

Complementary currency systems

What's the impact on waste prevention?

Studies and actions
carried out in the
Brussels-Capital Region

Symposium on economic instruments & waste prevention

22 November 2011

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BRUXELLES ENVIRONNEMENT

IBGE - INSTITUT BRUXELLOIS POUR LA GESTION DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT

A. Context

The Brussels-Capital Region

- *1,100,000 inhabitants*
- *Municipal waste: 432 kg/inhabitant*
- *Domestic waste: 324 kg/inhabitant*

Bruxelles Environnement

- Regional public service for the environment
- Waste -> Waste plans, authorisations, inspections, EPR, waste prevention, non-domestic waste management

Prevention plan and waste management in the Brussels-Capital Region

- *1st Waste Plan(1992)*
- *Currently: 4th Waste Plan (2010, unlimited period)*
objectives in figures, as well as in terms of prevention, by 2020.



B. Complementary currencies



“Complementary currencies relate to any means of standardised exchange, accepted by a group of players which circulates in parallel with the official currency.”

Objectives

- strengthen social cohesion
- give a new boost to the local economy
- protection of the environment

3 major types:

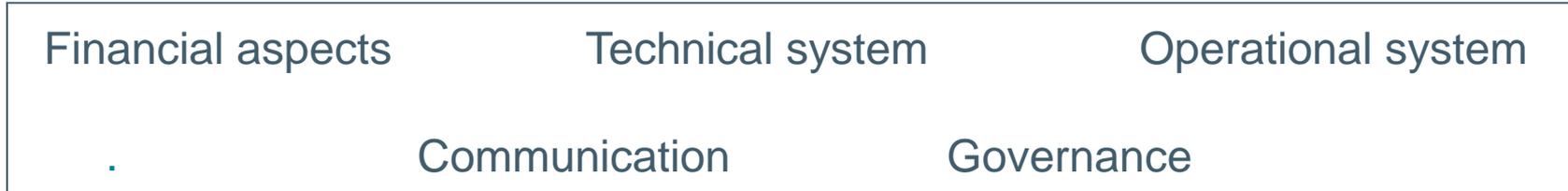
- time banks, i.e. LES (local exchange systems)
- local or regional currencies
- green loyalty cards

Characteristics:

- local acceptance only (boosts the local economy)
- voluntary
- based on trust
- loses value over time (money not hoarded)



C. Complementary currency systems



-> not tackled

How it works (collecting and using the points)



-> waste specificities



D. History (1)

The beginnings... within the framework of the 2nd waste plan

Context: 2001, “decrease waste” project competition

Project of the non-profit association “Revitaliser les Quartiers Commerçants”

Encouraging customers from 12 shopping areas in Brussels to produce less waste

Pilot study, 2 months

How it worked :

- *Multi-shop loyalty card*
- *Products labelled “mini-waste” in the shops*
- *Stamp for certain types of behaviour (reusable bag, bread bag, buying certain “mini-waste” products, etc.).*
- *Gifts: shopping trolleys, Tupperware, battery chargers, Ecover products.*

Results:

- *489 shopkeepers committed to producing less waste*
- *720 customers produced 14,400 times less waste*



D. History (2)

Acceleration ... within the framework of the 4th waste plan

4th waste plan (2010 -) – Recommendation 32:

“support good behaviour”: “The Region will pursue its studies to develop incentives for sustainable household purchases. Within this framework, the development of a system such as a “sustainable purchases card” would allow certain purchasing behaviours to be rewarded. For this purpose, a collaboration with the distribution and banking sector will be examined”.

2009-2010

Opportunity: European Interreg IVB Success Card project

Accelerator – Project starts mid-2010

In //: 2009

“Study on the experiences of systems aimed at encouraging specific behaviours through complementary currencies” (ULB-CEESE, Groupe One)

2011

- “Feasibility and marketing study with a view to developing a complementary currency system with “Ecolris” environmental objectives in the Brussels-Capital Region” (ULB-CEESE, Groupe One, Réseau de Financement Alternatif)

-Studies “Behaviours, attitudes and opinions on the development of a complementary currency system with environmental objectives”, and “Desk Research” (Dedicated Research)



Link to studies : www.bruxellesenvironnement.be/monnaiescomplementaires
www.leefmilieubrussel.be/complementairemuntsystemen

