Knowledge Sharing Strategy of

'Q-AGEING: quality ageing in an urban environment' CENTRAL EUROPE project

www.q-ageing.eu

Local Government & Municipality of District 11 of Budapest, Újbuda, Lead Partner

DOCUMENT HISTORY

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1.0	1st Draft	01-10-2009	Prepared for the 2nd Working Group meeting
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PREFACE

In line with the CENTRAL EUROPE Monitoring Committee' approval letter, this strategy was created by the Lead Partner of '*Q-AGEING: quality ageing in an urban environment*' project as a resource for project partners and all the stakeholder groups of the project. This strategy was formulated using existing knowledge-sharing resources, and it was tailored to the Q-AGEING project ,based on the project activities.

The target audience for this strategy includes especially the Q-AGEING project staff, but in general all people working in EU-funded transnational projects as well, since knowledge sharing is essential for the successful implementation of such a project. During the editing of this strategy our motto was that within the frame of an efficient knowledge sharing, a well organised activity (lobby, project presentation, etc.) could generate more influence on policymakers than the highest quality of results. Although it is possible to identify many levels of knowledge sharing, this level is the most important from a transnational project's point of view.

Questions, comments, and ideas for future editions can be sent to:

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STRUCTURE OF THIS PAPER

This paper is a strategy developed for the Q-AGEING partnership, therefore chapters are moving from the situation analysis, the identification of problems and objectives, to the strategy itself, in the following structure:

Chapter 1 is an introduction with the exploration of the definitions, objectives, EU standards, stakeholders and the project's specialities.

Chapter 2 is an exploration of what we have as 'knowledge' in the Q-AGEING project and what we know about existing European observatories in the topic. This is a situation analysis inside and outside the project.

Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 are about "doing." Chapter 3 contains a detailed description about how to share knowledge generated in the project inside and outside the Q-AGEING partnership.

Chapter 4 discusses the main working conditions of Ageing Resource Centre (ARC), which as a core output of the project will be responsible for knowledge sharing after the project closure.

Chapter 5 provides an explanation on the monitoring of knowledge sharing during the project.

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CHAPTER 1 – WHAT IS KNOWLEDGE SHARING IN AN EU FUNDED TRANSNATIONAL PROJECT?

1.1. What is Knowledge Sharing?

In general, knowledge sharing is defined as the process of exchanging knowledge (skills, experience, and understanding) among different groups.

In case of '*Q-AGEING: quality ageing in an urban environment*' CENTRAL EUROPE project, the above mentioned groups or stakeholders are the project partners (project managers at the Lead Partner and project coordinators, project financial coordinators and Steering Committee members at other project partners) and especially anybody (policymakers, municipality civil servants dealing with ageing issues, representatives of concerned NGOs, etc.) who is interested and concerned in the project, its results and activities.

Knowledge sharing is becoming increasingly important to ensure that practice (project' results) and policy are based on sound evidence. For this to happen, the gaps among different initiatives, between practice and policy must be bridged. Knowledge sharing is a tool that can be used to promote evidence-based practice and decision making, as well as to trigger exchange and dialogue among project managers and policymakers.

Knowledge sharing includes:

- Any activity that aims to share knowledge and expertise among stakeholders to promote evidence-based practice and decision making.
- Situations in which knowledge sharing may not be an explicit goal, but knowledge and expertise are shared nonetheless.

1.2. Why knowledge sharing is extremely important for the EU?

It is easy to understand why knowledge sharing is extremely important for the European Commission. Knowledge sharing provides the synergy among different projects and programmes of a specific thematic area. For instance Q-AGEING project deals with the complex social and economical problems of ageing, which topic is funded through many European programmes and funds, therefore the synergy should be aimed. Knowledge sharing is extremely important among transnational, innovative projects running in different parts of Europe.

Cohesion policy encourages regions and cities from different EU Member States to work together and learn from each other through joint programmes, projects and networks. In the period 2007-13 the European Territorial Co-operation objective (formerly the INTERREG Community Initiative) covers three types of programmes: cross-border cooperation programmes, transnational cooperation programmes and the interregional cooperation programme. The Q-AGEING project in co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund in the CENTRAL EUROPE (www.central2013.eu) transnational programme.

The transnational programmes add an important extra European dimension to regional development, developed from analysis at a European level, leading to agreed priorities and a coordinated strategic response. This allows meaningful work between regions from several EU Member States on matters such as communication corridors, flood management, fighting against social trends, international business and research linkages, and the development of more viable and sustainable markets.

In line with the objectives of transnational programmes, transnational projects' main purpose is to learn from each other in the relevant thematic areas (in case of Q-AGEING the key question is: how to improve the quality of ageing in European cities?) and to adapt the lesson learnt in the national policies, to the mainstream European development policies. One of the main outputs of transnational projects is the so called policy recommendations; therefore knowledge sharing between the project staff and policymakers is obviously crucial.

1.3. Specific issues of knowledge sharing in EU funded transnational projects

1.3.1. Knowledge sharing and communication – what does theory say?

Knowledge sharing is often described as a recommended activity in the light of specific project outcomes, but not as a subject of inquiry. The diversity of the results also made the task of sorting through the information very difficult.

For knowledge sharing to be successful, significant investments of time and resources are required from both parties: project managers as well as policymakers.

Despite the lack of empirical research on effective knowledge-sharing practices, review of the available resources suggests that there may be significant agreement among knowledge-sharing professionals on the factors likely to foster effective knowledge sharing. The importance of interactivity, the commitment of time and resources, and the need to cater to specific audiences are all mentioned repeatedly as critical to the success of knowledge-sharing. Although these components are not yet supported by robust empirical evidence, the fact that so many authors with differing approaches and expertise agree on them suggests their potential as effective knowledge-sharing practices.

A comprehensive, unified theory about knowledge sharing does not exist. However, starting from the common ground where knowledge-sharing professionals agree can serve as a foundation for developing this area of work.

In case of a transnational or interregional project, the third level of knowledge sharing (between project managers and policymakers) is the most problematic from the project' outputs' and results' point of view.

1.3.2. What is Evidence and Evidence-Based Practice and Decision Making?

For the purposes of this strategy, evidence includes project outputs, experiential knowledge, values, beliefs, and other ways of understanding that project managers, policymakers, and service providers draw upon in their practice and decision making.

