



# Report: Work Package 5

**Executive Summary for Deliverable 5.6: Delivery of high profile awareness raising events in partnership with other organisations**

<b>Grant Agreement number:</b>	314679
<b>Project Name:</b>	Strategies Towards Energy Performance and Urban Planning
<b>Project acronym:</b>	STEP UP
<b>Project's coordinator:</b>	Richard Bellingham
<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:richard.bellingham@strath.ac.uk">richard.bellingham@strath.ac.uk</a>
<b>Work Package leader</b>	Chris Dalrymple
<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:Chris.Dalrymple@glasgow.gov.uk">Chris.Dalrymple@glasgow.gov.uk</a>

## **Executive Summary**

### **Deliverable aims and objectives**

Deliverable D5.6 focusses on delivering high profile, awareness raising events for the STEP UP project, through developing partnerships with other organisations. The aim of the deliverable is to promote the project and raise awareness of STEP UP's goals, progress and outcomes through delivering a range of high profile events, from explaining the project's objectives to promoting the learning, tools, networks and best practice that have emerged throughout the course of the project. Building partnerships with other organisations helps to ensure the project reaches a wide audience, including key stakeholders already identified by the project, as well as new stakeholders and networks, maximising dissemination impact.

### **City approaches**

Earlier in the project, STEP UP developed a dissemination plan and a strategy for integrating dissemination activities with initiatives run by other organisations (D5.1/D5.5), which identified suitable channels for communication and potential opportunities for collaboration. Resulting from this, cities have planned and delivered a range of dissemination events throughout the project suited to their local context and priorities, to raise awareness of the project and progress made in sustainable city planning.

During the project, cities maintained a dissemination events schedule as a working document, detailing events delivered and upcoming opportunities; this was reviewed periodically between partners to share ideas and upcoming opportunities. The schedule detailed for each event: the type of event, date and location; a brief description of the event and STEP UP's role; the audience and number of attendees; the STEP UP representative who delivered the event; URLs to event webpages (where available); and the scope of the event – local, national or international.

In May 2015, cities were asked to evaluate the delivery of high profile dissemination events in their city, answering six questions to capture key reflections and learnings from their overall experience of delivering events:

- What worked well during the awareness raising events?
- What didn't work well? Is there anything you would have done differently?
- Where other organisations were involved in the event, was this beneficial and why? If not, why not?
- Was it beneficial to target the events at different audiences? What type of audience did the events tend to work best with?

- Were there any new contacts made at these events? Would these contacts be useful to stay in touch with and/or pass to others e.g. Learning Network cities? If so, why?
- What are the key lessons you have learned from organising and running these events? How will your city take these on board going forward?

### **Key findings**

Ghent, Glasgow, Gothenburg and Riga have all delivered a wide range of dissemination events to share STEP UP ambitions, progress and key findings along with their individual city's results and learnings. These events have included presenting and speaking at high profile conferences, speaking at forums and network events, seminars, workshops, face-to-face meetings with stakeholders and exhibiting at conferences. Gothenburg in particular also delivered a number of unique events, such as breakfast meetings, study tours and Earth Hour city challenges.

Delivering dissemination events has allowed the cities to raise awareness of their enhanced SEAPs and innovative projects, as well as the STEP UP project's integrated approach to sustainable energy planning. All cities also felt that valuable contacts were made throughout the process and have not only been used by each city, but passed onto Learning Network cities to allow them to progress with their SEAPs with the necessary contacts to hand.

Throughout the course of the project, all of the cities have reached a wide range of stakeholders and target groups on the local, national and international stage; targeting these different audiences has been important to maximise dissemination impact, allowing both the overall profile of the project to be raised and cities to engage more closely with key stakeholders and local learning networks. Whilst all cities targeted a range of audiences, when comparing between cities it can be noted that overall Gothenburg delivered more local events to diverse audiences, Glasgow and Ghent had more focus on regional or national events, linking particularly to Scottish and Flemish networks, and Riga's events often reached a more international audience. Events at large conferences tended to focus on providing a more general overview of the project and high-level learnings, whereas national and local events were often pitched at the Learning Network and key stakeholders, with more focus on specific tools and approaches, lessons learned and best practice.

