

FASIL PROJECT

BREAKTHROUGH TO THE FUTURE WITH
THE INFORMATION SOCIETY IN THE
LIEGE REGION

INTRODUCTION









A new and different society has dawned, characterised by the speed of the exchange and circulation of information and this on a global level.

This innovation comes in the wake of many others: the command of fire, the cultivation of cereals, the wheel, writing, printing, the industrial use of steam, electricity... to name but a few of the innovations which have marked the stages of human development. Like these developments, the information society (S.I.)¹, which is the subject under discussion, will engender a socio-economic revolution (NB. Appendix 1: Build the European Information Society for all).

Each and every one of us, right through from our role as simple citizens, to the numerous systems in which we evolve, work, relax, care for ourselves..we are all concerned with this revolution.

The thoughts that are expressed here show that the Information Society will in the near future have a very strong impact in many different areas of life and this throughout the entire world.

Some examples to illustrate:

-  education;
-  health;
-  employment;
-  organisation of work, the sociology of organisations;
-  the organisation of the manufacture and distribution of goods and services;
-  culture;
-  democracy;
-  ...

¹ A definition of the Information Society:

The convergence between information technology, consumer electronics and telecommunications enables us to group together under one roof all the digitised mediums - texts, graphics, photos, videos, sound systems and computerised data; in order to diffuse them simultaneously interactively. This convergence will allow the transition towards a society based upon knowledge, by stimulating a structural adjustment of its economy through the development of employment prospects, qualifications and the quality of life.

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These impacts can be seen at numerous levels of organisation in life:

- *The family;*
- *Education and training establishments;*
- *Work and leisure establishments;*
- *The city;*
- *Regional entities;*
- *Regions;*
- *Countries;*
- *Communities within different countries;*
- *Continents;*
- ...

The FASIL project, financed by the European Union, the Wallonne Region and the province of Liege which aims to Breakthrough to the Future with the Information Society in the Liege region, had the objective of enabling the province of Liege to measure up to the issues and impacts of this new form of society where information and its applications play the leading role.





This document aims to be a reflection of all the steps taken in the context of the FASIL project, as well as the assessments and issues identified during the project, all of this leading to a global I.S. strategy for the Liege region. This strategy is underlined by a series of priority axes of intervention

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1. FRAMEWORK AND OBJECTIVES OF THE FASIL PROJET

1.1 FRAMEWORK

The Commission's White Book written in 1993 under the heading of 'Growth, competitiveness, employment - the challenges and leads to take us into the XXIst century' clearly highlights the potentiality of information technology and communications and the corresponding services, with a view to:

-  Promoting continued and durable growth;
-  Developing competitiveness;
-  Creating new employment possibilities;
-  Improving the quality of life of all Europeans.

The European Union has since multiplied its initiatives in numerous areas in order to allow the Information Society to develop:

- *the speeding up of the process of liberalisation of the telecommunication sector,*
- *the undertaking of a new framework of regulations for intellectual property and respect of privacy,*
- *the launching of in depth studies dealing with economic, social and membership aspects of the I.S.,*
- *support for pilot projects,*
- *the launching of pilot actions for the development of the I.S. at regional level.*

In this perspective, it is worth remembering that in November 1994, six regions signed a common declaration of intent with the European Union, the *Inter Regional Information Society Initiative (IRISI)*, with the aim of leading the pilot project of a

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discourse aiming at a more rapid development of the I.S. within their regions (NB. Appendix 2)

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Boosted by this success (many concrete projects followed on from this), the European Union launched in September 1995 an invitation to tender presenting the broad outlines and the restrictions of a long-term course of action, which many regions responded to.

It is within this framework, in accordance with the Governor of the province of Liege, Paul Bolland that the SPI+ and SOCRAN drew up the FASIL project.

The province of Liege with its FASIL project is therefore one of 22 European regions selected by the European Union to take part in the RISI initiative (Regional Information Society Initiative) (NB. Appendix 2)

The European Union has in this way given financial assistance - officially signed in 1997 under article 10 of FEDER regulations. This financial aid amounts to 50% of the budget, the balance being equally shared between the Wallonne region and the province of Liege.

1.2. OBJECTIVES

The objective of the FASIL project within the province of Liege has been to draw up by common consensus, a strategy with a plan of action to be undertaken by different operators in order that the private and public socio-economic sectors, but also the general public make the most of this Information Society of the future.