Evidence means different things to different people. Part of the difficulty in moving project outputs into practice and policy and in moving practice and policy knowledge into project has been a tendency by project managers to value outputs as the "best" evidence.

The reality is that project outputs must compete with other sources of persuasion, as well as with the pressure for rejection because of their incompatibility with interests or ideology.

A better understanding by project managers of the competing sources of information, the ways in which their findings/outputs may be translated, the decision-making structures within which managers or service providers and decision-makers work, and current social values will assist project managers in understanding how and when their outputs may be useful and most likely to be incorporated.

Evidence-based practice and decision making occur when actions are based on an integrated body of evidence that includes all of the forms of evidence described above.

1.3.3. The project manager - policymaker gap: a product of diverse cultures

Based on the above mentioned facts, knowledge sharing in Q-AGEING is mainly about getting closer project managers and policy makers/stakeholders, providing an opportunity to create the bridge among them. In many cases, knowledge management activities or lobby activities are not planned in project plans, or they are underestimated in necessary time and efforts. Knowledge management is very time consuming. As academic literature of marketing often claims, you have to write 100 DM letters to meet 10 policymakers and receive 1 positive feedback. The same applies for Q-AGEING as well as any other transnational projects.

Knowledge sharing with local stakeholders is planned in details: Strategic Regional Platform is the perfect level to share knowledge. On the other hand, the more problematic area is how to share existing Q-AGEING knowledge (in the final phase of the project mainly) with decision-makers?

The project manager – policymaker gap exists because policymakers and project managers differ in training, goals, time sharing and priorities. These differences may lead to and also reflect very different cultures.

Project manager

Project managers face a number of challenges that limit their participation in knowledge sharing. Often, the time and resources available to engage in knowledge sharing are limited. Given that project manager evidence may be perceived as inaccessible or difficult to understand, it is not surprising that project manager evidence may be rejected in favor of professional experience.

The project manager does not know how to create a relationship with the policymakers, how to 'open the door', does not know the communication channels and proper methods which brings him to them. Or as this activity is not planned in the project, he/she does not have enough time to organise such a time consuming activity. On the other hand, policymakers are always busy and do not have enough time and energy to select best practices to be developed in the mainstream policies.

Policymakers

Governments (municipal or provincial) are charged with addressing multiple issues grouped under broad ministries, and bombarded with an excess of information about issues of concern to constituents and politicians. Policymakers are often faced with the daunting task of sorting through a mountain of information to isolate key knowledge. Project manager evidence is only one source of information among many, and may conflict with policymakers' values and the current political climate. In addition, the presentation of project manager evidence with many caveats and apparent lack of clear conclusions can make incorporating evidence in policy decisions difficult.

The use of project manager evidence by policymakers, particularly those attached to government, is further limited by the timelines within which they work. The nature of political office means that there is often a sense of urgency and action when responding to constituents' demands. In addition to being in term-limited positions, policymakers may also find that they are working with colleagues who have very different perspectives regarding the value of project manager evidence.

As a result of the above process, quite often the identified project manager knowledge is disseminated to policymakers only by sending them the edited policy recommendation paper or other materials on paper, but no special meeting organised due to the lack of time, effort and enthusiasm. Quite often policymakers do not read these, 'terrifying at the first sight', huge documents. Project managers can document the most significant activity of any transnational projects, without any real results. It is because the knowledge is not 'personalised' by the project manager in the frame of a well edited, personal presentation, which emphasizes the human story of the given project.

A special effort shall be emphasized to identify the key policymakers and to organise personal meetings with them and to create targeted, personalised presentations.

1.4. The Q-AGEING project

Like in many cities and regions in Europe, the structure of the society of the partner regions and cities of Q-AGEING project is changing radically with a growing rate of older workers (55-64), elderly people (65-79), and very elderly people (80+) and fewer people of working age. The Q-AGEING project is focussed on creating better conditions to enable active ageing by developing actions which will be concentrated on public services and urban living environment at municipal level. Both aspects are interlinked. The social exclusion of ageing inactive people will increase if no actions in these fields are taken. The creation of activity/jobs for elderly will be more difficult if no innovation in public support is realised, and the attractiveness of the urban environment and thus competitiveness will decrease if the changing needs of these large groups are not taken into account.

Q-AGEING is a possibility for participating partners to get to know usable transnational examples and to check and adopt them in local communities. The main message of the project is that ageing provides an opportunity for the whole society, instead of only generating problems. The unique Q-AGEING project aims to produce an efficient, usable Toolbox of developed and tested pilot projects and solutions for European municipalities, cities, containing:

1. Public service portfolio: integrated set of innovative public services;

2. Collection of urban solutions for communities to help quality ageing of seniors.

Based on the selection of model projects from the Toolbox, the core output will be the regional implementation plans per partner regions and a so called Transnational Ageing Resource Centre, which will be a methodological centre for community initiatives related to the elderly.

The project started in December, 2008 and runs for 38 months.

Since Q-AGEING is a European project with the active membership of 9 different legal bodies, the findings will be disseminated all over Europe, at local Strategic Regional Platforms as well as in international workshops, road-show events and final conference. They will be the base for developing a best practice collection, a toolkit and several pilot projects, which are the most important outputs of the Q-AGEING project. The outputs will be available on the Q-AGEING homepage and in the Ageing Resource Centre in Maribor as well.

Quality aging is a broad concept, within which Q-AGEING project partners have their specific focuses. Partners will create a wide quality ageing Toolkit linked to public services and urban environment, which clearly belong to the competences and legal responsibilities of local/regional authorities.

