



**European Cooperation
in the field of Scientific
and Technical Research
- COST -**

Secretariat

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COST 276/08

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Subject : Memorandum of Understanding for the implementation of a European Concerted Research Action designated as COST Action TU0803:
Cities Regrowing Smaller – Fostering knowledge on regeneration strategies in shrinking cities across Europe

Delegations will find attached the Memorandum of Understanding for COST Action TU0803 as approved by the COST Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) at its 172nd meeting on 24-25 November 2008.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

For the implementation of a European Concerted Research Action designated as

COST Action TU0803

CITIES REGROWING SMALLER – FOSTERING KNOWLEDGE ON REGENERATION STRATEGIES IN SHRINKING CITIES ACROSS EUROPE

The Parties to this Memorandum of Understanding, declaring their common intention to participate in the concerted Action referred to above and described in the technical Annex to the Memorandum, have reached the following understanding:

1. The Action will be carried out in accordance with the provisions of document COST 270/07 “Rules and Procedures for Implementing COST Actions”, or in any new document amending or replacing it, the contents of which the Parties are fully aware of.
2. The main objective of the Action is to foster the interdisciplinary knowledge of Regeneration Strategies in Shrinking Cities across Europe.
3. The economic dimension of the activities carried out under the Action has been estimated, on the basis of information available during the planning of the Action, at EUR 40 million in 2008 prices.
4. The Memorandum of Understanding will take effect on being accepted by at least five Parties.
5. The Memorandum of Understanding will remain in force for a period of 4 years, calculated from the date of the first meeting of the Management Committee, unless the duration of the Action is modified according to the provisions of Chapter V of the document referred to in Point 1 above.

A. ABSTRACT AND KEYWORDS

At the beginning of the 21st century, Europe has many examples of the phenomenon of shrinking cities. One of the most challenging tasks for urban Europe in the near future is to deal with the results of demographic, economic and physical contraction processes, and to plan for the future of considerably smaller but nevertheless liveable cities.

Against this background, the Action aims to foster knowledge of regeneration strategies in shrinking cities across Europe. By promoting the exchange of scientific knowledge and the stimulation of new ideas in selected reference cities, the gender-balanced network with proposers from ten countries will act as a catalyst for new solutions to deal with demographic change and to design the restructuring of shrinking cities in Europe.

Significant benefits at the European level are envisaged, resulting in a common framework of terminology and a synopsis of published research in this field, exemplary regeneration strategies and a best practice database.

Keywords: shrinking cities, urban policy and planning, urban regeneration strategies, urban revitalisation, innovation in economic restructuring

B. BACKGROUND

B.1 General background

At the beginning of the 21st century, Europe has many examples of the phenomenon of shrinking cities. According to the Urban Audit (European Commission, 2007) out of 220 large and medium-sized European Cities, 57% of the cities and 54% of the larger urban areas lost population in the period from 1996 to 2001. Included in this list are for example 22 German, 19 Italian, 11 British, and 5 Spanish Cities. In Eastern Europe 53 out of a total of 67 cities shrank. Several studies of urban trends since the 1960s, such as those by Cheshire (1995, 2006), have analysed the patterns of change of European cities. The most recent one by Turok and Mykhnenko (2007) shows that some European cities have been declining since the 1960s and that there were more shrinking cities than growing cities in Europe in the late 1990s.

Urban shrinkage in Europe has in part been caused by suburbanization. However, out of 98 larger urban zones (a functional urban region mainly based on commuter connections) 54 % nonetheless shrank. In addition to suburban losses, economic decline in structurally weak, old industrialized cities has led to problematic development path, in some ways similar to those in American metropolises like Detroit, Pittsburgh or Cleveland (Beauregard, 2003; Fishman, 2000). In Eastern Europe the combination of post-socialist and post-fordist transformations processes has led to exceptionally severe shrinkage phenomena (Wiechmann 2008).

Certainly, urban shrinkage as such is not a new phenomenon. It has been documented by a large literature analysing the social and economic issues that have led to population flight, resulting in the worse cases in the eventual abandonment of blocks of housing and neighbourhoods (Downs 1997; Beauregard 2003). A number of studies have also been dedicated to the analysis of the cycles of urban changes: suburbanization (Fishman 1987, 2006), decline of central cities, and regeneration (Metzger 2000). While the contemporary globalisation processes (Amin / Thrift 1994, Scott / Storper 2003) have been accompanied by spreading de-industrialisation, the period has also been one of profound demographic change in the developed countries, characterised by falls in fertility rates and the ageing of populations. This transformation, which has been termed the "second demographic transition" (Van de Kaa 1987), obviously has repercussions on the development of cities. In this situation, it may be that urban growth should in no way be assumed, while urban decline, rather than being an exception or an aberration, could be characterized as a global phenomenon (Oswalt, 2006). Since actors in the urban sphere have always been convinced of the need for growth (Logan & Molotch 1987) decline has hitherto generally been viewed as a sort of parenthesis, which should be as short-lived as possible, within a general trend in which recovery is essentially to be expected (Bontje 2004). It is however worthwhile reviewing this assumption, to envisage decline and urban shrinkage as durable, structural components of urban development. While urban decline is on the increase, placing the phenomenon in an increasingly global perspective, it seems opportune to review the paradigm behind the established views of urban growth and change (Rybczynski & Linneman 1999, Bourne & Simmons 2003, Mueller and Siedentop 2004, Andersen 2005, Hollbach-Gromig & Trapp 2006, Jessen 2006, Leo & Anderson 2006, Polese & Shearmur 2006, Allweil 2007).

Therefore, dealing with the results of demographic contraction processes, often linked with economic and physical contraction processes, presents some of the most challenging tasks for European cities in the near future. In addition, the restructuring of shrinking urban regions must be designed.

