

The network card

Presentation of a network activity instrument.

The idea of this paper is to point out the various benefits of using network cards in general. The team of evaluators of ASH also wants to promote supportive legwork to create finally a total TriNet network card.

General advantages

Network cards can document in a clearly and structured manner, the emergence of networks at different stages. They find often usability in work processes especially within projects. Such cards can be very useful to expose, for example generated and used contacts through different organizations and the relationship to the organizer. This helps to organize events more efficient. It may also be helpful in processes of brainstorming before or during the event. But also after it, it can be shown which networks were newly created or were used more frequently. So its also possible to draw development processes, if different periods of time were considered and combined in one overall context. Thus, existing data and resources of the organizer can be used optimally. Once such a network-card gets established, new applications on similar cases are possible and therefore associated with little work. Overall, work distribution is less time consuming and more transparent for everybody and in case of personnel changes finally easier to handle.

As is shown, network cards can offer overviews about incurred contacts and highlight special focuses of an event. By sharing the network card with others, once created transparency can gets public also out of the organization. Besides, it is possible to create such network card not only for an event. Also for a whole organization, for example, if an annual strategy meeting is scheduled, it is conceivable.

Accordingly, the network card is a documentation and analysis tool. As part of many projects which deal with promotion of linkages, the documentation is an important task. Network cards provide a clear and easy way of illustration to actual conditions and changes. Thus, finished processes can be well evaluated and optimized. Thereby, text documents are often unnecessary and / or decimated in their length.

The network card of the LEZ was created on the developmental expert conferences during the Berlin Asia-Pacific Weeks 2013. Using it as an example of network card, its development is presented below.

The fact that different types of network cards exist is because of individual alignment and illustration.

We wish to point out that the format selected by the LEZ is only one way of design.

Now we would like to demonstrate various benefits of creating a network card and give suggestion for their quick formation. Starting with the first reflexion about, what is necessary for understanding the LEZ network card? And what can be illustrated by the card?

The developmental expert conferences during the Asia-Pacific Weeks 2013

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Work topic of the three expert conferences during the Asia-Pacific Weeks (APW) 2013 was “Cities in Transformation – Pioneers for Sustainable Development”.

Especially for the Asian region, approaches for sustainable urban development and a resource-saving, energy-efficient and modern infrastructure are considered of great importance.

Sustainable solutions to urban development should include mainly two things: efficient use of living area and sustainable jobs. Because, cities should be continually made attractive not only for its inhabitants, but also for economic actors. Cities are therefore viewed as places of community, creativity and modern subculture, with its potential economic and innovative value.

Within the project “TriNet Global”, for the first time, a Development Policy Dialogue took place within the frame of the Asia-Pacific Weeks in 2013. The event was initiated by the Development and Peace Foundation (SEF) of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the State Office for Development Cooperation (LEZ) at the State Department for Economics, Technology and Research, Berlin, which sets the framework for entrepreneurial activities.

With a focus on “Smart Cities”, the Asia-Pacific Weeks 2013 highlighted key questions of actually development policy and special panels to “Green Cities” and “Collaborative Cities” were implemented. It is a try to bring together experts of different research fields, like sustainable urban development, in one interdisciplinary event and to create a platform for qualified exchange about urban problems. Based on the idea that, the strengthening of exchanges between cities and of human knowledge in the field of sustainable urban development can give important impulses.

Sustainable cooperation processes in networks should be initiated. This gives the participants opportunities to demonstrate their profile of the organization and accentuate the beneficial value-orientation of the process.

The Asia-Pacific Weeks resulted in newly formed collaborations between organizations. Therefore, three network cards have been created in the LEZ. They present actual network situations in three different time slots: before, while and after the event. The following cards demonstrate just one of different possible types of network cards. In context of this event, this type of network cards seems to be the most suitably.

After the following explanation, we still will introduce other forms of network cards.

Development of the network card

Organization and realization of the Asia-Pacific Week was very complex and impossible to reconstruct with simple linear depictions and charts. That's why it seems obvious to start with a simple brainstorming and enlightening questions about interested cooperation partners in the process. Which cooperation partners might be interested in which event? And who is most of interest for the themes? Thus, the card highlights existing contacts inside and beside the networks.

High frequency contacts are positioned in the centre (red ellipse) and referred to as actors. They are cooperation partners with good work experience and in a permanent cooperation mode. The probability that they will participate in the expert conferences is very high.

