

EXPO 2016 ANTALYA EXPERIENCES AND THE ROLE OF STRs

ABSTRACT

In Turkey, it is of specifically great importance to gain the consent of local people in making great investments or holding great organizations. The central administration, local authorities and NGOs make close cooperation for such investments and organizations. In this regard, STRs assume an essential function in ensuring the coordination and cooperation and providing accurate information to the local people.

As an example, to such investments and organizations, I would like to share EXPO 2016 experiences that was held in the province of Antalya, the pearl of Mediterranean, referred as the “Gate to the Paradise” lying from the Anatolia to the Mediterranean.

GENERAL INFORMATION ON EXPO 2016

EXPO 2016 Antalya Project is a botanical EXPO – on a 112-hectare exhibit site in Aksu District, under A-1 category (the highest class). In botanical EXPOs, countries exhibit their latest level of development they have made in the fields of ornament plants and horticulture. EXPO 2016 Antalya, Turkey’s first EXPO, has adopted the theme of “Flowers and Children” along with the motto “A Green Life for Future Generations”. EXPO 2016 launched on the date of **April 23 2016** and the official closing ceremony was held on the date of **October 30 2016**. However, the site is being used for similar purposes even after the official closing of EXPO event.

CENTRAL - LOCAL ORGANIZATION SYNERGY

EXPO 2016 was both state project and also the project of Antalya Province. The central government and the local dynamics and actors worked together for the project. Within this framework, the Governor of Antalya assumed the role of a bridge between the central and local organizations and ensured the coordination. Besides, the Governor of Antalya was the member of Executive Committee under EXPO Agency and simultaneously functioned as the Chair of EXPO Council. The Governor played a leading role in providing accurate and correct information.

Executive Committee: Chaired by the Minister of Food, Agriculture and Livestock, the Committee was formed by 9 Members, including the Governor of Antalya, Mayor of Antalya Metropolitan Municipality and representatives of the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Economy and Ministry of Culture and Tourism at the level of Director General status, as well as Chairman of Antalya Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Chairman of Chamber of Agriculture.

The Executive Committee is the decision-making body of the Agency. It has the authority to make highest level talks and render decisions regarding all the issues set forth by the law in

relation to its function and power. The Executive Committee represents the legal entity of the Agency and is authorized to make any kind of official application on behalf of the Agency.

EXPO Council: It consists of 54 members, chaired by the Governor of Antalya, including representatives of the Ministries, Municipalities, Universities, Professional Organizations, NGOs and Media Agencies.

The Council receives the necessary recommendations with the aim of organizing EXPO 2016 Antalya successfully and delivers its opinions and recommendations regarding the annual program, budget, domestic and foreign introductory activities, as well as other necessary issues. It also follows up the activities of the Executive Committee and the General Secretariat.

EXPO ACHIEVEMENTS IN ANTALYA

This project has enabled a great many of permanent marks, along with its yields of enhancing the brand value of Antalya, diversification of tourism and contributing to employment.

Permanent Investments in EXPO site:

- Congress Center (a main hall for 5000 persons)

EXPO BENEFITS FOR ANTALYA:

EXPO has improved Antalya's brand value, diversified its tourism and contributed to employment in the city, together with many buildings and facilities

Permanent investments in EXPO area

- Congress Centre (5000 capacity- main hall, total 9500 capacity) This will fill an important gap in Antalya's Convention tourism.
- EXPO Tower,
- Agriculture and Biodiversity Museum
- Chil Science and Technology Centre
- Amfi Theatre 5000 capacity
- Antalya bay shaped EXPO Lake and recreational areas

Regional Infrastructure Projects

- Sevage and Collector Line
- Flood Prevention Area,
- Railway Systems (17,8 km in 9 months– connecting city centre to EXPO and Airport)
- Highways, Bridges and Crossroads
- EXPO-Kundu Hotels Region Tourism Path

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE APPROACHES

Locals were generally aware of the importance of EXPO for Antalya. They were witnessing developments for last ten years which will help to improve the city's brand value and employment rates.

Antalya Metropolitan Municipality conducted a survey revealing the support of people to this Project.

In each and every step of EXPO there were some positive and negative approaches. For example, people had some different opinions about the selection of EXPO location saying that why it was so far (22 km) from city centre. They also debated on the members of executive board of EXPO.

EXPO was both a central and regional Project which created some difficulties in terms of accountability to both sides and to Bureau of International Exhibitions. On the other hand, 3 Ministers and 4 EXPO Secretary Generals changed during EXPO process.

In summary, negative approaches are:

- Objections in political grounds
- Frustration caused by high expectations.
- Conflict of interests
- Poor management of certain EXPO process

Objections in political grounds, together with political actors were perpetrated by opposing media and NGO's. Their arguments were based on wasting money and time for unrealistic targets which is a very common argument in many countries where EXPO is organised. However all Works were finished, some of them in last minute, before the start of EXPO. The number of participating countries was 54 which was second highest participation after 1990 Osaka EXPO with 78 countries.

Frustration caused by high expectations were caused by peoples idea of dream EXPO and very high targets set at the beginning of EXPO process. These high expectations were partly created by the authorities in order to bring EXPO to Antalya during the election process. For instance, 8 million visitor target was unrealistic. The number visitors remained 4.5 million.

Conflict of interests were caused by some local firms and individuals due to their not being awarded with EXPO tenders. EXPO Agency, created frustration among local subcontractors by organising national and international tender process according to nature of the job to be done.

There were also some people who proposed projects to take place in EXPO but refused. Despite all conflicts of interests a local people supported the process strongly and investments and the organization remained successful.

Some aspects of the EXPO process were not managed in the best possible manner. Some of these shortcomings were related to the fact that this was a first experience for Turkey. Some constructions were delayed to the last minute and integration with the city was sometimes

overlooked while constructions took priority. However, effective coordination resulted in successful completion of investments.

CONCLUSION:

EXPO 2016 in Antalya was a first for Turkey and the theme was “Flowers and Children”, while the slogan was “A greener world for future generations”. The EXPO began on April 23, 2016 and ended on October 30, 2016. With a participation from 54 countries and 4.5 million visitors, the EXPO was a very successful organization.

EXPO was both a state and a local project. Therefore, it allowed central and local dynamics and actors to work together. The Governor of Antalya acted as the bridge between central and local in this process. The Governor was a member of the Antalya EXPO Agency Executive Board and the chair of the EXPO Council. The Governor was also vital in informing the public about the project at local level and for monitoring related investments.

There were some criticism and shortcomings for several projects in the beginning. However, with the support of the public and their highlevel interest, together with an effective coordination, the organization became a success.

2018 TROIA YEAR

The 20th anniversary of Troia inclusion to the UNESCO World Heritage List has been declared the “Troia Year” by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. In this regard, awareness concerning Troia will be created at national and international level through events to be organized in cooperation with central and local government agencies, with the support of private sector and civil society. The Çanakkale Governorship will assume leadership and coordination of these events.