Though much research has been published on the issue of urban shrinkage, there are few systematic networking efforts to link fragmented national research activities. This is partly due to the lack of specific targeted funding programs. But it is also intensified by the fact that while a multitude of papers have addressed the subject in Eastern Europe, the rest of Europe has been slow to take up the debate. As a result, the topic of Shrinking Cities is still emergent in most countries of Western Europe. Moreover, despite existing studies of declining urban areas, we still know very little about their initial wealth creation paths; what made their fortunes change; what conditions contribute to the loss of skilled, qualified and creative people; and how urban actors might be able to preserve or regenerate city assets.

B.2 Current state of knowledge

The decline of cities is not a recent phenomenon. Numerous studies have analysed its manifestations and causes, in particular in the United States where the development and decline of cities and city centres has, since the work of the Chicago school, been viewed as a natural process whereby urban change results from a life cycle that ends in inevitable decline (Lang 2000). Thus the phenomenon appears inseparable from the history of cities (Beauregard 2003).

In the literature, urban shrinkage has been firstly analysed in terms of life cycles. On the scale of urban quarters or districts, Hoyt (1939), in his study on the structure and growth of residential neighbourhoods in American cities, demonstrated that residential urban areas undergo an inevitable evolution towards decline, linked to the devaluing of property resulting from the arrival of less prosperous populations. This conception of urban life-cycles echoes the cycle theory in economics, based on the idea developed by the Russian economist Kondratieff (1984). According to the "cyclic" interpretations of urban decline, cities go through stages of decline and regeneration that are linked to the relative economic position of the city in a wider market.

The evolution of regions and urban agglomerations is thus seen as following development cycles that include periods of rapid growth followed by periods of slower growth and decline. Hence at certain stages the number of jobs decreases, initiating the process of selective migration towards other territories. In this perspective, demographic decline is linked to economic decline (Booth 1987; Friedrichs 1993). In the field of urban research, Van den Berg et al. (1982) developed a model according to which the development of metropolises can be seen to go through four successive development stages: urbanisation, suburbanisation, de-urbanisation and re-urbanisation.

More recently, a substantial part of the research dedicated to Shrinking Cities has been conducted in Germany. After the fall of the Berlin wall, studies appeared on the effects of the changes in economic structure and of post-socialist transition in urban spaces (Hauessermann 1996). It was nevertheless not until 2000 and after, that a field of research on the *Schrumpfende Staedte* really emerged and developed in Germany. In Eastern European countries, the sharp decrease in fertility rates, sometimes described as a demographic shock (Steinfuehrer / Haase 2007), combined with dramatic processes of out migration and suburbanisation (Mueller 2004, Mueller / Siedentop 2004, Nuissl / Rink 2005; Kabisch et al. 2006) led to a rapid decline of cities. The combined effects of de-industrialisation, suburbanisation, post-Soviet re-composition and demographic factors have produced a hitherto unknown model for decline (Oswalt 2006). According to certain authors, the simultaneity between these different changes confers a "unique" character on the evolutions taking place in Eastern Europe and its cities (Boren / Gentile 2007; Steinfuehrer / Haase 2007). At the start of the 1990s, the economic upheavals generated by the fall of the socialist regime and the process of reunification took place extremely fast. Post-Fordist change, which occurred in a fairly gradual manner in the cities in the West, operated in the cities in the East in the manner of a shock therapy (Bontje 2004).

Shrinking Cities have also been studied as the spatial manifestations of globalisation processes. While these processes led to the development of global cities (Sassen 2001; Amin / Thrift 1994), which concentrate high-level financial and service activities, and information and communication networks, globalisation is also the cause of the decline of numerous industrial cities that have been unable to find a place in the international economic competition. This results in growing inequalities between those cities that are integrated into the global networks and those that are not succeeding in finding a place in the current knowledge-based economy (Scott / Storper 2003).

While the topic of urban decline or city shrinkage has already been well documented in different national contexts (especially Germany, the US and Great Britain), the research that has been conducted mostly lacks a comparative perspective on the factors and impacts of shrinkage at the European scale and on the policies and strategies that have been implemented to tackle this issue. Networking activities between members from various contexts within Europe would facilitate exchange of knowledge and best practice related to Shrinking Cities.

B.3 Reasons for the Action

The main reason for launching the Action is to foster knowledge on regeneration strategies in shrinking cities across Europe. Urban decline is not new to European cities, especially to those de-industrialising and consequently de-urbanising. However, research on shrinking cities is a holistic approach to the urban transformation of European cities due to changes in fertility rate (e.g. Germany), de-industrialisation (e.g. North UK), population migration (e.g. medium towns in France), and post-socialism (Eastern Europe). To meet economic and societal needs in shrinking cities fully it is not only important to promote the exchange of scientific knowledge in Europe, but also to stimulate innovative approaches in selected reference cities in order to facilitate the restructuring of shrinking cities in Europe.

The immediate benefit of the Action is that it would provide knowledge infrastructure to foster the interdisciplinary understanding of regeneration strategies in Shrinking Cities across Europe. By determining the most appropriate research approaches the network will strengthen the foundations for building scientific excellence in this field within Europe. It will create a common framework of action, which will enhance the opportunity of dealing successfully with the future challenges of shrinking cities. The medium to long-term impact resides in the theoretical implications of global processes in urban transformations. This analysis cannot be based in the know-how developed by only one country but in the experiences of several countries in Europe and elsewhere.

The Action aims are twofold: on the one hand the Action will address an important economic and societal need: the decline of cities and regions where a net loss of population, employment and commercial activity is producing economic stagnation of these cities. On the other hand, the Action will scientifically question traditional paradigms of urban development in European cities and propose new planning and policy scenarios to deal with shrinkage. The Action will therefore address economical, societal and scientific needs of Shrinking Cities and their communities.

The activity will aim for maximum productive outcomes by managing the Action at two levels: strategic and operational. At a **strategic level**, the network will provide a forum for the discussion of successful regeneration strategies in shrinking cities, improve the knowledge basis for targeted policy actions by the EU or its Member States, lay foundations for future corresponding EU research initiatives, and foster the questioning of traditional paradigms of urban development in view of the demographic and economic challenges in European cities.