The general procedures being put into action rest on the fact that the concept of the Information Society is inseparable from the offer of New Information and Communication Technologies (NTIC) but does not limit itself to this aspect.

Thus, for a maximum number of circumstances, the accent has been put on the necessity of responding to the specific needs of a number of social groups (bottom up approach) which are only too often trapped within a technology bases logic (top down approach).

Indeed, we must aim for a general plan, maximising all potentials for creating services and new activities, improving the quality of life, encounter various problems of structural adjustment, social acceptance, economic cohesion, new decisions and development process's which will be long lasting in a region such as ours, in particular in the domain of the Information Society (I.S.).

The results of the steps which were initiated nearly two years ago but which really got underway as from May 1997, will be presented further on.

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One of the essential concerns of the FASIL project has been to put into action, firstly, an effort in the circulation of information and raising the consciousness of the different actors as regards the issues, the opportunities and the risks, and secondly, a dynamic of projects with the aim of concretising the consequences of the first choice of strategies offered.

Of course, this is not new ground which is reassuring. Besides a global strategy and a number of priority axes which have been engaged, some firm proposals have been made. For the most part they aim to amplify, diversify, complete, make more coherent and meet with certain obstacles relative to different actions already embarked on or about to be embarked on or which local operators should embark on.

We must be clear. A strategy which does not lead to relevant actions can not really be considered a strategy. In the same way, a strategy which does not evolve in accordance with the concrete realities of the terrain, the means allocated, technological progress, private operator investment with a supra regional logic will not be of much use. Consequently, the decision makers of our region must be aware that if the FASIL project today has the first answers, it must also enter into a continuous process whereby the strategy, the resources and the plans of action are the object of a permanent evaluation in view of a readjustment equally permanent of the vision and the actions.

In the same way, a strategy cannot be put into being if the resources are not available to support the actions involved. This explains, firstly the importance of a vision as consensual as possible of this strategy, and secondly, the necessity of resources devoted to the projects.

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A number of steps will need to be undertaken in this respect. We already know that the resources could have 5 principal origins:

- Unused sums, available from structural funds, objective 2 97-99 (FEDER and F.S.E.) (DG V and DG XVI of the European Union) ;
- Sums to be reserved under general objectives of structural funds which as from the year 2000 will replace the current objective 2 (DG V and DG XVI of the European Union) ;
- Sums resulting from the positive results of the remission of tender following numerous invitations which will be given during the setting up of the 5th programme (2000 to 2006) which will be devoted to innovation (DG XIII of the European Union) ;
- Regional public co-financing ;
- Private finance (or co-finance).

... and experience has shown numerous local operators the importance of the effort necessary in order to obtain these means.

Finally, a precision must be made. FASIL does not reply to the following question: Which regional development for our region? This question is in fact posed in the context of Liege 2000. It is not up to FASIL to decide which economic sector should be privileged to the detriment of another. It is not up to FASIL to say which infrastructural investment is more important than another.

However, what FASIL is saying is that a local development which does not integrate fully enough, the different facets of the I.S. - in its technological aspects, and in its human aspects concerned with the economy and work, as well as the quality of life in the largest sense of the term - such a development when we are about to enter into the third millennium, could never succeed.

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2. THE MEANS USED

2.1. THE OPERATIONAL TEAM

Placed under the joint responsibility of the SPI+ and SOCRAN management, the operational team which has undertaken the realisation of the project has been made up in the following way (N.B. diagram hereafter):

At 

Part-time: Mrs Françoise Lejeune, infrastructure Manager.

Part-time: Mr Damien Jacob, Responsible for the Transport and Infrastructure

Unit.

Full time:  Jérôme Samain, Consultant.

With

Part-time : Mr Robert Frédéric, General Manager.

Part-time: Mrs Alix Housiaux, Assistant Manager

Full time (up until May 98): Mr Damien Wéra, Advisor.