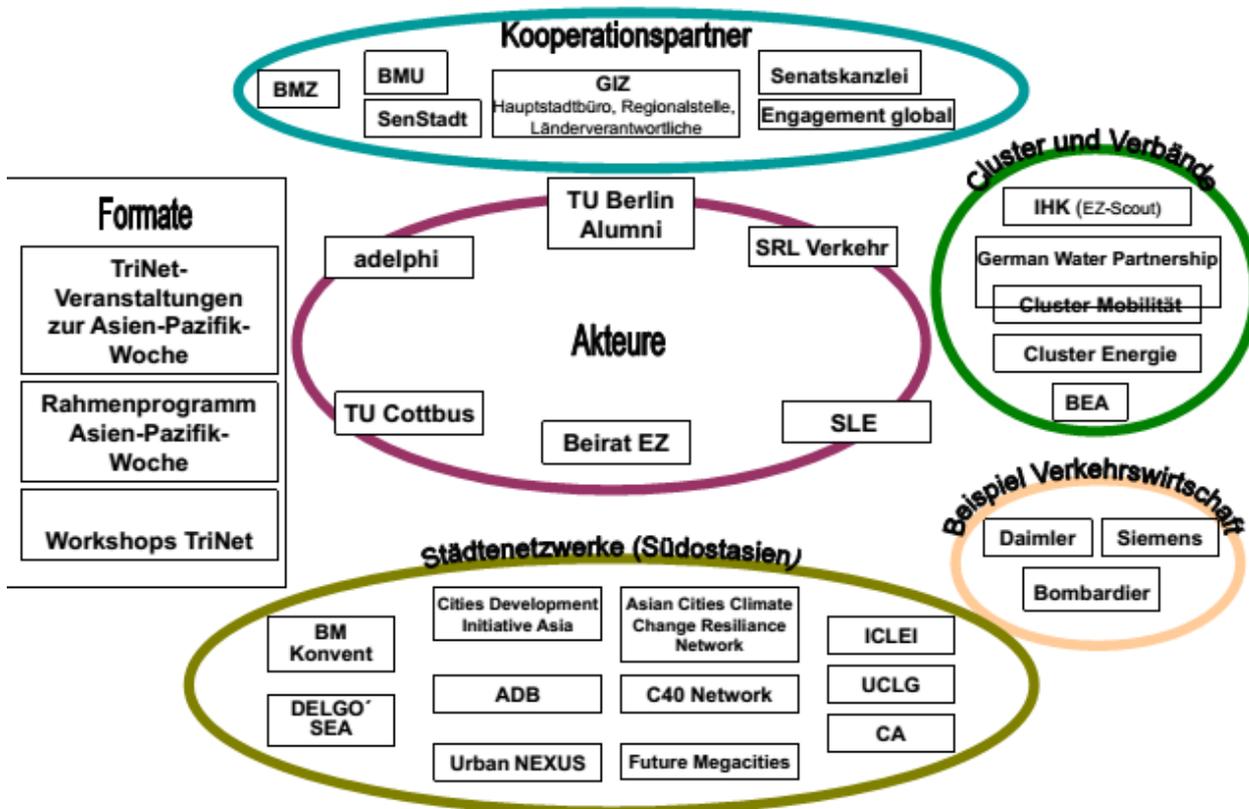
Other interesting partners are sorted in different groups. Organizations, which were of general interest for the event, are grouped together (blue ellipse). Also the group of city networks (green ellipse).

This card did not explain type and scope of participation for the different groups, possible formats were shown beside (black box on the left).

First Card – demonstrate the brainstorming process.

“Potential networks for TriNet (basic structure before the expert conferences)”

Potenzielle Netzwerke für TriNet (Grundstruktur vor Entwicklungspolit. FT)



The second network card was created after the developmental expert conferences. Therefore, the first network card has been reworked and only partners who engaged in the event actually, were

