

## CONNECTED CITIES PROJECT QUALITY TEAM Third report of the Quality team

### 1. General

This report considers the meeting of the Interreg IIC Project Connected Cities, lead by TU Delft, organised in Toledo, Spain from 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> January 2007.

ECTP Quality team members that attended the event were Virna Bussadori and Jan Vogelij.

This report should be considered in connection with both previous QTeam reports on this project.

The participation of about 20 partners was quite satisfactory although in contrast with last project meetings, the participation from Greece was less and Germany was hardly represented.

Due to change of personnel at the Toledo side, the promising presentation in Covilha, when announcing these Toledo events was not substantiated. Especially the lack of professional information on the regional scale, which is required to enable professional brainstorming and debate, together with the political character of some presentations, lead to a rather disappointing experience. The international team was as a result, not offered the opportunity to contribute to the regional development of Toledo by elaborating problems with regard to essential aspects of connectivity, spatial development and governance. More than in previous events, the “connectedness” of cities focused here on the infrastructure for mobility. Local politicians seemed to use this European event for articulating their international image to the local press.

### 2. Steering group

In contrast to last meeting in Covilha, at the steering group meeting in Toledo most project partner organisations were represented. The steering group meeting was well prepared, all information required for sound decision making on the items at stake was presented in a transparent way. Main item under discussion was the financial claiming by the project partners which was lagging behind and causing questions by the Interreg JTS.

Individuals representing the various project partners were urged to commit to the bureaucratic requirements.

We recommend continuing in this way with well prepared steering group meetings. We also recommend discussing during the next steering group meeting the important items reported hereunder in order to organise next project meetings in such a way that the project objectives are more effectively met.

### 3. The objectives of the project

The rather general disappointment about the Toledo meeting relates to expectations about the objectives of the project as a whole. Making acquaintance with several cases may be an objective for some participants which offers them an interesting experience. But going more into professional depth, and contributing internationally to solve problems, thereby providing extra value to all of the participating projects, is probably the most important objective of the project, justifying European funding.



This support by foreign colleagues requires a focus on professional information and can only be effective in combination with transparency on issues of governance (see 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> QTeam reports).

Local politicians might however foster different objectives which, when pursued in a dominant way, can make sound external support almost impossible.

We recommend to consider and establish the overall objectives of the project, by addressing the question whether an overview of local and regional project cases is considered as a sufficient outcome or, to pursue the objective that seeks to contribute to solutions for sustainable mobility in the specific locations and regions on basis of international, commonly developed expertise on essential issues. It is clear that our recommendations are to strive for the second objective.

After agreeing on a clear choice in the steering group, the most effective way to meet that objective must be defined. By organising the project in a targeted way (see 1<sup>st</sup> QTeam report), each project meeting should result in components for the final report of the project. That requires more guidance for organising the project meetings in the case study areas in accordance with the final deliverables of the project and with the agreed project objectives and expectations of the steering group.

#### **4. The organisation of the project**

Currently, the outcomes of project meetings in case study areas are mainly the result of the way in which the local organisers do freely interpret their task to host the international project team.

The Toledo events reflected both in the agenda (that was provided to the participants only at their arrival!) as well as during the proceedings an interpretation of good Spanish hospitality combined with politically showing of achievements that almost looked like promoting or marketing the city. No brainstorming like workshop activities were envisaged, nor prepared; the European guests were presented both success stories as well as problems, dilemma's or questions so as rather sophisticated technical approaches which were not linked to each other nor followed by active involvement of the partners.

This does not result in very effective meetings according to the main project objectives.

Therefore, the project coordination should include clear guidance to the way the future local case events should be organised. Organisers of next case project meeting should be provided with a set of requirements for the organisation of the project meetings that include short but clear presentations of local and regional issues followed – if possible – by site visits on spot, allowing for independent professional brainstorming, a time schedule that includes workshops, a time slot to agree on a set of provisional recommendations for addressing the local/regional problems as well as about the way the European experts may be supportive to the local authorities in the near future.

The agenda should preferably end in presenting these preliminary results and recommendations to the local/regional political responsible people. The latter shouldn't therefore be asked to deliver speeches but on the contrary politicians and decision-makers should attend the presentation of the outcomes of the workshop at the very end, giving them time to react and discuss with the international experts. The regional scale, aspects of governance, as well as visions on the long term spatial development should be addressed (see 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> QTeam reports).

Finally, clear indications should be given regarding the expected deliverables and products that should result from each workshop.