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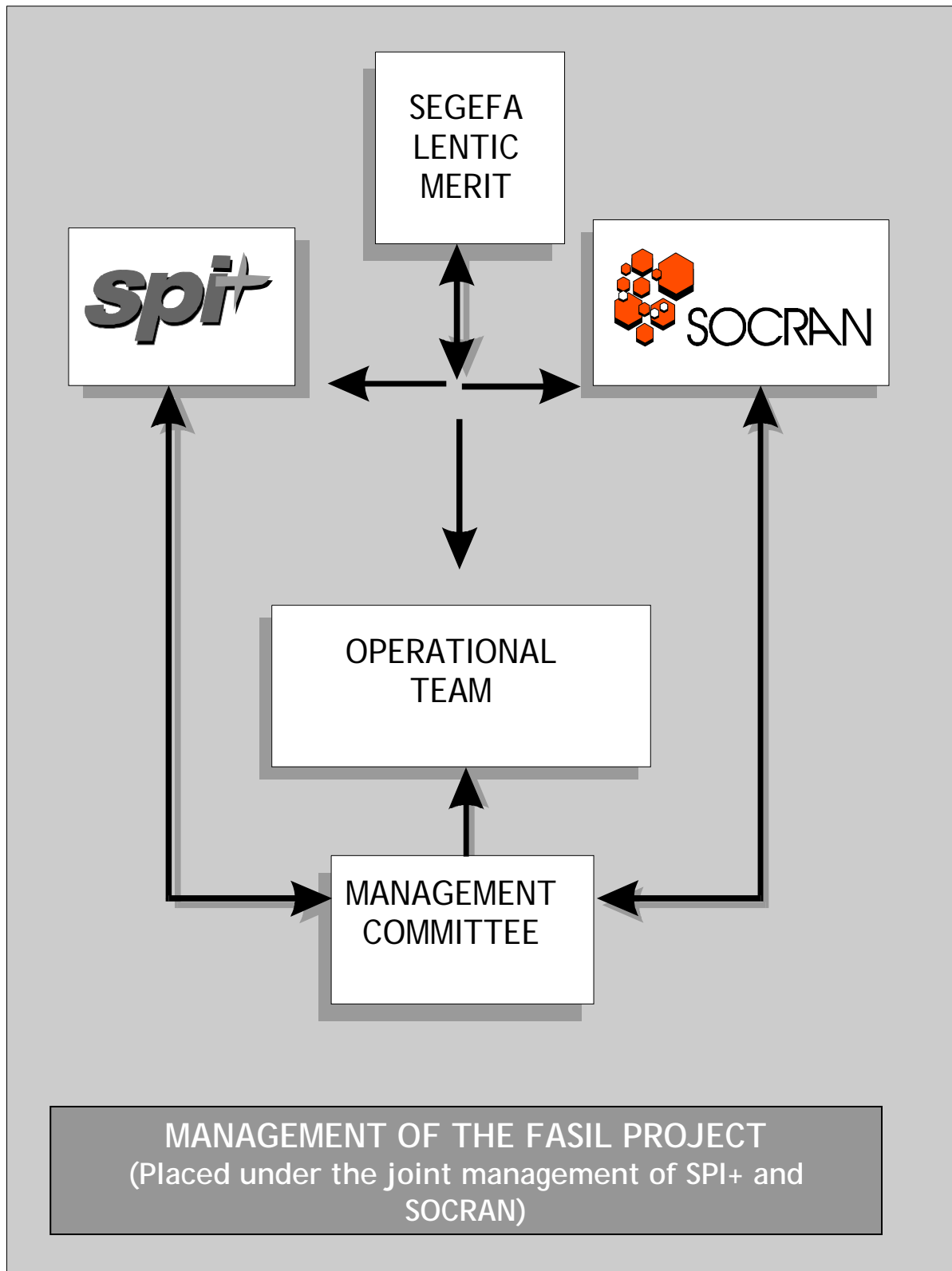
The team has been assisted and aided by:

A team from SEGEFA (Service of fundamental and Applied Economic Geography) from the University of Liège (Ulg), placed under the management of Professor Bernadette Mérenne-Schoumaker and composed of the following part-time researchers Mr Frédéric Derwael, Mr Guénaël Devillet, Mr Bruno Fallais and Mrs Anne-Marie Veithen;

Mr Marc Minon, Manager of the Communications Department at LENTIC (Laboratory of Studies on New Information and communication Technologies and the Cultural Industries) of the Ulg, placed under the management of Professor François Pichault ;

The professor Luc Soete, assisted by Mrs Claire Nauwelaers, Senior Research Fellow, of MERIT (Maastricht Economic Research Institute on Innovation and Technology), who have assured the international consultancy mission for the accompaniment of the project.

