

***“To a TI Community System: Shared Diagnostic and Territorial Animation  
of a Seraing’s area (Belgium)”***

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**Abstract:** Optim@ develops several projects aiming at the improvement of the wellbeing of the population living on the territory of Seraing (Belgium), an industrial town of 60.000 inhabitants. One of these projects consists in carrying out a process of observation and animation on a more restricted territory, namely the area of Ougrée-Bas. This process first of all seeks to build a diagnosis shared by all the actors and to reach a common knowledge of the area. The realization of this diagnosis requires a territorial process of animation and supposes a complete knowledge of the territory. On the basis of resources and needs identified, projects are defined and set up by the actors with Optim@. The method and the tools used could constitute a contribution for the theory on the territorial intelligence community systems (TICS).

## 1. GENERAL PROCESS OF OPTIM@'S OBSERVATION AND ANIMATION

Optim@ leads a partnership of almost sixty associations and institutions on the territory of Seraing (Belgium). After a period of explorative observation between 1998 and 2002 with the Catalyse method, this partnership was structured into reflexions groups which led to the implementation of social inclusion and socio-professional insertion actions.

The actions of social inclusion first concentrated on the area of Ougrée-Bas, an undermined area of 5.000 inhabitants. They aim to make the area more dynamic by supporting the emergence of projects carried out by the inhabitants and the professionals. During the three last years, these initiatives became increasingly autonomous thanks to a transfer of competences and Optim@ gradually positioned in second line, in support of the actors.

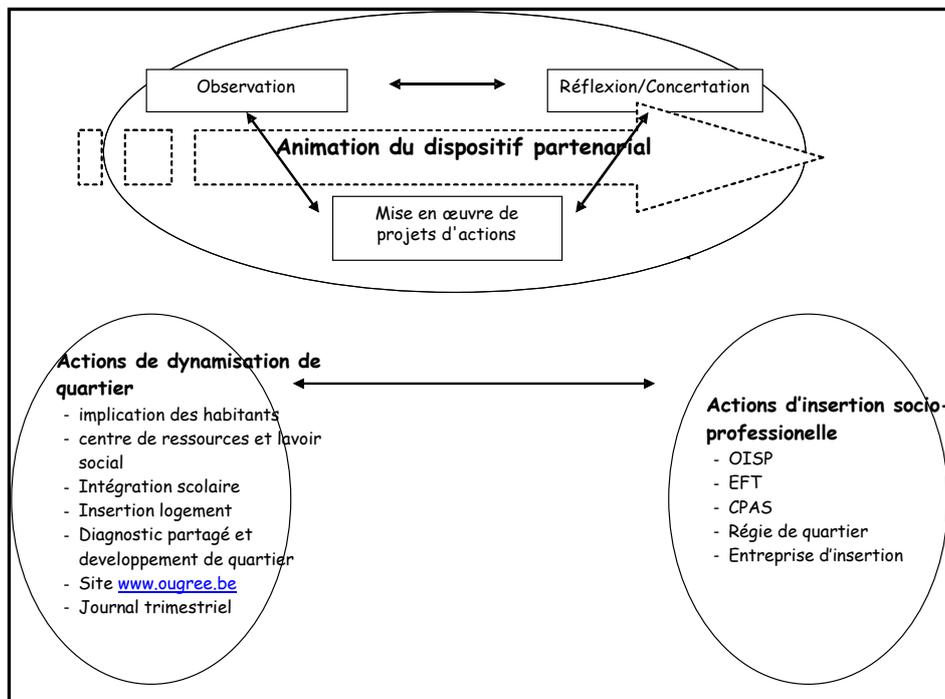
Optim@ evolved to a function of territorial animation relating to:

- Meeting of the actors;
- the global knowledge of the territory;
- Accompaniment of projects.

That shows the importance of animation in the global approach of the territory: it helps the actors to be complement each others in order to improve the well-being of the population in the fields of health, the social action, employment and housing.

Territorial animation becomes, for this reason, a cross function in all the projects of Optim@.

Figure 1: Territorial animation to action.



### **1.1. The territorial process of animation organizes the link between professionals and/or inhabitants**

The partnership process, which gathers since 1998 almost sixty services and groups of active inhabitants in Seraing, is composed of actors of the social integration, socio-professional insertion and the social economy. The objective is to develop a global solution for the insertion of excluded people and unemployed people without professional qualification in Seraing. This approach integrates collective and individual dimensions of insertion: to make there are more dynamic encourage the social activity wich is a necessary step before the social-profesional insertion. The individual report makes the transition to social and professional integration easier.

