



Project no. 022737

ACTOR

Aalborg Commitments Tools and Resources

Instrument: STREP

Thematic Priority 8.1: Policy Oriented Research

Publishable Final activity report

Period covered: from January 2006 to September 2007

Date of preparation: October 2007

Start date of project: 1st January 2006

Duration: 21 months

Project coordinator name: Dr Kate Theobald

Project coordinator organisation name: Northumbria University



ACTOR PROJECT WEBSITE: <http://www.actor.sustainable-cities.org.uk/>
Local Resources 21 website@ www.localresources21.org

Project Objectives

The project objectives for ACTOR were as follows:

1. To develop a coherent and unified context for the Aalborg signatories Toolkit through an analysis of existing Tools for Local Sustainability, and an Evaluation of the Aalborg Commitments and UTS.
2. To review the existing resources, tools, and guidance available to local authorities in meeting the Aalborg Commitments and UTS requirements through an investigation of the relevant sources of information.
3. To consult with end-users and local authority Networks in the development of the Toolkit in order to identify the benefits and potential problems with a web-based Toolkit for the Aalborg Commitments.
4. To develop the web-based Toolkit, to include a comprehensive catalogue of guidance, tools, and resources for local authorities across Europe, designed to provide relevant information, support, and guidance by policy sector and by country related to the requirements of the Aalborg Commitments and Urban Thematic Strategy.
5. To develop a methodology for local authorities implementing the Aalborg Commitments designed to guide signatory local authorities in responding to the requirements of the Aalborg Commitments.
6. To involve end-users in piloting and testing the Toolkit and the Training Package, designed to ensure that Aalborg Commitment signatories can feedback on the user-friendliness, relevance and application of the Toolkit and Training Package
7. To prepare the operational versions of the Toolkit and Training Package in 7 EU languages (including English) for further piloting of these by Aalborg signatory local authorities

8. To disseminate and promote the Toolkit and Training Package to all current and potential Aalborg signatories through a wide range of dissemination channels, including the local authority Networks of the Campaign, national government, and the European Commission.

Contractors involved in ACTOR

Participant name	Participant short name	Country
University of Northumbria at Newcastle (Co-ordinator)	Northumbria	United Kingdom
The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe	REC	Hungary
Union of the Baltic Cities	UBC	Poland
ICLEI European Secretariat GmbH	ICLEI ES	Germany
Ambiente Italia srl Istituto di Ricerche	AMBIENTE ITALIA	Italy
Aabo Akademi University	AAU	Finland
Entidad Metropolitana de Barcelona de los Servicios Hidraulicos y Tratamiento de Residuos (o del Medio Ambiente) acting as General Secretariat of Medcities	Medcities	Spain

The Co-ordinator is Northumbria University. The contact persons are Professor Bob Evans (Project Co-ordinator), and Dr Kate Theobald (Project Manager), Sustainable Cities Research Institute, 6 North Street East, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8ST, UK.
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Summary of Work Performed and Achievements between Month 1 and Month 21.

- Review and evaluation of relevant tools, resources, and guidance to support the Aalborg Commitments at European, national, and local level across all European countries (secondary data analysis)
- Extensive collection and organisation of data items, on a dedicated and interactive database, covering all 10 Aalborg Commitments and sub-Commitments, for all European countries, and in the categories of tools, policy, good practice and knowledge centres (formerly named Resources).
- Technical development of a web-based Toolkit, incorporating the information on the database.
- Development of the Aalborg Commitments Implementation Guide.
- Production of dissemination materials (brochure in 7 languages) on the suite of tools available to support local authorities in implementing the Aalborg Commitments: Local Resources 21, Local Targets 21, Local Evaluation 21, and Local Sustainability 21 (portal).
- Construction of the Toolkit (in relation to the 'local sustainability' upper portal, including the arrangement of all the data items to be easily accessible through a search function, and appropriate links within the Toolkit, and to other relevant websites.
- Involving local authority practitioners in the development of the Toolkit and Implementation Guide through local government participation in 3 regional Workshops and subsequently in the collection of data, in particular examples of good practice at local level.
- Involving local authority practitioners the testing of both the English and other language versions of the Toolkit and Implementation Guide.
- Launch of the Toolkit and Guide to the Commission in Brussels in September 2007.

Main Achievements

The project achieved all the required Management and Research Objectives up to the end of Month 21 as set out in the Description of Work. It is appropriate to note the following achievements:

1. Building upon the outputs of previous and current projects in this area, in particular LE21, STATUS, Managing Urban Europe 25; Sustainfo, EnviPlans and other relevant initiatives.
2. Comprehensive review at European and national level of policy reports, programmes, initiatives, projects relevant to supporting local governments in implementing the Aalborg Commitments.
3. Extensive involvement of policymakers and practitioners at local level, and also at national level, through the 3 local authority workshops, and the first Campaign Partners Forum.
4. Extensive involvement of policymakers and practitioners at local level, and also at national level, through the Seville Conference, and involvement of the networks of the European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign.

5. Dissemination of the Toolkit and Implementation Guide through relevant conferences and other networking events, undertaken by all partners in their respective regions, and at European level.