E. Four examples of complementary currencies with an environmental vocation

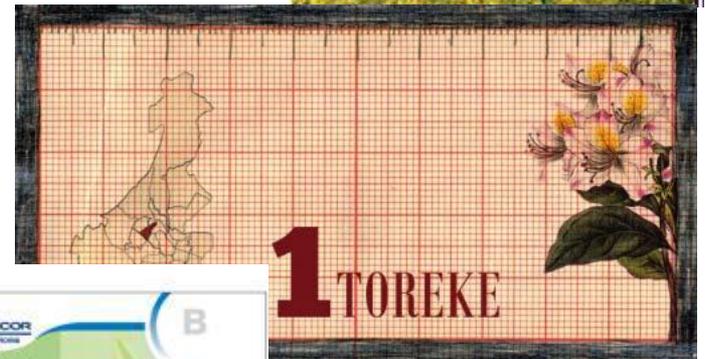
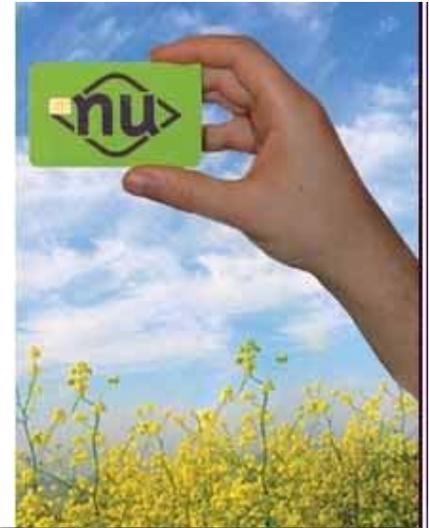
-> Focus on waste

Carte NU (NL)

Eporte monnee (BE)

Torekes (BE)

Eco-chéqués (BE)



(1) NU-Spaarpas



Framework: city of Rotterdam, Programme Life III (2002 & 2003 (18 months)

Type: loyalty card (medium: specific card)

Collecting points:

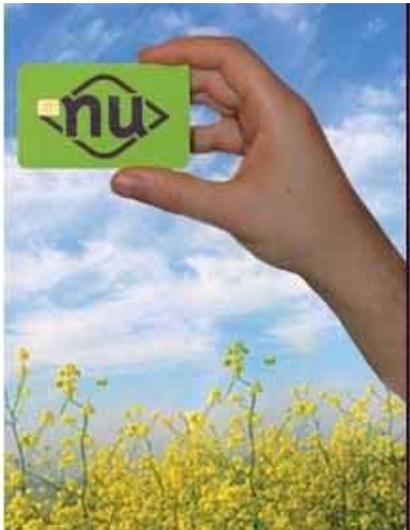
- ▶ sustainable behaviours (especially waste management)
- ▶ purchase of products (“green” products: more points)

Redeeming the points:

- ▶ gifts, or “green” services (public transport pass and entry to museums, etc.).

Results:

- ▶ 10,000 participating households (11,000 anticipated)
- ▶ 1,577,905 points handed out, 140,084 exchanged.
- ▶ the majority of points collected: recycling (people with the NU card went 3 times more often to the recycling centre).
- ▶ better visibility for sustainable consumer products (transfer of consumption) -> qualitative / not quantified



(2) E-Portemonnee



Framework:

- Bond Beter Leefmilieu (BBL) & Intercommunale de gestion des déchets Limburg.net, accepted by the Flemish government in 2003, pilot, then in 7 communes

Type:

- *Complementary currency system (medium: identity card)*

Objectives:

- promote sustainable behaviours (besides recycling)

Collecting points:

- waste prevention: anti-ad sticker, composting classes, washable nappies, second-hand donations & purchases, deposit, ...
- second phase: energy actions included

Redeeming the points:

- battery chargers, rechargeable batteries, composting bins, second-hand vouchers, CD or DVD rental, etc.
- miscellaneous (tombola tickets, theatre tickets, swimming pools, etc.)

Results:

- 15% participation rate in the pilot project in Overpelt (1 year, 2005/2006)
- 1/3 of points collected: compost



(3) Torekes



Framework: Ghent (Belgium), launch of pilot in September 2010, 1 year

Type: local currency (medium = ticket)

Objectives:

- to promote ecological behaviours
- to promote community behaviours

Collecting the currency:

- specific actions to maintain and embellish the neighbourhood (painting facades, flowers on the balconies)
- sport (football trainers; “godfathers/godmothers” of the bowling ground),
- environment, including some of the waste in the environment (anti-ad sticker, recycling)

Redeeming the currency

- second-hand, green electricity, etc.
- flagship operation: setting up a community garden (vegetable plots) = demand expressed by the inhabitants: plots rented out only using Torekes



(4) Eco-chèques:



Framework: Belgium, FEB & social partners, since 2008

Type: cheque given by employers to employees as an extra-legal benefit.