This process is based on different meeting's places:

- Conference and follow-up group (housing, employment, community development) to define projects starting from identified needs and following the actions.
- network meetings to share reflections between partners;
- seminars to increase reflections and to diffuse them outside (employment project in Seraing, positive experiences in the schools, follow-up of the unemployment person, parentality, community experiments in Seraing, need for education of the territorial actors...).

From 2008, "practices communities" will be the places where actors could speak and exchange about different issues related to their experiences.

The aim is to produce actions, tools and methods (e.g. mobilization of public undermined, critical segments of the individual courses, passage between operators, bond with social economy...).

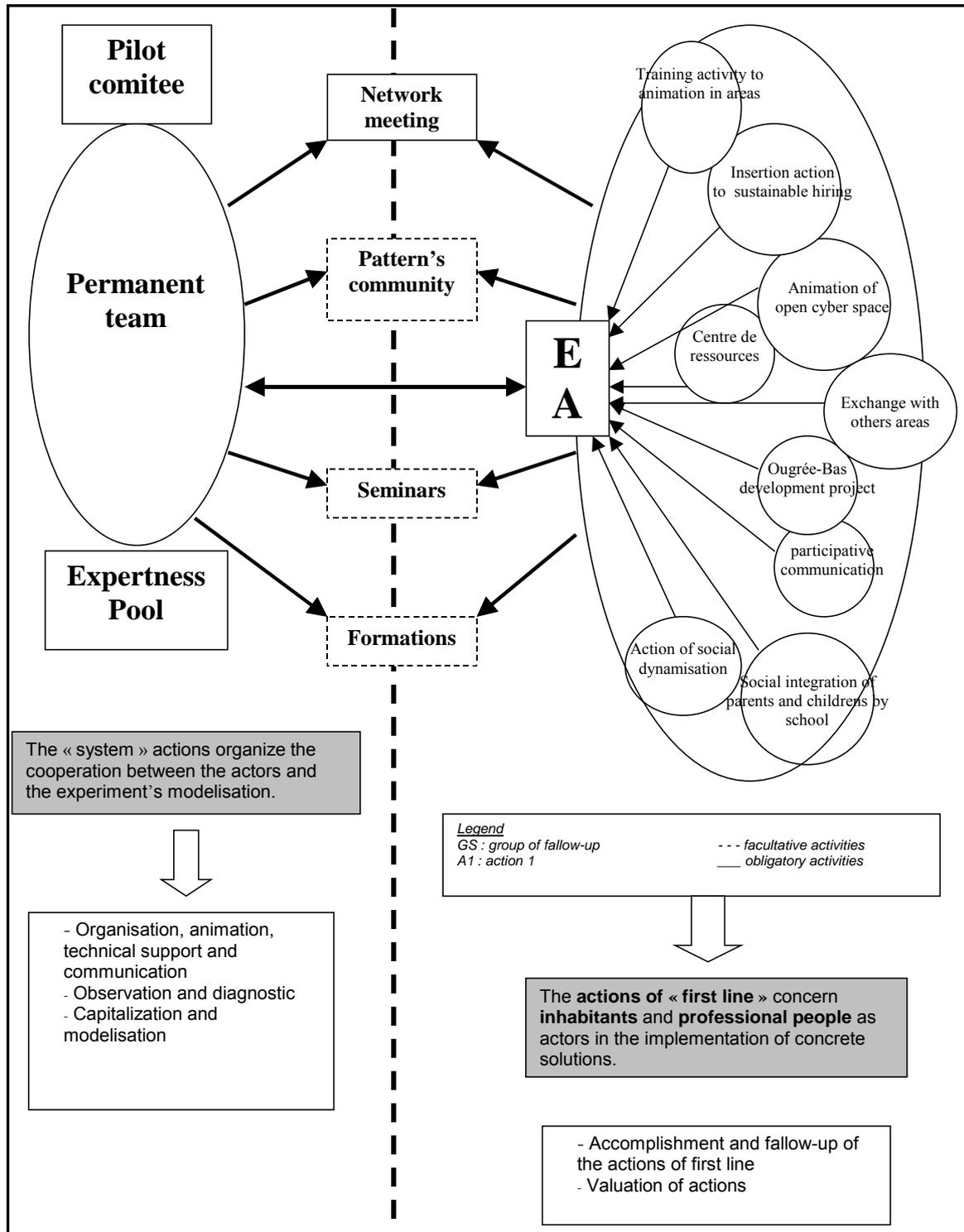
Training courses will be organized for the actors in the fields of the project management, animation of partnership, group dynamics... the aim is to improve their competences while supporting the meetings and synergies between actors of the same territory.

