

Speech by CAI managing director Gerhard Weihs on EIUP (Brussels, February 2, 2007)

Can Tho in Vietnam, Luang Prabang in Lao PDR, and Naga City in the Philippines have participated in an EU-funded partnership and capacity building project on energy policy, planning, and strategy formulation at local government level. These three cities have had diverse economic and political structures but comparable economic dynamism necessitating increased attention to energy as well as environment issues. The project had aimed at institutionalizing the integration of these issues in the urban planning and decision-making processes through learning-by-doing. The project has succeeded in formulating energy strategies and action plans for each of the cities. The strategies highlight the energy vision and mission of the cities, while the action plans identify priority community energy projects that can be implemented in the near term. These results have been achieved by forming a team of local experts and discussing with local stakeholders. The blessing and commitment of local political leadership could not be underestimated and in fact had to be secured right from the start of the project. The learning-by-doing approach has ensured local ownership of the results and responsibility for carrying them out. While the actual adherence to the strategies and implementation of the action plans remain to be seen, the project has demonstrated the key elements for a successful energy-integrated urban planning.

At project start the cities had a mere vague idea of integrated planning; they had only some ideas of energy projects, which may make sense. But there was a lack of know how to bring the projects forward and how to get the financing. Other questions concerned the selection of proper technologies. In general the former approaches of the cities were restricted to single projects and a comprehensive framework was missing. Even reliable data about energy consumption and future demand were not available. Except Naga City, the cities had not really a proper understanding how to involve stakeholders and how to make use of these involvements. Superior policies were seen more as restrictions than a framework, which can be filled in with own initiatives.

The EIUP project has changed these views and the three host cities are now equipped with adequate capacity to tackle energy as an integrated part of their development. The first lesson to be learned was that without a reliable database planning is a mere blind flight and the management of projects based on this deficient situation becomes a random-like undertaking. The cities learned that by collecting reliable data the city and its demands and constraints become clearer and clearer. Stakeholders, who had been even assumed as opponents or obstacles for progressive ideas, figured out to be potential partners. Existing planning and policies served as platform to build on. Other departments and planning sectors changed from competitors to

partners in the project. It became obvious that integration means not something abstract, but the involvement of people, ideas, data, and opinions in first instance. The tools provided within the applied methodology helped to structure the planning work into manageable steps, going from the rough to the details. With the background of restricted resources it was very important how to set priorities and like in a critical path analysis how to set the activities that the can harmonize and build upon each other, which is another more technical aspect of integration. It became obvious that business planning is not only to run for donors and investors, but in first instance to design justified projects, which have the desired impact and which are accepted and feasible in terms of means, technology and policy. Finally the cities understood that EIUP is not a single activity, but a permanent process, which needs continuation and periodical updates. The elaborated EIUP Working Reports are an impressive proof of the progress made by the three host cities in all this respects.