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2.2. THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

A management committee representing the lifebloods of the province was formed. Its role and composition (71 members) are defined in appendix 3.

The governor of the Province of Liege, Paul Bolland, assured the chairmanship






The management committee was kept up to date as regards the works programme and its different stages and several of its members took an active participation in the workings of the FASIL project.

The present document was submitted and met with approval.

2.3. METHODOLOGICAL OPERATIONS RESERVED

This is a major project concerning on the one hand a region of a million inhabitants and on the other hand, aiming to lead to a consensual strategic vision with a view to the development of the I.S.; thus, a group of actions have been launched within the framework of the FASIL project.

Each of these actions aim to answer at least one of the following preoccupations:

-  Collect information from the best sources;
-  Increase the awareness of the various local socio-economic actors to the importance of a voluntary and successful entry of our region into the I.S.;
-  Encourage all the actors within our region to dialogue with the leaders of the FASIL project;
-  Encourage the participation of a maximum number of people in the exchanges, discourse, or work parties leading to the first steps of a strategic discourse;
- 

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Compare the observations made and the proposals in development within our region with what is happening simultaneously in other regions.

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These different actions which will later be developed, are hereafter listed chronologically.

1. Starting analysis :
concerning the situation of our region on an economic level and as regards the emergence of the I.S. (appendix 4 and 5);
2. Making people aware of the FASIL project :
a press conference, two awareness days and the regular publication of a "Newsletter" (appendix 8);
3. 'General Public' Survey :
survey carried out among associations (appendix 7);
4. DELPHI Survey:
survey carried out among local and regional experts (appendix 9);
5. the 17 work groups
(appendix10);
6. Survey on the equipment used in households and the use of information technology within the Province of Liège
(appendix 5).

As well as this, other actions have been carried out during the FASIL project, initiated either by the European Union or directly by the FASIL project. These actions specifically concerned the relations with other RISI and IRISI regions (a list of these regions can be found in appendix 2):

- The visit of two French regions with an original approach to the I.S. : the Nord Pas-de-Calais region (Lille) and the Poitou-Charente region, which the town of Parthenay is part of (appendix 6);
- The participation in meetings organised by the European Union, regrouping the 22 RISI regions as well as the eris@ association;
- The organisation of meetings between FASIL and leaders of the projects developed by the State of Brandebourg, the Nord Pas-de-Calais region and Wales (appendix 11).

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2.3.1. STARTING ANALYSIS

Includes:

Documentary research: this consisted of grouping together all the data at a Belgian and regional level on the subject of telecommunications as well as on the characteristics and tendencies of our geographical zone as regards different themes whilst keeping in view the emergence of the I.S. This information was completed by an interview with the resource people;



A viewdata audit: this completed the documentary research with an inventory (interviews and surveys amongst the resource people), in view of an evaluation of the telecommunication infrastructures and the applications of existing NTIC's as well as those currently underway or planned for the future within our region;



SWOT¹ analysis

To start with these SWOT analyses were based on the documentary research and the viewdata audit. The first SWOT tables were published in the document entitled 'The issues raised by our regions entry into the I.S.' written in October 1997 and widely distributed throughout our environment.

Progressively the SWOT tables were enriched by the comments of those who read it and by the analysis of the answers to the Delphi survey (see hereafter), by the analysis of the projects carried out by the working parties (see hereafter) and in a general way by all the new information which punctuated the work of the operational team and its consultants.

In their final version, the SWOT tables include where needed an extra rubric entitled 'Needs', which synthesises the expectations of all those who are called upon to give their opinion on the situation of our region.

¹ Strengths = Forces

Weaknesses = Faiblesses

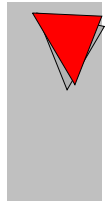
Opportunities = Opportunités

Threats = Menaces

All the SWOT grids can be found in appendix 13.

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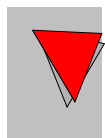
Presentation of all the information:



All the elements relative to the documentary collection have been transferred to appendix 4, whilst the corresponding SWOT grids can be consulted in appendix 13.

