HOSANNA

Soundscape
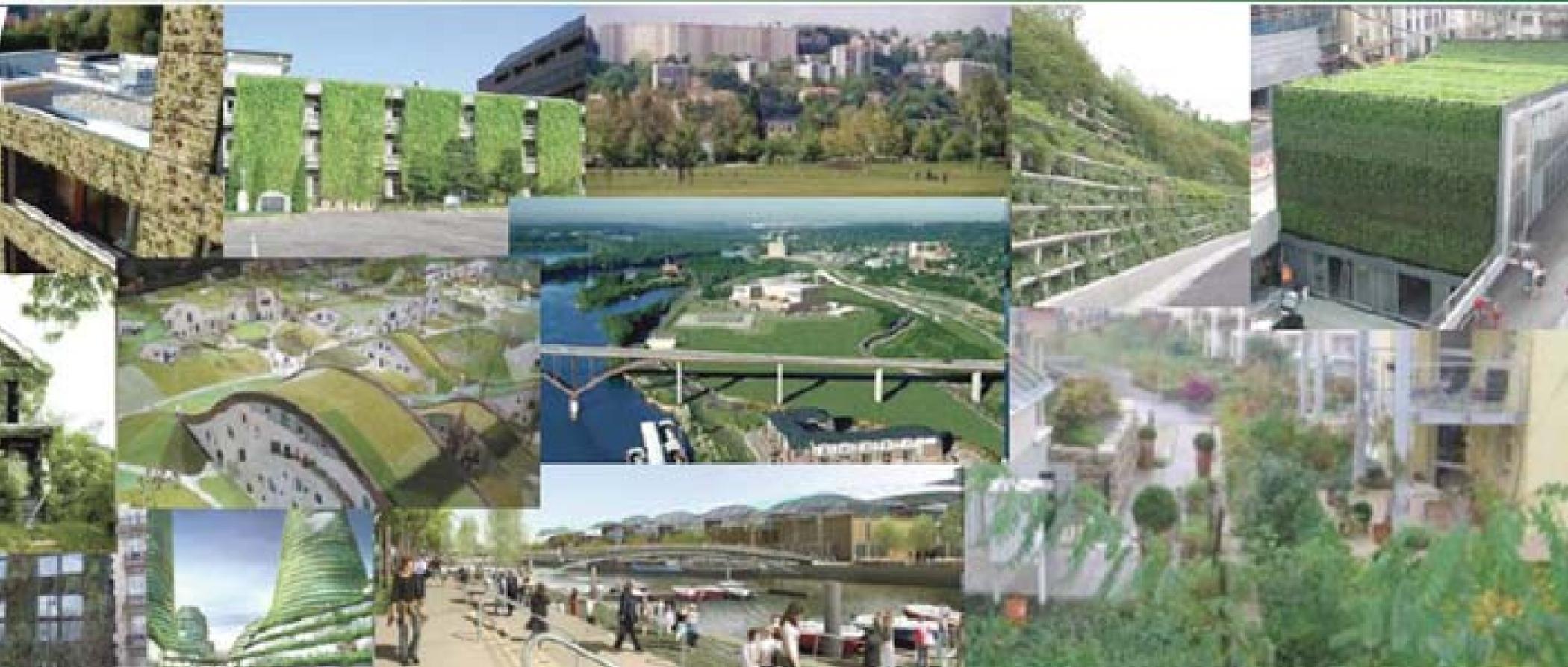# Implementation
Challenges

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Lack of money, asymmetric benefits and costs

Success or failures of soundscape improvement efforts depends on whether advantages and disadvantages of the efforts are disperse or concentrated. Policies are least likely to be implemented in cases where benefits are scattered and costs are concentrated. It does not help if an overall policy is cost effective or provides good value for money if the parties bearing the cost are different from those reaping the benefits. This is often an argument for policy packaging, where efforts on different policy areas are combined in a package so that all stakeholder groups receive benefits while sharing the costs.

Policies to reduce noise exposure in European cities have suffered from taking second place to first local air pollution, and thereafter to climate change. As a result noise exposure has increased over the last decade. Here the environmental quality indicators point the wrong way. The increasing number of people who become annoyed or highly annoyed from surface transport noise is the result of failing noise policies, and the trend lines for noise impacts exceptions to the European success-story in dealing with a range of other environmental exposures.

Lack of political enthusiasm can be linked to another barrier – financing the initiatives. Current means of achieving noise reductions and noise abatements are costly and there are simply insufficient funds available. The money squeeze is a major challenge connected to reach targets for noise abatement. State co-financing and getting the various stakeholders that benefit from the initiatives to also bear part of the costs can thus be a necessary tool in order to stimulate municipalities to advance noise abatement measures, and make the investments more manageable.

State, municipal and infrastructure authorities all have a responsibility for looking after their own targets, goals and responsibilities. The more advanced operations also have a number of operational and process indicators that monitor their activities and results. The downside of this operational context is that it dampens the enthusiasm for worthwhile projects that do not feed into the defined status and progress indicators. Areas where efforts "count" can easily take priority over successful implementations that channel resources away from areas that "count".

Distribution of costs and benefits

Barrier	Tactics
Acceptability depends on whether costs and benefits are disperse (collective) or concentrated	Identify (types of) barriers at an early stage. Prioritize efforts on measures that have a good chance of succeeding such as policies in which benefits are concentrated and costs collective or where all stakeholders benefit (policy packages).

Priority of noise abatement

Barrier	Tactics
Implementation depends on political priority	EC policies, national targets and legislation can affect lower level levels. Mapping of noise levels and action plans put noise on the political agenda and may indicate where measures are necessary. Dedicated individuals in administration and enthusiastic politicians. Status and progress indicators on noise policies part of organisations responsibilities.

