outset be part of the trajectory, an important complementation vis-à-vis traditional form of public enquiries. In the optimum scenario, urban planners and project leaders keep to the following aspects in the course of the exploration phase:

— **Drawing the objectives in sharp enough focus:**

During this phase, participation is primarily meant to get the problem formulation and the objectives in sharp enough focus. It is important to be able to fully describe the 'playing field' and to identify the project's importance, thus eliminating any future discussions or argumentations on the point. It is advisable to clearly communicate this objective from the very outset to the parties in this participation process. This phase is not yet the time to debate possible solutions to whatever the problem may be. In the practice, it appears that this participation process often happens at the level of economic, political, policy, and social stakeholders. At this point, we generally do not as yet speak of neighbourhood-oriented participation.

— **Participation as step in the planning process:**

Participation is a custom-tailored activity that really does need to be embedded as a step in the planning process. An important communication step is the identification of where, how, and to what degree participation will exert an influence on the ultimate decision-making. That puts it in the right perspective. One problem is that local administrations often feel themselves relegated to the side-lines during major investment processes. During this phase, they are urged via their participation to clearly map out their own ambitions and interests, or even to start up their own study concerning one problematic aspect that is part of the complex project.

2.2.2 Communication about the exploration process

In an ideal circumstance, communication about the project should likewise start at this juncture. But there is a slight hitch: the exploration phase has just begun; its outlines remain still vague ... Hence, what does one communicate about? In essence, there is no project yet. With major planning or investment projects it is often a question of walking on eggs. One fears Pandora's Box, anxious that the project will founder even before it starts. Here, the trick is to communicate expertly about the process (including the participation), but to keep mum about the results, for the time being. Experienced urban planners or project leaders are farsighted and look ahead. They will, however, offer enquirers some indication as to when the content of the project will be clearly identified and communicated. But concrete practical paradigms could hardly be furnished.

2.3 Start of the investigation: intense process communication

The investigation phase of an investment project begins when the decision is made to start a project, accompanied by the clear formulation of the problem. The objective of the investigation phase is to ferret out the "best" solution from a broad gamut of possibilities. To that end, the various solutions need to be weighed and examined. The best solution and alternatives are defined. Then, the one remaining choice leads to the elaboration phase of the investment project.

The following steps are part of the investigation phase:

- concretisation of the process structure
- investigation of alternatives
- organisation of the participation
- examination of budgetary and other resources
- public enquiries
- drawing up agreements in principle
- communication process

At the conclusion of the investigation, a decision will be taken: a preferential approach leading to the realisation of the project.

From a communication's perspective, we once again find contact points in organizing participation.

2.3.1 Communication about the investigation process

Once a decision is taken to start the project, communication has to follow. In effect, a great number of parties are involved (or feel themselves engaged) that quickly want to/will form opinions about the initiative, formulate their own interpretations, and proffer all kinds of comments. At that moment, communications need to be sent to all likely parties with an interest concerning:

- the initiators (the takers of the initiative) (who are conducting the investigation, why, from what point of departure ...?)
- the course the process is to take
- the consultation sessions

Within the context of the investigation, the urban planners or the project managers often draw up a stakeholder analysis. This way, the initiator gets an idea who the actors are and what interests are theirs with respect to the investment initiative. Through new insights or the implementation of certain investigations, new players or new interests may come to the fore. Likewise, a risk analysis will provide valuable information about possible bottlenecks, accompanied by suggestions for feasible actions to circumvent risks.

A need that will morph into a merit if the analysis is used effectively in the communication about the project. The message can readily be harmonized to fit the concerns of the target group. The entire process has to be made understandable not only to insiders but likewise to all actors involved in it and to the public at large. Stakeholder and risk analyses provide good back-up support to communicative methodologies such as Factor C. A significant part of the work (e.g., the force field analysis) has already been done by the project leader or the urban planner, based on the preliminary studies, and can quickly be applied to serve in the selection of key messages, the manner in which communication can be conducted, and the time when this is to happen. Communication planning is at this moment an integral part of the entire process.

2.3.2 Participation in making choices and creating a support platform

The investigation phase will ultimately issue into certain forms of public enquiry and choices. In a traditional approach, one generally awaits the effective start of this investigation to commence consultations with citizens, administrations, advisory bodies... However, many project leaders and planners are at that stage often confronted with resistance.

With that in mind, more and more often an advance start is made of participating with concretely involved parties in order to be able to anticipate on issues before the public enquiry gets underway. Hence, the social debate gets an earlier start and more opportunities are created for social consensus and a support platform. That way, it is sometimes also avoided that the process become blocked during later phases by legal procedures instituted by stakeholders or target groups that feel their viewpoints have not been given due timely attention.