At an **operational level**, the network will come up with a conceptual framework to describe and analyse issues of shrinking cities, survey and review the existing studies on regeneration strategies in shrinking cities in Europe and elsewhere, bring together Member States analyses of demographic and urban developments in different regions, assess the level and nature of selected approaches to regenerate shrinking cities, provide on-site advice to end-users of the completed research in selected shrinking cities, offer third parties (scholars and practitioners) best practice and advanced information on regeneration strategies, and provide access for young researchers to a highly innovative transnational debate.

B.4 Complementarity with other research programmes

Shrinking Cities has not been a topic of much discussion in most European countries outside Germany; and scholars from different academic fields are at the early stages of analysis of this phenomenon. In many ways the concept of Shrinking Cities constitutes a metaphor of rapid urban change in the face of globalization and the way it impacts local places. Despite this topic being relatively novel in EU territory, there exist other EC funded projects that can provide some linkages to this Action. Specifically, the Action can benefit from projects such as COST Action C27 focusing on Minor Deprived Urban Communities and the following INTERREG projects:

REVITHAR - the revitalization of small harbour towns and cities (2003-2008)

GREENKEYS - the development of urban green spaces as a key for making cities more liveable (2005-2008)

CoUrbIT - Complex urban investment tools (started 2005)

REPUS - Strategy for a Regional Polycentric Urban System in Central-Eastern Europe (2005-2007).

Concerning the interrelationship between shrinking cities and suburbanisation, this Action benefits also from EU research project URBSPANDENS focussing on an integrated impact assessment of regulations, incentives, economic instruments and infrastructure measures on urban sprawl. Additional linkages with further programs will be discussed in section E3.

C. OBJECTIVES AND BENEFITS

C.1 Main/primary objectives

The main objective of the Action is to foster the interdisciplinary knowledge of Regeneration Strategies in Shrinking Cities across Europe. By promoting the exchange of scientific knowledge in Europe and stimulating new ideas in selected reference cities, the network will act as a catalyst for innovative solutions to deal with demographic change and urban decline.

C.2 Secondary objectives

The Action will bring together experts from different countries to share their experiences in relation to urban shrinkage and to cross-analyse international case studies. The Action will provide a knowledge platform for an interdisciplinary team of experts in urban decline to constitute a network through which knowledge of regeneration strategies in Shrinking Cities across Europe can be shared and new policy analysis and planning strategies can be co-produced by the network.

By determining the most appropriate research approaches, the network will strengthen the foundations for building scientific excellence in this field in Europe. It will create a common framework of action, which will enhance opportunities of dealing successfully with the future challenges of shrinking cities. The scientific impact resides in the theoretical implications of global processes in urban transformations.

To meet both economic / societal needs of shrinking cities and scientific needs in this field, the Action will produce a number of written deliverables (see H. Dissemination Plan). The deliverables include a state of the art report on regeneration strategies in shrinking cities, proceedings of major conferences, policy oriented position papers, a synthesis report, and a handbook on regeneration strategies in shrinking cities.

In addition to the contribution to economic/societal and scientific needs for new knowledge in Shrinking Cities, a second important objective is to diffuse knowledge, specifically outputs of the Action. Among these outputs is the formulation of new policies to deal with shrinkage under a typology of cases in European shrinking cities. This typology of cases will provide the picture of Europe in terms of shrinkage from South European countries to Central Europe and North Europe. This part of the Action will be prepared through workshops where the participant team will put together current thinking and new research results to examine theories of decline. These workshops will analyse processes of population aging, low birth-rate and strong suburbanisation; globalisation effects fuelled by individual human and policy choices, political transformations in post-socialist cities, and the effects of climate change, especially extreme conditions of drought.

Dissemination of outputs such as the above can be summarised as follows (see also H. Dissemination Plan):

- At least six papers (from co-operations between members) focusing on different cases of shrinkage across Europe
- Monograph on policies needed for shrinking cities
- Book on the typology and map of shrinking cities in Europe
- Conferences open to public: European Conference on Regeneration Strategies of Shrinking Cities and Final Conference of the COST Action

C.3 How will the objectives be achieved?

In order to reach the different objectives, this Action seeks to carry out seven types of activities:

- a) A collective **conceptual framework** will be developed, including a synopsis of published research on shrinking cities and a common terminology across countries and disciplines.
- b) Two **European conferences** on good practice on regeneration strategies in shrinking cities in the third and fourth year of the Action will provide an opportunity for the wider audience to participate in the Action.
- c) **Workshop meetings** in reference cities will allow the interchange of tacit knowledge between the network members and practitioners. By this means the Actions proposals and recommendations can be discussed with local actors in selected shrinking cities. Thus the Action will invite local stakeholders to participate in the workshops.
- d) The Action will facilitate the sharing of European **best practice** on regeneration strategies in shrinking cities by offering a **database** with profiles of selected examples from all COST countries involved.
- e) The Action will produce **recommendations on policy implications** at different levels which will be distributed as widely as possible to relevant policy-makers.
- f) **Publication** of the **research findings**, by means of one edited book on regeneration strategies in shrinking cities, six journal papers focusing on different cases of shrinkage across Europe, and one monograph on policies needed for shrinking cities as well as conference and workshop proceedings.
- g) Designing and maintaining **of a web site**, that allows the interchange of knowledge between the network members and a wider public, through intranet and public website pages (see E.1 Coordination and organisation).

C.4 Benefits of the Action

The benefits of the Action are organised at a strategic and operational level:

At a strategic level, the network will:

- provide a forum for the discussion of successful regeneration strategies in shrinking cities, establishing a frame of common action facing the multiple challenges around shrinking cities,

- improve the knowledge basis for targeted policy actions by the EU or its Member States,
- lay foundations for future corresponding EU research initiatives,
- foster the questioning of traditional paradigms of urban development in view of the demographic and economic challenges in European cities, analyzing the interaction between structural processes and local responses.

