



Quality Team First report

July 2006

CONNECTED CITIES PROJECT QUALITY TEAM First Report

Foreword

The Interreg III C Connected Cities programme (CC) is about sustainable mobility, spatial development and spatial/urban planning.

It aims at improving mobility and quality of life in urban and rural areas.

The CC activities are centred on a series of bi-annual conferences, held in different regions of Europe. Core of these conferences are the Showcases to show what existing approaches to sustainable mobility and transport development areas could mean when they are applied in various locations in Europe. These Showcases are developed on site by the partners themselves and use interregional workshops as a tool. The Showcases deal with matters of policy, planning and/or design. Topics can vary from working on transport development areas in a specific region, to conceptualising how a specific public space can be integrated in a network for pedestrians, etc.

Main issues to be addressed are:

Sustainable mobility (public transport, biking, walking)

Transport development areas (well designed, higher density, mixed-use areas situated around good public transport access points in urban areas)

Accessibility (barrier-free public transport and public spaces)

Spatial quality (spaces offering quality of life)

Safety (both social and physical safety)

A Quality Team (QT) has been set up to support the guidance of the project.

The QT reports to the Steering Group.

The QT is composed by:

- Jan Vogelij, President ECTP
- Virna Bussadori, Vice president ECTP
- Frank D'Hondt, ECTP-delegate

The second CC conference in Greece was the first to participate for the QT.

REPORT BY THE QUALITY TEAM

1. General

After attending the second Conference some remarks can be made on how to improve the quality and effectiveness of the Conferences and of the programme as a whole.

The clear aim of the Conferences is to give momentum to local/regional project/s; in order to meet this objective, actions should focus on clear issues and on possible solutions. The Conferences should enhance the interactive character of their sessions in a way in which stakeholders in the hosts' region work intensively on the spot together with the CC partners, the Steering Group and the QT members.

The main goal is to go a step forward in the process of implementation and come to observations and suggestions that are specifically applicable for the case area. This includes an orientation on solutions for problems related to get more focussed policy strategies, for more effective organisations and management processes and for improved spatial design solutions on the urban and regional scales.

In order to do so, Showcases should be structured around main questions emphasising cross-cutting issues on the "HOW" questions such as:

- How do we improve connectivity of the case study area with the neighbouring areas?
- How do we enhance sustainable mobility, accessibility, in combination with spatial quality, safety and/or identity of place, etc.?
- How do we organize an effective spatial and transport planning and implementation process?
- How do we involve stakeholders, civil society organisations and citizens on regional and local levels?
- How can we raise the awareness about the destructive implications of the present developments?
- How do we enhance a more supportive attitude towards sustainable spatial development and the related forms of mobility?

2. Effectiveness of Showcases

1. The issue to be debated should be made clear in advance by position papers prepared by the hosts following a given format including questions, main problems and key issues to be addressed.
2. In the beginning QT members could be invited to provide input and information on a more general basis, to provide a general framework within which the local/regional case can be considered later.
3. Hosts should then present Showcases (by means of short presentations) which should only concern the territorial areas in which the Conference takes place in order to enable targeted site visits.
4. Brainstorming and creative sessions (like in Volos) should then be organised (eventually dividing participants into small groups) to discuss the Showcases and possible solutions.

5. Outcomes should be discussed by the whole group and preferably finally presented to and discussed with the governmental and non governmental stakeholders.

3. Transfer of Knowledge

A more general advice of the QT is to avoid 'simple' transfer/export of solutions or ideas from one place in Europe to another place with a totally different socio-spatial context.

Although authorities as well as experts of less developed places are often eager to adopt well published solutions from elsewhere, successful remedies for instance of the North can fail in the South, and vice-versa. Moreover, we have to embrace the 'variety and diversity' of solutions, that always should be related to the specific socio-spatial context, thereby integrating the history in the future developments fitting in and enhancing the regional identity. We should avoid 'equalizing' Europe that would lose its 'charm' and 'unique selling point' in the world.

This could be extended by widening up the learning network towards a European network on CC. In that perspective, it is also recommendable to integrate f. i. the whole Balkan region in the learning network.

More concretely, specific actions into that direction are to:

- Link the websites of CC with that of the association of the European spatial planners, the ECTP.
- Relate the demo-projects more explicitly to The New Charter of Athens 2003, the ECTP Vision on European Cities, in which sustainable urban transport is an essential element of the Connected City.
- Present first outcomes on an ECTP conference. For instance the coming autumn 2006 General Assembly in Seville might provide the right occasion.

4. Governance

Acknowledging that "technical" knowledge about public transport and spatial planning is widespread among the experts involved, the "how to" question on effective application of that knowledge demands to focus on aspects of governance.

When discussing problems of implementation and analysing related aspects, often the attention shifts to necessary tools of implementation as applied elsewhere. It is then often also established that legal regulations and bureaucratic responsibilities do not fit to the problems.

Therefore each case requires its specific governmental approach, within the existing circumstances. Instead of focussing on long term and formal activities like the preparation of new laws and new organisational structures, it is better to find pragmatic solutions in the given context.

Such pragmatic solutions should be addressed when discussing the Showcases.

Recommended components of successful approaches are:

- Create partnerships. Within the local/regional stakeholders that must be involved in the preparation of sustainable plans there are groups representing forces with interests parallel to connected cities. These should be unified.
- Make an extensive analysis of interests of all involved parties. Some opposing groups have specific wishes that are not principally against sustainable solutions; some interests can be served by new, creative solutions that are not conflicting with sustainability.
- Prepare forecasts of the long- and midterm impacts of present developments, emphasising the effects on the interests of the various parties. That raises awareness and may result in new partnerships.
- Formulate an overall major project in objective terms. Stakeholders, also with opposite interests should be enticed to participate in a project/process aiming at solutions.
- Organise a (informal) project organisation, aiming at agreement on objectives for the development of the region in the long term. Agreement on goals is less difficult than agreement on specific solutions, and it is the basis for constructive participation.
- Include in the project organisation representatives of all relevant stakeholders/regional key persons. The private sector as well as the public sector of different levels must get involved in interactive activities aiming at common objectives. Participants must have sufficient mandates and the representatives of the public sector assure for fast approvals in their formal positions.
- Such an informal project approach, organised parallel to and with involvement of the public sector will help to overcome formal deficiencies, by creating a positive attitude and a will to find solutions.

VB, 13/07/06

FD, 17/07/06

JV, 28/07/06

Chent University (UGent)

European New Town Platform (ENTP)

Municipality of Kardjali

City of Paris Engineering School (EIVP)

Sénart Public Local Authority

Hamburg-Harburg University of Technology (TUHH)

Research Association for Underground Transportation Facilities e.V (STUVA)

Development Agency of Magnesia S.A. (ANEM)

Municipal Enterprise of Planning & Development of Patras (ADEP)

Municipality of Philippi

Region of Thessaly

University of Thessaly

Municipality of Ancona

Municipality of Ancona

Delft University of Technology

Eindhoven University of Technology