An animation team, including members of Optim@ and partners, wich carry out actions, is responsible for the organisation of the activities related to this process. Moreover, a magazine, "l'observatoire serésien" is produced and distributed with the collaboration of Seraing Municipality with a circulation of 700.

### **1.2. Providing support of the projects**

For 2007/2015, the objective of Optim@ is to improve the individual way of insertion for excluded population and unemployed people without professional qualifications in Seraing.

Consequently, Optim@ integrates in a global solution, the collective and individual scale: the collective scale allows the emergence of social activity wich is a necessary step before the socioprofessional integration (social dynamization, co-operative and innovative projects); in addition, the individual scale (related to the individual project) supports the orientation of insecured inhabitants in their way of social and professional integration.



### **1.3. The knowledge of the territory**

The exploratory observation (1998-2002), carried out with the Catalyse tools, made the mobilization of the partnership possible. It also allowed to reach a better knowledge of the users and to implement a first series of experimental actions in Seraing.

That aim is to get the more complete knowledge of the territory in order to give structured informations to the partners. These informations should allow them to give a better orientation to their projects.

The characterization of the territory requires several activities: meeting the partners or the actors of the territory, evaluating their requests, identifying and collecting information, treating and analyzing these data, putting them in prospect with contextual data and then disseminating information towards the actors.

In collaboration with the Service d'Etude en Géographie Economique Fondamentale et Appliquée (SEGEFA-Université de Liège), ten themes were defined: health and well-being, incomes, employment, economic activities, housing, sociocultural and sporting activities, environment, education, mobility and life's areas.

For each theme, four sources of information are identified:

- a survey carried out in 2004 by Optim@ to 3600 inhabitants of Seraing brings information on real situations and gave new themes which are not yet treated by the official suppliers;
- the territorial indicators are institutional data (National Institute of Statistics, Forem, IWEPS...) which make possible to characterize the territory in an objective way;
- the reading on the area (realized on the pilot area of Ougrée-Bas) allows to know this area by establishing cartography of it (spatial data, parks, public spaces, empty housings, empty shopkeepers or in activities, pollution...). This reading, carried out by two people who go on site, completed the knowledge of the territory; This cartography is an additional asset: it brings a space representation of elements which are difficult to obtain, and it is clear for a public of neophyte.
- actors sensitivities are used to improve the knowledge of the area and to identify the elements they considered as a priority. To launch development project in Ougrée-Bas, some animations were organized during a photo exhibition and allowed the participants (inhabitants, professionals...) to express their sensitivities regarding their area.

## **2. THE APPLICATION OF THIS PROCESS TO AN IDENTIFIED TERRITORY: THE OUGREE-BAS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

### **2.1. Definition of the significant territory for the intervention**

The area of Ougrée-Bas is defined like significant territory of intervention:

- the size of the area makes this territory controllable (this working hypothesis is currently assessing);

- the precariousness of the population is important;
- the area is part of the priority zone defined in the Seraing plan for economic and urban renewal;
- a partnership between inhabitants and professionals, has been active in Ougrée-Bas for several years

Seraing is made up of the Jemeppe, Ougrée, Seraing and Boncelles old municipalities: Optim@ defined 10 "areas", including 3 in Ougrée (Ougrée-Bas, Ougrée Moyen and Ougrée Haut).

The definition of the limits is based on some indicators of the National Institute of Statistics (INS) whose coherence was analyzed for the area (housing, family, type of household, unemployment, evolution of the population).

Moreover, the topographic limit which is between Ougrée-Bas and Ougrée Moyen confirms this cutting.

## **2.2. Description of Ougrée-Bas (data INS 2001 and 2003, reading on the area carried out by Optim@ in 2006-2007).**

The area of Ougrée-Bas counts 4929 inhabitants (8,1% of Seraing complete population). Surface area is 181 ha (5,1% of Seraing complete surface area).

Density is 223 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>.

23,2% of the inhabitants are foreigners (mainly Italian), which is a bigger ratio than those for the whole of the communal territory (15,3%).