At an operational level, the network will:

- devise a conceptual framework to describe and analyze issues of shrinking cities. Establishing common terminology for the multiple causes and manifestations of the phenomenon; the international scope of the case studies, and the multidisciplinary nature of the study field,
- survey and review the existing studies on regeneration strategies in shrinking cities in Europe and elsewhere,
- bring together Member States' analyses of demographic and urban developments in different regions. Development of tools of analysis, such as typologies of cities/ processes/ strategies, that facilitate the comparison of different urban trajectories studied or to be studied,
- assess the level and nature of selected approaches to regenerate shrinking cities,
- provide on-site advice to end-users of the completed research in selected shrinking cities,
- offer third parties (scholars and practitioners) examples of "best practice" and advanced information on regeneration strategies. Development of a final document on best practices in regeneration and urban revitalization, to be disseminated by the channels established in the proposal,
- provide access for young researchers to a highly innovative transnational debate.

C.5 Target groups/end users

The COST Action Cities Regrowing Smaller will provide practical information, advice, and guidance for the following key target groups:

- The Action will include end-users of the completed research, including stakeholders with the responsibility for the design of policies and urban planning in shrinking cities, from local to regional, national or even at European scale - i.e. policy makers, urban planners, other practitioners.

- Officials at European institutions constitute a second target group. The Action provides a discussion forum to improve the knowledge basis for targeted policy actions by the EU or its Member States. The outcomes of the Action will create a basis for the designing of future European initiatives, e.g. regarding programs for urban regeneration or future corresponding EU research initiatives.

- The third target group are members of the academic community (scholars) in the fields of urban and regional planning, economic development, human geography, architecture and design, urban infrastructure and civil engineering, according to the inter- and trans-disciplinary approach of the Action. The geographic scope of the phenomena described makes their study interesting as much for European scientists as for specialists outside of Europe; for example the members of the Berkeley based Shrinking Cities International Research Network (SCiRN).

In addition, the Action would also try to specifically facilitate the access and specialization of young researchers to a study field of excellence, facilitating their mobility between research institutions of the network participant members.

D. SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME

D.1 Scientific focus

The Scientific focus of the COST Action Cities Regrowing Smaller aims at the exchange and creation of knowledge dealing with the complex issues of different types of shrinking cities in Europe. Against this background it seeks innovative solutions to deal with demographic change and urban decline.

Contemporary debates (see section B.2) show a rising awareness that several cities in Europe have to deal with challenges of long-term demographic and economic trajectories leading to an urban shrinkage associated with housing vacancies, underused infrastructure and other negative impacts. The term shrinking city usually describes a densely populated urban area that has on the one hand faced a population loss in large parts and is on the other hand undergoing economic transformation with some symptoms of a structural crisis.

However, issues of shrinking cities were predominantly interpreted as effects of hollowing out processes of the urban centres, triggered by suburbanization and urban sprawl. In fact the majority of the urban regions in the European Union lost population in recent years and this shrinkage cannot be simply explained by suburbanization (see B.1 General Background). Urban shrinkage and economic decline in structurally weak areas e.g. in old industrialized rust belts or in peripheral rural areas and regions are most commonly symptoms of societal transformations in Europe and other parts of the world (e.g. Japan, USA and Australia).

However, the extent and spatial distribution of population decrease differ significantly between the countries and between regions. Thus the different scales of development (sub-local, local, regional, national) have to be taken into account. In Western and Southern Europe the situation is driven by falling birth rates far below the natural reproduction rate and the structural changes in consequence of globalization processes (economic decline, deindustrialization, and high unemployment rates in certain areas). In many parts of Eastern Europe, the combination of post-socialist and post-fordist transformation processes led to exceptionally severe shrinkage phenomena with out-migration and natural population loss.

Accordingly, Shrinking Cities is a transdisciplinary field of study that addresses complex issues of regenerating urban systems that are undergoing demographic change and structural crisis. Therefore this Action adopts an inter- and trans-disciplinary approach. On the one hand it will bring together scholars who conduct research within the fields of urban and regional planning, economic development, human geography, architecture and design, urban infrastructure, knowledge and innovation, and civil engineering. On the other hand it will also include end-users of the completed research, i.e. policy makers and urban planners in shrinking cities. By applying the Engaged Scholarship approach of Van de Ven (2007) the scientific programme acknowledges the distinct responsibility for researchers to engage with the "real world" and to create practitioner-meaningful research.

D.2 Scientific work plan – methods and means

In order to reach the stated objectives, the Action fulfils four clearly defined tasks:

1. Synopsis of Published Research on Shrinking Cities:

Building on the documented state of knowledge (see section B.2) this task will explore the nature and character of the published research on shrinking cities with a special emphasis on regeneration strategies. It focuses in particular on the range of research issues and methods used in basic and applied research. A comprehensive sample of academic journal articles in different languages will be reviewed to characterise the issues and the types of methods used. Most likely, this will also demonstrate a significant variation with regard to policy recommendations derived from the research findings. This task is intended to get an overview on the state of the art, as well as to generate a network discussion on the character of shrinking cities research.

2. Theory-Practice Interface on Regeneration Strategies:

In a series of four workshop meetings in reference cities, selected issues of regeneration strategies in shrinking cities will be discussed with the involvement of academics and practitioners. This is crucial for grounding the shrinking cities phenomenon in reality and an essential step in any academic study as it affects theory building, research design and conduct.

Based on an attempt at linking development theories to an understanding of the causes of shrinkage and by implication, the causes of expansion. Wu et al. (2008) offer a typology of shrinking cities that explicitly focuses on the causes of shrinkage in order to identify the national and local contextual conditions. The typology is shown in the table below. It seeks to group the causes of shrinkage into three main categories of conditions that are: 1) imposed either by nature or external forces (including external to the region); 2) comparative in nature and, 3) conditions that prevail in the society or at the global level. Through this categorization, Wong et al. (2008) aim to clarify the policy responses that could be appropriate to the causes of shrinkage.