Major themes of Q-AGEING:
1. senior-friendly housing
2. access to public transport system, mobility of elderly
3. urban mobility
4. senior friendly community services in public buildings
5. access to recreation
6. elderly in the labour market
7. self-organisation, independent living
8. elderly at life-long learning programmes
9. health and prevention
10. access to volunteer work
11. urban environment/infrastructure
12. access to public buildings

The Q-AGEING partnership
1. Local Government & Municipality of District 11 of Budapest, Újbuda (Lead Partner), Hungary
2. Municipality of Maribor, Slovenia
3. Municipality of Slovenska Bistrica, Slovenia
4. Economic Institute Maribor, Human Resource Development Centre, Slovenia
5. Province of Treviso, Italy
6. Municipality of Sopot, Poland
7. Municipality of Genoa, Italy
8. National Academy of Medicine, Genoa, Italy
9. Centre for Developments in Civil Society, Freiburg, Germany

1.5. Structure of the Q-AGEING knowledge sharing strategy

The present strategy is meant to define how the learnt knowledge will be identified, shared, monitored and disseminated inside and outside the Q-AGEING partnership. This strategy is a guide for all the stakeholders and especially for the project staff discussing how to deal with their experience and knowledge within the Q-AGEING project. The strategy also describes the basic structure of the Ageing Resource Centre (ARC), which will be a pro-active, virtual centre, a methodological centre for community initiatives at municipal level, related to elderly, developed by PP4, Economic Institute Maribor. Through ARC, Q-AGEING partnership shall be an ageing observatory at municipal level or shall contribute efficiently to an existing think tank of the ageing topic. The steps taken by the project staff in order to achieve the above mentioned overall goal are described in the present strategy.

All in all, the Q-AGEING knowledge sharing strategy has 4 levels:

1. How the learnt knowledge will be identified, shared, monitored and disseminated inside the Q-AGEING partnership, i.e. among the project staff. The main goal of this level is to make the implementation of the project activities and outputs better, more professional, with the help of efficient knowledge sharing.

2. The second level is the knowledge sharing with the direct target group (see the next chapter in detail) of the project. Formally it designates the so called Strategic Regional Platforms (SRP), which provide a society based multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder involvement locally, in order to guarantee a true transfer of know-how.

3. From the project results' and core outputs' point of view the most important level of knowledge sharing is the third level. In this phase, project coordinators and Steering Committee members are committed to disseminate the project results to important policymakers regionally and at EU level, with the help of a well-developed knowledge sharing strategy (lobby).

4. Ageing Resource Centre, as a pro-active methodological observatory for community initiatives at municipal level related to elderly, will provide the sustainability of the project results after the project closure. ARC being an observatory, proper knowledge sharing will be essential for that.

1.6. Target groups and stakeholders of Q-AGEING and of knowledge sharing

1st level of knowledge sharing of Q-AGEING:

The first level of this knowledge sharing strategy deals with the question of how to share knowledge inside the Q-AGEING partnership, and how to make the implementation of the project activities and outputs better with the help of efficient knowledge sharing. In line with this, the project employees at all partner institutions are the target group of this level of knowledge sharing.

2nd level of knowledge sharing of Q-AGEING:

In line with the activities covered by the Q-AGEING partnership, target groups of Q-AGEING mean specialists, professionals dealing with the complex problem of ageing at municipal level, namely:

Target groups (directly targeted by the project) are:

1. Policy sector: civil servants within local/regional public authorities (economy, social, health, urban planning, mobility departments);

2. Representatives of NGOs from the economic/social sector;

3. Organisations representing the Health sector;

4. Organisations representing the business sector;

5. Organisations representing elderly people;

6. Local/regional decision-makers;

7. National administrations;

8. Managing Authorities for Objective 1 and 2 programmes.

The main platform of the involvement of these people is the regionally organised (6 locations at the same time: Budapest, Freiburg/Karlsruhe, Genoa, Slovenia, Sopot, Treviso) Strategic Regional Platform (SRP). Representatives of these target groups will meet twice a year in the Strategic Local Platforms. Each platform consists of approx. 15 members. The indirect target group means all people in partner regions/cities above the age of 55.

Past experiences of partners have shown that results can only be achieved if a strong bottom-up, cross-sectoral & multi-stakeholder approach is chosen.

3rd level of knowledge sharing of Q-AGEING:

Regionally identified, important policy-makers, development committees, different boards and councils and all the councillors and advisors working in these bodies mean the direct target group of the third level of knowledge sharing in Q-AGEING.

4th level of knowledge sharing of Q-AGEING:

Ageing Resource Centre (ARC) will be a pro-active methodological observatory for community initiatives at municipal level, related to elderly, developed by PP4, Economic Institute Maribor. Thus the direct target group of ARC will be the Q-AGEING project's target group with a special focus on the European level (concerned NGOs, institutions, lobby organisations, other think tanks and observatories, etc.).

CHAPTER 2 – SITUATION ANALYSIS

This chapter discusses what we have as 'knowledge' in the Q-AGEING project and what we know about existing European observatories in the topic. It is a European level situation analysis inside and outside of the project.

2.1. Identified knowledge in Q-AGEING

During the implementation of the Q-AGEING project, we can identify two types of knowledge:

▪ On the first level of knowledge sharing, between project staff, knowledge can be any practical method, tool or technique which help the efficient project implementation and contribute to producing better indicators.

▪ As many other innovative transnational projects, Q-AGEING will have paper based outputs and developed and tested pilots as knowledge to be shared. So, in the frame of the three other levels of knowledge sharing, knowledge developed in Q-AGEING project is identified as the core outputs of the Application Form, detailed as follows.

1. **Regional Situation Analyses** and based on them, the **transnational situation analysis**. As a first milestone of the project, each partner region prepares its own situation analysis, which will be composed of two parts:

1. *Needs analysis*: based on large scale quantitative or qualitative (citizens jury) method to be chosen optionally by partners according to their needs and available budget.

2. *Policy survey:* qualitative analysis on existing policies, tools, good or bad practices in the partner municipalities/regions to serve as input for the collection of best practices.

Based on the regional inputs, the Lead Partner creates a summary paper, a transnational situation analysis. With the knowledge of what is needed, and what already exists, project partners define together the underdeveloped areas, in order to develop the pilots.

2. Intensive transnational exchange following the pilot phase will result in the creation of the **Q-AGEING ToolBox**.

▪ Toolbox – public services: a portfolio of services provided at community level to enhance quality, active and independent life of senior citizens.

▪ Toolbox – urban solutions: a guide on urban solutions for communities (cities, agglomerations) to create senior-friendly urban environment.

3. **Regional implementation plans**: based on a selection of model projects from the ToolBox, the core output will be the regional implementation plans per partner regions long term implementation, thus ensuring the sustainability of project results in the partner regions.

