



CONNECTED CITIES PROJECT QUALITY TEAM Second report of the Quality team

1. General

This second report of the QTeam reflects the progress of the project as evaluated after the Covilha meeting on the 9th and 10th October 2006, and should be considered as an extension of the first report.

During the last meeting the QTeam members Virna Bussadori and Jan Vogelij were present.

It was good for the effectiveness of the process that the opportunity was offered to present the conclusions of the first QTeam report to the whole group. The envisaged attempt to apply, within the preparation of the next project meeting the suggested recommendations to concentrate activities and presentations a bit more on previously formulated questions and issues, is largely welcomed. It was good to notice that so many Greek participants were active; may be the mechanism starts that cases that hosted a workshop before, are more intensively involved, which (hopefully) may result in steadily increasing participation during the course of the project.

Hereunder our considerations about the effectiveness of the process, resulting in recommendations, which are grouped according to next aspects: the steering group (2), brainstorming (3), governance (4) and spatial development vision (5).

2. The steering group

The (lack of) involvement of the steering group creates some concerns. The task and the responsibility of steering the programme can only be substantiated when the large majority of the members of the steering group are present in important meetings like these on the spot of the cases. The value of the transnational project team consisting of representatives of relevant organisations and institutes from different parts of Europe will be enhanced by active involvement of steering group members. Now, in practice the project becomes too much dependent from the project leader, doing his utmost to avoid deficiencies.

We recommend the steering group members to give a higher priority to this responsibility.

3. Brainstorming

Part of the value of meeting on the spot of cases is the possibility to offer suggestions for solutions in the town/area concerned. A group of experts concentrate some time on developing sustainable solutions for mobility and accessibility of the hosting city. The hosting city should take the maximum advantage of such an event. During the workshop in Covilha ideas for solutions were generated by brainstorming in two groups about possible solutions. The groups came to complementing recommendations.

Question remains whether the results, after reporting to the authorities, have any influence on the decision making of local politics, which tend to continue in their actual flow of activities after the meeting is over. A presentation or a booklet, even if very well done, are soon forgotten.

Maybe the brainstorm session is too short, maybe more cannot be expected from two days work. But anyhow, it is a pity if valuable suggestions are not implemented because the local experts and authorities remain overwhelmed by the day to day problems and no one can support them further.

For serious help, they need some longer, more continuous support of experts that may indicate the way since they experienced different solutions elsewhere.

We would therefore recommend developing ideas to offer lasting support to public bodies.

4. Governance

The previous item already shifts the attention from technical considerations towards aspects of governance. Although technical developments of facilities and modes of transportations may be fascinating, the aspects of governance should be considered of equal importance if not even more important for sustainable developments.

Integrated solutions, combining aspects of all relevant sectors, demand for well developed views on the interest of different sectors and on the possibilities to put together different interests in applicable solutions. Comprehensive approaches for the future of a locality should combine the specific developments in various sectors into a common, future reality. This requires explicit attention for the aspects of governance when considering solutions for specific locations.

It is therefore recommended to include aspects of governance in the preparation of meetings, in the questions to be addressed, in the presentations and in the brainstorms to identify solutions.

5. Spatial development vision

The core of the project is sustainable mobility and accessibility in relation to spatial development. The objective is shortly summarised, that the future reality of a city should be more sustainable than the present situation.

In both the projects in Volos and in Covilha, it was shown that the long-term spatial development of the towns provides the background that enables to develop solutions for mobility and accessibility. When interactively developing views and visions for the future of the same town, in close cooperation with many parties that represent relevant interests, partnerships will develop around common issues and wishes. Also differences in views will appear. By analysing alternative solutions and evaluating their advantages and disadvantages for various interests, a clear view on parallel and conflicting interests will result. By translating solutions on maps representing alternative visions, a transparent process of good governance is followed, that helps to structure discussions about decisions.

Concentrating the attention of all parties on the wishes for a sustainable future, and away of actual problems, elaborating a spatial development vision, is a good way to work on lasting solutions applying good governance.

We suggest to combine the recommendations formulated before in such a process towards a common spatial vision.

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