Similar to Seraing, the population strongly decreased between 1981 and 1991. Ougrée-Bas lost 526 inhabitants (-9,8%), whereas over the same period the population on a municipal scale decreased by 5,7%. Between 1981 and 2001, Ougrée-Bas lost 7,7% of its population (common of Seraing -6,5%). This phenomenon is commonly observed in the industrial tradition valley whereas the very close tablelands are gaining inhabitants.

In 2001, the rate of unemployment in Ougrée-Bas (31,1%) is definitely higher than the rate of the municipality (22,1%) and the Walloon Region (16%).

In 2006, the rate of unemployment in Ougrée-Bas is not known, but it has strongly progressed in Seraing (28,1%) and in Walloon Region (18,5%).

Women living in Ougrée-Bas have a rate of unemployment of 40,4%. It is twice higher than men's rate (24,3%) and much higher than women in Seraing (28,5%).

The industrial decline had a strong impact on the area, and particularly on the commercial activity. There are less and less shopkeepers in activity, a lot are changing into living ("return to the living").

Housing in Ougrée-Bas is characterized by a majority of joint houses (59,9%) whose size is rather small (<84m<sup>2</sup>). The comfort is reduced (49,5%), generally dating back to more

than 40 years (more than 50% were built before 1970). The private rental housings is very important (25,8%) as there are very few social housing.

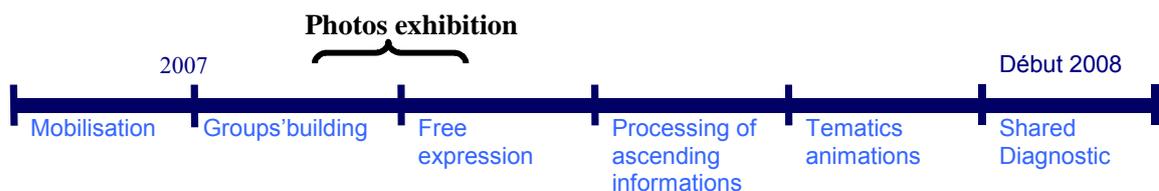
### 2.3. The Ougrée-Bas development project: objectives and timetable

Because of the decline of Ougrée-Bas, it is important to identify the forces and weaknesses of the territory to set up fitted solutions. Those solutions could improve the population wellbeing only if they involve all the actors. Consequently, Optim@ sets up structures of dialogues between all of them: inhabitants, speakers, political decision maker and economic actors).

This development project is divided into different phases:

#### The project preparation

First step is to define the territory of intervention (limits and the characteristics) and to create a process of animation facilitating the implication of the whole actors of this territory. It is also important to identify the resourceful actors of this process. The framework must be flexible even if some methodological options are choosing.



#### The mobilisation of the actors and the expression of actor's sensitivity

The mobilization aims to involve all the actors of the territory in the development project. The project started with a photographic exhibition "Ougrée-Bas: heads or tails ", organized in the Arts centre from the 12/01 to the 15/02/2007.

Some activities based on the photo exhibition were organized in order to make the actor express their sensitivity regarding their area of living. It was the first way to collect information. This information, complexe and new, comes to supplement the statistical data. The photographic support was extremely useful to cause the participation of the public by the means of the guided tours by district inhabitants, the animations organized by Optim@ (expression on the basis of photos, joinings, drawings, expressions of elements positive and negative compared to the areas, use of maps of Ougrée, Seraing or air photos...) and of the participants filmed interviews. Moreover, the expo made it possible to clarify the area image, miserable and dirty, and the image of the inhabitant, dynamics and cordial. This valorization of the inhabitants supported the meeting and the exchanges between the whole of the actors. Let us note finally that it is during the expo that the collect's first sequence of information was begun.

The first groups have been build on the basis of the existing partnerships in the area. The reflexion on various themes will continue and will permit to mix the different actors. The mobilization goes on throughout process.

The processing of these ascending data is the first step to formalize a shared knowledge: it consists in classing informations resulting from the group and making them validate by the group. It allows to identify the gaps of the groups about their knowledge of the territory.

### **Thematics animations and shared diagnosis**

During a network meeting (“Interateliers”) in June 2007, a synthesis of this first knowledge was presented to the participants. The priority themes were identified: environment, life area, employment/economy, housing, health... The people mobilized during the first phase have been going on to participate to the working group for September 2007.

The knowledge of participants will allow to complete the knowledge about the area together with the information collected by Optim@ and the knowledge of the participants. The aim is to produce a document called “the shared diagnosis” wich will be published in February 2008.

