KR Foundation Municipalities in Transition
Final Version (January 2017)

Project title: Municipalities in Transition

Main objective: to create a clear framework for how Transition groups and municipalities can create sustainable change together, tested in three (or more) pilot partnerships between Transition Hubs and municipalities

Main activities:

- Collating and assessing existing experiences, learnings and materials and co-designing an agreed framework and set of tools.
- Testing and refining the agreed framework in pilot areas to develop a shared evidence base
- Reaching out to decision-makers, funders and potential new partners

Budget: DKK 3,000,000 (circa 403.000 euros)

Funder: KR Foundation (Denmark)

Duration: 2017-2018

Proposal team (alphabetically): Ana Huertas (Spain), Carolyne Stayton (US), Cristiano Bottone (Italy), Filipa Pimentel (TN), Juan del Río (Spain), Nicola Hillary (TN), Sarah McAdam (TN)

Reference documents:

[Initial proposal](#)
[Revised proposal](#)
[Budget (with revised versions)](#)

1. Who will implement the project?

Transition Network will be responsible for the implementation of the Municipalities in Transition project. We will do this in partnership with the group of 31 Transition Hubs, mainly national-level organisations which support and catalyse Transition groups to address the root causes of climate change.

Transition Network is an international charity based in the UK which works to inspire, encourage, connect, support and train communities as they self-organise around the Transition model. There are over 1200 Transition initiative community groups in 48 countries

around the world, engaging communities to create a low-carbon, socially-just, healthier and happier future.

2. What are the key issues?

The global problems we face, such as climate change, social and economic inequalities and division, consumerism in the face of natural resource limits, and lack of community resilience, urgently require innovative, systemic responses arising from the bottom-up as well as top-down.

We see many examples of engaged communities working for positive change who feel unsupported, even blocked, by local government. We see many municipalities with positive goals and a determination to act who are struggling to build genuinely collaborative relationships with local citizens.

A few communities and municipalities are experimenting with Transition-inspired approaches and tools to help them move beyond the current paradigm, align around a strong place-based vision and collaborate to create sustainable change.

For example:
- Transition Italy have a built a partnership with the Emilia Romagna branch of Italian Association of Municipalities. 300 municipalities (previously 40) are now in the Covenant of Mayors carbon-saving network.

- In the UK, Transition group Sustainable Frome are the basis of "Independents for Frome" elected to control the Town Council. "Flatpack Democracy" describes the more participatory way they make decisions for a sustainable future for the local area.

- In Ungersheim, France, Transition has been taken on by the municipality, with outcomes including a local currency, PassivHaus co-housing, local food businesses and the largest solar project in the Alsace.

- The Transition Spain Hub has given Transition Training to 3 municipalities and is starting to work with them on connecting to civil society and applying Transition approaches.

BUT, this ground-breaking and potentially hugely impactful work is largely unsupported, isolated and invisible - valuable knowledge and experience is not being shared, built upon or disseminated.

We want **to create a clear framework for how Transition groups and municipalities can create sustainable change together, tested in three (or more) pilot partnerships between Transition Hubs and municipalities**. We will establish a developing evidence base; and a vibrant international community of practice which will support more municipalities, communities and decision-makers to engage with Transition-inspired approaches for sustainable change grounded in local needs.

Our theory of change for this is inspired by the increasing evidence that top-down approaches alone cannot achieve sustained behaviour change. As new approaches arise

through bottom-up experimentation, effective sharing of learning and inspiration is critical to supporting replication, evolution, scaling up and ultimately enabling us to reach a tipping point whereby the emerging culture becomes the new normal.

We seek to support systemic change, by fostering values, and frames that encourage a cultural shift from separation to collaboration. We have considerable relevant experience and networks to draw upon when implementing this project approach - it is the philosophy which underpins the international spread and evolution of the Transition movement.

3. How will you achieve the desired change?

ACTIVITIES

1.   **Recruit project manager, core team and researcher**
   - We will form a core project team by inviting applications for the posts from across and beyond the Transition Hubs group, and other people with relevant experience of working with municipalities.

   - We will contact Universities and the Transition Research Network to find a research partner to work on evaluation of an emergent process.

