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ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability
Freiburg, Germany
www.iclei-europe.org



PAN
Polish Academy of Sciences
Poznan, Poland
www.isrl.poznan.pl



SERI Sustainable Europe Research Institute
Vienna, Austria
www.seri.at



TU-Delft
Technische Universiteit
Delft, The Netherlands
www.tudelft.nl



UFZ Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research
Leipzig, Germany
www.ufz.de



ULB Université Libre de Bruxelles
Brussels
Belgium
www.ulb.ac.be

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CONTEXT Individuals InContext

Supportive environments
for sustainable living



Transition Research

What do people *need* in order to achieve a sustainable lifestyle?

The research project InContext identifies the framework conditions enabling societal transition towards an ecologically sound, economically successful and culturally diverse future. At the core of the project lies an examination of the interplay between structural conditions and internal factors in building the context for individual behaviour.

InContext brings together leading European research institutions in the fields of transition, behaviour and sustainable development.

The project will be implemented in close co-operation with a network of local governments and a transdisciplinary advisory board. This will allow for regular and effective communication and give political and business professionals the opportunity to provide reality-checks.

In addition, three pilot communities have been selected to test the concepts and instruments developed within the project in a practical manner, with the aim of closing the gap between sustainability awareness and behaviour.

InContext assumes that individual and collective behaviour respond to both an external context (such as social norms, policies, and infrastructure) and an internal context (such as needs, values and priorities). So far, initiatives to further sustainable development have focused mainly on changing external contexts. By conducting case studies and implementing pilot projects, InContext will contribute to the development of theories on the internal context and will subsequently produce policy advice in this respect.

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION

Case studies will be conducted to identify structural drivers and barriers and their interplay with mind-sets. They will look at existing cases from the area of energy and food consumption in Austria, Belgium and Germany.

COMMUNITIES IN TRANSITION

Pilot projects will follow an action-research approach in three local communities (in Austria, the Netherlands and Germany). They will employ the concept of 'transition arenas' using scenario development and back-casting exercises with the aim of empowering individuals to develop alternative strategies for fulfilling their needs.

THEORY OF TRANSITION

Theory development will build the basis for the practical work of the project and will:

- characterise relevant internal and external contexts as well as their interplay and the way individuals respond to them;
- test whether the transition approach utilising participatory scenario development and back-casting exercises creates suitable frameworks for inducing individual and collective changes.

MAKING TRANSITION HAPPEN

Policy advice will put together the project results in a way that is easily accessible for policy-makers at various levels, including:

- a manual, targeted to the local level providing guidance to communities who want to implement transition processes themselves as developed and tested by InContext.
- a policy brief, directed to EU- and national level policy-makers giving recommendations on how they can assist communities to implement transition processes and how they can address the internal context in a way that supports sustainability-driven action.

