

## **COST 358 Pedestrians' Quality Needs – Progress**

### ***Summary***

The aim of COST 358 Pedestrians' Quality Needs (PQN) is to provide knowledge for improving and innovating policy making on the pedestrian issue. Innovation is sought through the application of a systems approach and moving from problem orientation to a quality oriented approach. For this a comprehensive conceptual framework and a dedicated policy process procedure was developed. The ACTION is working interdisciplinary on comprehensive substantiation of the ideas from four perspectives:

- what can be measured (Working Group 1 Functional needs)
- what stakeholders opinions and intentions are (Working Group 2 Perceived needs)
- how quality evolves over time (Working group 3 Durability and Future Prospects).
- integration of the 3 perspective into practical comprehensive policies (Working Group 4 Coherence and Integration)

The Final Report of the Action is almost ready. It will comprise 3 parts: a background report including theoretical and conceptual background, a report dealing with the Working Group results (Documentation) and a summarising report for stakeholders. The Final Conference is being organised. This will be a major conference on walking, joining several conferences (PQN, OECD-PUSH, WALK21 and ICTCT workshop). The conference will be held in The Hague (NL) in 17 – 19 November 2010 and is called 'Getting Communities Back on their Feet'.

### ***Innovations***

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- what can be measured (Working Group 1 Functional needs)
- what stakeholders opinions and intentions are (Working Group 2 Perceived needs)
- how quality evolves over time (Working group 3 Durability and Future Prospects).
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Expected tangible medium term socio-economic impacts are that:

- a quality driven system approach covers all options and prevents a one-sided approach
- it offers best value for money
- it improves the image of the pedestrian issue by taking a 'professional' rather than a intuitive approach that is often associated with 'minor' issues.

Specific breakthroughs as part of the Action are:

- the definition and documentation of the system around the pedestrian in public space and a basic policy process procedure for improving the pedestrians' system
- the identification and substantiation of pedestrians' need, abilities and opportunities needed on the various decision levels (lifestyle, strategic, tactical and operational levels)
- the development of methodology for formulate a 'vision' on the optimal systems and evaluation of the current state of the system and how pedestrians perform within the



services and facilities that is offered to them.

- a start with the guidelines for measuring walking
- a structure for a comprehensive overview of promising interventions
- a glimmering overview of gaps in crucial knowledge regarding the pedestrian issue.

The Action has been approached by many parties for information, co-operation or support of national activities, such as the ICTCT workshops and WALK21 conferences in 2007, 2008 and 2009, the current I'D GO2 project in Edinburgh (UK), The Walking and Cycling Conference in London (2008), Project for Public Spaces in New York, University of Singapore (2008), Pedestrian City Conferences in the Czech Republic (February 2008), options for participation in policy making for the City of Copenhagen (2008), the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Centre (PBIC) of the University of North Carolina (2009), the Conference The Walker in the City in Lisbon (2008), the Vulnerable Road Users Conference in Tel Aviv (June 2010).

As far as we can see the Action did not yet result in spin-off on EC RTD Framework Programme proposals or projects. The Action focuses on development of basic knowledge on the issue first and has already started identifying gaps in knowledge.

In several countries the Action led to new scientific and policy proposals:

- at Leeds University (UK) related PhD posting has been realised
- the PQN approach forms part of the ICTCT Early Stage Researchers course
- Walk21, Urban Mobility Research, PQN, Mobiel21 and Transport for London initiated the project 'Making Walking Count'
- national research projects connected to the PQN project in almost all PQN countries (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK). Denmark is now involved through the Making Walking Count project.

### ***Inter-disciplinary networking***

From the beginning a key feature of the PQN group has been its multidisciplinary composition. The adhered system approach is only feasible if comprehensive knowledge regarding the functioning and options for improvement and comprehensive policy development are adequately covered. The Action includes participants from a very wide scope of disciplines: architecture, landscape architecture, traffic engineering, land use planning, road safety policy making, anthropology, sociology, psychology, medical sciences, geography, computer sciences, philosophy. It covers experts from the academic world (universities and scientific institutions) as well as local and national authorities, and private consultants.

