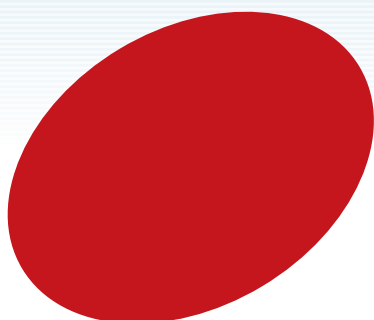


# NICHES+ Champion City Region Artois-Gohelle

## Implementing Neighbourhood Accessibility Planning



# The Region and NICHEs+

## The project

NICHEs+ is a FP7 co-ordination action aiming to network key actors actively engaged in developing **innovative urban transport concepts** and to facilitate the co-ordination of their activities across Europe. The project duration is from 2008-2011.

Artois-Gohelle is a Champion Region within the project that aims at implementing a Neighbourhood Accessibility Planning (NAP) scheme. This document summarises an **implementation scenario** that gives advice on how to realise the given concept in the specific context of the city. This also provides an example to other cities interested in the uptake of the measure.

## The region

**Artois-Gohelle** is a region located in northern France, which is characterised by a disperse polycentric settlement structure with many small towns and villages. The “**urban heart**” of the region is formed by the cities Lens (35,000 inhabitants) and Liévin (32,500 inhabitants). The region is a **former coal mining area**, which is struggling with structural change and a high unemployment rate. Urban regeneration and renewal is therefore a key policy objective, in which attractive and accessible public transport services and urban environments also play an important role.



**City of Lens**

Photo: Rupprecht Consult

## The innovative concept

The Syndicat Mixte des Transports Artois-Gohelle (SMT), which is the transport authority of the region, intends to implement a **Neighbourhood Accessibility Planning (NAP) scheme**. This will require cooperation with local authorities (communes) in the region and takes into consideration experiences of European forerunner cities as Munich and Gothenburg.

The focus of the NAP scheme in Artois-Gohelle would be to **improve the accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists to the stops of a new tram line that is currently in planning**. The idea is to implement some NAP pilot schemes in selected neighbourhoods. SMT plans to organise **participatory workshops** with inhabitants and other stakeholders in order to elaborate a priority list of measures to improve the accessibility of new tramway stations and their surroundings (pedestrian/cyclist catchment area).

The implementation of the NAP scheme for Artois-Gohelle has not been confirmed yet. SMT is trying to establish cooperation arrangements with selected local authorities that have the responsibility for streets around the tram stops.



**District excursion with children and parents in Munich**

Photo: Kerstin Langer, KOMMA.PLAN

## The Challenge

Mobility in the region is still heavily focused on the use of the private car (66% modal share). **Public transport is only used for 3.5% of all trips.** Currently the public transport services are based exclusively on a bus network and some special transport services. A tram project is on the way to establish a new link between the major agglomeration poles and to increase public transport ridership.

One challenge is the currently still **poor accessibility of public transport stops and the surrounding streets.**

The **French Accessibility Act** from 2005 requires local transport authorities to make public transport fully accessible by 2015. In response to this, SMT developed an accessibility scheme with a comprehensive strategy to enhance the accessibility of public transport in the region over the coming years. NAP is part of this strategy.

A big challenge for NAP is the **fragmentation of responsibilities.** SMT can only implement actions for streets that are remodelled in the context of the tram scheme. Local authorities are in charge of the sidewalks and most streets around public transport stops. They are still hesitant with concrete actions. A well accessible route to the public transport stops can only be achieved through cooperation between these two actors.



**Sidewalks and bus stops are frequently blocked by parked cars,** Photo: SMT

*"Implementing neighbourhood accessibility planning has two goals for us: by listening to people, we want to make public spaces around tramway stations more suitable for everyone, and we want inhabitants to make this project their own."*

**David Maubert, Head Manager,  
Syndicat Mixte Transports Artois-  
Gohelle, France**

## The Vision

SMT has the vision to remove accessibility barriers in the bus network and to plan the new tram line in a way that ensures **"accessibility for all"**. This broader vision of accessibility is not limited to public transport services and stops, which are in the direct responsibility of SMT, but includes the whole **seamless travel chain from door-to-door.** Accessibility should become a key element of a **high quality public transport** service in the region.

With regard to **NAP** the vision is to start with two or three pilot areas, where the **surroundings of new tram stops** are made accessible for pedestrians (including people with mobility impairments) and cyclists, based on a participatory approach. NAP could be introduced on a wider scale in the region after a few successful pilot schemes.