4. **Ageing Resource Centre** (ARC). During the project, Economy Institute Maribor, PP4 develops the operational model for ARC: organisational structure, possible funding sources/schemes, and competences of such an organisation. Ensuring long term (beyond project lifetime) implementation of strategies on ageing & durable transnational cooperation, ARC as core output will be a methodological centre for community initiatives at municipal level related to elderly, and the coordinator of partners' similar platforms.

5. **Lifestyle Coach Senior Platforms:** an ICT based community support system, an interactive web-surface will be developed in order to help families, welfare providers and voluntary organisations in senior care.

2.2. Analysis of existing policy frameworks and observatories

The main goal of the following part is to certify that the establishment of a European observatory for community initiatives in municipal level related to elderly is important and necessary, based on the wider policy framework and the characteristics of existing, similar methodological centres.

2.2.1. The demographic revolution

Based on the well-known demographic trends, ageing has been a hot topic both in Europe and the World in the last decades. All framework programmes on ageing developed by UN or WHO highlight that in all countries and in developing countries in particular, measures to help older people remain healthy and active are a necessity, not a luxury.

As for the demographic revolution, it is enough to mention that worldwide, the proportion of people aged 60 and over is growing faster than any other age group. Between 1970 and 2025, a growth in older persons of some 694 million or 223 percent is expected. In 2025, there will be a total of about 1.2 billion people over the age of 60. By 2050, this number will reach 2 billion, 80 percent of them living in developing countries.

As for tendencies in the Western culture, the following table shows efficiently how dramatic the change will be. Old-age dependency ratios are changing quickly throughout the world. In the European Union for example, in 2002 there were 36 people over age 60 for every 100 in the age group 15 – 60. In 2025 this number will increase to 56. It also means that the demographic change is going to be faster than in North America.

Old Age dependency ratio for selected regions			
2002		2005	
Japan	0,39	Japan	0,66
North America	0,26	North America	0,44
EU	0,36	EU	0,56
Source: UN, 2001			

2.2.2. Ageing policy framework programmes in Europe

An observatory or think tank is an organization, institute, corporation, or group that conducts research, practice results/evidence and engages in advocacy in areas such as social policy, political strategy, economy, science or technology issues, industrial or business policies.

Many observatories and think tanks are non-profit organizations, which in some countries such as the United States and Canada are provided with tax exempt status. While many observatories and think tanks are funded by governments, interest groups, or businesses, some of them also derive income from consulting or research work related to their mandate.

There are different opinions about these institutions; supporters hail them as "one of the main policy actors in democratic societies, assuring a pluralistic, open and accountable process of policy analysis, research, decision-making and evaluation". Others consider the term to be a euphemism for lobbying groups.

Think tanks are specialized on pure political issues in most cases; meanwhile observatories are more than information centres of a specific issue and deal only with relevant policy issues. In line with the above mentioned demographic trends, drafting framework programmes and establishing observatories on the field of ageing has been crucial in the last couple of years worldwide.

Based on the desk research, the overall policy and research framework on ageing is provided by two worldwide organisations, namely:

1. United Nations Programme on Ageing
2. World Health Organization Ageing and Life Course Programme

2.2.3. United Nations Programme on Ageing

Within the United Nations, RAA-21 (Research Agenda on Ageing for the Twenty-First Century) is recognized as an important tool for supporting the implementation and monitoring of policy actions proposed in the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. The United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution 57/177 in 2002, welcomed the adoption by the Valencia Forum of the Research Agenda on Ageing for the Twenty-First Century, and in 2005, the General Assembly called upon governments to consult and utilize the Research Agenda on Ageing as a tool for strengthening national capacity on ageing (General Assembly resolution 60/135).

The RAA-21's Regional Implementation Strategy for Europe includes 10 commitments. Each of the commitments (1 to 9) was used as a focus to consider key issues (important research questions) and priorities for research, as follows:

Commitment 1: 'Mainstreaming Ageing'
▪ Images of and attitudes to ageing
▪ Older people as agents of change
▪ Models for public involvement of older people

Commitment 2: 'Full Integration and Participation'
▪ Gender and age discrimination
▪ Societal responsibilities for ageing
▪ Intergenerational stereotypes
▪ Contributions of older people

Commitment 3: 'Equable and Sustainable Economic Growth'
▪ Socio-economic scenarios of demographic change
▪ Dynamics of poverty in old age
▪ Social security systems

Commitment 4: 'Social Protection Systems'
▪ Effects of changes in family structures
▪ Effects of different incentive arrangements on retirement decisions
▪ Conflicting interests between and within stakeholders in social security protection systems

Commitment 5: 'Response of Labour Markets'
▪ Labour market – role of factors in pushing older people out of employment, incentives for continuing employment, etc
▪ Pace of societal change (technology, globalisation, etc) on older people in the labour force
▪ Impact of migration policies on older age employment
▪ Effects of re-training and re-skilling

Commitment 6: 'Life Long Learning'
▪ Evaluation of:
    – Training and re-training programmes
    – Strategies toward life-long learning
    – Impact of existing programmes on quality of life, employability, functioning, cohort effects
▪ Review of presence/absence of life-long learning perspective in education
▪ Provision and cost of life-long learning

Commitment 7: 'Quality of Life and Independence'
▪ Accessibility and quality of health and social services
▪ Contribution of psycho-social interventions to improving quality of life
▪ Evaluation of standards in palliative care
▪ Quality of life issues
▪ Effectiveness of health promotion

Commitment 8: 'Gender'
▪ Gender inequality and differences in relation to legislation, social security systems, health and service accessibility – from family level to community to society at large

Commitment 9: 'Families and Care'
▪ Family structures in the face of demographic change
▪ Coping strategies within families for dealing with consequences of demographic change
▪ Older people living independently
▪ Migration and effects on family solidarity
▪ Grandparents' role in enhancing children's quality of life

In line with the Regional Implementation Strategy for Europe, **UNECE** (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe) ministerial conference in Leon (Spain), 2007 defined the following aim:

▪ **Establishing a European Institute on Ageing and corresponding infrastructures, to work in close collaboration with the US National Institute on Ageing and existing institutions in the UNECE region** (research, training, exchange, databank and information management).

