

CONNECTED CITIES PROJECT QUALITY TEAM Fourth report of the Quality team

1. General

This report of the Quality team regards the Connected Cities project conference held in Ancona on 16/17/18 April 2007. ECTP QTeam members participating in the events and reporting here were Virna Bussadori and Jan Vogelij.

The conference consisted of presentations, completed with site visits about mobility and spatial development problems in Ancona, Jesi and Fabriano, organised in the Muse Theatre and the Town Hall of Ancona. On the last day a guided visit and presentations / discussions about implemented solutions was organised in Perugia.

Next to that a steering group meeting was held.

The overall impression is that this conference met very well the expectations of the project.

The presentations displayed good introductions to the peculiarities of the region and the direction in which solutions are sought; this was further supported by visits on spot. That enabled an open discussion. The excursion to Perugia on the last day illustrated the approach and implementation for better connecting a city in a mountainous area, which was extremely relevant for the Covilha project partners.

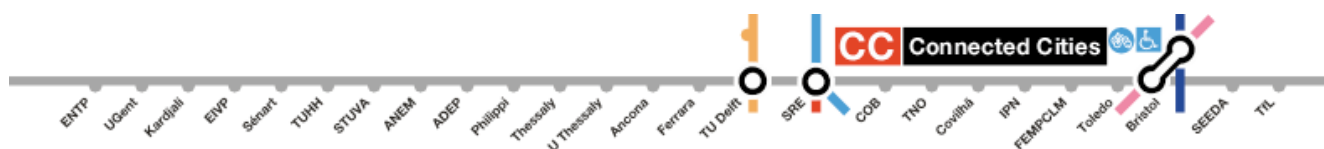
Although there was room for open discussions with technicians and politicians, the question remains in how far foreign experts are able to really help the local and regional processes to proceed on basis of available expertise and experiences while avoiding mistakes experienced elsewhere. Anyhow exchange of information and experiences may be expected to increase the chance for success.

2. Steering Group

The steering group meeting held in the afternoon of the 17th in the Ancona town hall was very effective. The large majority of the steering group was represented and prepared for the discussion. The information presented by the project leader was well organised and provided transparency that resulted in short, effective discussions leading to clear decisions about programming events at the termination of the project in the light of the spending/under spending of the budget. The specification of the final deliverables will be at stake next.

3. Content of the Project

The connected cities issues regarded in this project conference are located in the province of Ancona, covering one of the four valleys that compose the Central Italy region of Marche. In that valley a large group of mainly small municipalities are situated. By far the most important players are Ancona, Jesi and Fabriano. Although each of those has different problems with regard to



connectivity/accessibility and also has some mutual competing activities, it is decided to collaborate on a common platform. Common initiatives and investments are planned and furthered. That must be seen as a great step forward in the generally fragmented reality. Taking problems of accessibility and mobility to the regional level, and trying to solve those within the framework of a common vision on future developments, may at least be welcomed as developing into the right direction and addressing essential aspects of governance. Still many questions are to be faced especially with regard to whether all relevant interests are well represented.

Discussions concentrated on how the future development of the region and its composing cities could become more specific about the basis of its future economy and the role it can play among other regions, based on unique selling opportunities.

Here foreign expertise could help to become more selective and specific. An over concentration on aspects of transportation (of goods) must be avoided. Also the future role of the agriculture (combined with soft tourism) in the region, the new functions that might revitalise the old, partly abandoned villages on the hilltops, the spatial (re)structuring of the mosaic consisting of economic zones and residential areas in the valleys, as well as the level of services in the rural areas, must be taken into account as essential elements of the development of the region. These aspects, covering social as well as economic and spatial connectedness, are determinants for the types of facilities securing better accessibility and sustainable mobility.

The excursion to Perugia, with interesting presentations, showed the value of continuity of policy. Problems identified forty years ago, studied, planned and decided, were implemented and seemed to work well. It demonstrated how a weakness in the physical connectivity of the hilltop historic town centre was modified into an extra quality in the way to access the centre, with lifts and escalators through historic defence walls. Also the innovative approach, in which the mini-metro on basis of ski lift techniques was implemented, seems really promising.

4. Organization of the Project

The Ancona conference as it has been organised, including the trip to Perugia, showed a productive balance of conveying information, gathering own impressions and time to exchange ideas and comments. Thereby it also balanced all types of connectivity well. It was a pity that not many project partners were able to participate in the Perugia excursion.

Even at such a successful event, the question still remains to be answered on how exchange of experiences and the availability of foreign experts can result in more effective and lasting support to overcome the local and regional problems. If European financial support to solve a problem in a specific region would be related to the involvement of a group of experienced experts, the effectiveness of such projects might be enhanced. Such considerations leading to recommendations might be part of the final report.

JCV 19/04/07

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