All cities felt that attending high profile events was important and facilitated wider dissemination of the project. In terms of the involvement of each city in the organisation and delivery of events, there has been a broad balance: the cities have both accepted invitations to speak at events organised by external parties, particularly for large conferences, and have been the sole-organisers for some

events. The cities highlighted that there are advantages and disadvantages to each approach. Linking with large scale conferences and events offers much greater profile and publicity overall, but can cause challenges in attracting people to individual sessions within the conference arena, as these large-scale events also have a much wider audience, often resulting in less targeted content. A city organising and delivering its own event has much greater control over the target audience and environment, can tailor content more easily and focus on its key dissemination priorities; yet, this then requires considerable time and resource, including efforts to promote and publicise the event through channels such as social media. Therefore, this suggests that a balance of using both approaches within an overall dissemination strategy can help cities raise awareness at a high level whilst also allowing for targeted dissemination to key stakeholders more locally.

Each city has also linked with other organisations and initiatives to organise and collaborate on the delivery of dissemination events, such as national and international conference organisers, other European projects and initiatives, regional networks and other relevant organisations. It was noted by all of the cities that working with other organisations was productive and allowed wider dissemination, critical discussions and good opportunities to increase knowledge of STEP UP and sustainable energy planning. However, cities also noted that delivering events in partnership can bring challenges; for example in ensuring that integrated sustainable energy planning is the main focus and that STEP UP does not become lost in a wider agenda.

Earlier in the project, a number of initiatives were identified as having good potential to link with for dissemination activities as part of the combined deliverables D5.1/D5.5 – a comprehensive dissemination plan and integration of dissemination strategy with initiatives run by other organisations. The events schedule in Annex A of this report demonstrates that STEP UP cities have delivered events in partnership with many of these initiatives, including EU Sustainable Energy Week, EUROCITIES, Energy Cities and the Covenant of Mayors. In addition, opportunities to link with other high profile initiatives, such as All-Energy, have also been taken. Many of these events have served as Learning Network workshops, delivered through Work Package 4 (D4.8), and are therefore covered in separate reports. EU Sustainable Energy Week 2015 played host to the final STEP UP event, soon to be reported on for deliverable D4.9. Good use has also been made of other dissemination channels to promote events and foster good communications with other initiatives, including press releases, newsletters, published articles, blog posts and social media.

Overall, events were predominantly delivered by STEP UP partners, for example, the local authority/municipality or their commercial or academic partners; however, all four cities also used political representation wherever possible to add support to the project. All cities felt that valuable

contacts were made throughout the process; these contacts have been beneficial for other work undertaken in developing and implementing enhanced SEAPs and innovative projects, and relationships will continue to be fostered as part of the legacy of the project. In addition, relevant contacts have been passed onto Learning Network cities to allow them to progress with their SEAP and project development and tap into relevant expertise available.

### **Learning points and Recommendations**

From the cities' experiences of delivering dissemination events, a number of common learning points and recommendations can be drawn. These are relevant both to the project partners as they continue to deliver dissemination events on their sustainable city planning in the future, and also for other cities or projects looking to disseminate information about their own initiatives.

#### **Understanding the audience is critical to maximise dissemination of the message**

All of the cities highlighted that it is important to know the audience at a specific event in order to communicate the right messages to the right target groups. This may mean explaining key project goals and findings at a high level for large conferences which attract a wide audience, and going more in-depth on key issues and outcomes when a more targeted group, such as council officers, is in attendance.

***Recommendation: Identify and understand the audience to allow appropriate dissemination and discussion of relevant topics***

#### **Effective dissemination relies on engaging appropriate speakers**

Sustainable energy planning can sometimes be a dry subject, therefore the person disseminating needs to be effective in engaging the audience to get the message across and encourage dialogue and discussion around key issues. Choosing the right representatives is critical, ensuring a good knowledge of key content which is of interest to the audience, such as project results, failures and best practice. Successful speakers may also be those who are able to offer a different perspective on a topic, such as a political representative.

