

Permanent Scientific and Technical Committee of CODATU

PSTC Session, CODATU XVI, Istanbul, 4 Feb 2015
Getting researchers and practitioners closer

SUMMARY

Lorenza Tomasoni
Scientific Secretariat of CODATU

CHAIRS

Ali Huzayyin & Anthony May, Co-chairs of the Permanent Scientific and Technical Committee of CODATU

SPEAKERS

Ali Huzayyin, CODATU- Presentation of the Committee

Lorenza Tomasoni, CODATU – How to better link research and practice? Results from the PSTC internal questionnaire

Charles Rivasplata, SFMTA, San Francisco (USA) – Researchers and practitioners: presentation of some success stories and cooperation

Tony May, CODATU & **Rao Krishna**, Indian institute of technology Bombay (India) – Proposal of future initiatives

ATTENDEES

The session was attended by 17 people.

Couzon Robert	France
Bernard Gyergyoy	Germany
Oliver Lah	Germany
Arnd Baetzner	Suisse
Heather Allen	UK
David Maunder	UK
Anna Quemeneur	France
Ela Babalik Sutcliffe	Turkey
Valérie Ongolo Zogo	Cameroon
Nico McLachlan	South Africa
Nicolas Ziv	France
Sanjay Gupta	India
Sabahat Topuz Kiremitci	Turkey
Lidia Signor	Italy/France
Ravi Gadepalli	India
Julien Allaire	France
Dominique Breuil	France

SUMMARY OF THE SESSION¹

Ali Huzayyin, CODATU- Presentation of the Committee

The aim of the PSTC is to develop technical and scientific activities of CODATU apart from the conference and it is composed of 23 members mostly from developing countries and transition economies with good balance of experience, geography, gender and age. The PSTC aims to facilitate communication between researchers and policy-makers. The main purpose of the session was to create this dialogue and to invite comments and views of participants on this. There is a gap between researchers and practitioners which must be solved in order to implement transport policy. The PSTC also sees the need to investigate how the recommendations and guidelines of recognised international Reports and initiatives are considered, by the concerned in research and policy, in developing countries and transition economies.

Lorenza Tomasoni, CODATU – How to better link research and practice? Results from the internal PSTC survey

One of the main problems in urban mobility issues is the lack of dialogue and mutual comprehension between researchers and practitioners. An internal questionnaire was implemented by the PSTC in order to determinate the main barriers and integrate and facilitate dialogue between researchers and practitioners, June 2014. The principal problems are the lack of mutual trust, communication and exchange especially in projects dealing with the coordination of urban and transport planning such as the SUMP. This questionnaire was useful to CODATU to understand the main barriers and weaknesses of the relationship between researchers and practitioners. It allows CODATU to propose means to reinforce the cooperation between the two groups such as conferences, networking and joint research/practice projects.

Charles Rivasplata, SFMTA, San Francisco (USA) – Researchers and practitioners: presentation of some success stories and cooperation

Charles Rivasplata stressed that it is important to facilitate cooperation between researchers and practitioners. Some good examples exist, as the project of car-sharing in San Francisco Bay Area. Transport planners and researchers worked closely to test car-sharing options and develop policies. The benefits are for everyone: working on problem solving enables to develop wider and better mobility strategies and policies.

Tony May, CODATU & Rao Krishna, Indian institute of technology Bombay (India) – Proposal of future initiatives

According to the results of two internal questionnaires of PSTC, Tony May presented some ideas and recommendations for the development of a research pilot project by CODATU

¹ A first draft of summary of presentations was provided by students from the ISUR Master coming from France.

focusing on the cooperation between researchers and practitioners around the concept of SUMP and more in detail on (regional, national and local) Guidelines produced all over the world to develop and implement SUMP at the local level and on investigating related barriers. The focus will be implement the methodology in selected cities of different geographical regions and to draw comparisons. Rao Krishna, Professor at TERI (Mumbai, India) proposed the City of Mumbai as a possible site to develop a pilot project. He presented the Mumbai Metropolitan Region in order to show that the lack of communication is the first barrier for a good cooperation between researchers and practitioners. He also showed conflicting priorities between the different actors working on the Master Plan for the Metro Lines; urban transport policies can suffer from stakeholders' different interests and priorities and the effectiveness of the results can be compromised.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

Dominique Breuil (EIGSI, France) was happy with the session and the investigation the PSTC is carrying on. He found the discussion interesting because he is himself professor/researcher and decision maker in a small French city. He highlighted one experience he had concerning an evaluation of projects made by researchers who presented so long a list of questions that it was impossible for practitioners to answer. Results from the evaluation were therefore totally meaningless.

Ravi Gadepalli (PhD student from India) suggested to PSTC members a very interesting study that can be useful for the discussion produced by UNEP on a comparison of three different SUMP development processes in three Indian cities. He suggested that different research approaches might be needed in cities with differing institutional structures.

Bernard Gyergyay (Rupprecht Consult, Germany) claimed that there is a question around new mobility practices like UBER that can be considered as “unexpected “ as researchers have not been capable to foresee their arrival.

He then highlighted also that the “consultancy” dimension is absent in the results from the PSTC questionnaire. They speak about researchers and decision-makers mainly.

Sanjay Gupta (School of urban planning and architecture, New Delhi) reminded the importance of dealing with central level (Ministries) in some contexts.

Ela Babalik-Sutcliffe (METU, Ankara, Turkey) highlighted that there is no structure in Turkey that could lead a project like that proposed by Tony and Krishna. Furthermore, the concepts of “SUMP” is not clear for everyone. It is “EU” vocabulary and it would be needed in some contexts to better explain the meaning. Nonetheless, there is definitely a need for SUMP guidelines in Turkey. She also pointed out the need to reflect some urban transport projects within the context of the national level as the Ministries of Transport.

Heather Allen (TRL, UK) wondered about creating Centres of Excellence around structural transport project like BRT in LA cities, MRT in Indian cities, etc. Could they be the ideal places to formalise the researchers/practitioners network?

Oliver Lah (Wuppertal Institute, Germany and SOLUTION project) offered to help in looking for cities to develop pilot projects.

Julien Allaire (CODATU) highlighted the importance of the PSTC in the CODATU activity. Also it was positively surprising to observe the consistence between the results from the PSTC questionnaire highlighting the importance of working on SUMP and the CODATU initiative on SUMP-NAMA in view of COP21 in Paris.

Nico McLachlan (ODA, Cape Town, South Africa) Told that researchers from University of Cape Town were seen as “the enemy” by decision-makers during the BRT project. At present a strong cooperation exist between the University and the Local Authorities around the questions of urban transport. Things can change.

Students' viewpoint on the discussion

The following are the views given by the students as they were expressed in the session:

“During question’s time, some participants highlighted the difficulty to understand researchers’ findings and an insufficient vulgarisation of results. Some speakers insisted on that aspect: the political game or the inapplicable aspect of some recommendations. The lack of trust and communication between researchers and decision makers is an important stake and all the participants agreed on that point. Research findings and information are sometimes difficult to find and it is important to tackle this lack of communication. Better links between researchers and practitioners will enable best transport policy because both of the stakeholders need each other to make good decisions.

To conclude this debate, the central question was who has the information, who has the data?”