The aim of the project is to innovate policy making on the pedestrian issue by applying a systems approach. For this aim a new conceptual framework was developed and discussed. The many facets of this new approach are explored and documented, using the many disciplines that are represented in the group. For example, philosophical expertise was used to test for the comprehensiveness and robustness of definitions of basic concepts like 'needs'. An extensive Glossary is developed, which is now used as 'common ground' for the entire group as well as for educational purposes in universities. Another example is that the scope of auditing facilities is not limited to a technical assessment, but user demand (human factors including perceptions, intentions, cultural values, aesthetics) and stakeholder needs aspects are also included in the appraisals.

Although there is certainly wide scope of disciplines involved in the action, there is only limited input from the medical (health) discipline and hardly any from Law sciences. Some



input regarding these disciplines and perspectives is delivered through contextual knowledge of the Action's participants. This is however a 'blind spot' in the project's work.

Although the results of the PQN project are not yet published, there already is impact from the available results. The principles of the PQN systems approach have been presented at a number of conferences and workshops. These ideas are now being introduced in policy making on both the local (Copenhagen, Den Haag, Prague, Israel) and international levels (OECD working group PUSH; ICTCT Early Stage Researchers Course). Furthermore, within the context of the project a 'Make Walking Count' project is defined, which aims to advance data collection on the issue, making use of knowledge that is developed in the PQN project and made concrete by applying them on the city level.

### **External networking**

Almost from the start of the Action 20 countries were involved. In 2008 contacts with Denmark (the City of Copenhagen) did not result in inclusion of Denmark in the Action, but it has to be mentioned that there now are regular contacts with Copenhagen. Since the Action now is now in its final stage no attempts will be made to further expand the number of countries and institutes involved.

During 2008 and 2009 some 14 participants joined the group, mostly Early Stage researchers. Their contributions have been both substantial and refreshing. From the total of 70 PQN participants / contributors 28 are female (40%); 16 of the participants are Early Stage researchers.

Through structural exchange of information with the OECD working group Pedestrian safety, Urban Space and Health (PUSH) and contacts with the Pedestrian and Bicycle and Information Centre (PBIC) additional input is realised. With the PUSH group there is intensive cooperation: we made use of their questionnaire outcomes, analysis and theoretical and conceptual expertise and they had full access to our interim products via the PQN website. PUSH is the policy making counterpart of our project. It will present their project results at the Final Conference on Walking issues in The Hague in 2010.

From the start of the project both WALK21 and ICTCT were actively involved in the dissemination of PQN progress. They will continue to have a function after ending the COST PQN project.

In 2008 and 2009 the Action accommodated 3 Short Term Scientific Missions (Giulia Dell'Asin, Galit Yerushalmi and Daniel Malet), all now completed. Because of assumed budgetary limitations the action did not focus on attracting candidates for STSM's. The Malet STSM was the last one because the Action is now in its final phase.

A number of PQN participants have contacts with other COST groups. There is are however no contacts on a structural base. We do not have complete overview of these contacts.

Although there is no complete overview of fundraising results related to the PQN project, some prominent examples are the financing of the PQN website development, financing of special studies in the Austria, Netherlands, Switzerland and the UK and conferences and workshops in Wuppertal, Lisbon, Brno (2x), Prague and Tel Aviv.

In relation to the conclusion of the PQN project in November 2010 the Final Report has been compiled. It will be a 3 parts report. Part A will cover the backgrounds and conceptual framework of the project, Part B Documentation will present the Working Group's results and Part 3 will be the Executive Summary.

Part A is ready, internally and externally reviewed and is currently being finalised. This report will later be elaborated into a PhD thesis, which is planned to be released in 2011.



Almost all chapters and sub-chapters of Part B are available in final drafts. Articles are all internally reviewed; a majority were ready in time to be externally reviewed to provide quality control.

Based on the summaries and conclusions of articles in Part B Documentation, work on the conclusive Part C is started. The complete final report will be published (digitally) and presented at the Final Conference in The Hague.

Preparations for a major Conference on Walking are well on their way, It will be a joint activity of PQN, WALK21, ICTCT, OECD, NL Ministry of Transport, The Hague municipality, TNO Applied Science and Walking Platform Netherlands. The conference will feature the final reports of the PQN project as well as the OECD PUSH project and contributions from other experts and parties involved throughout the world. The conference will take place in The Hague 17-19 November 2010 and will mark the conclusion of the COST 358 PQN project.

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