

2nd Meeting of the Interreg Better Governance Network

**2nd Meeting of the Interreg Capitalisation Network for Better Governance
(T011)
24 October
City, Country**

Report

Author(s) Monica Tanaka

Welcome

Interact welcomed participants of the 2nd network meeting. The Interact work on capitalisation and the strategy were presented: 1 of 3 objectives to capture and communicate Interreg results on 6 networks, one of which is Better Governance. He invited participants to read it and use it by linking the relevant networks to their work, e.g. at events. Interact explained that before the 1st network meeting in March 2018 an EWRC workshop with DG EMPL, REGIO and the Danube programme took place and a video about service delivery of Interreg to the citizens is being prepared. Participants were invited to register at the [T011 Community](#) to benefit from regular updates, event notifications and read documents such as Interact's capitalisation strategy.

Presentations

Presentation of MLG projects

Panoramed project: 12 countries, 19 partners, 4 axis, one on better governance, NEAR, REGIO, MARE. EUR 24 million for the project. Turkey is not involved because they are not part of MED. Meet twice a year. There are sub-projects and experts on coastal + maritime tourism and maritime surveillance. The aim is to get outreach (liaising) and to influence policy (mainstreaming). It is a rather political project, mirroring almost a Monitoring Committee, with associated partners from international organisations as well as strategies. As LP one way to address challenges is to put problems on the table in a diplomatic manner to find solutions e.g. create sub-working groups with partners who are more willing to work on a topic than others.

Umbrella project: Deals with “governance” CBC of South Baltic. EUR 1 million, 4 countries, stakeholders from 6 countries of the BSR: Academic and administrative. They provide tools and activities to upskill target groups for better international cooperation capacity – 3 levels of groups. Different levels of administrative and financial capacities (English skills), and project management skills for Interreg and other EU funds. Also it serves to raise awareness about the EUSBSR. Project runs out of funds and will ask for more funds in South Baltic or in Erasmus+ or Europe for Citizens. The countries involved have administrative disparities and they accept them – they are here to stay. Bringing them together helps to explore their differences as they go along. Tools and activities: travel and accommodation costs, attendance of events, support to apply for Interreg. They will create a database of beneficiaries and will carry out follow-up interviews to see if the knowledge acquired is used in the organization.

Horizontal Action “Capacity” of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region: Overview of MRS and EUSBSR in particular. Role of “Policy Area Coordinator” as Architect. For each policy area they do one-day workshops (for partnerships and aligning funding); modelling policy input. They organise annual fora. Overall concerns for EUSBSR and Interreg:

- Funding and basic costs should come from other sources, not only Interreg!
- Thematics for projects and platforms.
- Many interfaces today but what about tomorrow?

Swedish institute provides information on potential Swedish beneficiaries and provide seed money.

Communication activities of the network

Interact will develop a video about TO11 projects throughout Europe, highlighting the service deliver of Interreg programmes to citizens.

The Health+ project and video. Corinna’s findings of working in a cbc area:

- Culture is important. 70% of people cross the border regularly the Groningen/Munster border.
- You cannot just transfer a practice from one place to the other – you need to adapt it.
- Involve the right level: For DE they have the regional Ministry of health in the 2 länder and they have their own network at the local level. At EU level you have large scale representatives. At this level you have greater impact.

Following the recommendation of the 1st Network meeting, a video started being produced by Interact. Uffe presented the video process including the SK/AT kindergarten bilingual schools; healthcare ambulance project in SE/FI and the FI/EE active agency one. The video will be available on Interact's website for all to use. TO11 members are encouraged to share communication material.

Spatial Foresight

Interreg does not do enough for governance! How is the learning to institutional capacity flow vis-à-vis the Cohesion Policy? Where does learning come in?

- TC is about finding better solutions.
- Finding better solutions means learning.
- The aim of learning is to change the way we do things.

EU legislation has an influence on governance as it impacts uniformly but CP is operating in a different level, often without the relevant stakeholders.

Post 2020 territorial cooperation is a must – with stronger emphasis on territorial assets.