- The Spanish government, with the support of other governments, convenes a Committee to create a European Institute on Ageing, which would define its purpose, structure and management, and also update the European Research Agenda on Ageing to include the concern of the entire UNECE region.

Specifically, in order to better invest in efficient policy research programmes, **UNECE invites Member States of the UNECE region to**:

- Contribute to the exchange of research information, best practices and guidelines as well as the exchange of students, academics and professionals for pre- and post-grade education and training, together with the establishment of a clearing house on ageing.

2.2.4. World Health Organization: Ageing and Life Course Programme – Active Ageing: a policy framework

The Active Ageing Policy Framework is intended to inform discussion and the formulation of action plans that promote healthy and active ageing. It was developed by WHO's Ageing and Life Course Programme.

This framework in Chapter 3 mentions physical environments, safe housing, falls, clean water, clean air and safe foods as determinants related to the physical environment. Regarding the urban issue, the main scope of Q-AGEING, the framework programme states for instance:

- Physical environments that are age-friendly can make the difference between independence and dependence for all individuals but are of particular importance for those growing older. For example, older people who live in an unsafe environment or areas with multiple physical barriers are less likely to get out and therefore more prone to isolation, depression, reduced fitness, and increased mobility problems.

- Accessible and affordable public transportation services are needed in both rural and urban areas so that people of all ages can fully participate in family and community life. This is especially important for older persons who have mobility problems.

- Hazards in the physical environment can lead to debilitating and painful injuries among older people. Injuries from falls, fires and traffic collisions are the most common.

- Safe, adequate housing and neighbourhoods are essential to the well-being of young and old. For older people, location, including proximity to family members, services and transportation can mean the difference between positive social interaction and isolation. Building codes need to take the health and safety needs of older people into account. Household hazards that increase the risk of falling need to be remedied or removed.

- The great majority of injuries are preventable; however, the traditional view of injuries as "accidents" has resulted in historical neglect of this area in public health.

2.2.5. The AMBIENT ASSISTED LIVING (AAL) Joint Programme in Europe

European Member States addressed the common problem of the ageing society in AAL Joint Programme.

The challenges of demographic change cannot be approached with traditional policies and concepts. Already around the year 2020 a first major impact of the demographic trend will be imposed on most societies in Europe. The need for immediate actions is even bigger because many regions in Europe, urban and rural as well, will feel that impact earlier and stronger. Especially with regard to the decreasing workforce for care and cure, new technologies and new innovative system solutions are necessary, especially in the field of innovative ICT-enabled assisted living or „ambient assisted living" (AAL) solutions. Europe has a high scientific, technological and industrial potential in these technologies and systems. From a lot of projects already carried out on national and European level, it is well known, that AAL, assistive technologies, can help older individuals to improve their quality of life, to stay healthier and to live longer in their preferred living environment, thus extending the individuals' active and creative participation in the community.

Implementation and dissemination of new AAL solutions cannot be realised without close interaction with the national systems especially of healthcare, social care and institutions supporting or having a high importance for senior citizens. Because of these strong interrelations with national and regional actors, and also for great similarities of the problems in all European countries, a new approach of a funding programme for innovations has been applied. The AAL Joint Programme is a member state-driven programme of 23 Member States according to Article 169 of the European Treaty. The Ambient Assisted Living (AAL) Joint Programme (AALJP) was set up in 2008 with budget support of 25 Mill € from the European Commission, and a total budget in the order of 55-60 Mill € per year (2008 – 2013).

2.2.6. To be or not to be? What to do with Ageing Resource Centre of Q-AGEING?

Demographic trends and the question of an ageing society is a really hot topic all around the world and especially in Europe, not to mention that the recent economic crisis makes the theme more crucial then ever. The key question is: how to change the disadvantages (less and less workers have to finance more and more elderly, who live longer and longer) of the problem to opportunities (ageing society is an opportunity for the whole society through, for instance, voluntarism and ICT development, etc.).

Q-AGEING project is a unique initiative in Central and Eastern Europe, because it tries to develop usable tools and solutions for local authorities (municipal level) to take the above mentioned opportunities.

In line with this, it is really important to recognize that although many actions are partly focused on the physical environment to be changed in order to adapt to the special needs of the elderly, there is no specific action on urban issues in these general framework programmes in Europe. **Therefore, the establishment of a European observatory for community initiatives in municipal level related to elderly is necessary**, although the responsible partner, Economic Institute Maribor has to develop further and more detailed research in this topic.

CHAPTER 3 – THE Q-AGEING KNOWLEDGE SHARING STRATEGY

3.1. Main highlights of knowledge sharing tools in general

Knowledge sharing tools of the Q-AGEING project are categorized based on delivery method, and fall into three categories: writing, speaking, and information technologies.

Writing

Writing creates permanent knowledge sharing products. The biggest advantage of written documents is durability: a well-written article on a project can be useful for years after it is written. Access to written documents is usually available to all interested parties, regardless of proximity to the author.

Writing also allows for extensive planning and editing during the creation of documents, a "safe" way to communicate as writers can take time to compose their messages. For readers, written documents allow them to reflect on their reading and return to previous sections of text to clarify understanding. However, the permanence of written documents is also a potential weakness. On the other hand, too large documents often have the possible danger of 'not being read'.

Categories of written materials in case of a transnational project are numerous: publications, reports, handbooks, newsletters and media releases.

Newsletters

Newsletters, typically a collection of articles on organizational activities and related topics, can be useful for raising awareness of new ideas and innovations, and also to promote knowledge sharing activities.

Newsletters can reach a broad audience, especially if available both in print and electronic versions. However, because many newsletter articles are intended to reach a broad audience requiring that content be generalized and limited in length, newsletters may be unsuitable for detailed communication.

The **Q-AGEING newsletter is a perfect tool for raising awareness** (programme authorities, possible stakeholders, etc.); therefore, project partners should be involved more actively in the production.

Publications, reports and recommendations

Peer-reviewed research publications have been the way in which researchers have shared knowledge with one another for a long time. However, the content may not be accessible to audiences without research backgrounds, as highly technical language is usually the norm. Therefore, the recommendations of regional situation analyses are highly important in case of Q-AGEING. The research publication itself is also an important product, but **from end-users' and policymakers' point of view, a well structured summary is more useable**.

