

CONNECTED CITIES PROJECT QUALITY TEAM Fifth report of the Quality team

1. General

This Qteam report considers the Interreg 3C Connected Cities workshop held in London 19 – 23 September 2007. As before, the ECTP Qteam consisted of Virna Bussadori and Jan Vogelij, who are responsible for this report.

The workshop consisted of four days programme, containing a large variety of presentations, site visits, discussions and other experiences, offering the participants professional information, strategic insight, background as well as possibilities for independent impressions.

The Qteam considers this London workshop as the one that is best meeting the Connected Cities programme objectives. The quality of the content of the presentations as well as the organisation of the events was simply high.

2. Steering Group

The steering group meeting as hold in the afternoon of September 20th in the British Library concentrated on the finalisation of the project. There is only one more event to go in Paris, and not all project partners developed activities as were envisaged in the original programme. This might result partly in underspending of the project budget, partly in shifting budget lines to other project partners that developed more efforts than originally envisaged. The project leader explained the problems, so as the required actions and solutions in a very clear way indicating deadlines and deliverables to all partners; it is hoped that in the last stages of the project all substantial differences compared to the original project plans are levelled out.

These problems, occurring quite generally in projects that are organised according to Interreg regulations, result in recommendations to reconsider the Interreg regulations in such a way that the responsible project leaders will get more flexibility in rearranging the composition of the team and the budget lines. It is also felt that the time and efforts to organise the activities as well as to build a real coherent team is largely underestimated. With regard to this last point, continuation of the project team in a new Interreg project is considered to be of great value for effective project proceedings and cohesive team working.

3. Content of the events

The participation of the CC project partners in the UK Annual Transport Conference provided a good impression of actual high level political thinking on transport in the UK. This was offering useful background information at the start of the workshop.

The workshop meetings, starting with the inspired presentation delivered by Transport for London, set the scene by an overview of measures aiming at a modal shift towards more sustainable transportation within London metropolis. The mix of professional considerations, politically supported by the Mayor of London, as well as the differentiated approach in which the



implementation of measures to influence the behaviour of the population was aimed at, was considered to be of great value. These measures were specified into concrete actions in many ways like in business transport plans, school accessibility plans, bike networks etc.

The aspects that were presented were illustrated by guided site visits in the streets of London explaining measures and peculiarities on the spot.

The SEEDA/Kent County Council presentations of the 21st September balanced the metropolis /urban focus by concentrating on the aspects of the Thamesgate regional developments.

Also in Greenhithe, presentations and site visits were of high quality.

Although a lot can still be won by further refining information technology and means of communication, both parts of these CC workshop made clear that the technical solutions are not the main point anymore. The integrated approaches to come to well functioning cities and regions require a strong focus on aspects of governance when planning and implementing sound spatial developments.

4. The organization of the project

The positive general outcomes of the London events reflected the quality of the organisation. There was a well balanced mix of CC aspects in the programme, there was a variety of presentations, site visits and background information, the venues, spread over London and Kent, were well chosen and offered adequate, well appreciated hospitality. The steering group meeting was well prepared and lead.

The only remarks, if any, to be made with regard to the organisation regards the hotel and the length of the programme.

The location of the hotel was not in short distance to one of the project events venues. This resulted in quite some travelling, at the other hand offering the participants more transportation experiences within the metropolis. The three days programme seemed for some of the participants too long. Like in Ancona, some project partners missed interesting and relevant parts of the programme, because they could not stay longer.

But the overall impression was that of a very well organised meeting thought over well into details, offering hospitality in nice venues, providing oyster-cards and possibilities to enjoy car free London and transportation by boats, that was very supportive for the project objectives.