The manner in which all of this is happening varies: info markets, round-table discussions, neighbourhood consultations ...

It is also during this phase that political decision-makers at different levels are being hard pressed for their advice. Via informal consultation, feedback is passed on about the approach plan, the planned investigations; the selection of alternatives ... In this manner, there occurs a constant flow-through of information. Politicians have their own communications network that is used to circulate messages, for testing, for consulting with

colleagues, and get the direction of the wind blowing from the rank and file ... The same trend is in evidence in the consulting of administrations.

Participation with the private parties (for instance, developers, building firms, architects...) is conducted via a market survey (possibilities for the development of a project, general market interest, possibilities for a PPP..

In the case of public enquiries, the formalities with bearing on communications, participation, or information are stipulated legally. This formal step runs more smoothly if one has in advance engaged in establishing a well-considered participative procedure. At the time of the public enquiries, a great deal of information is often collected. Project managers make good use of this by disseminating information that is readily digestible and accessible and – sometimes – by widely publicizing the ways in which it can be consulted.

2.4 Elaboration phase: from process to project communication

The elaboration phase of a planning or investment project is the stage of concretisation of the selected solution into a realisable project. At the same time, the manner of implementation of the project is being established. This ultimately is also the phase wherein concerted efforts are made to secure the needed permits and authorisations and when a lot of attention goes to zoning plans, financing, supporting policy...

2.4.1 Top-level consultation with citizens

At this point, emphasis is placed especially on consultation sessions in order to gain insight into the views of the citizenry. Participation in the elaboration phase is truly custom-tailored work. Not only does the citizen advance meaningful proposals towards the concrete elaboration but – depending on the kind of project – ownership may result. During this phase in the process, the citizen often displays greater interest than during the preliminary stages, and this because he is made effectively aware how his own living environment may possible be affected and changed (and how he can exert his influence on the process). In its turn, also the so-called administration participation occupies an important place here. Ways and techniques are legion.

Planners invest a lot of time in this phase. Studies (e.g., Conflict and conflict management in strategic Urban Projects) have indeed demonstrated that the most serious conflicts about projects occur in the absence of sufficient participation during this phase.

2.4.2 (Ultimate) project communication

Now that a choice has been made, project communication can start in earnest. Practices, however, may greatly differ... a well-conceived communication plan (with imaging, identity, baseline, slogan), a communication campaign featuring an attractive storyline with respect to the project objectives, a contact point whither questions may be directed, a project website,...proceeding to a quasi-entire absence of structural communication. This has to do with (the lack of) expertise, interests involved, and the stakes associated with the project.

Project communication, however, is not a substitute for process communication. An unambiguous and transparent communication is to be maintained throughout the entire course of the process.

2.5 Implementation phase: 'less nuisance' communication and follow-up communication

The implementation phase of a planning or investment project gets off the ground only following positive decisions by the competent authorities concerning permits, authorisations, zoning plans, etc ... The objective of the implementation phase is, on the one hand, to have the works proceed with the greatest possible efficiency while, on the other hand, it is also necessary that the required measures with respect to management, the monitoring, and the evaluation of the project be duly adopted.

2.5.1 'Less nuisance' communication

The project's realisation often is accompanied by conditions that are bothersome and a hindrance to people. In that case, communication that focuses on stressing the reduction of nuisance is used, but not without continuing to work on promoting the supportive platform. This is the less Nuisance Communication trajectory. People in the first place tend to see primarily what's happening in the short-term and right in front of their door. Less nuisance communication emphasizes this short-term focus. With good practices, in the realisation of a less nuisance communication, a balance is sought between, on the one hand, practical and clear information (detours, road interruptions, hinder and nuisance noise on a construction site) and, on the other, a framework that depicts the future reality (e.g., visualisation of the realisation following completion of the works). This way, the possibility for creating a supportive platform for the works and for the hindrances that inevitably will result from them (and hence for the project as a whole) will be enhanced.

2.5.2 Follow-up communication

Projects do not come to a halt on the day of the final acceptance of the realisation. Following acceptance, there remain numerous evolutions to come and many hurdles still to take. Follow-up communications keeps all of this warm on the burner. In the practice, only little investment is made in this aspect, mostly a matter of digital communication forms.

2.6 The place for communication about soil remediation within this process

Each of the four above-mentioned phases could function as a vehicle for communication about soil contamination and soil remediation, albeit to specific target groups (still a long way from the need to communicate to the public at large!). During the exploration phase, soil remediation shows up under the scope, in the investigation phase it receives a place amongst the possibilities, while in the elaboration phase the investigation of, and the conclusions with respect to, soil remediation emerge as clear issues. The actual remediation practice occurs during the implementation phase. It is not difficult to find points of contact: manipulating them to serve the best possible interests becomes a challenge.