2.   **Collating and assessing existing experiences, learnings and materials and co-designing an agreed framework and set of tools.**
   - Mapping and harvesting what is already underway in a number of countries;

   - Sharing what is working, challenges and emerging responses;

   - Developing and agreeing a shared framework and a set of supporting tools, trainings and guidance.

3.   **Testing and refining this agreed framework in pilot areas,** in three or more countries, with the support of the relevant Transition Hubs.

4.   **Starting to develop a shared evidence base**, to include inspiring stories of success and reflections on failure, quantitative and qualitative evidence of ongoing impacts, unexpected benefits and additional potential.

5.   **Reaching out to decision-makers, funders and potential new partners**
   - Disseminating information about this work, its potential and challenges in imaginative ways (eg videos, workshops, webcasts, social media);

   - Offering key decision-makers the opportunity to experience the approaches that have been developed and see projects that are underway;

   - Building relationships with those interested in being involved in future phases of the project. We intend this model, if proven, to lead to funding from other sources, for example potentially through the Covenant of Mayors.

PLAN + TIMELINE:

January - February 2017:
- Recruitment of Project Manager and Core Team of 3 members.

March - May 2017:
- Engagement with international Hubs Group to map and harvest current work with municipalities; offering some seed-funding for this research work.
- Set up an online platform as a repository for project information.
- Recruitment of researcher

June - September 2017:
- Core team analyses mapping & harvesting research in order to create a set of practical tools, training and guidance.
- Work with researcher to co-design monitoring and evaluation.
- An open call to select three or more pilots between Transition Hubs and municipalities, which will test and refine the framework. We will look for pilots where there is already some groundwork or relationship with a municipality, and which span a range of contexts and, potentially, levels of scale.
    - o   In order to make the best use of the available budget, we will take into account the existing circumstances of pilots, such as additional funding, when allocating resources. Therefore, this will probably not be equal financial amounts per pilot, but allocated equitably according to circumstances.

September 2017 - March 2018:
- Some translation and adaption for different country contexts, of the basic framework of tools, training and guidance.

September 2017 - December 2018:
- On-the-ground pilot work of a Transition Hub and municipality partnership, runs in three or more countries. Accompanied by project core team and researcher every 3 months.

4. How will your project result in positive change?

We will be looking for positive change at two levels: in the communities of the pilot areas; and evidence of international learning, impact on decision-making and take-up of ideas.

In the pilots, we aim to see increased levels of community engagement, and the municipality able to adopt more participatory, community-led processes and values. We expect to see commitment to measures that increase community resilience and human well-being within natural resource limits. Municipalities and communities will need to take a bottom-up approach which follows the creativity generated when people come together; this enables behaviour change to take root and open up new possibilities for the future which could not be foreseen. The specific nature of sustainable behaviour change cannot be predicted in advance, as this is an emergent process.

Internationally, we aim to see increased enquiries from, and activity by, new municipalities, impact on political decision-making, and new Transition Hubs and groups able to start this work.

The development of a rigorous evidence base is critical to the project. We will therefore recruit and work with a researcher with experience of emergence, to codesign and implement a monitoring and evaluation framework, and curate the evidence base.

5. What are the key organisational competencies for the project?

Transition Network has 12 part-time staff, and a number of contractors and teams working on particular projects, with overall management by Delivery Director Sarah McAdam. A new project manager and core project team will be recruited for this project. The Delivery Director will hold responsibility for establishing the project, setting up clear collective governance arrangements and ensuring the project team meet requirements agreed with funders.

Three or more Transition Hubs, chosen by open call will receive part of the grant to help fund their in-depth pilot work. A wider number of Transition Hubs will receive seed-funding through this grant for research, mapping, harvesting work or to assist with taking up new work with municipalities. Transition Network has administered seed-funding to Transition Hubs since 2013 and has existing processes for transferring and monitoring these payments.

We know there is relevant experience to draw upon within the international Transition movement, for example:

- Transition Italia has a small team of researchers and practitioners who have already developed similar strategies and activities and are engaged in experimental pilots in the field.

- Transition Spain is made up of an interdisciplinary team who are working on a transition consultancy for resilience project with three municipalities and a university.

- Through local Transition groups, Transition US has developed relationships with local governments, with Transition representatives on local government councils, planning commissions and climate change action committees.