The four reference cities will be selected by the Management Committee at the end of phase 1. Each will represent a different type of shrinking cities:

- a **former mining city** after termination of mining operations (shrinkage is imposed),
- an **old industrialised city** in a declining region suffering under the post-industrial transformation in Europe (shrinkage due to comparative disadvantages),
- a **satellite city** affected by social segregation and low standards of living (shrinkage due to comparative disadvantages), and
- a comparably wealthy **city** with a **declining and fast ageing population** (shrinkage due to societal / global changes).

The aim of the workshops in the four reference cities is to gain a deeper understanding for the causes, processes, and policy implications in the different types of shrinking cities in Europe. In order to achieve this urban planners and policy makers from the reference cities will be invited to the workshops. The preparation of the workshops will be supported by **Short Term Scientific Missions** (STSM), as described in section E4.

Type	Characteristics	Underlying Causes	Selected Contemporary Examples	Policy Implications (examples)
Shrinkage is Imposed	Conflicts/war Political or economic reforms Depletion of resources	Political and military conflicts Spatial/Administrative Reforms national govt. Uneconomic exploitation of natural resources	Beirut, Lebanon; Phnom Penh Chinese county towns & villages Nauru & other mining cities including resource towns	Conflict resolution Modification of administrative reforms New technology; Efficient methods of resource extraction
Shrinkage due to comparative disadvantages	Lack of economic opportunities/diversity Lifestyle attractions Climatic conditions Infrastructure provisions	Core/periphery drift Globalization De-industrialization Re-industrialization (rise of Regional inequalities; Knowledge economy) Climatic differences Metropolitan lifestyle	Poland relative to EU S. Korea - regions outside of Seoul Metro region France (non metro Paris) Scotland NE China old industrial centres Rust belt (USA)	Reinforce regional resilience Ensure embeddedness of economic activities Regional decentralization policies
Shrinkage due to societal / global changes	Absolute decline of population Ageing population Climate change	Low birth rate (fertility decline) Low population replacement rate Population structure Demographic onus Global climate changes	Dresden, Germany Kyoto, Japan Australian outback towns	Population policy Urban amenities/infrastructures investments Global climate policies/programs

Table 1: Typology of Shrinking Cities (Source: Wu et al. 2008, p. 5)

3. **Theory Building and Interdisciplinary Communication:**

This task is primarily concerned with a conceptual framework. In line with the interdisciplinary approach, alternative theories and methods to deal with the issue of shrinking cities will be developed. As any given theory is an incomplete abstraction, multiple frames of reference are needed to encompass the complex reality. The most important part of the conceptual framework is a common terminology across countries and disciplines.

4. **Problem Solving Strategies and Best Practice Database:**

This task focuses on linking the research findings back to the problem as defined in the Theory-Practice Interface. It encompasses a report of research findings and a discussion of their implications for theory and practice. In addition the Action will facilitate the sharing of European best practice on Regeneration Strategies in Shrinking Cities by offering a database with profiles of selected examples from all involved COST countries.

Four interwoven **Working Groups** (WG) (see also E.2 Working Groups) will be launched. Based on an extensive review of published work on Shrinking Cities WG 1 will provide a Synopsis Report (task 1). WG 2 will prepare and organise the Theory-Practice Interface (task 2). WG 3 will set up the conceptual framework (task 3), whereas WG 4 will focus on assembling instructive cases of regeneration strategies as the major source for the Best Practice Database (task 4).

E. ORGANISATION

E.1 Coordination and organisation

The Action is carried out by a **network** of researchers from various COST countries and selected non-COST countries. Its implementation is coordinated by a **Management Committee** (MC), according to the COST regulations.

The Action holds two **meetings** per year. Each will have a two and a half day duration allowing for plenary sessions, Working Groups, MC meetings, and field trips.

The communication within the Action will be facilitated by means of an **Action web site** (see also H.3 Dissemination Plan). Design and maintaining of the web site allows the interchange of knowledge and information between the network members and a wider public. The basic contents to include will be the following:

- Identification of the network members and its institutions
- Creation of a database from national statistics available on demographic and socioeconomic evolution of the cities
- Papers/Proceedings compiled by the network members, with case studies and examples of good practices in urban regeneration
- Cartography and other complementary graphic material
- Connection to other close networks in thematic of investigation

A Network Manager will be responsible for keeping the flow of communication between partners, updating the website, providing administrative support and providing a key contact point for all partners, and also those interested in the Action outcomes but not actively participating in the network. The Network Manager will report directly to the MC for the Action and follow the strategic plan derived for the Action.

E.2 Working Groups

There will be four interacting Working Groups (WG) corresponding to the four main Action tasks. Each of the four Working Groups will produce deliverables as described below. In order to achieve a high level of synergy and coordination between the Working Groups, their meetings will be annexed to Action meetings and workshops with plenary sessions for reporting and discussion of the Working Group tasks.

WG 1 will provide a Synopsis Report based on an extensive review of published work on Shrinking Cities (summary report "Synopsis of Published Research on Shrinking Cities" in phase 2; revision in phase 5). It will also act as organising committee for the European conference on Regeneration Strategies in Shrinking Cities as well as for the Final conference of COST Action Cities Regrowing Smaller. This includes the responsibility for the editing of the Synthesis Report with the findings of the workshops and conferences.

The Theory-Practice Interface (main task 2, see D.2 Scientific work plan) will be prepared and organised by **WG 2**. In phase 1 this WG will compile a tentative list of potential reference cities (as basis for selection process in the MC). In the following phases WG 2 focuses on the preparation and organisation of the series of workshop meetings in four reference cities with the involvement of academics and practitioners. Hence, WG 2 also acts as organising committee for the four workshops in reference cities. This includes the support and monitoring of four Short Term Scientific Missions to prepare these workshop meetings.