They are organised around the following rubrics:

- The Belgian context (federal and regional).
- The regional situation :
 - geographical;
 - demographic;
 - infrastructural.
- The economic structure;
- The information technology and communications sector;
- Research and development;
- Teaching and training;
- Health;
- Administrative;
- Leisure, cultural and media activities;
- The rural zone.



The viewdata audit is the subject of appendix 5.

It includes the following rubrics:


- The telecommunication infrastructures ;
- Residential users;
- Professional users.

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2.3.2. MAKING PEOPLE AWARE OF THE FASIL PROJECT

- Press conference (6 May 1997) 

This marked the 'official' starting point of the FASIL project and brought together around twenty journalists. The detailed document concerning the FASIL project which was handed over to the press on this day, as well as the various articles which appeared in the regional and national papers, can be found in appendix 8.

- Awareness days (Liège - 12 and 13 September 1997) 

A total of almost 150 people participated in these two awareness days. The detailed programme, the summary of some of the interventions and a press clipping can be found in appendix 8.

These two days were divided into 3 distinct parts:

- The morning of 12 September, presided by the Governor Paul Bolland, was devoted to 2 general reports :

'The regional anchoring of the Information Society' by the Prof. Luc Soete (MERIT and President of a high level advisory group who met up in 1996 and 1997 on the initiative of DG V);

"Actions and results of the regions which participated at the IRISI" by Mr. Gareth Hugues (general secretary of the network of 6 regions who have carried out a pilot project of strategic discourse concerning the I.S. since 1994.

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- The afternoon of the 12 September was devoted to 6 workshops on the following themes (Health, Teaching-Training, Administration-Citizens, Logistics, Companies, and Media-Culture.
- The morning of the 13 September was concerned with :

The demonstration of a practical implementation of participative teaching skills (ULG);

A debate with the theme of 'the Information Society and regional development' which brought together various local personalities from the socio-economic circle.

- **The "FASIL Newsletter - Click on to the future!"**



4 numbers were edited during the period of the project and nearly 3000 copies were distributed. The objective of this newsletter was to introduce the FASIL project and make the socio-economic world and the general public aware of the Information Society.

The compilation of this newsletter is the result of a collaboration with the 'Fifteenth Day' team (including several students in their last year of journalism studies) and the LENTIC team (Ulg).

- **The "Liège, our Province" survey**



As co-financier of the ASIL project, the Province of Liege carried out a survey 'You and the Internet' which appeared in 'Liege, our Province' a leaflet that was distributed to every household within the Province of Liege.

The explication of the FASIL project in the publication of this survey and its findings gave more than 400 people the chance to make their comments on the project to provincial leaders.

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2.3.3. THE 'GENERAL PUBLIC' SURVEY

One of the main objectives of the FASIL project had been to make the 'General Public' in other words the citizens; aware of the concerns linked with the development of the I.S. In order to attain this objective the decision was taken to carry out a survey. This survey which became known as the 'General Public' was carried out amongst associations which represented the different worlds of sport, social interests and tourism, etc. within our region. The objectives of the survey were, apart that of making the public aware of the project, to understand the state of the equipment within the associations and the problems which occur most often in the domain of the I.S.

The questionnaire used in the General Public survey is presented in appendix 7. The preparation, definition of the sample and the analysis were carried out by the SEGEFA.

The questionnaire of the survey was sent to:

- A sample of 432 associations picked at random (out of a total population of 6000 associations);
- 70 other associations that the operational team considered important to know their opinion on the subject.

A telephone follow up enabled the replies of 150 questionnaires out of the sample of 432 to be obtained; and from the second sample group of 70 associations, around 20 replies were obtained. .

The distribution of the associations (by arrondissement and by type of activity) who took part in this survey are summarised in the following table:

Arrondissement	Social Associations	Sporting Associations	Others	Total
Huy	5	14	8	27
%	18.6	51.8	29.6	17.1
Liège	18	36	31	85
%	21.2	42.3	36.5	53.8
Verviers	12	20	13	45
%	26.7	44.4	28.9	28.5
Total	35	70	53	158
%	22.2	44.3	33.5	100

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The report on the General Public survey can also be found in appendix 7.

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2.3.4. THE DELPHI SURVEY

The DELPHI method









The DELPHI method, well known amongst the specialists of medium and long term strategy development, aims to gather by means of the questionnaire, the justified opinion of a panel of experts in the different domains. The procedure, based on feedback, avoids confrontation between experts and protects their anonymity.