The transverse process develops knowledge that each one has on the area. The group gathers various actors of the territory. This heterogeneous form is complex to set up. It is difficult to structure the communication<sup>64</sup> between different people by their history, their formation and their competences. This diversity requires the installation of adapted animations. Methods are collected and evaluated before completing the tools of the organizers.

### **Providing support of the projects**

The shared diagnosis will be used as a basis to identify the priority problems on which to act firstly in the area. In March 2008, it will be a common base to make easier the projects carried out by the different actors of the territory.

## **3. ANALYSE OF THE PROCESS**

Optim@ emphasizes several major elements of the process in terms of governorship:

- this process is based on the links creation and the participation of a diversity of actors. Far from constituting a spontaneous construction, it supposes a specific animation and an adapted communication. The experiment of Optim@ is based on a long-standing social dynamic of the area, which is certainly an element facilitating the process.
- to build to an operational knowledge shared by all the actors, it is probably necessary to have several types of tools and supports. The appropriation of the process by the actors and the training of these actors about it are two fundamental issues. The undermined public used to be missing of these territorial dynamic.

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<sup>64</sup> Each participant can speak, hear, to feel listen and to be listen by the group.

- at the time of the transformation of knowledge shared into territorial action plans, the nature and the ambition of the actions require the implication of the political authorities. This implication is important from the beginning of the process in spite of the difficulties that it could represent.
- the process of territorial development must be written in the long-term, which supposes their progressive institutionalization. The evaluation, the diffusion and the transfer of practices must be developed.
- this participative process asks the place and the function of the inhabitant-actor-citizen on his territory, and its relation with the other actors (intervening, decision makers, experts, contractors)

#### **4. OPTIM@ METHOD'S: A CONTRIBUTION TO THE THEORY OF TICS?**

Since 2003, the SEGEFA of the University of Liege (ULg) works with Optim@ in its steps. This collaboration is especially reinforced by the CAENTI. The SEGEFA brings assistance to Optim@ regarding to the tools of the IT and the installation of a territorial information system. It also has a function of consultation, as well as technological and methodological support in collaboration with MTI (UFC).

The methodological options tested for the pilot action of Ougrée-Bas is based on the experience accumulated on the city of Seraing where a Catalyse step had been initiated. New working hypotheses are tested there. The similarities and the divergences are indexed by the SEGEFA within the context of the CAENTI.

In this paper, the SEGEFA will intervene in order to show the originality of the method and the tools used to lead to the diagnosis shared on Ougrée-Bas. This method and the tools could constitute a contribution for the theory on the Territorial Intelligence Community Systems (TICS).

##### **4.1. Theoretical recall on the TICS**

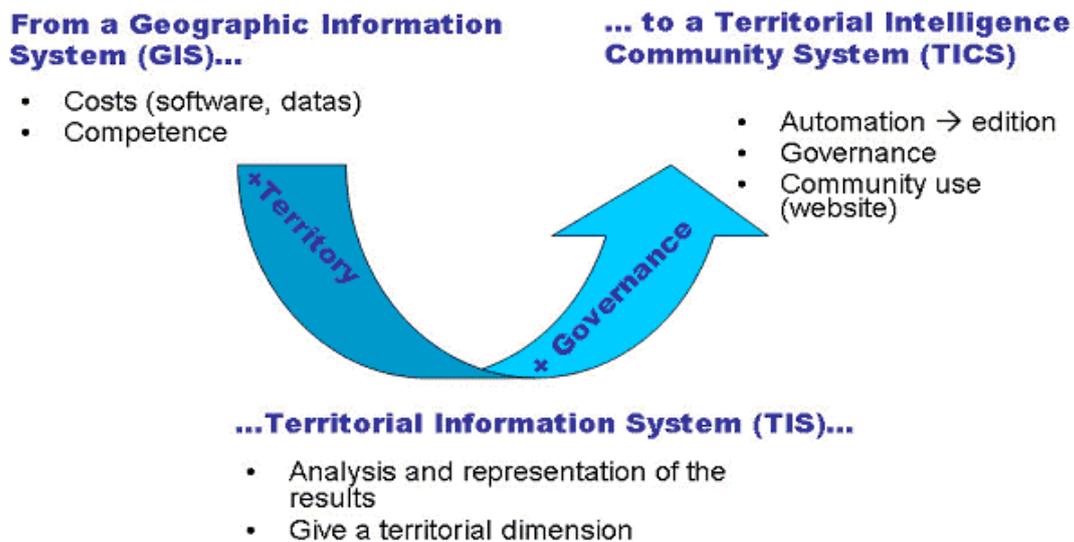
As Girardot and Masselot (2006) explained it a territorial intelligence community system is a Territorial Information System (TIS) in the service of a territorial community (a partnership of territorial actors) that want to develop democratic governance at the service of sustainable development.