WG 3 will set up the conceptual framework (main task 3) for the whole Action and thus provide a theoretical-methodological basis for the whole Action. To this end the WG will produce a Summary Report on the "Conceptual Framework" at the outset of phase 3. This will include a common terminology (Glossary on Regeneration Strategies in Shrinking Cities across Europe). In the final phase WG 3 will revise the "Conceptual Framework" and edit the final reporting of the Action as well as the book publication.

WG 4 will focus on assembling instructive cases of regeneration strategies. It will be in charge of producing the Best Practice Database (main task 4), the corresponding Report and a map of shrinking cities in Europe. Following up the European conference on Regeneration Strategies in Shrinking Cities this WG will also carry out the comparative analysis of different regeneration strategies in phase 4 and the editing of the monograph on policy implications in phase 5.

Crosscutting tasks of all WG cover the preparation and wrap-up of the meetings, and the discussion of intermediate results via website and chats.

The membership of the four Working Groups will be determined at the Kick-off meeting of the Management Committee (MC). Overlaps between Working Groups will exist with members active in more than one WG. Each of the four Working Groups will be chaired by a Lead Partner.

Working Group leaders will be responsible for the preparations of the WG meetings and the dissemination of the outcomes.

The Chair and the Vice-Chairs of the COST Action and the Lead Partners of the four WG and the Network Manager will form a **Core Group** as a capable and flexible managing board of the Action.

The Core Group is responsible for maintaining communication between Action members, the coordination of the Working Groups and the preparation of the Management Committee meetings. In a case of emergency the Core Group can take a provisional decision on matters that would normally lie within the responsibilities of the Management Committee.

In addition, the Core Group is responsible for **monitoring** and **evaluating** the implementation of the COST Action. A formative evaluation approach will be applied, with particular consideration of gender balance and the involvement of early-stage researchers. The purpose of formative evaluation is to provide the involved partners evaluative information useful in improving the Action and to ensure that the objectives of the Action are being achieved.

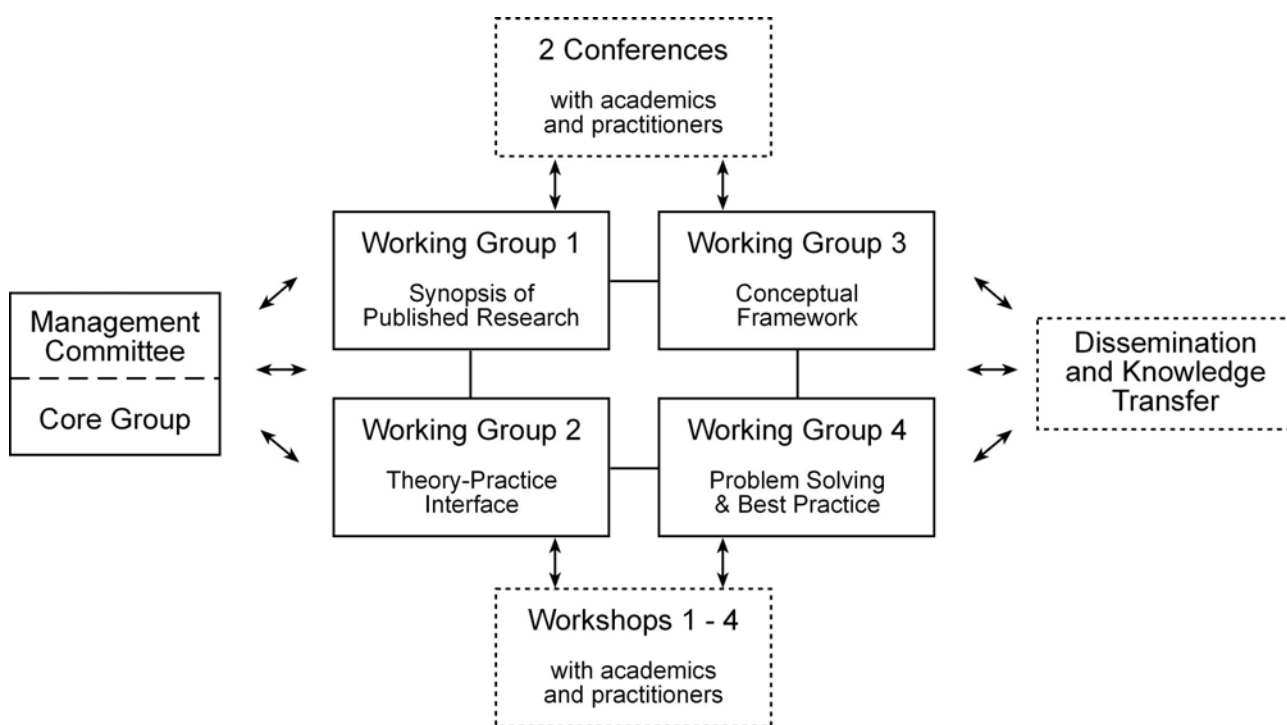


Figure 1: Organization of the COST Action Regeneration Strategies in Shrinking Cities across Europe

E.3 Liaison and interaction with other research programmes

The work of the network is related to several other EU-funded projects, as detailed in section B3. The output of these projects will be monitored and topics of mutual interest will be explored with the relevant research teams.

There are also close linkages with two other programs.

One is the EU research project Shrink Smart - Governance of Shrinkage within a European Context funded by the 7th Research Framework of the EU (Priority 8: Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities, prop. 225193). It is based on comparative case studies from seven urban regions in Europe, in particular in Eastern Europe, and it focuses on the role of policies and governance systems in different types of shrinking urban regions.

The other is the Shrinking Cities International Research Network (SCiRN) based at Berkeley, California. SCiRN is a research initiative studying shrinking cities and involving more than 40 researchers and PhD students from around the globe. Cross-collaboration of the ongoing actions and exchange of ideas will occur in joint sessions at SCiRN's bi-annual workshops at international conferences.