- Filipa Pimentel, Transition Network's National Hub Co-ordinator, has extensive experience at EU policy-making level, including creating processes for participative design for EU policy events, and a case-study to introduce innovation and a Transition perspective.

6. How will risks be managed?

Risk: The project or the pilots run behind schedule, particularly where progress is reliant on volunteers from Hubs or local communities, and different agendas of municipalities. Addressed by: Appointing a core team to run this project should give the capacity to share tasks. The timetable can be flexible and respond to unexpected opportunities.

Risk: Resistance to change from some people within the public administrations and communities.

Addressed by: Focusing on the flexibility of Transition approaches to meet people where they are, hear and respond to local needs, and work with emergence rather than externally-driven goals.

Risk: Working with a particular local administration could create a perception that Transition is affiliated with one political party.
Addressed by: Making efforts to involve political and community representatives from different backgrounds and affiliations within and across the local pilots, and taking care that communications are balanced.

Risk: The diversity of legal and governmental structures between countries, restricts the implementation and replicability and makes progress slower.
Addressed by: Keeping the main framework flexible and at a summary level, so that Hubs in different countries can adapt and build on this in their own national context.

7. What role does communication play in the project?

Communication is core to this project, in giving visibility to innovations happening where municipalities and Transition are working together.

The project communication strategy is to:

- To share, build upon and disseminate valuable knowledge and experience about the best ways for Transition and municipalities to work together

- At the pilot project level, to communicate to municipalities about systemic change and encourage community empowerment and action.

- To encourage more municipalities, communities and decision-makers to engage with Transition-inspired approaches for sustainable change

- To establish and use internal project communications that support the project to thrive.

Key target groups include:
- Representatives from municipalities and public administrations
- Transition Hubs
- Transition initiative groups
- EU and national/regional level policy-makers
- Local communities in pilot areas
- Other networks addressing systemic sustainable change
- Researchers

The Communications Plan includes:

<u>To share, build upon and disseminate valuable knowledge and experience about the best ways for Transition and municipalities to work together</u>

- An Evidence Base will be collated through
    - An online repository of documentation, resources and articles, multi-lingual and open source
    - A project video channel (youtube or vimeo)
    - Evaluation of impacts

- The core team and researcher will distil a set of tools and guidance that can be tested. This will be widely translated and adapted to contexts of some countries with Transition Hubs between autumn 2017 and March 2018.

<u>At the pilot project level, to communicate to municipalities about systemic change and encourage community empowerment and action.</u>

- Hubs running pilots will liaise with regional and national media.

<u>To encourage more municipalities, communities and decision-makers to engage with Transition-inspired approaches for sustainable change</u>

- The team will seek effective ways to present the key learnings of the evidence base, through videos, workshops and personal meetings.

- Websites of Transition Network and the Transition Hubs running pilots, will disseminate imaginative information about the work, including stories of success and reflections on failure, through blogs, articles and webcasts. The Transition Network e-newsletter reaches over 25,000 community activists worldwide

- We will disseminate learnings and discuss further work through partner networks and relationships, for example EU policy-making contacts, the Covenant of Mayors, Transition Research Network and the ECOLISE network.

<u>To establish and use internal project communications that support the project to thrive</u>
- The project manager, core team and researcher will meet frequently online to assess project progress.

- Where possible, we will use consent-based decision-making and consult with the wider Hubs Group to ensure inclusion and partnership.

- The core team will take roles in accompanying and supporting the pilots, including evaluation meetings every 3 months.

Transition Network has three Communications staff plus contractor teams. Transition Hubs and municipalities running pilots will also work on communications.

8. Notes on furthering the project

Until we have secured additional funding to do more, we have removed from the initial project plan:

- Developing an international community of practice, apart from basic work on sharing information internationally, to be done by the core team
- The round of seed-funding for International Community of Practice to help support Transition Hubs inspired to get involved with this work.
- The events and dedicated communications time and resources.

Most of this work would be later in the project, so this gives us some time to secure additional funding and/or partners. We have explicitly re-framed the budget line previously identified for networking to make clear that this activity is likely to include a fundraising element. We see this as a project capable of attracting new partners and resources, but time and effort needs to be committed to building relationships with funders alongside and as part of our planned influencing work.