- It favors the information sharing within a territorial development partnership;
- It instruments the data cooperative analysis and the results participative interpretation;
- It introduces the citizens' participation in the process of decision-making;
- It provides the actors with useful information to draft projects, then to manage them and value them.

As it is shown in the next figure, the concept of TICS can be approached with the GIS (Geographic Information System) concept. The GIS needs particular competences and generates some implementation costs. In adding the territory notion, the GIS becomes a

Territorial Information System (TIS); it concerns a geographic space and its community. In adding the notions of governance, participation and automation, the TIS becomes a TICS. The TIS is shared within a partnership (professional associations and institutions) but also with the whole territorial community (inhabitants included) that is united by a common project. Moreover the TICS automatically deals with the analysis of the furnished data and edits the analyzed information (by a multi-criteria analysis for example) in order to produce graphic and cartographic documents...

**Figure 3: the transition from a GIS to a TICS.**



One of the objectives of the CAENTI is to create the tools in order to obtain a global TICS usable by the actors. These tools have to integrate:

- the analysis function;
- the data analysis protocols;
- the editorial workflow;
- the community uses.

#### **4.2. Originality of the Optim@'s process**

The Optim@ process originality on the Ougrée-Bas area is the process animation which permits to consider the sensitivity of the whole actors (inhabitants, politic and economic authorities) of the territory in order to build a shared diagnosis.

- The capture of the sensitivity is done during the animation process by using different tools:
- une exposition photographique permettant aux acteurs de s'identifier à leur territoire;
- les résultats de l'analyse de l'enquête effectuée auprès des habitants;

- les cartographies des relevés de terrains;
- les résultats de l'analyse des données contextuelles.

The communication methods are adapted functions of actors' types (dispersion, simplification, practical methods of animation ...).

The recording's storages are various: audio and video tape, notes...

The goal is the acquisition of the approach by the actors. The framework is smooth and adaptable.

The realization of the optim@ process is allowed thanks to two conditions specific to the territory of Ougrée-Bas:

1. The territory of Ougrée-Bas is an area of about 5.000 inhabitants and 181 ha. Given that this little size the territory is easily controllable and its knowledge can be approached by the use of sensitivity and reading on the area. Usually the working area of Optim@ is the whole entity of Seraing. This modification of scale is done within the framework of the adequacy's research between relevant territory and methods of observation, animation and action.
2. The final aim is to improve with actions the general wellness of the Ougrée-Bas' population. Thus the whole population of the territory is concerned by the process and not only certain groups of the population. That is why the tools have been adapted. The entire territory actors are concerned.

### **4.3. Conclusions**

First of all it seems that the process in implementation on Ougrée-Bas constitutes the foundations of a TICS because it corresponds with the definition and the general aims of the concept. The TICS of Optim@ is currently experimenting. That is because it is now a pilot-project in progress. For the moment (the shared diagnosis is waited for the beginning of 2008), it appears relevant and the first results are very positive and relevant especially for the actors' mobilisation.

The use of the actors' sensitivity in the process seems to be an innovative element that constitutes a contribution for a TICS because it reinforces the shared knowledge of the territory and allows a real implication of the actors.

Nevertheless the implementation of a such process can meet several difficulties:

- The information from the sensitivity of actors is qualitative feature. It is not simple to objectivise and sum up them. A lot of contradictions can appear; thus the observatory has to be careful before any synthesis.
- The collected information is the result of what the actors want to communicate. That does not always correspond to their real sensitivity because some people can have self-restraint when they are talking. The use of different tools and means of capture allows to limit the lost of tacit information. In this direction, the implementation of a website ([www.ougree.be](http://www.ougree.be)) constitutes a new relevant tool.

- To constitute a shared diagnosis on a whole territory needs the mobilisation of lot of actors. All the actors of the territory should participate. Although taking into account the sensitivity of 5000 inhabitants is a very difficult task. Thus it is important to implement an ascendant network whereby the formalized and generalized information will go through.

The aim of this future research-action, notably within the CAENTI framework, is to develop solutions to surpass these difficulties. In a close collaboration, Optim@ and SEGEFA will underline the reproducible elements on other territories or other populations and try to make a model of the process in order to disperse it.

## **5. REFERENCES**

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