Reports are typically comprehensive documents outlining a project. Due to their comprehensive nature, reports can be extensive, sometimes with hundreds of pages. Although publications and reports in their traditional forms may be unsuitable as an efficient knowledge sharing tool that aims to reach broader audiences, they can be adapted to the actual needs.

Books

Although books can be extremely useful for in-depth knowledge sharing, they are only effective if potential readers are aware of their existence, and the books are easily accessible. If the target audience(s) are severely limited by time, an entire book on a particular subject may not be an efficient way to capture their attention.

In **Q-AGEING, a Toolbox** will be developed, which therefore has to have a '**fact-sheets' system**', rather than being a normal guidebook. **As it will be the main product of the partnership, it is essential to make it as user-friendly as possible**.

Media release

It contains the entire news story, providing all the information needed for media coverage. A media release should contain:

- Logo or letterhead of the organization.
- Date of issue.
- Release date.
- Contact name and phone number.
- Headline.
- The most important fact or idea in the lead paragraph (the hook).
- Brief summary of the event.
- Concise quotes from the event.

A well-written media release will often be used for the bulk of a news story, so it is important to ensure that all the facts that should be included are present in the media release.

Speaking

Events

Conferences have traditionally been events for networking on areas of shared interest. As conferences often draw participants from larger geographic areas, one advantage is the opportunity to bring together individuals who would not have the chance to interact face-to-face with one another on a day-to-day basis. Conferences can support intense participation in knowledge sharing on one or several related topic areas. Beyond the knowledge shared at conferences, opportunities for networking can support the formation or expansion of knowledge-sharing communities.

Unfortunately, conferences require a **huge investment of time and resources by organizers**. Therefore, it is crucial for Q-AGEING events to use available guidebooks (**CENTRAL EUROPE Communication Guidebook**), to be able to act in an economical way.

Lectures and presentations can be particularly appropriate for sharing theoretical knowledge. Large numbers of participants can usually be accommodated, particularly when there are minimal interactive elements.

Workshops tend to require active engagement from participants with emphasis on problem-solving and hands-on training. The interactivity of workshops places a limit on the possible number of participants. In case of **Q-AGEING, Working Group meetings should be organised as workshops**.

Online

If a community has been established already, online knowledge-sharing strategies can provide space for a group to maintain contact even when large distances and other barriers limit face-to-face interaction. Therefore, where possible, online knowledge-sharing strategies should be used to support existing knowledge-sharing communities rather than be considered as stand-alone knowledge-sharing activities.

Website

Advances in website design and online technologies are resulting in increased website interactivity. Contents of websites are typically authored by one or several individuals, sometimes representing an organization, and may leave users with little input as to the content available online. Websites are most like lectures and presentations in that they primarily put information "out there" for consumption, with opportunities for providing feedback varying greatly between websites. However, websites have the potential to reach wider audiences than lectures and presentations, as anyone interested in a particular topic or organization can access a website as long as they have a computer and an Internet connection.

As the web is increasingly becoming a common resource people turn to when seeking information, **websites become critical to knowledge sharing**. Websites may represent an organization's first contact with an individual. Given the sheer amount of information available online, well-designed websites are necessary to keep users interested and engaged with the content. **The joint development of the q-ageing.eu website is essential for successful dissemination of project results.**

Online forums

Online discussion forums, also known as message boards, internet forums, and bulletin boards are web-based applications that support ongoing discussions. Discussion forums are usually focused on particular topic areas, and led by forum moderators whose role is to keep discussions on topic and to censor abusive behaviour. The degree to which moderators intervene and are actively involved in the day-to-day activity of a particular forum can differ significantly.

Q-AGEING Smart Guide as an online forum will be developed in the frame of the recent strategy (see below).

Electronic mailing lists

Electronic mailing lists are a special use of e-mail that facilitates the distribution of information to many users. They are typically organized around a shared interest of some sort and have a list "owner," who is responsible for setting the guidelines around acceptable content and behaviour of subscribers.

Pro-active use of mailing lists by each partner is necessary for the efficient project implementation and communication.

3.2. First level of Q-AGEING knowledge sharing strategy

The main objective of knowledge sharing at this level is to make the implementation of the project activities and outputs better, more professional by boosting the communication between project staff. In general it means that in case of all activities, project partners could share their good or bad experiences in a systematic way.

Identified knowledge sharing tools at the first level:

Name of the knowledge sharing tool	Description	Responsible partner
Intranet	A separated Intranet site in the q-ageing.eu website for Q-AGEING partners to download all the important programme and project materials.	Lead Partner
Q-AGEING Smart Guide	A separated forum for project partners. It is the project coordinators' task to collect good or bad experiences related to the implementation of each activity and upload them to the website. The q-ageing.eu sends an e-mail automatically for all partners when a new item comes up in this Smart Guide. Categories: organisation and implementation of SRPs, transnational events (e.g. event what-to-do lists); implementation of road-shows and benchmark visits; good methods in first level control reports; key questions in financial issues; short report about the implementation of pilots; sharing stories, other professional experiences, etc. Is is unnecessary to mention that it works only if partners are active.	Development of the surface: LP Continuous content development: all partners
Regular feedbacks and summaries about Smart Guide activities during Working Group meetings	During planned Working Group meetings, project partners discuss the Smart Guide activities in a separated session. It will form the basis of a 'how to implement successfully a transnational project' guide.	All partners

3.3. Second level of Q-AGEING knowledge sharing strategy

The second level is the knowledge sharing with the direct target group of the project. Formally it means the so called Strategic Regional Platforms (SRP) which provide a society based multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder involvement locally, in order to guarantee a true transfer of know-how.

SRP has the following functions at all project partners:

- SRP meetings – round-table local events – give an opportunity to implement the Q-AGEING project based on the opinions and feedback of local stakeholders and with their active participation.

- SRP provides an NGO/stakeholder control over the project activities.

- The main objective of SRP is to create recommendations for the appropriate project partner regarding the local implementation of the project.

- The specific objective of the SRP is to establish a strong local support and basis for the implementation of Q-AGEING and to ensure that the results of the project are transmitted and further elaborated on.

- SRP provides information about the Q-AGEING project and its activities for local stakeholders.

