

Conference “From Community Initiative INTERREG to European Territorial Cooperation” - Hotel Intercontinental, Warsaw, Poland - 09-10 November 2006

Session 2: *Practical aspects of implementation of INTERREG III and European Territorial Co-operation programmes*

Panel discussion about Cross-border co-operation programmes in which Poland participates in 2004-2006 and will participate in 2007-2013 (practical dimension: good and bad experience, best practices and preparations for European Territorial Co-operation programmes) with participation of representatives of Managing and National Authorities

Questions asked to the panellists:

1. Best practices under the INTERREG programme that should be continued within the future programme;
2. Problems in managing the INTERREG programme;
3. ERDF allocation, N+2 risk and measures taken to avoid / reduce the loss of funds, N+3 in the future;
4. Simplifications to be made within the managing system of the future programme;
5. Lead partner principle within the current and future programmes;
6. Changes in the eligible programme areas;
7. The inclusion of the 10% clause (outside the EU) and the 20 % clause (outside the programme area)

What are the top things to be brought into the new programmes? What is a good programme/project?

- Integration of staff / joint common bodies in the JTS . The sub structures do not always ensure transparency for decisions on project. Assessment. Common body = better understanding
- Organise joint information events for applicants on both sides. Communication one of the most challenging.
- Avoid national substructures but strengthen joint structures.
- What makes a programme successful: programmes firmly anchored in the region, they are really seen as ownership of regions deeply knowledge of the Region (e.g. Denmark programme). This is a good practice. Match with regional needs. What the region really wants.
- Implementing structures in each programme. Keep and develop the structure. Do not invent the wheel again. Keep and work on networks in place of all relevant stakeholders.

- Rather positive experience from INTERREG/Tacis programme cooperation. To capitalise on this experience for the new period.
- MSC and SC should be one body
- National subcommittee as advisory boards is useful
- One mutual language ENGLISH, is a good choice. Better to have more.
- Use the experience. Good practice: role of the commitment of so many programmes / actors involved, despite demanding requirements.
- Effective follow up programme to PHARE CBC dealing with many constraints. Process of contracting and paying is running very well.

What are the main problems? Financial flows? Language? What else?

- Minor problems concerning implementing differences between 2 countries lead sometimes to bottlenecks and even to tribunals, such as to the involvement of EU Court. Put aside about prestige and national pride. Cooperate, civilised and discussing manner. Together. Unimportant issues.
- Financial agreement to read as simple as possible. Might be an obstacle. Must be understandable otherwise delays.
- Need to agree on important matters even domestically and internationally. Common understandings. What really makes the programmes very valuable. All parties should cooperate to focus on common issues.
- Delays on the difficult implementation system. Complicated structures and procedures. Time demanding. Superfluous. Bureaucracy. To be resolved in the future. Unnecessary intermediary and institutions. Accelerate processes. Eliminate some docs.
- INTERREG the procedures are too complicated- bureaucratic
- Simplification. Harmonisation concerning different frameworks on different side of the borders. Germany programme. Amendment in mid term cause of the accession of Poland.
- Avoid sub-structures as they are obstacles to communication.

Automatic de-commitment:

- Specific characteristics in some programmes. Such as N+2 Saxony-Lower Silesia different reason: Small area on the German side, Poland 3 times bigger. Trilateral illegible area overlapping with 2 other programmes. Much more difficult. Current programmes: payment in advance as a first commitment. Not for old MS. No payment in advance. Challenge without this.
- Some programmes had no loss of money. Larger priority fewer focus. Not demanded priorities
- Proactive MA or JTS. In order to evaluate what are the most demanded to transfer
- Potential project owners proactive attitude

- Bigger framework projects flagship projects, to take away the bulk of the funding.
- Internal procedures are sometimes time demanding and lead to delays in contracting. Preparation of smooth procedures are very important. Some progress has been made. Efforts have been made.

LPP

- Training of staff. 2 from 4 criteria to be fulfilled will help the programmes. Other priorities in the future programmes:
- How can infrastructure projects be developed under LPP principle? e.g. Roads close to the borders good projects under this new requirements. How? Flexibility on the cut of the priorities. To be readjusted.

New geographical eligibility

- The new programme. South Baltic programme. Challenging. New for the cooperating regions. New in the way it is perceived. 150 km rule a new product, e.g. not possible to fund infrastructure.

EGTC

- Some countries consider this possibility seriously.

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INTERACT POINT Managing Transition and External Co-operation