

Workshop Report

Workshop: “Goal-oriented project development - Strategic project generation working sessions”

Leipzig 04/10/2006 – 13:30 – 18:00

Date, Venue: 24 October 2006; EUREGIA Fair, Leipzig, DE

Facilitator: Mauro Novello, INTERACT MT

Background

Target group and participation: Project developers + Potential project applicants + beneficiaries.

Since it is not possible to reach a unequivocal definition of “Strategic project”, as far as different national and local policies are concerned, INTERACT Point MTEC intended to tackle the project development process, in order to define successful patterns.

An expert “coach” from different Joint Technical Secretariats – Contact Points, facilitated the work of small groups. Each group received part of a standard application form to be filled in. A predefined hypothetical “strategic” project was provided in advance.

The aim was to stimulate and raise awareness of project developers, as well as of project evaluators, on the main issues and processes to be considered for successful project development, as well as for smooth project implementation and follow-up.

The focus included the different parts of the project application form such as:

1st session: Building a “strategic” partnership

2nd session: Setting up an action plan (milestones, activities) – Time table

3rd session: How to develop a sound financial plan (according to a given action plan)

Workshops outcomes

First session: **Building a “strategic” partnership**

Coach: Herwig Langthaler, ÖAR

Facilitators: Mauro Novello INTERACT Point MTEC

Recommendations:

- 1) Make clear what are the **common objectives**, which should be **concrete and precise**
- 2) **Lead Partner** should be a public institution with long experience in cooperation
- 3) Check if the partners have experience on the field of action of the project
- 4) Check how third countries partners can participate
- 5) **First plan the activities then the funding**
- 6) Costs should be calculated through experience
- 7) Authorities involved should be responsible / competent for the field of action (e.g. environment)

- 8) Check **real needs** of the area involving all relevant stakeholders
- 9) Sell the project to the region and to institutions involved
- 10) **Clear definition of tasks** from the very beginning and shared decision on these.
- 11) Soft projects (**awareness raising**) have less concrete objectives and therefore difficult assessment indicators.
- 12) Compare competences of different authorities involved (hierarchical and competence level)

Main recommendations:

- 13) Coordination and communication aspects are essential. Plan meetings and partner coordination. Many coordination activities (**meetings**) **during project development**.
- 14) Public involvement is important to support projects. **Political support** is essential. **Involvement of the public** about to disseminate project objectives – pilot actions. Set up a **PR plan**.
- 15) Private partners and of scientific partners provide an added value, nevertheless expectations and goals must be checked. Private partner should not aim at profit, but should have other benefits such as improving image-prestige e.g.. (difficult to assess and ensure it). Search for private “external” support, such as bank financing sub-actions- follow up actions.
- 16) Result indicators are very important. From the very beginning goals to be achieved must be clear.

Second session: **Setting up an action plan (milestones, activities) – Time table**

Coach: Aldo Puleo, National Contact Point INTERREG IIIB ALPINE SPACE

Facilitators: Mauro Novello and Henrik Lauridsen INTERACT Point MTEC

Recommendations

- Decide together what the Work package will be about.
- One WP should be **project management**
- One WP should be about **dissemination activities**
- Plan the partner meetings from the very beginning
- **Every partner should contribute to the project management**
- The kick-off meeting should involve the major stakeholders in order to be the first dissemination meeting and **get public/political support**
- Project management and audit activities should be planned for the entire duration of project.
- **Capitalisation on available knowledge** to be planned in any case.
- Clear role of every partner.
- For **long projects** (3 years), a **mid term evaluation is useful**: Plan staff and funding resources in **the application form already**
- Work on the dissemination and public audience involvement
- Timing should match with budget spending targets.
- **Keep always main objectives in mind**
- **Objectives must be very well linked**.
- LP should also have time management tasks

- Set the **milestones** very precisely: **concrete goals to be achieved**
- **Final conference should involve all relevant actors** and is necessary to present project results and start up the follow up phase, such as **generation of new project ideas**.
- Precise planning of the project management tasks by lead partner: reporting deadlines, budget spending targets, financial flows, define precisely **how external factors influence the project such as first level control deadlines**, etc.
- The **project must be developed jointly**, to share objectives, and activities. Shared planning will provide **better commitment for all single activities** (Lead Partner should not send a ready application, to be only signed by partners).

First session: **How to develop a sound financial plan (according to a given action plan)**

Coach: Andrea Igazi, INTERREG IIIC East JTS

Facilitators: Mauro Novello and Henrik Lauridsen INTERACT Point MTEC

Recommendations

- 1) Find the **right balance** between **management and operational costs** : (e.g. IIIC recommends 25% management of total budget)
- 2) **Dissemination budget** must be high enough and from the very beginning (e.g. IIIC recommends 5-10% of total budget)
- 3) **All partners should contribute to project management**, even if LP should have main share
- 4) **Small scale investment** should be kept around 5-10% of total budget e.g.
- 5) Spending targets: **Second year really active**, but **first year enough funding to start activities**
- 6) **LP share** on total budget should **not exceed 40%**
- 7) The operational programme should set how private partners are allowed
- 8) **Funding should be content related for all partners**
- 9) Project management funding should take also consultant costs into account (higher in some countries). That is way **each partner should write its own contribution** to the project.
- 10) **Co-financing issues and constraints** to be considered (how much a partner can contribute).
- 11) **De-commitment issues**: e.g. IIIC JTS cuts the funding if the level of expenditure is not satisfying and some de-commitment is likely to be foreseen.
- 12) **Financial plan should be realistic** (do not distribute funding according to shares).
- 13) Consider also **how long contracting and tendering procedures take**.
- 14) About eligible costs, **please contact national authorities** (e.g. about staff), but also the JTS can provide advice on how to fill in the application form.
- 15) About ENPI and external funding, please contact the authorities in charge.