

Kick-off for the capitalisation network for better governance across borders

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Report

Author(s) Jörg Mirtl

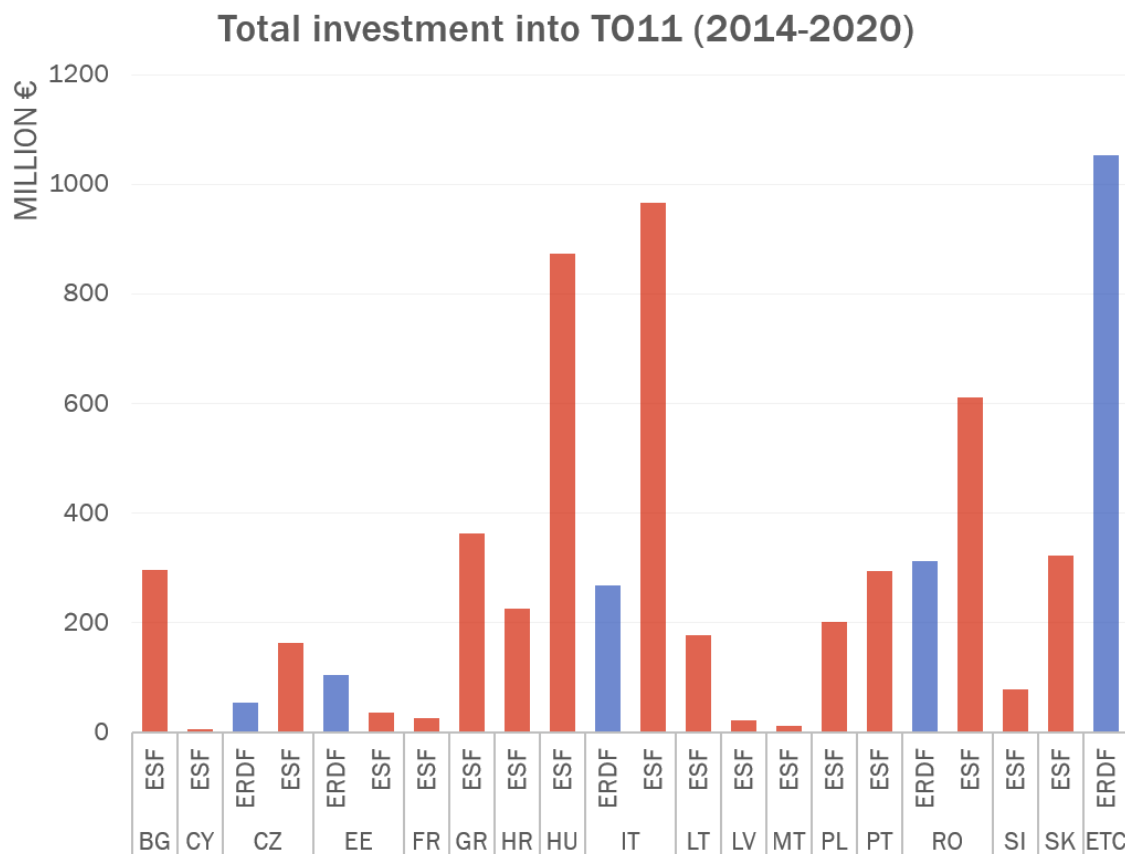
Tour de table

Participants introduced themselves and expressed their expectations. The participants were composed by representatives from Interreg programmes, projects, and the national authorities in France, international organisations as well as macro-regional strategies.

Introduction to the objectives of the meeting

Interact introduced the objectives and goals of the meeting. The idea is to establish a sustained process that lasts over several years. Rather than highlighting the challenges and opportunities of the governance of Interreg, the capitalisation process related to the thematic objective 11 (henceforth referred to as “TO11”) in Interreg and other fields of cooperation (e.g. macro-regional strategies) emphasizes the paramount role of Interreg in enhancing institutional capacity and promoting good governance across borders (external dimension). Capacity Building serves the purpose to improve the delivery to the citizens, and openness and smooth communication are key criteria for making this endeavour a success. There was a shared understanding of participants that capitalisation deals with the outputs and results of projects, that it interlinks them and groups them into clusters and thereby fosters an exchange of experience that enables mutual learning and improves both existing policies and programme coordination.

Interact reported on what has happened so far, e.g. a questionnaire for Interreg programmes was conducted in the first half of 2017, a workshop held at the European Week for Cities and Regions in October 2017, and an [online platform](#) was established.



Group Work 1

Participants discussed the interrelation between institutional capacity, cooperation, and capitalisation. Capacity Building is seen as pre-condition for cooperation within a partnership. There are several understandings of capitalisation, e.g. how project results can feed back to policy processes or communicate project results to a wider audience beyond a smaller circle of stakeholders. One challenge could be the diversity of topics that are covered under TO11 and therefore is also challenging to check the results of projects. Several participants highlighted also the imbalance of skills/experience in partnerships, as well as the need to close the gap between projects and policy processes. Other challenges were emphasized, such as the involvement of private partners and legal obstacles at cross-border level. The importance of sound partnerships with the right partners was highlighted, and their commitment to the cause. Interreg programmes and other bodies highlighted the crucial role of trust in capacity building. It was stressed that institutional capacity cannot be considered as a goal in itself, but that cooperation and capacity mutually reinforce each other in a combination of a joint top-down and bottom-up process. Systemic changes in management and empowerment of all actors were seen as conducive to filling the gaps and respond to the needs on the ground.