The findings of the first questionnaire were communicated to each expert (general tendencies, specific details, opinions and justifications,...), who were then invited to give their reactions and reply to a second questionnaire designed in function with the first opinions gathered and so forth until there is a strong convergence of replies.

Putting into Action

The operational team chose, in accordance with the means available, to retain a DELPHI of two iterations.

The putting into action of the DELPHI survey was entrusted to the SEGEFA university department which worked in close collaboration with the operational staff. The following stages give details of the steps taken:

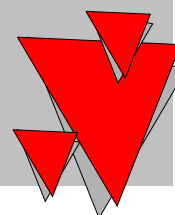
-  Definition of the different themes reserved;
-  Development of questionnaires;
-  Verification of their pertinence amongst resource people linked to the University and also experts from MERIT and LENTIC;
-  Selection of a panel of experts (based on a defined profile - NB. Appendix 9) to be contacted according to the theme in question;
-  Following up of experts;
-  Thorough analysis of replies according to the different points of view and presentation of the results;
-  Development of a synthesis;
-  Development of the DELPHI II questionnaire.

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The first round: DELPHI I

The DELPHI I questionnaire (and the DELPHI II) covered the following 8 themes:

- _____Transport - Logistics;
- _____Public transport;
- _____Economic development;
- _____Health;
- _____Education development and adult education;
- _____Media-culture;
- _____Administration;
- _____Citizens services.



Each questionnaire for the first seven themes was addressed to the relevant experts. The questionnaire on the 8th theme (Citizens services) was addressed to all the experts in the role of citizens. Thus, each expert replied to two themes.

Each thematic questionnaire (the first 7 on the list above) asked the expert to express themselves on the following four major points.

1. An assessment of strengths and weaknesses and the correlative exposition of evolution prospects, the extent of application being the Province of Liege;
2. The issues which imply the use of NTIC's; each issue (11 were identified) was the object of a general question and several affirmations. The general questions 'issues' (repeated in the 2nd part - §2.2) are the result of the analysis of reports from the high level advisory group presided by Mr. Luc Soete (see appendix 1)

Each 'issue' question had an affirmation on which the expert gave an opinion amongst the 8 nuances proposed. In addition they gave their opinion, for these affirmations on the subject of opportunities / threats concerning the situation of our region.

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3. The leads for our region, positioning with regard to firm proposals of action possibly to be carried out in the future. The expert was asked to choose and justify two of these proposals which would be priority for the development of the region as well as two which would be easy to put into action;
4. Propositions, in accordance with the vision of the expert, still in the optic of a concrete application within our region.

For the 'Citizens services' theme, each expert replied, as a citizen, to proposals issued from affirmations and proposals from the 6 thematic questionnaires (transport was grouped under one theme), always positioning themselves with regards to our region. Each expert also chose 2 proposals in each theme that he subscribed to, expressing his justification and his vision of possible obstacles.

Out of 100 people approached as experts, 42 accepted to help (mostly from our region). According to the themes, they were distributed in the following way:

THÈME	NUMBER OF EXPERTS
Transports - logistic AND Transport of people	8
Economic Development	7
Health	6
Education development and adult education	11
Media - Culture	7
Administration	3
TOTAL	42

The complete file of questionnaires DELPHI 1, the tables and the synthesis of replies carried out by SEGEFA can be found in appendix 9

The second round: DELPHI II

The DELPHI II file was sent to 42 experts of DELPHI 1, it included three main parts.

1. The communication of the results of the DELPHI 1 questionnaire enabled the experts to situate their replies (from his own theme and the citizens services theme) in relation with those of the other experts. The expert was asked if he wished to modify one or several of his replies to DELPHI 1 and to give a justification.

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The presentation of the results can be noted in the form of a graph (see opposite). These are coloured tables used to visualise the answers from experts (who can also compare his own answers to that of other experts easily but anonymously) and place the answers in the order of descending consensus².

2. New thematic proposals. These are supported in particular by the conclusions from the working parties. A number of firm proposals for projects to be developed in the Liege region have been the object of a request for expert opinion. The firm proposals reserved for the questionnaire concerned major projects that were able to illustrate actions that support the main theme of the project (see part 3)

As far as the joint theme of 'citizens services' is concerned, the propositions made were concerned with the possible setting up of new 'trusted third party' (TTP) services.