***Recommendation: Ensure presenters are appropriate for the event, have the relevant knowledge and can communicate key messages succinctly and effectively***

#### **Good planning early on helps to ensure dissemination opportunities are not missed, but cities also need to be flexible to unforeseen avenues for dissemination**

Identifying future events at an early stage can help cities target key opportunities and plan for involvement in these – at a local, national and international level. Liaising with colleagues in different departments can be useful in identifying opportunities for collaboration. However, cities

also need to be open to new opportunities as these arise, and be flexible to adapting content and materials to suit these contexts.

***Recommendation: Start planning early, but be open and flexible to new opportunities***

**Linking with other organisations or initiatives can be challenging, but has potential to offer multiple benefits**

Ensuring that the project or city's key messages do not get lost in a wider agenda can be challenging when linking with other organisations, requiring careful planning and management. However, collaborating with other initiatives can also provide more publicity, reach a wider audience, offer good opportunities for knowledge exchange and attract participants by offering multiple perspectives on a key issue or topic. Building good relationships can also benefit other areas of a project or city's activity, such as future project development or SEAP implementation.

***Recommendation: Explore opportunities to collaborate with initiatives that have similar priorities and objectives***

**A balanced dissemination strategy can help cities to benefit from different types of events**

High-profile large conferences can offer good opportunities for publicity and promotion of the overall project, whilst smaller, more focussed events can allow for more in-depth discussion, knowledge exchange and direct engagement with key stakeholders and the Learning Network. Using a mixture of approaches and delivering a range of different types of events, at different times in the project, can allow cities to reap the benefits of both.

***Recommendation: Organise and deliver a range of events to reach different types of audience and meet different dissemination priorities***

**Social media channels can be useful for promoting events and encouraging participation**

In the modern day and age, using social media channels can be very effective in highlighting events and activities being held. Using social media on the day can also help to maximise attendance at large conferences where there are often multiple sessions running in parallel, and at the same time offer summary information to those unable to attend the events in person.

***Recommendation: Use social media to promote and raise the profile of upcoming events***

**Next steps**

Going forward, the STEP UP cities will continue to disseminate information about STEP UP, key project outcomes and approaches, and city progress in implementing enhanced SEAPs and innovative projects, until the end of the project and beyond. In particular, cities will continue to implement the dissemination and communication plans developed for their SEAPs and innovative

projects (developed in deliverable D5.8). The lessons learned from delivering dissemination events detailed above will be helpful in continuing to improve dissemination activities and ensure key messages are communicated to the right people.

Many of the learning points and recommendations relating to delivering dissemination events are also highly relevant for other types of dissemination activity, and stakeholder engagement activities; the continuation of these activities, relating to STEP UP and future projects, will also be part of the legacy of the project.

As the project draws to an end, the project partners are actively exploring a range of dissemination activities to ensure that cities continue to learn from each other, share their expertise and STEP UP findings with a wider network of cities and organisations and communicate their progress effectively to stakeholder and citizens. These activities are highly dependent on local contexts, but options being discussed include:

- Periodic updates to the STEP UP website after the end of the project, allowing for city news and key events to be advertised, and relevant resources to be uploaded and maintained;
- Visualising STEP UP's achievements in an accessible and engaging way, such as infographics, so key outcomes from the project can easily be disseminated at future events and in city presentations;
- Continuing to build relationships and share knowledge with local Learning Networks;
- Disseminating project outcomes in journals and other publications;
- Continuing to use social media to highlight the project and city's achievements; and
- Promoting the project and key resources, such as the enhanced SEAP and project guides for cities through future events, city teams, social media and online.

This wide variety of activities will ensure that lessons learned from delivering dissemination events, and from other dissemination activities undertaken in the project, will have a positive impact on the legacy of the project, for the STEP UP partners and for other cities interested in learning from the STEP UP approach.