Some projects were discussed in this respect, e.g. the BforB project or joint activities across the Czech-German border such as the project “together in the middle of Europe – regions Oberpfalz and Pilsen”, which works as a project and policy hub across the border and improves the knowledge of the political and legal system on the respective other side of the border.

Presentation of GaYA project

The [GaYA](#) (Governance and Youth in the Alps) project, an Interreg Alpine Space project involves about 400 young people in the Alpine Region and enables meetings with politicians. It thereby communicates specific needs to a wider audience. The project also cooperates with the EU Strategy for the Alpine region. Interact conducted an analysis of communication aspects of the project, which has also had an impact on the regional planning in Liguria.



Presentations of the b-solutions and GaYA projects

Presentation of the b-solutions project

The [b-Solutions project](#) is related to the newly established cross-border focal point of the EC and intends to identify innovative cross-border solutions.

Activities of Urbact and ESPON in the fields of capacity building and capitalisation

[Urbact](#) and [ESPON](#) presented their respective activities in the field of capacity building. Urbact provides tailor-made services to urban stakeholders, whereas ESPON fosters evidence-based policy making and provides decision-makers with academic expertise.

Multi-level governance across borders – point of view of the mission opérationnelle transfrontalière (MOT)

[MOT](#) emphasized the tremendous role of multi-level governance. A shift from government towards flexible governance systems was illustrated with concrete examples, such as the Cerdanya hospital on the French-Spanish border. Several proposals were made to deal with cross-border challenges.

Presentation and discussion of the Observatory for Public Sector Innovation (OPSI)

The OECD presented this Horizon2020 [project](#), a project that creates a repository of public sector innovation. Proposals of public sector innovation examples from the cooperation sphere (Interreg and others) are welcome and can be submitted. The OECD also emphasized the importance of an entrepreneurial attitude of public officers, as well as the positive effects of inclusive governance and related bottom-up processes.

Capacity Building across borders - presentation of the ESF Public administration & Governance platform and options for more transnational cooperation

The [ESF platform for Public Administration and Governance](#) (TO11) was [presented](#), as well as new approaches to governance and administration. A meeting back-to-back with this platform may be considered for autumn.



Discussing Public Sector Innovation with Macro-regional strategies' representatives, the ESF and the OECD

Introduction to the macro-regional perspective

The EU Strategy for the Danube Region and the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian were presented. The Danube Strategy has a dedicated [Priority dealing with institutional capacity](#), whereas the [Adriatic and Ionian Strategy](#) conducts capacity building measures for its stakeholders. Both involve partners from third countries from the Eastern Partnership and Western Balkans on a level-playing field. The presentations aimed at showing the connection between macro-regional strategies and the programmes and highlighted potential mutual benefits from cooperation.

The Innovation Lifecycle



OPSI

Extract from the OECD's presentation

Group work day 2

The main purpose of the second day's group work was to define joint activities in the future.

1. One next step could be to reflect the state-of-play and **conduct a critical review/analysis** of the projects that have been implemented under T011, e.g. in a **case study**. Moreover, **cooperation with academia** and other institutions dealing with the network were considered to be beneficial for the future of the network. Different projects could be clustered and analysed.

2. **Communication** activities were highlighted as a key factor for showing that cooperation/Interreg makes a difference as well, including an exchange of communication methods, reaching out to the citizens via the Cooperation Day and sectoral fora for participation. A joint message/mission could be that cooperation leads to public sector innovation. Moreover, initiatives involving young people such as the Interreg Youth Initiative and those promoting regional policy such as the cohesion alliance were mentioned. A linkedin group for the TO11 capitalisation network could be established in addition to the Interact online platform.
3. Participants also discussed how to **reach out to decision-makers** to promote the results of projects. In this context, skills for **lobbying** could be developed. Participants discussed to develop a **policy paper** highlighting how institutional capacity benefits from different forms of cooperation such as Interreg.

In brief, the following activities could be envisaged:

- A study/analysis of projects (and clustering/grouping thereof) in the field of TO11, as well as general considerations of governance across borders (cooperation with academia);
- Share examples from programmes and foster mutual learning by assessing how institutional problems were solved;
- Communication activities and trainings both with/for internal stakeholders and reaching out for mainstream media;
- Lobbying for the added value of cooperation and the benefits of cooperation for the institutional development in the EU, e.g. via a policy paper.

Conclusions

Participants highlighted the added value of the network. They requested a critical analysis of the field to be conducted and to include more beneficiaries. The approach could be narrowed down and a study/analysis could lay the ground for the further development of the network. Concrete milestones will help to develop it further. Together with the other programmes, ESPON and Interact will explore the potential to cooperate for the future development of this network. The next meeting is to be held in autumn. Participants are invited to make use of the dedicated [online platform](#).

Upcoming meetings

17-18 May 2018, Heraklion (Greece), [ESF Public Administration & Governance Network](#), DG Empl/AEIDL

24 May 2018, Brussels (Belgium): [Good Governance conference](#), DG Regio

13-14 June 2018, Alicante (Spain). 2nd Conference: Let's practice capitalisation, Interact

Autumn 2018: 2nd Meeting of the Better Governance across borders network.