For the wider accessibility scheme SMT has set **ambitious objectives for the year 2015.** This includes amongst other things improvements in the accessibility of bus stops, a 100% low floor bus fleet, better passenger information about the accessibility of the public transport services, and soft measures to address psychological and cognitive barriers.



# The Good Examples

## Munich, Germany

A **neighbourhood mobility concept** (“Stadtviertelkonzept Nahmobilität“) was piloted in a selected Munich city centre area in 2001. Transport professionals from various organisations (different city departments, transport operator, consultancies) as well as organised stakeholder groups and citizens from the neighbourhood worked together in order **to identify problems, assess them and develop concrete proposals** for measures to improve the situation.

The aim was to find effective, simple and reasonable measures to **improve conditions for walking, cycling and other forms of non-motorised transport** as well as for the locally relevant bus network.

A key element of the approach was **extensive citizen participation**, which not only involved local interest groups but also “ordinary” citizens. The target group of the approach were all citizens of the neighbourhood, while children and older people benefited particularly from the proposed measures. The focus was on small measures, and on an organisational rather than a technical level (e.g. new benches, pedestrian crossings or improved lighting).

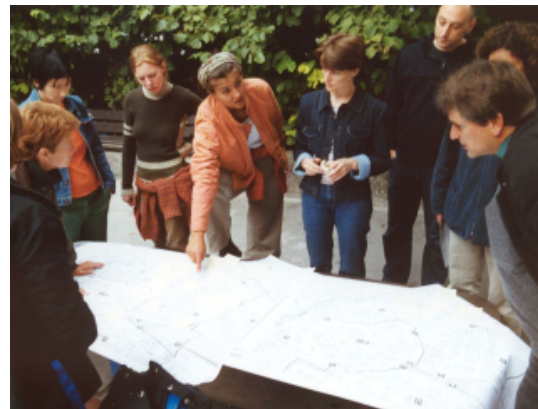
The City of Munich continues to apply similar approaches in other neighbourhoods (e.g. Giesing).

### Contact in Munich

Paul Bickelbacher, planner and councillor, e-mail: [Paul.Bickelbacher@t-online.de](mailto:Paul.Bickelbacher@t-online.de)

*“Neighbourhood accessibility planning is crucial for the liveability of inner city quarters. The participation of the citizens helps the planner to identify the people's needs and to find the right solutions.”*

**Paul Bickelbacher, Councillor and planner, City of Munich, Germany**



**Citizen participation in Munich**

Photo: Kerstin Langer, KOMMA.PLAN

## Gothenburg, Sweden

The City of Gothenburg has a long tradition of making the public transport system more accessible.

Roland Ahlgren, accessibility specialist at the City of Gothenburg, works on **measures to enhance the accessibility of public transport stops and their surroundings**, including pathways to and from the stops. This poses specific challenges such as the design of tram stops or the adaptation of crossings for people with reduced mobility or visual impairments.

A key for the work on universal design of streets and public transport stops was to get the most out of the available budget and to identify a **programme of priorities**. This approach proved to be successful in finding cost efficient solutions that respond to the user needs.

### Contact in Gothenburg

Roland Ahlgren, accessibility specialist, City of Gothenburg, e-mail: [roland.ahlgren@trafikkontoret.goteborg.se](mailto:roland.ahlgren@trafikkontoret.goteborg.se)

For further details on the Munich and Gothenburg cases see the NICHES+ website section on NAP ([www.niches-transport.org](http://www.niches-transport.org)).

## The user needs

In the case of the NAP concept, there is a **large variety of citizens and actors involved**, all of whom have very different needs and expectations.

Not only tram users will benefit from improvements to accessibility but also all people living or visiting the concerned areas. These people have certain needs related to mobility and urban planning. First of all the measure should ensure **easy access** to the new tram lines and enable independent and healthy mobility. Residents and visitors of the concerned areas also need a **high liveability of the neighbourhood** (e.g. meeting opportunities, sharing of space, tidiness, playgrounds, green areas). Local businesses need an environment that facilitates **economic life** in the area, e.g. through attractive public spaces that attract customers.

With regard to the participatory process the concerned actors require **sound information and open involvement**. All travel modes should be considered and the involved citizens should be enabled and encouraged to work on challenges in an active way together with the responsible authorities. This also requires a realistic **management of expectations** about what a public authority can do with given resources and time.



**Especially vulnerable members of society would benefit from a NAP scheme in Artois-Gohelle**

Photo: Rupprecht Consult



**Accessible model bus stop in Liévin**

Photo: SMT

## The key stakeholders for implementation

The concept of NAP can be characterised by the need for a **multi-stakeholder co-operation** and the involvement of different user groups through public participation.

Key players to drive the process forward are **SMT and the representatives of the local communes**. SMT will be organising the public participation process, supported by a subcontracted external moderation expert.