Exchange in association with waste prevention

- Purchase of NiMH portable and rechargeable batteries and chargers
- Composting bins
- Synthetic products completely made from compostable materials that meet standard NBN EN 13432, as well as washable nappies
- 100 % recycled unbleached or TCF whitened paper
- Products and services that meet the criteria of the European Ecological Label



F. Conclusions

Complementary currencies:

- Can be an innovative economic tool in response to the stakes of sustainable development (economic, social, environmental objectives)
- In terms of the environment: could serve as a lever for the transition towards more sustainable behaviours by adopting a positive approach to a change of behaviour
- In terms of waste, can involve:
 - management and/or prevention: choice!
 - purchases and/or behaviours: choice!

BUT:

- Existing pilot models / short term / no assessment system -> --> measurable impact not yet shown
- There are conditions to be respected to achieve a prevention impact
 - ! behaviours >< purchases
 - ! shops >< products
 - ! rebound effect



G. Prospects in the Brussels-Capital Region:

1) Potential

Survey among households and shopkeepers (Dedicated Research, 2011)

Households:

- 49% of people very interested in the initiative
- 39% said they would participate
- 7% not interested at all
- -> potential ! (besides the interested parties)

Shopkeepers

- 42% very interested
- 36% would participate

Motivation of households:

- environment (50%)
- citizenship (50%)
- “collecting points” (43%)
- positive impact on the neighbourhood (42%)



G. Prospects in the Brussels-Capital Region:

2) Pilot project “ECO-IRIS”

Pilot experiment carried out in 3 communes (+/- 21 months: 2012-2013), with assessment

Objectives: to promote ecological behaviours and local economy (not only waste prevention !)

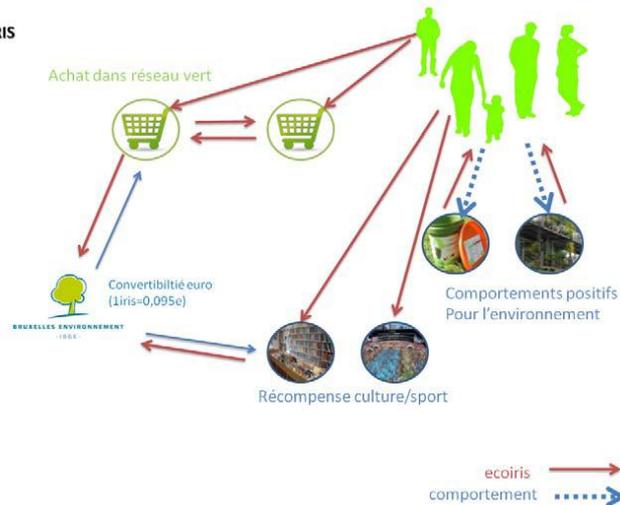
Measure time 0 (assess the changes in behaviour compared with the reference period), monitor by scanning the tickets, associated environmental accounting

Collecting points based on behaviours (priority) and some purchase of products

List of behaviours that should be encouraged: enormous potential, but it must be possible to check the behaviours

Redeeming the points: based on citizen and neighbourhood rationale to make the area more attractive

ECO IRIS



G. Prospects in the Brussels-Capital Region

3) list of “waste prevention” behaviour?

Interest for households – collecting points:

- Ideas resulting from the qualitative study (waste):
Less product packaging, reusable bags, products with recycled / recyclable / deposit-based packaging, recycled products, donations, repairing objects, less toxic products, rechargeable batteries, composting, universal chargers, i-libraries, games libraries, multimedia libraries, anti-ad stickers, second-hand clothes sales, cleaning the neighbourhood, etc.
- Ideas resulting from the quantitative study:
Reducing the energy bill: 79%
-> in association with waste?
Interest in calling upon a repairer (37%), buying things in a second-hand shop (32%), putting up an anti-ad sticker (32%), composting (24%), registering a SERD project (14%), participating in a recycling group (12%), taking a composting course (9%), using a reusable nappy service (4%)

Interest for households – redeeming the points:

Reduction in communal taxes(66%)
-> in association with waste?
Ecological cleaning products (43%), library rental (20%), games library rental (12%)

+ suggestions for neighbourhood improvements (spontaneous)

In 1st place: cleanliness, reduction, waste management (42%)



-> **Potential on waste prevention ! (Results ? 2013)**