The Action will also link with a research program proposed in Australia and the Pacific region involving the analysis of shrinking cities in Australia, Japan and the USA among other countries. The Australian program includes analysis of employment and skills development in shrinking cities which will further inform the COST Action. Knowledge from shrinking cities in that part of the world and the regeneration strategies and policies designed so far would benefit the analysis of European cities and its typology analysis.

E.4 Gender balance and involvement of early-stage researchers

This COST Action will respect an appropriate gender balance in all its activities and the Management Committee will place this as a standard item on all its MC agendas. The Action will also be committed to a high level of involvement of early-stage researchers. This item will also be placed as a standard item on all MC agendas.

The Action is carried out by a gender-balanced network of scholars. The group of experts who have been involved in the Action consists of 6 men and 8 women. In addition, the formative evaluation approach of the Action will be applied with particular consideration of gender balance and the involvement of early-stage researchers (see section E.2).

As described in section D2 (see also section F.), **Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM)** will be set up to enhance the collaborative activities of the Working Groups. They will allow young researchers (PhD students or post-doc) to visit the institutions that actively participate in the COST Action. In particular, the STSM are utilized to prepare the workshops in the four reference cities. Therefore two early-stage researchers from different countries will go on two weeks field trips to approach local planners and policy makers and to compile a summary report on the reference city. These reports will follow a standard structure, focusing on causes, processes, and policy implications of the urban shrinkage. In making the reports the early-stage researcher will be supported by senior researchers from the respective country. The MC may set up further STSM as appropriate for the COST Action.

In addition, the connection with SCiRN, as described above, will enable interaction to take place with SCiRN's PhD Academy, a fast-growing section composed of junior researchers.

F. TIMETABLE

The duration of the Action is **four years** (48 months).

Phase 1 (6 months):

- Establishing of Management Committee (MC), Working Groups (WG) and Core Group (CG)
- Management Committee (MC) meeting (Kick-off in Brussels)
- Compiling a tentative list of potential reference cities
- Compiling a tentative list academic journals to be reviewed
- Development of Action website
- Launch of Action website

Phase 2 (12 months):

- MC / WG meeting
- Short Term Scientific Mission (STSM) to prepare first Workshop Meeting

- First Workshop Meeting (all WG, plus MC) in reference city A
- Summary report on "Synopsis of Published Research on Shrinking Cities"
- Core Group (Chair, Vice-Chairs, WG leader) meeting
- Short Term Scientific Mission (STSM) to prepare second Workshop Meeting
- Second Workshop Meeting (all WG, plus MC) in reference city B
- Maintenance of Action website

Phase 3 (12 months):

- Summary report on "conceptual framework", including a common terminology
- Short Term Scientific Mission (STSM) to prepare 3. Workshop Meeting
- Third Workshop Meeting (all WG, plus MC) in reference city C
- Best Practice Report
- Maintenance of Action website

Phase 4 (12 month):

- Core Group (Chair, Vice-Chairs, WG leader) meeting
- Short Term Scientific Mission (STSM) to prepare fourth Workshop Meeting
- Fourth Workshop Meeting (all WG, plus MC) in reference city C
- European conference on Good Practice on Regeneration Strategies in Shrinking Cities (incl. MC)
- Comparative analysis of different strategies
- Maintenance of Action website

Phase 5 (6 months): final conference, dissemination

- Core Group (Chair, Vice-Chairs, WG leader) meeting
- Final conference of COST Action Cities Regrowing Smaller (incl. MC)
- focus on synthesizing the main results
- Book publication, monograph on policy implications, journal papers
- Maintenance of Action website
- MC / WG meeting

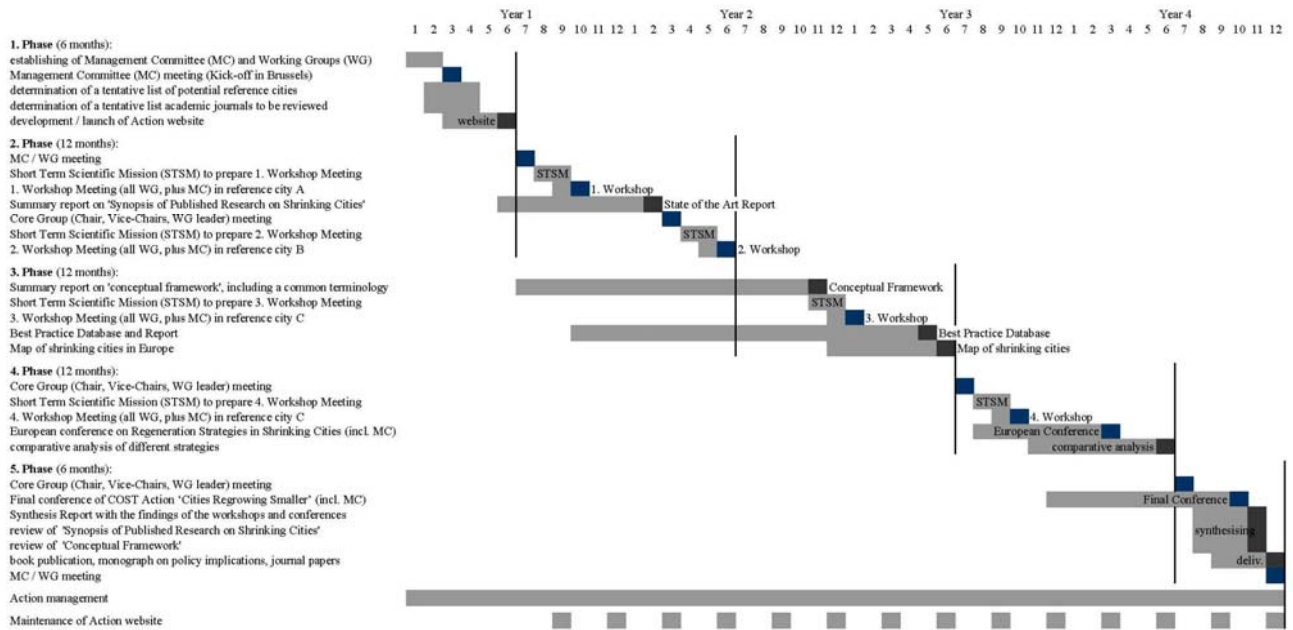


Figure 2: Timetable of the COST Action Regeneration Strategies in Shrinking Cities across Europe