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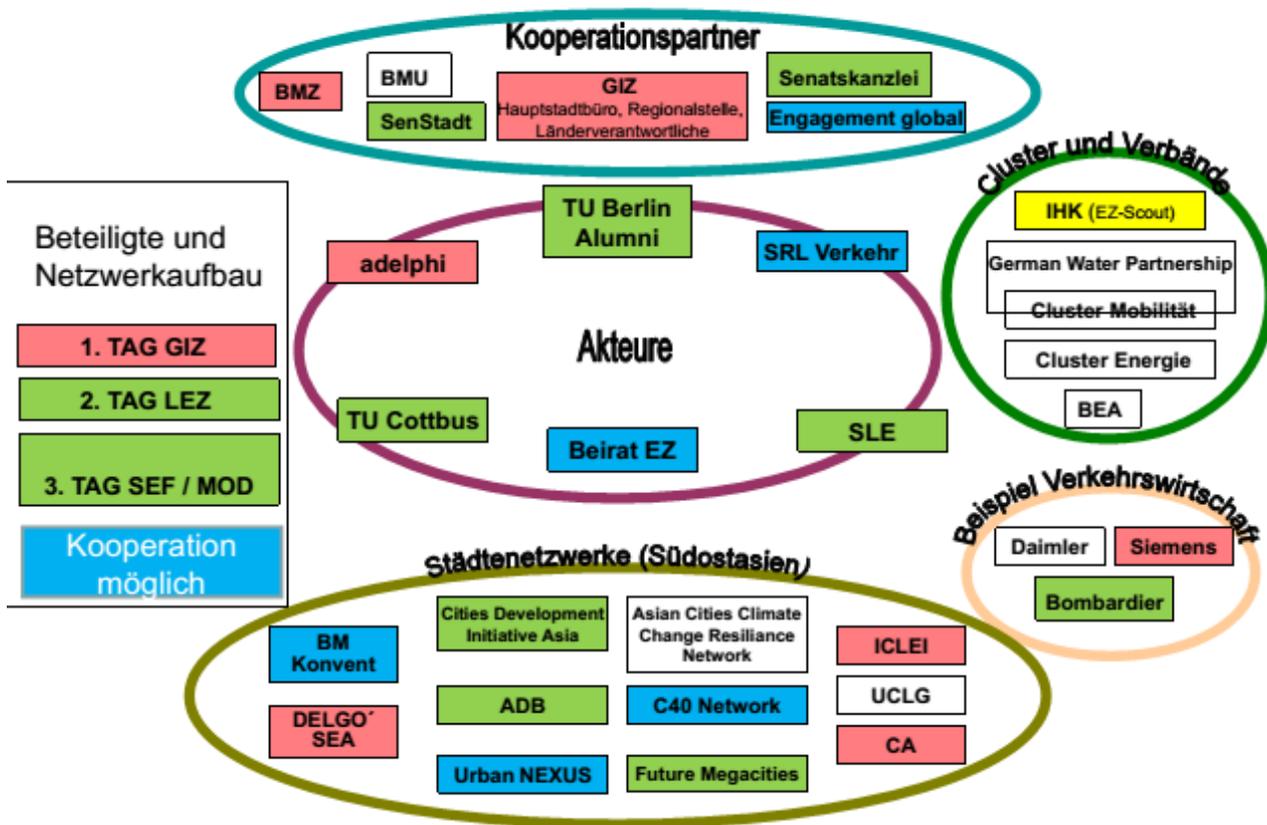
marked in color.

Different colors were selected for each day, also probable interest partners of related cooperation. To emphasize is, that on a similar event this card can be used as a basic analysis instrument for preparation and organization. Because it offers information about cooperation prospects, equal topics and contacts.

Second card – demonstrate willingness to cooperate.

(black box on the left: participants in days and network construction)

Potenzielle Netzwerke für TriNet (Grundstruktur nach Entwicklungspolit. FT)



Legend:

- red = actors GIZ
- green = actors LEZ
- blue = addressed actors, which are generally interested in cooperation, but could not participate at APW
- yellow = German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IHK), cooperated but participated with own focus of interest

The finally presented network card has been created after the Asia-Pacific Weeks. It reflects the actual network arisen at the event. Only partners who engaged in the event actually, were transferred from the network card before. Close proximity to the organizers means close cooperation status. So the card gives possibilities to demonstrate newly attached contacts.

The GIZ and the LEZ, located as the main organizers, can achieve other networks about the close cooperation to their partners.

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By simpler methods, individual network activities can also be well clarified. Short and simple Network cards have advantages like quick creating processes, also for different projects or organization tasks. They are suitable to retrace actual states of network activity in organizations and projects or to sum up, who is in contact with whom? How? And from which position?

To ensure that simple designed cards transfer clear messages, it is inevitable to structure them well. So it makes sense to limit the forwarded informations. Selections might be: the 20 most important contacts, a theme, a special situation...

The in following proposed network card is limited to a maximum of 20 contacts. They are marked in their relationship with the organizers (close contact: inner circle, mean contact: middle circle, few contact: outer circle).

Through this model of relationships it can be seen where contacts should be intensified or in which areas close contacts are actually useful.

To connect network content with TriNet Global objectives (promoting networking of: actors of urban administration, the business community, science and civil society), we have these four areas specially marked:

-  - triangle for actors of the administration and City Council
-  - circle for economic actors
-  - rectangle for science actors
-  - hexagon for actors of NGO`s

By that, target groups can be taken easy into account. Also conceivable is a division into segments to make participation in different areas visible.

To handle easier the informations of the card for internal use, a list of contacts is added.