Economic resources/financing

Barrier	Tactics
Lack of economic resources	Financial support (state funding, private-public partnerships) creates incentives for implementation and can facilitate noise abatement. Municipality in good economic situation favours noise abatement.

Not my table, not my concern, know nothing about it

Even when a dedicated part of the organisation e.g. environmental office or department are in charge of noise policies, progress is not assured. Actual noise abatements and soundscape improvements may depend more on strategic decisions such as the choice of new locations for infrastructure investments, their layout and architecture, procurement rules, and operational decisions than the policies of the environmental department.

It helps to have environment officers that are enthusiastic, but they can seldom succeed when working in isolation. Other parts of the organisation, especially those in charge of the important decisions and financing, need to support the efforts.

Soundscape improvement and noise abatement policies that are part of operational, purchasing, and planning procedures in other parts of the organisation, are means of securing policy integration.

Since other departments or parts of the organisation may not share the same view of the necessity for or priority of noise abatement measures even partial success can at least reduce the number of decisions that are counterproductive.

Committed teams consisiting of representatives from municipal staff, politicians, business sector and research can successfully promote implementation. This explains why some municipalities are forerunners. However, a high level of competence and access to administrative resourses is necessary .

A recommended strategy is to establish inter- and intra-organizational networks. Such networks can bridge barriers, lack of integration between areas of responsibility, difference in perspectives and lack of policy integration, and thus support and strengthen local initiatives.

Local groups can be an arena for discussing changes, best solutions and sharing of information. To establish such groups, regulations and specific guidelines for participation maybe required. National knowledge centres/networks spanning municipalities and regions is also possible.

By including information from state, municipalities, regions and researchers, the network could strengthen noise abatement, be an arena for discussing and spreading knowledge and experiences, as well as be an institution for networking among actors.

Conflicting framing/different understanding

Barrier	Tactics
Different understanding of decision frameworks, no guidelines or mandatory requirements for cooperation can raise the conflict level and reduce possibility of implementation	Inter- and intra-organizational networks can build trust and mutual understanding between actors. Provide guidelines and mandatory requirements for systematic cooperation.

Policy integration

Barrier	Tactics
Lack of priority/integration of noise implications from other relevant parts\sectors	Secure that noise is included in relevant parts of the administration through e.g. committed teams with representatives from municipal administration, politicians, business sector and research. Visualise the benefits of soundscape planning and areas in need of noise abatements

Administrative/professional resources

Barrier	Tactics
Lack of administrative competence and resources	Strengthen administrative/professional resources. Establish national knowledge centres to increase competence. A national network could strengthen soundscape planning, noise abatement initiatives, disseminating state of the art/experiences, as well as be an institution for networking among actors.

Veto points, turf conflicts, lack of popular support

The number of actors affected by or involved in the implementation of soundscape imporvement and noise abatement measures can be large. Local residents, neighbouring areas, shops and businesses, public transport companies, infra structure managers, motorists, and traffic regulation authorities are some of the instances directly involved. Each of these groups may have the power to delay and some have the organisational, financial, legal or political basis to veto a given implementation.

Even where there is an overall agreement (or acceptance of the need) to improve sound quality and mitigate citizens' exposure to noise, the variety of actors, perspectives and interactions make for complex implementation processes .

Noise policies often affect areas where there is no clear problem "owner", or where shared, undefined, unclear, or fragmented organisational responsibilities create barriers. Professional stakeholders and actors focussing narrowly on their limited tasks can also cause problems. One scenario is where different turf "masters" disagree on who gets the final say. Some departmental divisions or stakeholder groups may have other priorities, and even conflicting interest.

Noise is an ambient stressor that is characterized being "non-urgent", "chronic", "dirty" and "intractable". This is a group of stressors that citizens often feel powerless to do something about. However, passive acceptance can be overcome where there are active national or local organized interest groups promoting noise abatement.

Having organized and knowledgeable citizen groups make it easier to overcome financial, organisational, and multiple stakeholder hurdles and get support for quicker processes. In many countries, cities and local communities there are thus groups that play an active role in lifting environmental consciousness regarding community, neighbour and transportation noise.

Having multiple actors on board can also result in synergetic processes, where each party brings specific competencies and assets to to the table. Municipal organisations may have the local knowledge and know how to implement successfully, but lack the planning tools and organizational expertise that e.g. national infrastructure authorities, or environmental offices may have. Especially in the Soundscape area, there is also a need for an EC-wide network that can promote innovations, and efforts to improve soundscapes and not only reduce noise.

Number of actors

Barrier	Tactics
The number of decisions (veto points) and actors influence time used to reach consensus and to implement.	Adjust the regulatory and organizational framework by reducing the number of participants, appointing a chair person or put in place a process that can govern or resolve disputes between autonomous actors.

Division of responsibilities

Barrier	Tactics
Multiple actors combined with limited and often unclear responsibilities reduce the possibility of implementation (fragmentation)	Put in place strategies that bridge sectors in a coordinated manner. A leading actor can be assigned the role as initiator and governor of the process. Appoint a noise abatement chief or noise policy "general" that not only has responsibility but also power.

Stakeholder support

Barrier	Tactics
Lack of organized stakeholder groups or citizens promoting noise abatement	Institutionalise citizen participation. Put in place mechanisms for citizens to have their complaints heard, argue the need for abatements, and submit proposals for considerations. For larger projects having significant noise consequences: Establish stakeholder panels with regular meetings.