CURACAO is a project funded by the European Commission through the 6th Framework Programme for Development and Research.

This project aims to coordinate research and monitor the results of the implementation of road user charging as a demand-management tool in urban areas, in order to find out what decision makers require in order to progress with a road pricing policy in their city.

Who Will Benefit from CURACAO and How?

**Project Audience** — CURACAO’s target audiences range from cities where pricing schemes are already in place to those engaged in a fact-finding exercise.

A group of 20 cities planning for implementation have joined an End User Cities Group.

**Products** — A number of products will be created during the project, including a state-of-the-art report, policy recommendations, an implementation guide and an on-line database on good practices.

**Events** — The following types of events are scheduled within the project:

- Three small planning workshops to provide support to the partner cities from the user group;
- Three large events in cities with implemented schemes;
- Three site visits to implemented Road User Charging schemes.

What are the CURACAO products?

- State-of-the-art-reports based on scientific literature and information from the cities implementing road user charging (RUC)
- Guiding paper on good practices - a handbook to support decision makers in the design and implementation of road pricing measures
- Policy recommendations
- Targeted Fact sheets (e.g. on possible impacts and overcoming barriers)
- Final report providing guidelines on successful implementation of RUC
- Online searchable good practices database

What Has Been Done in CURACAO So Far?

**First CURACAO Seminar and User Group meeting in London, March 2007, “Why Charge for the Use of Roads?”**

The first CURACAO User Group meeting took place in London on March 21 and 22, 2007. Continued on next page >
On the first day of the event, the first meeting of the CURACAO User Group was held. Representatives of 17 user group cities were introduced to the project’s objectives and set-up. The content of the first State-of-the-Art report was discussed and the draft evaluation framework was presented for feedback. Several presentations from Transport for London (TfL) told the story behind the London Congestion Charging system.

On the second day, the joint seminar of the Independent Transport Commission (ITC) and CURACAO took place. The Curacao User Group met with an additional 35 pricing experts to learn about public and political acceptance and scheme design. UK case studies and experts’ opinions were presented against a background of the scientific synthesis that has been developed within CURACAO.

The conference ended with a look across the Atlantic Ocean to Kiran Bhat’s presentation about the US experience in local pricing policies.

All presentations of these events are available at www.curacaoproject.eu. The next CURACAO User Group meeting will take place in Stockholm in September 2007.

For more information and to register, contact Ivo Cré at Polis <icre@polis-online.org>.

**US Road Charging Activities**

During the London seminar, CURACAO welcomed Kiran Bhat, who presented a US viewpoint on design and acceptability. He explained that in most cases, the first priority of road authorities is to avoid the paralysis of analysis and to put a pricing system in place. Active monitoring and evaluation can then improve the systems over time. The US federal government has recently rediscovered the pricing issue, so much more activity is to be expected in the near future.

The CURACAO community looks forward to keeping in touch with its US colleagues.

**First State-of-the-Art Report**

The first version of the State-of-the-Art Report (SoAR) has already been finalised and was based on evidence collated from research and practice before the end of 2006, including a survey of end user cities in July of last year. The report covers eight important issues.

Each section of the report is structured around a series of questions which cities might ask and answers to those questions based on available evidence. End user cities were asked to comment on an initial list of these questions in November 2006. The resulting list of questions reflects their suggestions and concerns. A few of the issues which they raised then — concerning legislation, business processes, administration and enforcement — are being considered within the separate work package on learning from best practice. It is anticipated that the evidence will be more practical and city-specific in nature.

Given the number of consultancy studies on road pricing, it is likely there will be other evidence that will be new to the study team. We would very much welcome information on other evidence that can be included in future versions of the report. If you wish to see the current version of the State-of-the-Art Report and provide comments, please send an email to <A.Koh@its.leeds.ac.uk>.

**What Does the State-of-the-Art Report Cover?**

- The possible objectives of road pricing schemes
- The ways in which road pricing schemes can be designed to meet those objectives
- The technologies available to support such scheme designs
- Techniques for predicting the effects of road pricing schemes
- Techniques for appraising the effects of road pricing schemes
- Specific evidence of impacts on the economy, the environment and equity
- Factors affecting the acceptability of road pricing schemes
- The potential transferability of experience from one city to another
- Environmental impacts (only raised in late 2006, and is not addressed in this current version of the State-of-the-Art Report)
What is the Status of Road User Charging in European Cities?

Limited Traffic Zone (LTZ) in Rome – Further Developments

The Limited Traffic Zone LTZ subsystem in Rome has been operating from October 2001, and includes 22 “electronic gates” installed on the access roads to the historic city centre. Pole-mounted cameras detect vehicle license plates with Automatic Plate Number Recognition (APNR) technology. Since 2001 the system has helped bring about a 15-20 percent reduction in car traffic, a 5 percent increase in public transport speed and a 5 percent increase in public transport use. However, there has also been an increase in evening rush hour car access to leisure areas, two-wheel traffic and illegal transit.