But currently 3 challenges:

- 1) Fragmentation and disintegration of societies
- 2) Spatial interdependencies and externalities
- 3) Mismatch of responsibilities: irrelevant policies and/or policy impact beyond administrative borders.

Functional areas of different geographical size matter – ESIF operations need reach out to build institutional capacity.

The meaning of Good Governance

University of Gothenburg presented how to measure governance. Can the organization of bureaucracy reduce corruption and use resources more efficiently?

What helps:

- Meritocratic recruitment and promotion correlate with low corruption
- High institutional quality, high economic and social development and high levels of (politician) accountability correlate with low levels of corruption.
- An early warning system may help to stop corruption from taking place/escalating.
- Fear of punishment (being dismissed) is a tool of coercion and becoming accomplices.
- Steering functions with joint efforts (cooperation approach) will also help efforts for this.

For CP – is investment in governance needed or just on how money is spent?

TOOP H2020 project

One-off data registration for citizens. 2 ½ years project, 21 Countries, LP Tallinn University of Tech. They develop IT solutions with coding.

Data storing is conceived differently in different countries based on culture, history etc.

Single Digital Gateway Regulation for things such as birth certificates, residence information, diplomas etc making 21 procedures in total.

EE “X-Road” service – allows different operators to exchange data. 23m requests for transaction this month for a country of 1.3 m population. 2 key public sector innovations based on x-road that helped taxing and sped up transactions:

- All transactions above EUR1,000 need to be reported in real time.
- E-residency option.

Good for time saving, lower administrative burden, compliance with data protection legislation.

Future scenarios can cover areas of data exchange e.g. online ship and crew certificates not yet connected.

European Cross-border Mechanism (ECBM)

After Interreg and EGTC the ECBM is a mechanism to address concretely legal obstacles in CBC. It is not a new form of EGTC nor is it limited to Interreg and it applies in the limits of a well-defined case/project. Derogation is foreseen for a limited amount of time but the regulation is open enough to have the time limits reviewed and possibly extended, up to the MS. If only 20% of existing obstacles were removed border regions could gain 2% of GDP. 2-level decision in the proposal: 1 year to put the ECBM in place and 1 year for a CB Coordination Point and processes for solving obstacles (a solution is a Commitment or a Statement, one per case). If another mechanism exists, then no ECBM is necessary and only reporting obligation for the MS. The whole process will be monitored.

- Can the duration of legal waiver last during an Interreg programme period?
- No, Interreg support cannot be conditionally linked to an ECBM statement. We have rejected an idea for an enabling condition to that direction.

MS need to decide who the Coordination Point is. They will need to have the authority and know-how to oversee the process (e.g. inside the PM office).

Update of the Public Administration and Governance Network

Vladimir’s presentation: He is responsible for the TO11 with ESF (mainstream) on PAG (Public Administration and Governance). Next meeting will also include a training on quality of public services and some policy failures and lessons learnt in the UK (where the expert is based). Information flow between meetings is not strong. It could be suggested to organise meetings more often (currently the network meets twice a year) but avoid online tools, not good for public servants.

Next steps

The group agreed to look at the following topics:

- More practical information on what projects do in TO11, not only at the strategic level but at the local level of municipalities. Good practices? CZ-PL programme.
- The potential of the new ECBM, how to implement it.
- Governance experience from Interreg should be collected also in the context of the draft future regulation which includes institutional capacity in Component 1 and 2 and in Policy Objective 5.
- Look into flagship projects (e.g. FR/SP hospital) to explore the governance work that took place behind the scenes to make the project happen, including on-site visits.
- Specific topic on needs of the labour market.
- Think of transferability issues, can we learn from each other?
- Homework – what type of problems or solutions do you want to share?
- Other organisations: World Bank? Partnerships of CB municipalities? Academics? EGTC? MOT? Council of Europe? CESCO? Nordic Council of Ministers? Horizon-funded on Governance. FMO (Norway and Grants) who will soon start this approach – in REGIO it is E1 who is in touch with them

TO DO:

- Members to register at the TO11 Community to benefit from regular updates of the group with statistics, project information and interesting links and read Interact's capitalisation strategy.
- Remember! Capitalisation is also about showing results. Some thought into what Interreg produces for TO11!
- Share communication material with the network!