



## Inter-Urban Interoperability on the organisational level: Structural ICT-cooperation between two cities

# Cities' Location



## The two largest cities in Flanders

### Antwerp

- Inhabitants: 457.749
- City administration: 8.000
- Local police: 2.300
- Teachers: 5.000
- PCSW: 5.200

### Ghent

- Inhabitants: 230.951
- City administration: 5.000
- Local police: 1.200
- Teachers: 3.100
- PCSW: 1.700

“Public Center for Social Welfare”: Support for needy people

- Independent organisation
- Financial aid, legal aid, social housing, nursing homes for elderly people, meals on wheels, home care, domestic care, cleaning aid, handyman services, ...

## Needs

- Ghent (1998): internal computing center,  
lack of good ICT-professionals within public administration

>> create autonomous public city-owned ICT-organisation  
but: VAT on personnel costs (21 %)

- Antwerp: Telepolis since 1988 (city + PCSW), within CIPAL-  
group

no synergy with other CIPAL-members

(different size >> different solutions)

conflict of interest in mgt board of Telepolis (CIPAL as  
supplier)

>> create autonomous public city-owned ICT-organisation

but: VAT on personnel costs (21 %)

but: PCSW could not participate

## Basic principles

- Found an intercommunal ICT-organisation: DIGIPOLIS
  - No VAT-penalty on personnel costs
- Same size of administrations  
>> same complexity >> same needs >> benefits from synergy
- Participants (exclusively ! >> noncommercial)
  - City of Ghent
  - City of Antwerp
  - PSWD of Ghent
  - PSWD of Antwerp
- Equal partners, regardless of size differences  
(e.g. mgt board, contract signature)  
Financial transparency
- Transfer of “mandate”
  - Digipolis acts in name of participants (“monopoly”)
  - Digipolis acts as ICT-department of the participants (“colleagues”)
- Start:

• legal establishment: January 2003

## Facts and figures

- Employees:
  - 250 in Antwerp + 50 in Ghent
- Yearly budget 2005 (MEuro)

	Antwerp	Ghent	Total
Contracts	14.4	5.2	19.6
Personnel	15.5	2.6	18.1
Projects	8.5	5.4	13.9
Total	38.4	13.2	51.6

## Synergy stimulation

- Common legal identity is necessary condition for close cooperation
- But not a sufficient condition
- Common projects and initiatives: opportunistic approach
  - Concentrate on common interests, not on differences
  - Ongoing process
- Stimulate “trans-urban dialogue”
  - Information exchange sessions
  - New projects: if not together, why ?
  - Common vision development
  - Videoconferencing

## Synergy examples

- Common logistics (HR, administration)
- Common technical standards >> common purchase of equipment
  - Higher discounts (PCs, printers, laptops, ...)
  - 1 instead of 4 public tendering processes
- Common software solutions
  - School-administrations
  - Time-registration for city employees
  - Content management system
  - Management of public terminals

Common needs & selection; separate implementation
- Common lobbying
  - Introduction of digital id.-card: negotiation with ministry of internal affairs
  - Positioning in ICT-group of Flemish cities
- Local synergy
  - Merger of helpdesks of city and PCSW
  - Merger of copy-servicecenter of city and PCSW

## Synergy: in the pipeline

- Strategic telecom partner for all network components
- Unified ICT-infrastructure
  - Vision
  - Strategy for integration
  - Common projects (application hosting, redundancy, ...)
- Common visions
  - ERP, content mgt, data warehouse, facility mgt

## Conclusions

- Synergy works !
- Tangible benefits: Calculation for city of Antwerp share of the budget:
  - Projects (until now): 111.500 €
  - General services: 168.000 € + 732.000 € yearly
  - Common contracts: 215.000 € yearly
- Shift of mind set:  
Digipolis employees have learned to think 'trans urban'
- Mutual trust between participants has grown

## Interoperability between local and regional authorities

- Digipolis and Flemish regional administration:  
Establishment of common legal organisation for exploitation of HR-software and –services
- Flemish local authorities and Flemish administration:  
Information exchange between content management systems



Thank you for your attention

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