The status analysis regarding the accessibility of tram stops and their catchment areas as well as drawing-up of a list of priorities will be carried out by SMT and the co-operating communes.

The communes need to be closely involved in all steps and finally take forward the realisation of measures that are suggested in the process.

Key for realising a NAP scheme in Artois-Gohelle will be the support of the **political representatives** of the communes. This still requires some awareness-raising.

# The Transferability Potential

## The transferability to Artois-Gohelle

The good practice cases of Munich and Gothenburg have been the key references for the transfer of the NAP concept into Artois-Gohelle.

The **main factors that support transferability** are:

- **Accessibility policy of SMT:** with the new tram project, not only the vehicles and stops shall become accessible, but also the pathways to the trams. The big investment into a new tram line only makes sense if the tram stops are accessible from the surrounding streets (catchment area). SMT's awareness for these issues is a key driving force for implementation. SMT's official accessibility scheme includes NAP as one of the measures.
- **Funding for participatory process:** within the accessibility scheme there is also budget for paying a specialised external moderator to run the participatory process.
- **Focus on small and cost efficient measures:** as seen in Gothenburg, measures to improve the accessibility to and from public transport stops do not need to be very expensive. This could facilitate an easier implementation of NAP in Artois-Gohelle.
- **Potential link-up to urban renewal activities** (it still needs to be checked where NAP areas and urban renewal areas would coincide)

When considering **constraints for transferability** the main issue at the moment is still the **lack of awareness and political support** for the topic on the level of the communes.

It can be concluded that transferring the NAP concept for the specific case of improving the surroundings of some pilot areas around tram stops will be challenging, but seems feasible if political support in the communes can be activated.



**Site visit on accessibility issues in Gothenburg**

Photo: Rupprecht Consult

## The general transferability of Neighbourhood Accessibility Planning

In general the concept is **highly transferable**, while there is a wide variety of possible participatory tools and measures, which need to be tailored to the local situation.

The key for success is strong political back-up and a budget for the participatory process and measures implementation.



**NICHES+ transferability workshop in Munich**

Photo: Rupprecht Consult



## The measure justification

It is clearly visible in Artois-Gohelle that **many streets are not designed or maintained in an adequate manner** for pedestrians and cyclists and even less for mobility impaired people. Their generally poor condition is a severe obstacle not only for moving within the cities, but also for achieving a higher use of public transport.

The two **new tram lines** that are currently in the planning phase represent an opportunity to improve this situation. The building of the tram lines will require a lot of roadwork. This will follow the **latest accessibility standards**. At the same time access to the new tram line needs to be ensured for the **whole catchment area**. Also in terms of urban renewal requirements, NAP offers the opportunity to make some of the areas around tram stops more attractive, with the chance to **attract businesses and social activities** for more vibrant communities.

## The implementable measure

The following summarises what is suggested as the **main activities for a NAP scheme in Artois-Gohelle**:

- **Create a cooperative environment** between SMT and the participating communes as well as other relevant stakeholders. Through the work in NICHES+ some interest among three municipalities (communes de Liévin, Lens and Houdain) could be generated. SMT aims to work in a co-operative approach with the communes on a better accessibility of the surroundings of newly planned tram stops. The chances for NAP pilot schemes will strongly depend on the political commitment of these communes and the decision on the final route of the new tram line.
- **Strive for linking-up to existing programmes in urban renewal or social programmes** to exploit possible synergies and funding opportunities.
- **Define planning areas for NAP** when participating communes have been confirmed. The areas around the tram stops should cover at least the catchment area for pedestrians (400m minimum). Ideally a wider catchment area for cyclists should be considered.
- **Fix budget for process and measures in advance.** This facilitates the process and sets a clear framework for all activities. If there is only little money available, it is better to focus on small and lean measures that are less costly. If sufficient budget is available, the process may include some effective measures with higher costs (e.g. infrastructure works).
- **Set-up of co-operation arrangements with external planner and moderator.** SMT has already set aside 75,000 EUR for contracting a consultant that runs the participatory process.
- **Carry out accessibility inventory** for selected areas and present in easy to grasp form. SMT has already developed a methodology to assess bus stop accessibility which could be used as a basis for further work.
- **Carry out participatory process** with citizens and other stakeholders to define priority list for increasing the accessibility of the neighbourhood. Orientation for designing the participatory process has been provided by the Munich example. A feasible approach that would take about 7 months could include district excursions with residents, several meetings with working groups that discuss possible improvements and a citizen jury with randomly picked participants that discuss the final priority list of measures.