In order to overcome these issues, several measures have been introduced. In October 2005 a night time LTZ scheme in the central LTZ began running 11 p.m. to 3 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays.

On July 26, 2006 a new LTZ was implemented in Trastevere, supported by 12 electronic access gates and a charging scheme. This is effective Monday to Friday from 6.30 to 10 a.m., and Fridays and Saturdays from 9 p.m. to 3 a.m.

In Trastevere, to minimize violations, instruments have been installed on the poles to indicate whether the gate is active or not.

During the CURACAO project 10 new electronic gates will be installed for monitoring two new LTZ areas: San Lorenzo LTZ (seven gates) and Villa Borghese LTZ (three).

Congestion Charging in Stockholm: What Happens Next?

Congestion charging was implemented in Stockholm on a trial basis from January 3 to July 31, 2006. The trial was evaluated from a number of perspectives. Most importantly, car traffic to and from the inner city dropped by approximately 22 percent during charging hours.

A referendum on the continued implementation of congestion charging was held in conjunction with the general election in Sweden on September 17, 2006. In that vote, 51.3 percent favoured continued implementation versus 45.5 percent against. There was a rather large shift in opinion throughout the charging scheme process.

The new Swedish government has decided to reintroduce congestion charging. The final decision on continued congestion charging in Stockholm will be made by the Swedish Parliament. The reintroduced congestion charges will likely take effect in July 2007.

The revenue from scheme will be used for infrastructure investments.

Debate about Road Pricing in UK

In the UK the debate about road pricing has received a great deal of media coverage in recent months, stimulated by a hugely popular online petition to the prime minister.

The UK government has launched a website where citizens can post petitions, and visitors to the site can register their signature in support. A petition against a national road pricing scheme attracted 1.7 million signatures between November 2006 and February 2006, by far the largest of any e-petition to date. The petition argued that road pricing would impose unreasonable costs on poorer people and those who lived away from their families.

Prime Minister Tony Blair wrote a personal reply to the petition that was sent to every signatory. Mr. Blair drew attention to the need to tackle congestion and its effects on the economy and society, but stressed that no decision had yet been taken on whether to implement a national scheme.
Barriers to Road Pricing: Results from the CURACAO User Needs Assessment

In May 2006 a total of 43 European cities or regions with a potential interest in road pricing were identified. These cities and regions were approached by the CURACAO project partners and asked to complete a questionnaire. In total 22 completed questionnaires were returned by the closing date of the assessment exercise.

The most important question related to the different barriers which respondents were encountering with road pricing, and the relative weightings that they gave to these barriers. Therefore respondents were offered a list of possible barriers to implementation, and asked to choose five, ranking them from one to five in order of priority. The lack of a political champion and low public acceptability were the top two barriers, followed by the difficulty of planning and managing such a large project. A further outcome from this question was the identification of a number of barriers which were not given as options in the original questionnaire. Four of these unidentified barriers were given the highest priority by respondents, and include legal barriers and uncertainty about economic impacts.

By understanding the barriers that cities face, both known and newly identified, CURACAO is able to target its resources to offer solutions from cities with experience in overcoming such issues. While some issues will have a straightforward resolution, others will be more complex and require deeper exploration.

How do Citizens Perceive Road User Charging?

A new report* from Germany throws new light on citizens’ attitudes toward the introduction of road pricing schemes. A survey from the University of Dresden (CURACAO partner) suggests that once a road-pricing system is decided or looks likely to happen and citizens can no longer avoid it, their attitudes towards charging become more positive. In addition they perceive only weak social norms against the toll and they are less likely to exhibit negative emotions like anger.

Furthermore they report lower levels of infringement of freedom and they state a weaker motivation to restore personal freedom than persons who got the impression that the introduction of road pricing is rather uncertain. Thus, the strength of conviction about the introduction of road pricing has a strong effect on the attitudinal evaluation of road pricing.

The report of the survey, published in Transportation Research magazine, relates only to Germany and will need to be replicated in other countries. But the author, Jens Schade, believes something similar happened with the euro: before its introduction those convinced that it would happen felt more positive about the euro than those who felt it could still be resisted. Schade said: “I would like to see more research so my conclusions can be validated, but I see no reason why they wouldn’t be relevant for other countries. And if they prove to be right, policy makers should take the likely positive change in attitudes into account when considering the introduction of a road charging scheme.”**

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Project Partners

The CURACAO project partners are:
- Transport & Travel Research Ltd
- ISIS (Rome)
- ITS, University of Leeds
- Technical University of Dresden
- SINTEF
- Goudappel Coffeng
- WSP
- POLIS
- Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe
- CERTU
- SESTRAN
- ATAC Rome
- City of Stockholm
- Public Roads Administration (Norway)
- Bristol City Council

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