- In the frame of SRP, the local project coordinator receives feedback related to the project activities from the local stakeholders.

- SRP supports the implementation of the project.

- SRP is the main forum to involve local decision-makers.

More thematically SRP:

- clarifies the particular needs of the appropriate partner;

- identifies (mobilises and validates) what the partner really has to offer to the project in the form of good practice, existing tools, site visits, policies and other experience;

- ensures that this knowledge is reflected in the pilot implementation and other core outputs of the project;

- identifies (mobilises and validates) the concrete needs of the partner (good examples, lessons learnt) for the preparation of a useful pilot plan;

- disseminates the findings of the project to a wider local audience.

Identified knowledge sharing tools at the second level:

Name of the knowledge sharing tool	Description	Responsible partner
SRP meetings	Strategic Regional Platforms (SRP) provide a society based multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder involvement locally in order to guarantee a true transfer of know-how.	All partners
SRP reports	All partners are required to prepare short presentations about their SRPs. This process will be supported by a template to be developed by Economic Institute Maribor (PP4) in order to make the partners' feedbacks comparable and unified. These reports will be downloadable at the q-ageing.eu website.	PP4 & Lead Partner
Interviews with SRP members	PP4 develops a short interview template to be filled in by appropriate local SRP members. It is the project coordinators' task to identify 5 key SRP members after the 4th SRP meeting, and make an interview with them. PP4 collects the interviews from project coordinators and creates a report to the LP and other project partners in order to provide knowledge sharing in SRP meetings in a proper way. It is like a mid-term evaluation of SRP meetings.	All partners Coordinator: PP4
q-ageing.eu	The project website has to be a systematic, efficient link to all project activities and outputs as well as the partner regions' ageing policies.	Communication manager with the active and pro-active help of project coordinators
Creating a list of organisations, partner institutions (e.g. SRP) presenting the target group of the Q-AGEING project	A detailed database will be prepared to the project joint website providing useful interactions.	Communication manager with the active and pro-active help of project coordinators
Newsletter	The Q-AGEING newsletter informs the Q-AGEING target group about the main issues half yearly. The newsletter is an important joint tool of knowledge sharing.	Communication manager with the active and pro-active help of project coordinators
Event list	q-ageing website also contains an updated event list of Q-AGEING events as well as of partners' local events.	Communication manager with the active and pro-active help of project coordinators
Template/questionnaire for knowledge mapping	PP4 prepares a knowledge mapping questionnaire for project partners by the end of each year of the implementation (2009, 2010, 2011). Project coordinators have to fill in these questionnaires together with the SC members. LP collects and evaluates the questionnaires.	PP4 and LP with the active and pro-active help of project coordinators

Regular feedbacks and summaries about knowledge sharing activities during Working Group meetings	During planned Working Group meetings, project partners discuss the knowledge sharing activities as a separated issue.	All partners

3.4. Third level of Q-AGEING Knowledge Sharing Strategy

From the project results' and core outputs' point of view, the most important level of knowledge sharing is the third level. In this phase, project coordinators and Steering Committee members are committed to disseminate the project's results to important policymakers regionally and at EU level, with a well-developed knowledge sharing strategy (lobby).

This level provides the most apparent and attractive result of the Q-AGEING Knowledge Sharing Strategy, as some of the Q-AGEING core outputs will be used in a wider context or in other cities, regions. The main tool for this purpose is the dissemination and lobby activity. It is essential for project coordinators (knowledge officers in this case) and Steering Committee members to be able to design well-organised and well-structured meetings with and presentations for important policymakers in their region or at European level, in order to disseminate Q-AGEING project results.

3.4.1. Guidebook about how to organise efficient lobby and dissemination activities in the Q-AEGING project (how to reach policymakers; good presentations and lobby activities)

In order to establish a harmonic relationship with policymakers, based on the CENTRAL EUROPE Communication Guidebook, PP4 will develop a guidebook on how to organise efficient dissemination and lobby activities in the Q-AGEING project.

Great presentation skills are particularly important for Q-AGEING project coordinators. The above mentioned guidebook lays out the core guiding principles to build skills appropriate to each person and the wide variety of situations in which we need to perform. It draws on perspectives from psychology, linguistics, sociology, and hard practical experience to help the appropriate project member to create simple, clear and compelling presentations and deliver them effectively.

In each case (presentations, speeches, and lobby meetings) the key element will be the content. In the professional world, most audiences are much too sharp for superficialities of presentation to make much difference. Effective presentation content depends on identifying a handful of clear and memorable messages, around which to build everything else. While it is important not to squander a good presentation with a limp delivery, the key to a great presentation is the preparation, structure and planning.

The above mentioned guidebook has to answer the following questions:

- Which are the roles and responsibilities of the project coordinator as a knowledge officer?
- How to identify important policymakers?
- How to arrange personal meetings with policymakers?
- What is the Message (emphasizing its importance, case study in Q-AGEING)?
- How to make good presentations?
- How to make good speeches?
- How to write documents in the most appropriate way (writing practicalities)?
- How to make our lobbying activities more efficient?

3.4.2. What is lobbying in Q-AGEING?

Although this is an EU-funded project and not a business-based, for-profit initiative, the project staff has to sell the project results at as many places as possible. It is maybe uncomfortable describing ourselves as lobbyists, because we should rather disseminate the project results at as many places as possible, not sell them. However, for a member of the project stuff, dissemination activities can easily be interpreted and simplified along the lines of project outputs: "we have arranged ten meetings with policymakers" and it is really easy to convince ourselves that the work has been done. The overall goal of Q-AGEING is to create a ToolBox, which will be used by as many other European cities as possible. The main result of the Q-AGEING partnership is to sell the results. In line with this, try to think about ourselves as lobbyist. Maybe it is not academically true, but helps make proper efforts.

Since project coordinators (knowledge officers) and SC members have to play a constructive role in the meetings with policymakers, Q-AGEING lobbyists are appreciated as experts. The lobbyist bringing good ideas and convincing arguments to the table is likely to receive undivided attention and positions himself as a proactive partner assisting in solving the problem at stake. 'Lobbying' is not more than 15% of what needs to be done. The rest of the time is taken up with monitoring, analysis, networking, strategy formation and a healthy dash of informed guesswork about likely future developments.

