



The Urban Lab of Europe!

NEWS

PROJECT

TMaaS - Traffic Management as a Service (Closed)
Ghent, Belgium

TOPIC

Urban mobility

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TMaaS web article No 3 - TMaaS Replicator City program Part 2: lessons learnt

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The TMaaS Replicator City program is an important part of the TMaaS project. Its ambitious aim is to increase the number of cities that use the TMaaS solutions and to provide assistance to the external interested cities in doing so. As the TMaaS project and the Replicator program come to an end, some useful conclusions and lessons learnt have been drawn, which are discussed in this web-article of the TMaaS project. The lessons learnt are mostly targeted towards future similar programs and cities or other entities that may plan and execute them, in order to transfer innovative solutions developed within projects to cities or related entities outside the project partnership.

Technical challenges:

It has been shown within the TMaaS Replicator City program that replication cities have different context and different problems to solve, different existing infrastructures, different data sources as well as different languages. It is thus important to account for these differences to the extent possible at the initial design stage of the solution, in order to be able to cover requirements and use cases that may differentiate from the ones that are associated with the core participating cities. Thus, the timing of the execution of the Replicator program within the project itself plays a significant role, as such requirements can probably be known earlier on, when time allows to account for them sufficiently at technical level. A plug-and-play solution is difficult to implement, due to the diversity of the above-mentioned parameters. Use of standard formats is desirable, however the practical absence of standards' implementation poses a barrier that requires case-by-case solutions.

Level of interest and commitment:

It has been proven difficult to attract the interest of cities outside of Europe, as most existing communication practices and related networks have a clear focus within Europe itself. Another issue to be considered is the need to be able to reach out to the right people at city authorities, as traffic management in itself is associated with both technical aspects as well as with policy aspects for cities. Understanding the benefits of adapting innovative solutions and committing to allocating resources and time in their implementation requires a balance of technical and political support, thus the involvement of several city authority departments and levels of decision making.

Application procedure:

TMaaS had adopted a simple, not simplified, application procedure, in order to maximize the chances of cities applying to the Replicator program. An important lesson learnt is that all procedures should be electronic, to avoid time needed for submission of paper documents. Also important is to clearly define the terms and conditions for the use of the project's solutions by Replicator cities after the end of the project, to ensure that expectations for both sides are at the right level.

Selection procedure:

The TMaaS selection procedure for the Replicator program has been faced with drop-out of applications, for reasons that go beyond the project's scope or interests (e.g. local elections and changes in cities' administrations). However, it has become clear that a short period between application and selection would reduce the risk of such drop-outs. Another lesson learnt is that a step-wise inclusion of replication cities might increase the number of cities with actual interest, as information spread about such activities to cities may take more time, than that provided between the Open Call announcement and the application submission date. Finally, as technical and non-technical risks remain significant, it is recommended to keep a balance between innovation and feasibility in such replication activities, in order to reduce risks and pressures at both sides.

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