

ENVIREO - RECOMMENDATIONS TO EU DECISION-MAKERS

The SusStation Project (Supporting Sustainable Stations)

The SusStation project

SusStation is a European project, funded through the Interreg IV B programme for North-West Europe. It gathers 5 partner organizations, including rail industry partners, from 4 EU countries (France, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK). The project, initiated in 2009, ran until 2013.

The SusStation Project aims at delivering and promoting a **new generation of sustainable and environmental-friendly railway stations**. To achieve their objectives, SusStation's partners have:

- **Developed four demonstration projects**, i.e. sustainably renovated or built stations across Europe, using local craftsmen and eco-materials, which were made accessible to the general public, providing all interested stakeholders with learning material. Good practices and recommendations to local communities, willing to implement a sustainable station or any other sustainable infrastructure, have been drawn from the demonstration projects. At the heart of cities, stations are also ideal demonstration locations and serve as examples of sustainable buildings and sustainable urban development. These projects are located in the UK (Lancashire and Northern Ireland), the Netherlands (Utrecht) and Germany (Cologne).
- **Highlighted the benefits from a sustainable station**: through renewable energy schemes and efforts in energy savings, **sustainable stations substantially reduce the use of energy** (up to a 50% reduction in the pilot projects!) and thus decrease both operating costs and the CO2 emissions. Beyond the direct positive effects of sustainable stations on the environment, the projects have proved to **increase the use of railway transport by up to 18%**, as these new stations improve the comfort for passengers and thus their willingness to choose this mode of transport at the expense of other modes. By getting people to travel by train, instead of using their cars for instance, sustainable stations are a means to reduce GHG emissions, beyond their own walls.
- **Created an Assessment Tool**, to help in the evaluation, planning, and design as well as the construction and operation of sustainable stations. This Tool is intended for use by station infrastructure owners and operators and local/transport authorities who specify station schemes. Taking into account five themes (**energy, environment, health, quality of use and future value**), the Tool allows to identify the weaknesses and strengths of a station or its design and makes it possible to work on improvement measures objectively and improve the quality of the project.

Recommendations to EU decision-makers

1. Use the invented wheel

The five SusStation projects demonstrate and make accessible information and good practices on how to make a station sustainable. Beyond stations, SusStation could benefit to other infrastructure or urban development projects, leading to a better efficiency and increasing the chances of success for project leaders.

SusStation partners encourage the European Commission to actively promote sustainable stations towards local communities. SusStation partners would be keen to serve as a reference contact for public authorities or private entities willing to develop sustainable station or sustainable urban development projects.

2. Use the right tool

The development and use of reliable and comprehensive evaluation tools is a key step in the mainstreaming of sustainable buildings. The Assessment Tool created by SusStation partners allow schemes designers to work on improvement measures objectively and improve the quality of their project.

SusStation partners suggest the European institutions to encourage actors from the construction sector and local communities to make use of existing tools, notably the SusStation Assessment Tool, to evaluate the existing stations or to optimize sustainable station design projects.

3. Use short supply chains

Sustainable construction implies the use of local materials and craftsmen, in order to avoid an important environmental impact from the transport phase. SusStation projects demonstrated the importance and the liability of short supply chains, which also favours the involvement of local communities and their citizens in the projects.

SusStation partners call for the support of short supply chains by the European Union, and ask the European Commission to recommend to local communities leading an urban development project to use local materials and craftsmen, when possible.

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