What is lobbying in Q-AGEING?

Lobbying means communication with a previously identified policymaker or public servant in an attempt to influence:

- the development of a policy tool or strategy developed by the Q-AGEING partnership;
- the arrangement of a meeting with a policymaker (important person).

Identified knowledge sharing tools at the third level:

Name of the knowledge sharing tool	Description	Responsible partner
Guidelines for lobbying in Q-AGEING	PP4 will develop a guidebook on how to organise efficient dissemination and lobby activities in the Q-AGEING project.	PP4
'Knowledge officer'	Each project coordinator and SC member has to be prepared as knowledge officers.	All partners
Dissemination and lobbying activities	With the help of the above mentioned guidebook, all partners organise personal dissemination and lobbying meetings, participate in events (boards meetings), collect tailored brochures, etc.	All partners
Participation in international conferences on ageing	Based on the approved application form, project partners shall attend at least 3 thematic events. Thematic events and conferences are ideal for disseminating the projects' results.	All partners Coordinator: PP4

3.5. Project partners' role and responsibilities in the implementation of the Q-AGEING Knowledge Sharing Strategy

This strategy and the mentioned material prepared by mainly PP4 serve as important guides for the implementation of knowledge sharing in the Q-AGEING project. On the other hand, all partners have to organise their own knowledge sharing activities independently.

All project coordinators are responsible for:

- pro-active implementation of this strategy,
- data colleting, text producing, implementation of each knowledge sharing tool,
- identification of good or bad practices,
- communicating results, resources, articles, documents and other inputs – transfer of knowledge - for a knowledge base of ARC,
- sharing bad or good experiences in the appropriate way.

Lead Partner and PP4 - Economic Institute Maribor acquire a facilitator role, giving decision support for partners. Lead Partner is responsible for providing infrastructure for knowledge sharing; PP4 is responsible for the coordination of the implementation of the current strategy.

CHAPTER 4 – MAIN PRINCIPLES OF THE AGEING RESOURCE CENTRE AS A EUROPEAN OBSERVATORY

Based on the approved Application Form, PP4 – Economic Institute Maribor will establish the Ageing Resource Centre (ARC), which will be a pro-active methodological observatory for community initiatives at municipal level related to elderly. Ageing Resource Centre will provide the sustainability of the project's results after the project closure.

4.1. Provision of the Ageing Resource Centre

- Sharing high quality knowledge and experience is a key element in the shaping and determination of effective ageing policy at municipal level. The **primary aim** of the Ageing Resource Centre is to connect European cities and facilitate the provision of knowledge at every level. The added value of exchanging ageing expertise and stimulating co-operation within Europe is of great importance. It strengthens cities, and enables them to make a sustained and powerful contribution to the economic, environmental, and social success of Europe as a whole.

- The key question or **motto of ARC** will be the following: how to change the disadvantages (less and less workers have to finance more and more elderly, who live longer and longer) of the problem of the ageing society to opportunities (ageing society is an opportunity for the whole society, instead of only generating problems).

- The ARC will be a **thematic European observatory for community initiatives at municipal level related to elderly**.

- Through the ARC, a sustainable and effective knowledge network on ageing policies will be created. The ARC will **connect existing networks to offer multiple-level access** and the sharing of knowledge. It will do so by providing stakeholders and end-users with high quality ageing knowledge at municipal level that is universally reliable, relevant and of practical use.

- At the same time, the ARC will be more than just a knowledge network. It will offer a range of **associated support services** to participants, and provide specific and practical assistance to **National Focal Points**. It will organise **conferences, meetings**, seminars and exchange programmes for experts.

- The Ageing Resource Centre will facilitate the exchange of **demand-driven knowledge and experience on ageing issues at municipal level**. ARC will support policy makers and practitioners across Europe in developing effective ageing policy tools and to promote the vitality of Europe's towns and cities.

- The main component of ARC is its **on-line database, the European ageing e-library** at municipal level. To ensure the constant availability of comprehensive, detailed, relevant and up-to-date knowledge, ARC will establish National Focal Points. The National Focal Point will be responsible for collecting relevant knowledge at national level and making it available to ARC. ARC will create a good relationship with different European networks, observatories, centres of concerned framework programmes, etc. as well.

- The ARC e-library will provide knowledge on several ageing policy areas such as active ageing; community building; social inclusion & integration; housing; urban environment; employment; security & crime prevention; skills.

- The e-library will contain four types of documents: descriptions of best practices; summaries of practical research; descriptions of successful policies; and descriptions of relevant networks.
- The ARC e-library will offer demand-driven knowledge; therefore feedback from ARC users will be essential.
- ARC will provide a regularly overview of ageing news and meetings by a **newsletter**, sending out occasional e-alerts, which will reach ageing professionals.
- **ARC Secretariat** will be responsible for the day-to-day management of ARC and the maintenance of the ARC website. The ARC Secretariat will be housed at the **Economic Institute Maribor, Slovenia.**

Identified knowledge sharing tools at the fourth level:

Name of the knowledge sharing tool	Description	Responsible partner
Operational Model of ARC	By the end of the Q-AGEING project, PP4 has to establish the Ageing Resource Centre with the help of an operational model: organisational structure, possible funding sources/schemes, competences, etc. The implementation of the present strategy will be an efficient input for the ARC.	PP4 Economic Institute Maribor
Regular feedbacks and summaries about ARC during Working Group meetings	During planned Working Group meetings, especially in the final phase of the implementation, project partners will discuss the Operational Model of ARC as a separated issue.	All partners

CHAPTER 5 – MONITORING OF THIS STARTEGY

The monitoring of the present strategy is the Lead Partner's role with the active help of PP4 – Economic Institute Maribor, who prepares background documents and templates.

Main instruments of the monitoring process:

- Quantitative evaluation of knowledge sharing activities (number of partner inputs in case of each knowledge sharing tool).
- Evaluation of the knowledge mapping questionnaire filled in by project partners by the end of each year (2009, 2010, 2011).
- Evaluation of SRP members' feedbacks (interviews collected and evaluated by PP4).
- Report for the Steering Committee half yearly.

Knowledge sharing will be discussed and evaluated by project partners regularly in the frame of Working Group meetings.