A general demand for the validation of the SWOT grids ⁴ presented for each theme and, in a global form for all the themes. These grids were designed by integrating all the observations made since the first version from October 1997 and by expressing the main needs of users as shown by the answers to the DELPHI 1 questionnaire and the conclusions reached by the working parties.

For information, these grids can be consulted in appendix 13

²The first graph is a three dimensional functional picture which enables the visualisation of the simultaneous position of each of the experts. The affirmations are in lines; the experts are in columns and at the intersection of these the opinions coloured in the scale of opinions.

The colour codification is as follows : Dark green = ' « I am in total agreement » ; Light green = « I am more or less in agreement » ; Orange = « I have mixed opinions » ; Light red = « I am not really in agreement » ; Dark red = I don't agree at all » ; black = « I have no opinion » or « I cannot reply » or « I refuse to reply ». This rough table was sorted, the lines and columns were classified in hierarchical order going from dark green to black and passing through the orange and the red.

In this way we have a second graph which shows clearly a consensus (a majority of green with little orange or a majority of red with little orange) and dissensus (presence of both green and red).

⁴Strengths = Forces

Weaknesses = Faiblesses

Opportunities = Opportunités

Threats = Menaces

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In mid-September, 23 experts agreed to answer to the second round.

THÈME	NOMBRE D'EXPERTS
Transports - Logistic and Public transport	5
Economic development	5
Health	5
Education development and adult education	5
Media - Culture	1
Administration	2
TOTAL	23

The complete dossier of DELPHI 11 questionnaires, the tables and synthesis carried out by the DEGEFA can be found in appendix 9.

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2.3.5. THE FUNCTIONING OF THE 17 WORKING PARTIES

At the end of November 1997, 17 working parties made up of 8 to 15 people were launched; their mission was to finish their work for the end of April 1998.

The composition of these parties was the result of a call for voluntary service. This was achieved by an invitation either directly by the operational team, or through somebody responsible for one of the 6 professional associations who had accepted to form a working party within their association (AIHE, Young Economic Chambers, Walloon Union of Liege and Fabrimetal Companies, Liege Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Middle Class union)

During the starting up meeting, each of the groups formed was requested:

- to programme a minimum of 3 working sessions;
- to elect a leader who became by rights, a member of the Management Committee;
- to lead a discourse within the framework of a theme (see after) always keeping in mind the possibility of linking up with another theme;
- identify problems in common for all members of the group and which the solution implies the setting up of new organisation systems or management systems or the modification of existing systems, bringing into play :
 - human resources;
 - proceedings
 - flow of information
- to deduce project sheets from this information, showing the nature of the problem, the solution envisaged, possible partners, the means, delays and costs, possible obstacles, as well as the results expected;
- to validate the SWOT grids concerning each groups theme;

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- to rely on operational staff to carry out the groups secretarial work.

The 17 working parties were distributed in the following way:



Company services (5 groups each led by a professional association, 1 group made up of company managers);

Logistics;

Research and development

Teaching;

Training;

Health;

Media;

Culture and Leisure;

Rural zone;

Administration and local councils;

Regional development and employment (group made up of local or regional development organisations);

Citizens services (grouping together some non profit making associations)

In this way, over 200 people participated in the discussions within this framework.

In appendix 10:

The make up of each working party;

The corresponding final reports and project sheets (limited distribution).

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2.3.6. SURVEY ON HOUSEHOLD FITTINGS AND THE USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY WITHIN THE PROVINCE OF LIEGE

In order to dispose of up to date and pertinent statistics on the entire province, it was decided to carry out a survey on household fittings and the use of information technology in the province of Liege.

The carrying out of this survey was entrusted to LENTIC (ULG) and SOFRES/SOBEMAP. It was carried out during the months of May and June 1998.

These surveys form part of a similar survey, carried out at a national level, which then proceeded with a sub sample of 200 people in the province of Liege.

The advantage of this procedure is the possibility of benchmarking, thus enabling the analysis of the situation in Liege, as compared to that of the whole of Wallonie and Belgium.

The results and analysis are resumed in appendix 5 - Viewdata audits.

2.3.7. THE INTER-REGIONAL INITIATIVES

With its FASIL project, the province of Liege forms part of 22 RISI regions. This network of regions, to which 6 IRISI regions are attached (NB. 1.1. Framework and appendix 2) has enabled various actions of which details follow.

