

Minutes of the inaugural conference ICT2-EE – 18th March 2009:

The inaugural conference of the ICT21-EE thematic network, which was held in Brussels on the 18th of March 2009, met with a real success. It was the opportunity to gather more than fifty participants from different regions all over Europe. This conference has been divided into two main steps. It began with a morning working session, where the members of the three working groups (1. ICT for intelligent buildings, 2. In transport, 3. As catalyst of change in user behaviours) had the opportunity to reflect and create indicators for good practices. It was followed by an afternoon plenary session at the Committee of the Regions, opened for all external participants who were interested in the thematic raised by the ICT21-EE project.

The three morning working groups have been held respectively in the premises of “Pour la Solidarité”, the Committee of the Regions and “The Centre”. These groups had the aim to engage discussions between each working groups members, in order to generate indicators and, at the same time, define objectives. Vin Sumner (working group leader related to intelligent buildings), Alberto Moro (working group leader related to transports) and Paulo Partidario (working group leader related behaviours) have gathered all experiences and know-how of each participant to elaborate the working groups’ guidelines.

The conclusions have been presented to the afternoon plenary session, getting together all network members.

Gilles Berhault (President, ACIDD) and Bertrand Déprez (The Centre) opened up the plenary session by reminding the 2020 objectives targeted by the European Union and also the different existing approaches related to the alternative energy sources. The different ways of using energy efficiency and working methods related to ICT21-EE project have been raised by reminding that one of the project’s key objectives is to gather at least five good practices in each working group.

During the plenary session, the rapporteurs of each working groups have presented the results of morning sessions. It has been proposed that a template collecting all best practices identified by all partners will have to be made. Partners of network members could be used as case studies and could benefit from the ICT21-EE results dissemination as Katrina Destrée has told the audience referring to GeSI members. This perspective has been well greeted by the President Gilles Berhault and the other round-table participants.

The results of these three morning working sessions will have to be transversal in between, in order to reach coherent and operational results and to create indicators allowing the identification of good practices.

The Committee of the Regions will shortly launch a call for proposals for the creation of a guide designated to local and regional actors, on the utilisation of ICT for energy efficiency. It has expressed its interest, by the voice of Anna Kadar, to the ICT21-EE network. It has also invited cross-fertilize results of network working activities and the Committee of the Regions working activities. The European Commission has explained that the Covenant of Mayors initiative could represent a possible way of synergies.

The day has been concluded by remarks of round-table participants which have underlined the necessity to consider the existing inequalities between “connected” people and people suffering from the digital divide.

The good practices which will be identified and analysed by the network, will have to contribute to produce a vision close to the 2020 objectives. These results will give Europe, a state of the art technological infrastructure which will benefit all Europeans. This vision will be achievable if attention is given to the role of local and regional authorities as operators and the role of the European Commission and the European Investment Bank as financial backers.

To conclude, this conference has been a real success, and has enabled us to launch opportunities of new cooperation with ICT21-EE external actors such as Netwerk Vlaanderen (http://www.netwerkvlaanderen.be/fr/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=258&Itemid=267), which has expressed its interest in being part of the project.

The next steps are concerning the ICT21-EE project: 18th and 19th of June 2009 in Lisbon.