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td-net  
Network for Transdisciplinary Research

## Workshop “practical approaches to integration” – Case 1

*Please read the case description and discuss the questions of the exercise in your group.  
Prepare a short presentation on your results.*

### **The project “living in a commuter zone”**

The main aim of the overall project “living in a commuter zone” is to analyse a Swiss catchment area on an urban-suburban railway line. Around 300'000 people live in the area, in small to medium sized towns and communities. The railway line is 50 km long and the main means of transport in that area. It originates in a big city and ends in a small one, and connects 6 small and medium sized communities. The area is a typical agglomeration/suburbia, i.e. it is not a city and not a village.

The main project aims are to come to a comprehensive understanding of the commuter area, to advance suburban area studies and also to feed back its comprehensive understanding and the results of research to the residents as input to the further development of the area.

The main project consists of nine individual sub-projects

1. *Contours*: The aim of this sub-project is to identify the inhabitants' perceptions of the area in order to find typical contours of suburbia areas.
2. *Planning*: This sub-project develops designs for the future development of the area where large shopping malls and apartment buildings stand 'in the middle of nowhere'.
3. *Natural areas*: This sub-project identifies the inhabitants' ideas and preferences about the natural areas close to where they live.
4. *Living in suburbia*: This sub-project searches for characteristic forms of living in suburbia
5. *Neighbourhood*: This sub-project aims to understand how new transport options and mobile lifestyles change the concept and reality of neighbourhood.
6. *Accommodating everyone*: This sub-project investigates conditions in a medium sized town, especially in terms of independent living for old and disabled people.
7. *Historical economic development*: This sub-project investigates how the industry of the area developed from textiles to high-tech and identifies the factors associated with success.
8. *Political landscape and settlement*: This sub-project studies the influence of communities and regional planning agencies on the actual process of settlement.
9. *Mobility*: This sub-project searches for different mobile life styles in the region.

A project management team runs the overall project. The project management team is composed of a principal investigator, an expert in research translation (i.e. in how to communicate scientific insights using exhibitions, popular books and other media), a resident of the study area (who happens to be a retired politician) and an expert in suburban studies. In addition there is an expert panel, who periodically critically review the sub-projects for their scientific quality.

### **Your job as integrator**

The project management team have presented the interdisciplinary collaboration and the practical outcomes of the project to the founders, and all agree on their overall value. The principal investigator contacts you to ask whether you would be available to support the project in interdisciplinary collaboration and in producing practical outcomes. So far, there is no concrete plan of how to reach both goals. The individual sub-projects are already set up and some of them have started. You accept the job.

### **The constraints for your work are**

Your time budget is 150 hours

The project management team have already planned the following events to bring the individual sub-projects together. (Your work starts with meeting 6. The period between meetings is 3 months):

- Meeting 6: 2h project meeting, 1h for administrative issues, 1h discretionary time
- Meeting 7: 2h project meeting, 1h for administrative issues, 1h discretionary time
- Meeting 8: 8h workshop, detailed review of the projects by the expert panel, 5 minutes for your summary
- Meeting 9: 5h workshop, 3h planned by you and the project management team
- Meeting 10: 8h workshop, planned by you and the project management team
- Meeting 11: 4h meeting, 1h discretionary time
- Meeting 12: The projects report to the expert panel
- Meeting 13: 8h workshop, planned by you and the project management team
- Meeting 14: 8h workshop, planned by you and the project management team

You are allowed to give “homework” to the individual sub-projects in preparation for the workshops.

You can ask members of the project management team to collaborate with you.

You can be present at all meetings.

### **The cross-cutting project**

In addition, there is a cross-cutting project on sustainability. The cross-cutting project searches for good examples and practical propositions for the sustainable development of the region in question. Cross-cutting means that it searches for such examples in close collaboration with the individual sub-projects.

The project leader of the sustainability project asks you whether you would advise the cross-cutting project and plan it jointly with the sustainability project leader. You accept. For the cross-cutting work you will have three meetings with each individual project, each meeting is about 2h long. You can give modest “homework” to the individual projects. Your time budget is 50h.

### **Questions for group discussion**

*Please discuss the following questions in groups*

- *Where do you see a potential for/ the necessity of integration?*
- *Where do you foresee barriers?*
- *What ideas do you have for reaching integration (practically ie with methods)*