3 Communicating about soil contamination and soil remediation

3.1 Insights

The survey was made to establish the position that is currently adopted vis-à-vis communication about soil contamination and soil remediation in general within the context of projects. It immediately strikes us that this is not seen as a priority matter and, where possible, it is even afforded but a bare minimum of attention. We summarize the arguments under the heading 'Obstacles'. Probing for possibilities, we find suggestions, but these are primarily outside the scope of one's own activities. We shall be discussing these under the heading 'Possibilities'.

3.2 Obstacles

3.2.1 Only when necessary

In contrast to evolutions currently happening in the planning and investment processes, the communication about soil contamination and soil remediation evokes little emotion. When this issue is broached, one is referred to purely legal obligations (certificates, permits, official notifications ...).

Soil remediation receives only a limited place in the communications universe. Remediation is seen as a burden to be born in order to get ownership of the terrain, sell it and make it operational. Soil contamination and soil remediation is, firstly, a costly affair or an obstacle, hardly a topic that is the subject of passionate communications.

3.2.2 Active communication can become threatening

There exists a clear reticence about pro-active communication to stakeholders or neighbourhood residents. The fear of faulty interpretation is palpably present. Soil contamination is a difficult subject to explain. Technically, scientifically ... not so easy to grasp for the average citizen. On the other hand, one is very reluctant to vulgarize the information since in that case it ceases to be (legally) correct.

According to some survey respondents, communication places (too) much weight on the remediation aspect versus the attention paid to the entire project and its realisation. Given the lengthy period required for the remediation works, the impression has been created that it will remain a millstone around one's neck for the entire duration of the process and sooner or later is bound to overshadow the project.

Intensive internal consultation precedes the decision whether or not to have communication. During the interviews with respondents, there was no noticeable evidence of any knowledge about strategy or of the

manner in which strategy ought to be determined. No doubt this is an added obstacle to engaging in communication.

3.2.3 Active communication is not needed

Soil contamination and soil remediation is no longer news. One respondent put it as follows: “within an urban context, soil contamination is pretty well present everywhere. When we take a sample, we’re bound to always find something amiss. This no longer surprises the stakeholders. They are expecting it. For what concerns the neighbouring residents, it suffices to put them at ease and to assure them that the situation can only get better in the future.”

3.2.4 Soil remediation: often only a (all too) small fraction of the whole

Project developers and urban planners seldom see soil remediation as an opportunity to engage in communication. Telling a strong tale about the fact that remediation is, for instance, a worthy investment in the future or brings added value to the entire project is hardly experienced as such. “This is not an essential aspect of the project”, was the reaction of one of the interviewed respondents. The developments that are happening surpass the remediation segment. This is somewhat surprising since during an exploration phase, remediation surely ought to be an objective? The enquiry here hits a dead-end. Too few interviewed respondents are able to add anything of any value to this for our elucidation.

3.2.5 Communication about soil remediation is best left to others

It became quickly clear during the interviews that all of the attention is directed to the local authorities or administrations that are responsible for matters concerning environmental and soil policy. Communications concerning soil contamination and soil remediation are not seen as part of the task responsibilities of the project leader or the urban planner.

According to the respondents, local administrations are in a position to assume greater responsibilities in the matter. They are more knowledgeable about local problems and possess the tools to get into touch with the local population. According to some respondents, municipalities are more favourably situated to defend the concrete remediation issue within the broader context of the project (knowledge of the history, causes and effects). On the other hand, it is also said that in all likelihood nothing all that positive ought to be expected from such communication. There appears to be a lack of technical knowledge to bring the message to the people, plus a lack of resources to actually do this out properly. Furthermore, municipalities assume a rather facilitating or intermediary role: passing on information from the official environmental department.

This brings us to the other party that is looked at: the OVAM, the Amt für Umweltschutz... plus other offices. The interviewed respondents are all agreed: we do not possess the communication competence for these topics, that party does.

Finally, also reference is made to specialists in soil remediation as parties possessing the technical knowledge to communicate appropriately about such issues. But these specialists will only get involved in this

if they are commissioned to do so. And that happens rarely, except on the operational plane (e.g., informing the public where soil surveys are to be conducted).

3.2.6 Too little clarity

Although some general trends were observed, it does nonetheless appear that this survey, small-scale and combined with the unique character of each project, can furnish us with only a little concrete information. On location X we found an absence of the one thing that, in contrast, was of importance on location Y, while Project A in turn had nothing to do with a problem that proved a serious issue on location B. This brings us to the essential fact: custom-tailored work is difficult to compare.