G. ECONOMIC DIMENSION

The following COST countries have actively participated in the preparation of the Action or otherwise indicated their interest: FR, DE, IT, PL, PT, SK, SI, ES, and UK. On the basis of national estimates, the economic dimension of the activities to be carried out under the Action has been estimated at 40 Million € for the total duration of the Action. This estimate is valid under the assumption that all the countries mentioned above but no other countries will participate in the Action. Any departure from this will change the total cost accordingly.

An expert from Australia has also actively participated in the preparation of the Action and expressed interest in participating in this Action as a partner from a non-COST country which has a reciprocal arrangement with the COST Office.

Additional experts from the USA have also expressed interest in participating in this Action as a partner from a non-COST country.

H. DISSEMINATION PLAN

H.1 Who?

The Action will share knowledge about regeneration strategies in shrinking cities with researchers and academics working in the field. The focus is primarily, but not exclusively on research institutes and academia in European countries. Strong efforts will be made to create synergies among the involved research institutions with special emphasis on younger members of the research community (PhD students, postdoctoral research fellows).

In addition the consolidated findings deliver expert opinion to policy makers on the European level (in particular EC) and the international level (e.g. OECD).

To facilitate the dissemination of knowledge gathered throughout the Action to a wider audience, several partnerships will be established, including local and regional governments, business circles, social and cultural institutions and NGOs involved in making and applying policies regarding the creation of knowledge on regeneration strategies.

Another target audience will be the population living in shrinking cities. Through establishing partnerships with community groups the Action will invite these groups to participate in conferences where a wider audience is expected to participate. The Actions team will thus establish a dialogue with population from shrinking cities which in turn will contribute to a better analysis of which policy actions are needed in terms, for instance, of skills retention and upgrading, training needs, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) needs and the challenges associated with maintaining a weak local or regional innovation system.

H.2 What?

The Action will primarily achieve the following deliverables to meet both economic / societal needs of shrinking cities and scientific needs in this field:

- State of the art report on Regeneration Strategies in Shrinking Cities (will provide an overview of the current state of the art in theory and practice).
- **Map** of shrinking cities in Europe
- **Six scientific papers** in peer-reviewed journals (from cooperation between members) focusing on different types and cases of shrinkage across Europe
- Regularly updated **Action Website**.
- **Proceedings** of major conferences.
- **Monograph** on policy implications, including recommendations for policy makers on different levels.
- **European Conference** on Regeneration Strategies of Shrinking Cities and a final Conference at the end of the COST Action
- **Synthesis Report** with the findings of the workshops and conferences.
- **Handbook on Regeneration Strategies in Shrinking Cities**.

H.3 How?

Dissemination activities will take place in all phases of the Action to set the stage for its success. By making the content and progress of the Action transparent, the dissemination strategy will guarantee the continuous internal and external communication.

The Action Website will play an important role in the dissemination of knowledge gathered in the Action. It will be created within the first three months of the Action. The website will function both as a platform of communication and information exchange between the Action partners and as a platform for communication with all parties interested in the Action's progress and results. The Action will include local portals in the website. At these portals, each of the 9 project partners can place information about the Action which is of specific local interest in their native language. This might further encourage communication with the respective partners and the wider audience.

The website will be divided into a publicly accessible part, with up-to-date information about the Action objectives, progress and activities, and a login-protected part for the Action partners. In this password-protected environment, all working papers and final reports will be accessible for the partners, as well as information on forthcoming meetings and deadlines. A discussion forum as an additional means of communication between the partners will be added.

An online discussion forum will give an opportunity for discussing new developments, issues and problems. Also an email lists will be added for making announcements and for widespread distribution of information to many users (e.g. an achievement, something new on the Action Website, general information).

The State of the art report on Regeneration Strategies in Shrinking Cities will provide an overview of the current state in theory and practice.

Published reports, case study reports and other noteworthy results of the Action will be announced through press releases to local/national newspapers, relevant periodicals, relevant government bodies, international organisations, NGOs as well as academic journals and organisations. Each of the Action partners will take responsibility for seeing that these press releases reach those interested in their respective cities, regions and countries. There will be sufficient copies available of each report to enable distribution to those interested outside of the Action partnership. Publications based on the Action in international journals will inform in particular the academic world.

One of the milestones of the Action will be a position paper on policy implications, including recommendations for policy-makers at different levels, which will be distributed as widely as possible to relevant local, regional, national and European policy-makers, and other parties with a possible role in fostering knowledge on regeneration strategies in shrinking cities.

A handbook on Regeneration Strategies in Shrinking Cities will be written in the final stage of the Action in order to be able to disseminate knowledge based on all analyses made throughout the project.

In a series of four workshop meetings in reference cities, selected issues of regeneration strategies will be discussed with the involvement of academics and practitioners. This is crucial for grounding the shrinking cities phenomenon in reality. On the other hand, the debates with local actors involved in the process of creation and implementation of regeneration strategies will enable an immediate reaction for the Actions proposals and recommendations.

The European conference on Good Practice on Regeneration Strategies in Shrinking Cities will be a major conference of the Action in the third year. A final conference will be organized at the end of the fourth year to present the outcomes of the COST Action. Both conferences will be open for participation for a wider international audience. They will be announced at the website, with press releases, in newsletters, mailing lists etc. of relevant organisations.