# The Implementable Measure

- **Draw-up priority list of recommended measures**, e.g. engineering, education, marketing, encouragement, enforcement, environmental and policy initiatives. The special needs of more vulnerable groups such as disabled and older people as well as children should particularly be taken into account.
- **Evaluate costs of recommendations and clarify financing strategy.**
- **Implement measures** to enhance the accessibility of the neighbourhood.
- **Provide follow-up communication and expectation management** with citizens to avoid frustration if measures take a time to be implemented.

## The finances

SMT has foreseen 75,000 EUR for the **participatory process**. This includes the sub-contracting of the external moderator as well as the organisation of events. Furthermore resources in form of **staff time** will be needed from SMT and the involved communes. The **definition of the budget for measure implementation** will need to be discussed with the communes that will



**Poorly accessible bus stop at Lens Hospital**, Photo: Rupprecht Consult

be participating in the scheme. This can reach from small cost-efficient measures to larger infrastructure works, depending on aims and available funding.

## The timing

A NAP scheme requires some months of preparation and some months for carrying out the participatory process, which leads to a priority list of measures. The measure implementation itself can take a few weeks up to a few years.

## The long-term perspective

It is recommended to include a manageable **monitoring and evaluation** procedure to learn about the impact of the project and to give feedback to involved stakeholders and citizens. An evaluation that shows the benefits of enhancing neighbourhood accessibility can deliver important arguments to strengthen this field with local decision makers.

Assuming that some pilot NAP schemes will be successful, it is advisable to think on time about a follow up strategy to **expand the NAP approach** also to other neighbourhoods around public transport stops. Key to the long-term perspective would be to get more and more communes on board by convincing them about the benefits of the approach.



**Improved pedestrian crossing on the route to a tram stop in Gothenburg**  
Photo: Rupprecht Consult



Neighbourhood Accessibility Planning can become a **key tool for improving conditions for walking and cycling** at the local level. It does not only address the mobility aspect but also has the potential to create more lively communities and foster better use of public space and social inclusion.

The concept is **in general easily transferable**. The multi-stakeholder environment of NAP however requires a good management of the process.

The experience in Artois-Gohelle shows that **awareness raising and political commitment** are a first step to enable NAP processes. It will be a key aspect in Artois-Gohelle to activate political support for a co-operation of SMT (public transport authority) with the local communes. **Fragmented responsibilities** can otherwise become a major barrier for implementation.

The examples of forerunner cities as Munich and Gothenburg provide **mature methodologies and processes** for running a NAP process, which SMT and the communes could apply in **pilot projects** to the surroundings of tram stops. The aim would be to expand NAP schemes after these first “experiments” on a wider scale to achieve a higher impact.



**All citizens benefit from Neighbourhood Accessibility Planning**

Photo (Munich): Paul Bickelbacher

## Check list

The following check-list summarises **key aspects for Neighbourhood Accessibility Planning** and intends to give the reader advice on whether the concept is suitable for their own context.

Check list	
<b>City size</b>	No restrictions, wide range of settlement structures suitable. The planning area should be of manageable size.
<b>Key conditions for implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong political back-up and pre-defined budget for participation process and measures.</li> <li>• Will to involve the citizens and to co-operate with many stakeholders.</li> <li>• Internal expertise to manage the process or budget to sub-contract external moderators and planners.</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	<p>Staff time and possibly external moderation for participatory process. Costs can be considered as being moderate.</p> <p>Budget for measure implementation depending on measures prioritised. Can be low cost (e.g. regulation) to high cost (e.g. infrastructure).</p>
<b>Implementation time</b>	Several months preparation and several months for participation. Measure implementation in short to long-term.
<b>Stakeholders involved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local authority (different departments)</li> <li>• Citizens in general</li> <li>• Local institutions such as schools and kindergartens</li> <li>• Local interest groups (e.g. older people associations)</li> <li>• Local businesses</li> <li>• Public transport operators</li> <li>• External moderators and planners (optional)</li> </ul>
<b>Undesirable secondary effects</b>	Long-term: If not tackled, possibly increasing gentrification (displacement of poorer people in inner city neighbourhoods that become more attractive and expensive to live in).



For further details on how to implement Neighbourhood Accessibility Planning schemes please see the **NICHES+ Guidelines for implementers** (available from [www.niches-transport.org](http://www.niches-transport.org)).

The more detailed **full version of the Implementation Scenario** for Neighbourhood Accessibility Planning in Artois-Gohelle is also available on the NICHES+ website.

### *Photo on title page*

Photo left hand: Kerstin Langer, KOMMA.PLAN (shows participatory workshop in Munich);  
photo right: SMT Artois-Gohelle (shows Lens city)

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[www.niches-transport.org](http://www.niches-transport.org)  
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