Taking part in RISI meetings (*Regional Information Society Initiative*)



Within the framework of the RISI's initiative and throughout this initiative, the European Union, assisted by the Technical Assistance Office and the TECHNOPOLIS consultant, organised various meetings which the 22 RISI regions took part in.

Apart from an exchange of experiences with the 21 other regions concerned, these meetings also enabled a methodological consolidation on the way the projects should be developed.

PART 1 : STEPS TO BE TAKEN

A list of these meetings can be found in appendix 2.

Visit of 2 French RISI regions

These visits were destined to measure the efforts being made in two distinct areas:

1. Nord Pas-de-Calais (4,2 Millions inhabitants): this region had launched a project similar to FASIL two years before us. Their experience was therefore precious on several accounts :



The methodology used;



The strategy and plan of action proposed at the end of the project (in 1996);



The functions of the permanent team which remained in place after the end of the project.

PART 1 : STEPS TO BE TAKEN

2. The Poitou-Charente region. Ville de Parthenay forms part of this region. The mayor of this town of 12 000 inhabitants, Mr. Michel Hervé and the President of the agency for the creation of Businesses (APCE) launched an action entitled 'digitalisation for all' which implicates:



A major effort in the digitalisation of the towns administration departments;



A strong participation by the towns population;



Financial aid (leasing from the local council) for information technology equipment and household connection to the Internet.

The reports of the corresponding visits can be found in appendix 5.

The Liège region, member of the association eris@



In addition, our region was amongst the first to join up as a member of the ERIS@ network⁵ (European Regional Information Society Association) supported by the European Union with a view to:

- Promoting the development of the Information Society at the heart of the regions within the European Union;
- Continuing the exchange of experiences, beyond the end of the RISI contracts;
- Organising transregional thematic groups;
- Contributing to the research for financial assistance in order to perpetuate the operational staff already in place and enable the launch of local or transregional projects;
- Make transregional co-operation easier.

Transregional co-operation



We have formed an exchange group with the following three regions:

- Nord Pas-de-Calais (IRISI pilot action);
- The state of Brandebourg (RISI region - project BIS 2006);
- Wales (RISI region - project WIS).

PART 1 : STEPS TO BE TAKEN

Like the Liege region, these are regions with a long industrial tradition, undergoing economic redevelopment and therefore eligible for structural fund aids. These regions present both similarities and complementarities.

Two meetings were set up: the first in Liège, the 18 and 19 June 1998; the second in Potsdam (Berlin), the 27 and 28 August 1998.

The object of these meetings was:

- Mutual exchange of information on the socio-economic characteristics of each region;

- An exchange of documents and information (peer review) concerning the RISI or IRISI projects developed in each region;

- An exchange of points of view on the steps taken for the promotion of the I.S. in each region, development of the different RISI projects, prospects of the launching and management of concrete projects in partnership

- Search out the axe of co-operation possible in the context of the I.S. between the 4 regions.

The review of these meetings can be found in appendix 11

PART 1 : STEPS TO BE TAKEN

2.4. OUTLINE OF OUR COMMUNITY ANALYSIS

The different steps taken to punctuate the organisation of the FASIL operation thus enabled many people to put forward their views:

- The 71 members of the Management Committee;
- The 150 people who participated at the awareness days (of which around 50 participated in the working parties);
- The 42 DELPHI experts;
- The 180 association leaders who replied to the “General Public” survey;
- The people who replied to the survey concerning household fittings and use of information technology within the province of Liege ;
- The participants of the working parties (more than 200 people);
- The consultants of the FASIL project (MERIT, LENTIC, SEGEFA and the Fifteenth Day team) : about 15 people;
- Spontaneous contacts (around one hundred people).

Thus, we estimate that our ‘community analysis’ (the province) is made up of around 700 members⁶ who contributed their point of view and this participated in the processes of discussion, which was launched.

These figures are obtained taking into account the fact that some people may belong to several categories (for example: member of the Management Committee and participating in the awareness days or member of a working party).

Are not counted:

The 343 people interviewed as part of the Sobemap Survey - Lentic;

The 400 people who replied to the survey that appeared in the leaflet ‘Liege, our province’ delivered to all households.