



# Quality time

**Ivo Cré** sheds light on QUEST's audit methodology for urban mobility policy





*“For the QUEST partner cities ITS plays an important role in making the quality leap towards a better urban transport system”*



The EU-funded Project QUEST will improve the quality of urban sustainable transport. The efforts of the project will not stay confined to the happy few: 50 cities in 17 countries signed up to join the project. These 50 cities will develop action plans that will substantially improve urban transport, and urban life in general. For the QUEST partner cities Ghent (Belgium) and Bath (UK), ITS plays an important role in making the quality leap towards a better urban transport system.

QUEST is a Quality Management method to help small- and medium-sized cities to set up and further develop their sustainable mobility policies and actions with the assistance of an external expert. QUEST is not a toolbox with ready-to-use sustainable mobility solutions or a traditional transport engineering tool. QUEST has its roots in Total Quality Management and focuses on identifying promising development areas and initiates and supports processes in the city to start improvements in these areas. The emphasis is on stakeholder involvement, creating a common problem understanding and on commonly developing viable policy actions and improvements of internal processes that can be implemented.

#### **DIFFERENT STROKES...**

QUEST acknowledges that every city has its own, specific situation and preconditions that need to be taken into consideration and that, stepwise, improvements are possible on >>>

**As a UNESCO world heritage site, the City of Bath is concerned with the effects of traffic on quality of life and has implemented smart solutions across several transport modes**

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all levels of development of sustainable mobility policies. Achieving sustainable mobility is – as all quality improvement processes – not simply copying best practice, it’s a result of a continuous learning and implementation process that every city has to go through from basics towards excellence. Basically, the goal of QUEST is to facilitate and structure this process and to help cities to help themselves.

The QUEST process includes an audit phase, a self-assessment phase (with stakeholder consultation meetings to discuss the audit outcomes and to develop policy priorities). These policy priorities feed into the third and final phase, the action planning. The QUEST certification concludes the 11-step process.

Bath and Ghent were two of a group of five pilot cities where the early audit tool was tested, and two QUEST workshops were held in the cities in spring 2012.

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#### City of Gent and Vialis agree about preliminary delivery

Gent’s Mobility Company (Mobiliteitsbedrijf) agreed with the preliminary delivery of the traffic guidance system. The company reached the agreement with technical partner Vialis now that the new dynamic signage and the supporting software are performing as expected. In the next phase the functionalities of the system will be gradually augmented, in addition to the parking guidance functionality. These functionalities consist of re-routing in case of network disruptions; provision of up to date traffic information, suggestion of sustainable alternatives (P+R, public transport and car sharing); and the diversion of parking search traffic from busy public transport routes.

The outcomes of the test audits provide a detailed overview of urban policy fields to which priority needs to be given to improve the quality in urban transport policies. What is interesting to see is that these two cities are European Champions for ITS in medium size cities, whereas urban ITS is often oriented at traffic management in metropolitan areas. In this respect, it is clear that the interest in urban ITS coincides with the consideration of improving quality of urban transport policies.

#### A COHERENT URBAN ITS PACKAGE FOR ALL MODES

A UNESCO world heritage site since 1987, Bath is famous for some of Europe’s finest Roman remains and 18th century architecture. The city in the valley of the River Avon is a major tourist attraction. Located in the south west of England, Bath has an area of 29 km<sup>2</sup> and roughly 80,000 inhabitants. The city is concerned about the toll traffic takes on the quality of life and wants to take a leading role in demonstrating how European cities can preserve their historic heritage to the benefit of residents and business through clean urban transport solutions.

Bath has implemented Bus Gate Enforcement, using a CCTV camera and enforcing moving traffic offences in the bus lane in the centre of the City. Bath is using CCTV cameras with ANPR in a trial run within the CIVITAS RENAISSANCE project to track HGV that cross the city centre. A variable message sign alerts HGV drivers to the weight restrictions in place.

With regards to public transport, Bath has introduced RTI on the Greater Bristol Bus Network routes where they come into Bath. They use the so-called Diamond Card smartcard for those public transport services who qualify for concessionary fares. The Bath Park and Ride Buses are fitted with a reader device



for Diamond Cards. Also the Cycle Hire Communicare and the City Car Club systems are using smart card technology.

All ITS measures are backed up by a UTMS standard traffic control system linked to the traffic lights across the city to assist with traffic management.

#### MORE THAN PARKING GUIDANCE

Ghent is Belgium’s third-largest city with about 243,000 inhabitants on an area of 156.18km<sup>2</sup>. Over the past couple of years, Ghent has become much more attractive again after the city has made considerable efforts to curb the use






**Ghent in Belgium has taken measures to reduce private car use, calm city centre traffic and improve bicycle mobility. It is now upgrading its parking guidance system**


of private cars, calm traffic in the city centre and improve bicycle mobility

The City of Ghent is in the process of upgrading its own parking guidance system, which displays the latest number of parking spaces available in 10 different parking garages spread throughout the city centre to a fully fledged traffic management system. The city centre roads are even more clogged up by motorists who hope to find a free parking spot on the street. There was also a great need to

issue traffic warnings about upcoming roadwork, major events etc. which have an impact on traffic in the city. To be fully effective, these messages would need to be provided on all road categories, from highways down to local roads. The sustainability-oriented, multi-modal traffic management system will integrate variable message signs (VMS) for traffic information, traffic light management and the parking guidance system. Real-time traffic information will be incorporated. 🚗

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 Ivo Cré is Project Manager at Polis and the QUEST dissemination manager

 [icre@polisnetwork.eu](mailto:icre@polisnetwork.eu)

 [www.quest-project.eu](http://www.quest-project.eu) [www.civitas.eu](http://www.civitas.eu)

 The project QUEST is funded by Intelligent Energy Europe Program (IEE) Program of the European Union, and will run until October 2013. Gent and Bath are involved in the CIVITAS initiative. The Bath local transport plan is available from <http://www.westofengland.org/transport/joint-local-transport-plan>