

Implementation strategies for Innovation hubs

Intelligent Cities Project organised a 2-day workshop in Guimarães, Portugal

INTA is a partner of a EU funded INTERREG IIC project called 'Intelligent Cities' that aims at drawing up a strategy for European cities to become centers of innovation and knowledge-based economies, and to define one of its specific tools focusing on knowledge and innovation - the "innovation hub".



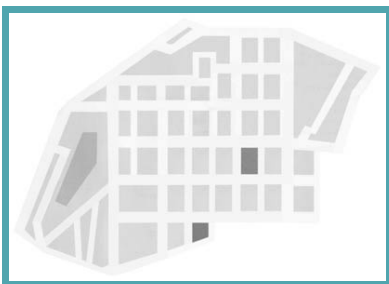
The project will launch a set of political guidelines for creating innovative, competitive towns and cities that can assert themselves on a national and international level, through the development of metropolitan areas and the creation of strategic networks of medium-sized towns and the surrounding regions.

Cities are undergoing a renaissance as scenes for economic development and as driving forces behind regional competitiveness. National matters such as economic competitiveness, quality of life, social equilibrium, innovation and environmental sustainability depend on the capacity for governance of cities and regions.

In the framework of this project, INTA has assisted INTELI – Inteligência em Inovação (the Portuguese Lead Partner of 'Intelligent Cities') in the organization of a two-day seminar in Guimarães, Portugal, on 6-7 July 2006 to discuss and review the experiences of a sample of European cities or regions whose economies are based on innovation and knowledge. The meeting was hosted by the Municipality of Guimarães, and supported by several local institutions such as the University of Minho.



Cities and Regions on the knowledge-Based Economy



Over 70 delegates attended this two day workshop at the recently completed Vila Flor Cultural Centre, near the UNESCO World Heritage protected historic heart of this splendid medieval town 'where Portugal was born'. The active participation of António Magalhães Silva, Lord Mayor of Guimarães, and the Portuguese Secretary of State for Spatial Planning and Towns, Mr João Ferrão underlined the importance given by the Portuguese authorities to the need for innovation strategies and the implementation of public policies aimed at creating innovation hubs that work.

For information & proceedings, please visit www.intelligentcities.net

INTA announces next Intelligent Cities meeting in Belfast

The next meeting of the Intelligent Cities project will be held in Belfast, United Kingdom, at the occasion of INTA's 30th World Urban Development Congress. Intelligent Cities will be an integral party of the Congress. The subject of the Congress "Competitiveness, Creativity & Community - How will cities compete in tomorrow's world?" reflects the common interest in a better understanding of the type of urban policies that can accommodate innovation and foster competitiveness, without hampering the sustainability of our neighborhoods and communities.

Competitiveness: raising profile and performance of cities and regions

Greater understanding of the pivotal role of post-industrial cities in advanced economies is now focusing more attention on the changing nature of relationships between cities and regions. The increasing use of the term 'city-region' or "metropolisation" reflects the growing economic significance of this relationship. Competitiveness generally relies on structural characteristics built up over long periods of time. But there is evidence that cities can put in place strategies which do change their relative performance – often by combining longer-term structural improvements with short term initiatives. The most competitive regions contain the most competitive cities. The relationship between cities and their subregions emerges as an increasingly important issue in spatial economic strategy.



Creativity: a tool for urban development

Creativity and innovation are strengthened and enriched when the key functions are located close together. So spatial policies that prioritise higher densities for urban development directly support the growth of knowledge assets and the higher value economic functions that these attract. This in turn produces a stronger property market for renewal and upgrading of the urban area.

Knowledge based economic functions seeking to locate near to the vibrancy of the urban centre will progressively develop and upgrade the rest of the agglomeration areas. This reduces perceptions of sharp distinctions between the centre and the suburbs, and also reduces pressures for rural and green belt locations. Knowledge economy functions which still require large urban fringe sites are likely to be more environmentally friendly than their traditional manufacturing predecessors.

Prioritising the city as a key economic focus creates a positive climate for the renewal and enrichment of inner urban communities. This in turn puts a major responsibility on cities to develop innovative approaches to education, skills, employability and the design of public buildings and realm.

Community: developing sustainable strategies

The links between economic competitiveness and social inclusion is rather evident. Cities are concerned that economic success could exacerbate social divisions. Evidence shows that the most competitive cities have the lowest rates of unemployment. Critically these cities also have the most skilled and better educated workforces – thereby highlighting the pivotal role of investment in ‘human capital’ for achieving both economic and social policy goals. However, cities which are successful in reducing the ‘breadth’ of social exclusion also need specific strategies for addressing the more intractable manifestations in depth.

Technical Visit to the Northern Ireland Science Park

Mobile Workshop: How to start a science park?

A technical visit to the Northern Ireland Science Park (NISP), in the Titanic Quarter in Belfast will be organised in co-operation with the Laganside Corporation. The Northern Ireland Science Park forms a community of companies, encouraging interaction and the sharing of knowledge. It is a commercial and research driven centre for knowledge-based enterprises. Its unique work environment fosters innovation and provides flexibility for growing companies.

Its objective is to create a self-sustaining, internationally recognised Science Park. The genesis of the Northern Ireland Science Park (NISP) dates back to an announcement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to set aside funds to support the establishment of a local Science Park. The Northern Ireland Science Park Foundation was formed and the rest, as they say, is history.

The NISP aims to be a landmark institution reflective of the growing high tech and knowledge based sectors in Northern Ireland. It is a £100 million (€150 million)* project that will create 400,000 square feet of high specification buildings across its three sites and provide for up to 3,000 jobs.

For more information on the Congress, please visit www.inta-aivn.org or contact the INTA Secretariat In The Hague



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INTA, International Urban Development Association, is a world forum and international network encouraging the exchange of information, experience and best practices on urban development and renewal across the world. Incorporated in Paris in 1974 as a not for profit association, INTA has been granted Category 2 status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and has Consultative Status with the Council of Europe.

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