3.3 Possibilities

3.3.1 Creating a support platform for soil remediation

Some of the interviewed respondents expressed themselves cautiously about a broader general support platform for soil remediation. What remains unknown remains ignored. This explains part of their reticence to communicate about this topic. Were the importance of soil remediation more conspicuous in the crosshairs of stakeholders and the citizenry, it would likely more rapidly generate a positive attitude towards and acceptance of soil contamination and soil remediation. It would undoubtedly assist in putting soil contamination in a correct and proper perspective.

Urban planners or project developers, regrettably, do not look upon that as part of their responsibilities and rather leave it to the competent authorities to deal with it. Some interviewed respondents were of the opinion that, in this context, the local administrations can accomplish quite a lot. A soil remediation project that within a project pops up “out of the blue” often is cause for anxieties and problems. The local administration can have positive impact by creating a support platform via communication at a much earlier stage in the process (sketching out the history, stressing the project’s importance for the population, and the like).

3.3.2 Integration into the communication process

Urban planners and project leaders are, nonetheless, open to the idea that, at specific moments, administrative departments responsible for the environment become actively involved in the communication process. Their expertise is appreciated and their authority exceeds that of the party responsible for the project. It’s only a matter of seeking out the right moment. It is precisely because of drastic differences between projects, the need for specifically tailored work, and legislative provisions being determining factors, that the correct moment for their involvement needs to be correctly timed.

Currently, such administrative offices are already becoming involved, but this happens only later on in the process or at the moment when their intervention to communicate about soil contamination or soil remediation is enforced by legal stipulations. Undoubtedly, such intervention on their part can happen much earlier in the process. From a wide overhead perspective one might conclude that in the course of the investigation phase a standard mechanism be built in to involve the administrative offices into the process and to try out together the communication opportunities. This phase likewise contains the actor and risk

analysis. If it were to become possible in each country to hold consultations with, for instance, associations of urban planners or with the administrations that provide direction or advice to project managers and conduct investigations into the feasibility of building in testing mechanisms, the possibilities would no doubt be many.

3.3.3 Broadening knowledge about communication possibilities

The many communication tools that OVAM has already developed within the context of the assignment and forwarded to our attention were barely known to the interviewed respondents. In itself, this shouldn't come as a surprise. Soil remediation is not a feature that is present in all projects and, likewise, communication is not seen as a priority in all of them... Within the welter of responsibilities and insights that rest upon the project leader or the urban planner, remediation and communication readily fall below the radar. But investing in publicity concerning the possibilities and resources in areas pertaining to this specific aspect of communication makes a lot of sense. Focus is in such cases best laid on possible synergies within the general communication process.

4 Inspiration for the CityChlor communication checklist

When there is soil and/or groundwater pollution involved there is often a stagnation in spatial planning process due to the unexpected costs but also due to risk perception of people living and working in the area concerned. Inversely, health concerns may crystallize and reveal other previous concerns and expectations. The risk may be over-exaggerated or underestimated because of personal interests in the site. A viable solution will only be found if, next to health concerns, undermining concerns and expectations are addressed. All stakeholders have to listen to others' concerns and expectations as legitimate and useful in the search of the best solution. That is why in the CityChlor project technical experts worked together with experts from other disciplines (communication, legislation, finance, spatial planning,...) to create an integrated approach which makes sure both goals (new developments and a necessary remediation) are known and accepted by all stakeholders. The insights gleaned from this brief enquiry give food for thought towards the need to make certain choices for the further development of the planned communications trajectory. This survey is an annexe to introductory note on communication during soil investigation and remediation projects.

Together with the sociological survey on risk perception and the communication strategies implemented in Utrecht (C-Factor) and the French site (COMRISK) this report gave inspiration to a practical checklist through essential steps in effective communication with all stakeholders.

On our website you can find all background information on communication:

- sociological study on risk perception,
- comparisons of the approaches in the 4 participating countries,
- examples of communication strategies (Factor C method, Utrecht Standard for Participation, COMRISK by Ineris,...)

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- Sophie Tilman, administratrice déléguée, Urbaniste CUB
- Renaud Daele, Urban Planner AUPA
- Bruno CLERBAUX, Secretary-General of the European Council of Spatial Planners (ECTP-CEU) and Manager ACP Group
- Serge COLIN, Architect & Urban planner, D+A International smpa sa
- Gwen Mussche – senior projectmanager, MAVA
- Paul Robbrecht, expert industrial estates POM Antwerpen
- Saskia Engbers, Programmaleider, Unit Professionaliseren, Platform 31
- Sophie Claes, Principal Consultant, ERM Belgium
- Thomas Saile, Amt für Stadtplanung und Stadterneuerung, Landeshauptstadt Stuttgart

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