Expected end results

The Aalborg Commitments and the EU Urban Thematic Strategy together represent a new and innovative approach to policymaking and implementation in Europe. The ACTOR project is based on the premise that the scale of the research and policy challenge presented by the Aalborg process is such that the exploitation of information technology to assist and support the policy process is appropriate. The end result of this research project has therefore been to provide the Toolkit of resources, tools, and guidance which towns and cities across Europe will need to deliver the outcomes that the Aalborg Commitments demand. This has involved researching the needs and aspirations of local governments through a series of workshops with local authorities and the European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign networks and cities in order to ensure that the resulting toolkit clearly meets local needs and contexts. The Toolkit and Implementation Guide will clearly support and strengthen the implementation of the Commitments over the coming years, and had a high profile presence at the Seville conference in March 2007. The development of the Toolkit also supports the work of the European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign networks and local governments, and, through the development of an 'upper portal' ('localsustainability.eu') the ACTOR Toolkit and Implementation Guide is now situated in the broader context of other key tools and initiatives supporting the Aalborg Commitments implementation (such as LocalEvaluation21, Local Targets 21, MUE 25+, the Campaign, and other relevant resources and websites).

The publishable results of the ACTOR project will be available from August 2007 onwards, as this is the point at which the final versions of the on-line Toolkit, and Aalborg Commitments Implementation Guide will be completed in English, and translated into 6 further EU languages.

Publishable results of the final plan for using and disseminating the knowledge

Exploitable Result 1: Content Management System (Database) for the ACTOR (Local Resources 21) Toolkit

This database has been constructed for the entering and organization of approximately 700 data items collected by the ACTOR partners, with assistance from a number of local authorities. These are of relevance to European local authorities in finding information and guidance to support them in implementing the Aalborg Commitments (and local sustainable development policies per se). The data is organized, by country (including an EU category) into both Themes (the 10 Aalborg Commitments, and 5 Sub-Commitments under each of the 10 Commitments) and 4 categories – Good Practice, Knowledge Centres, Policy and Legislation, and Tools. There is a search function on the Toolkit (see Exploitable Result 2 below) that allows users to search for items using one or a combination of these categories. A matrix of Resources has also been constructed for users to have an ‘at a glance’ picture of how many items are listed by country/category/Commitment, and to enter any one of these for further information.

The database can be updated, with items added or deleted as appropriate (although this requires person resources to make these changes). It will be possible for any partner in the ACTOR consortium to enter further items of data, using the administrative interface of the database.

For each of the data items a summary has been produced (a maximum of 100 words), and a word search is available, to search within these summaries. All the summaries are in English. It is anticipated that further funds will be sought to translate these into all EU languages.

It may be appropriate in the longer term to consider linking the database with the EUKN database currently being developed through another FP6 project, and which has a much longer timespan. This could provide a more extensive search facility for local governments in the area of local sustainability. This has been discussed within the ACTOR consortium during Months 13-21, as there are clearly issues around Intellectual Property Rights, exploitation and updating of the database in addition to the appropriateness of such links being made. Further discussions may take place with the EUKN representatives, and ‘sister’ projects using the EUKN content management system, on this issue in the future.

There is also the possibility of extending the resources database to include items from other Mediterranean basin countries (through future work by MedCities). This will be agreed to by partners through email.

Intellectual Property Rights belong to all partners of the ACTOR consortium.

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Exploitable Result 2: On-line Toolkit ('Local Resources 21')

The on-line Toolkit which is the major output from the ACTOR project has been named 'Local Resources 21' as this links closely with other FP5 and FP6 funded tools developed by the majority of ACTOR partners in previous consortia – STATUS (Local Targets 21), and LASALA On-line (Local Evaluation 21). The Toolkit developed through ACTOR makes up a 'package' of implementation Tools that local governments can use to implement local sustainability policies and procedures. This Toolkit can be accessed directly through the web, using the domain name 'localresources21.org', but can also be accessed through an upper portal, entitled 'localsustainability.eu'. This website has been developed by ICLEI and Northumbria using non-ACTOR funds, and it is envisaged that this will provide a much needed overarching framework for local sustainability, linking the Tools mentioned above, with other key websites such as the European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign, the Aalborg Plus 10 website, and the Commission strategies on the urban environment and sustainable development. All ACTOR partners agreed to these developments, in order to place the ACTOR toolkit within the wider context, and to ensure the widest promotion of the Toolkit.

The Toolkit text on each of the Local Resources 21 webpages is in English and in the following 6 languages: Slovak, Polish, German, Italian, Spanish, French. It is anticipated that the consortium will seek to secure further funding to translate the text into all EU languages.

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Exploitable Result 3: Aalborg Commitments Implementation Guide

The Aalborg Commitments Implementation Guide (formerly referred to as the Training Package) is a methodology and steps for local government implementing the Aalborg Commitments, and needing detailed guidance on how to progress. The Guide is based on the 5 steps of the sustainability management cycle, and builds on/extends the Guidance prepared in the STATUS project (which focused on target setting for local sustainability). It also has direct synergies with the guidance being developed in another FP6 project entitled Managing Urban Europe +25 (co-ordinated by UBC (also an ACTOR partner) and with ICLEI being a partner in both.

The Guide is translated into the same 6 languages as the Toolkit, and is available to download from the ACTOR website (Local Resources 21) or for users to visit on-line, and 'dip into' individual chapters or steps. In addition, introductory guidance has been prepared for each of the 10 Aalborg Commitments, to provide information to users on what policies they need to consider for each of the Commitments, and sub-Commitments, and to guide them to appropriate examples of good practice. These introductory pages

have been translated into the same 6 languages and are also available both as PDFs or to click onto individually for each of the Commitments.

It may be appropriate in the future, and subject to additional funding, to expand the Guide to provide training materials for local governments. ICLEI may consider developing these, possibly in conjunction with other partners from the ACTOR and MUE consortia, if appropriate.

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