

SEMINAR **INTERACT SEMINAR “STRATEGIC PROJECT GENERATION”**  
VENUE BAUDIREKTION, RATHAUSSTRASSE, VIENNA, AUSTRIA  
DATE 15 AND 16 NOVEMBER 2007

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## Summary Report

The second edition of the Seminar on Strategic Project Generation took place in Vienna on 15-16 November 2007 and it was co-hosted by the Vienna City Administration. This followed on the first successful Seminar taking place in Venice on 17-18 October 2007 (please find more information at <http://www.interact-eu.net/227138/772316/0/0>).

### INTERACT Seminar “Strategic Project Generation”, Vienna 15-16 November 2007



The main aim of the Seminar was to introduce a systematic approach to strategic project generation and implementation. More specifically, the Seminar provided an opportunity for participants to discuss, share ideas / solutions and find a common understanding, where possible, on the following questions:

- A) Is there a “strategic” project as such? Is it different from a “good quality project”? What are the risks of labelling a project as “strategic” too early?
- B) Where shall programmes start to increase the strategic dimension? (Programme visions exercises etc.) ? How can programmes support the generation and implementation of strategic projects, in order to efficiently meet their strategic goals? What are the effective processes, tools and methods? How important is the partnership for more strategic projects? Success stories on systematic approaches.
- C) What are the processes that support a more strategic project selection and implementation?

D) How can we transfer or capitalise on project results? How can we disseminate project results and reach the most relevant stakeholders?

In particular, during the Seminar good practice procedures and tools were presented in an interactive way in order to inspire and empower programmes in their day-to-day work with project developers, potential applicants or key stakeholders in general.

The Seminar was structured around the presentation of methods that proved to be efficient under INTERREG III, as well as new approaches planned by the programmes for the new programming period, collected by INTERACT.

Additionally, following presentations on specific strategic approaches were held by Seminar participants:

- Roland Abter, Federal Chancellery of the Republic of Austria: The Strategic Approach in Austria;
- Katrin Stockhammer, INTERREG IIIC East JTS: Knowledge management;
- Angelos Sanopoulos, South East Europe Programme: Strategic approach.

Besides these presentations, the 30 participating representatives of national and regional authorities involved in the implementation of INTERREG III Programmes and in the preparation of the new European Territorial Cooperation Programmes were very pro-actively involved in several working sessions.

## Main learning points

In particular following main learning points came out of the discussions:

1) We can assume that:

- there is **not one single and definitive definition** of a strategic project,
- there is **not one single and definitive procedure** that ensures the development of strategic projects,
- **it is risky to label a project “strategic” from the very beginning**, as the results might not match with the expectations.

Nevertheless the programmes should identify and agree **on specific characteristics and procedures to increase the strategic dimension of projects**.

2) Programme and project objectives must be set in a strategic way. The link between project and programme objectives should be clear.

Some tools have proved to be efficient under INTERREG III in order to set strategic objectives, such as:

- The **Programme Visions** exercises for drafting teams. (See presentation “Where to start”);
- The **Objective Tree** (planning methodology based on a real problem). (See presentation “Where to start”);
- **Knowledge management:**
  - o Knowledge management is a **structured approach** to the use of the knowledge produced by a programme.
  - o It is important because knowledge is the most important asset of a cooperation programme; programmes need a tool to be able to capitalise on project results (collect and process the information, as well as disseminate it); a systematic approach would support the selection of strategic projects; **if relevant, the data collected can be used by programmes/decision makers to demonstrate the added value** of European Territorial Cooperation.

- Knowledge management can be successfully implemented through an **efficient infrastructure** (e.g. web-based data storing) for sharing knowledge where projects feed in the information on their expected and achieved results right from the start.
- Programmes should set this infrastructure in the starting phase already. (See Katrin Stockhammer's presentation).

3) Programme authorities and national authorities play a major role in steering the strategic project generation process (see Presentation "Project generation and development"):

- Top-down approaches (targeted thematic calls) can be useful if combined with bottom-up consultation (e.g. thematic seminars for potential applicants).
- Two- or three-step procedures enable programmes to pre-assess projects ideas (short forms) and filter the most suitable ideas, which can become a project.
- Strategic projects shall address **specific strategic needs** of the area and shall have additional strategic elements which **may be identified by the programmes**. To be successful, programmes have **to directly contact the most relevant stakeholders** in the themes they address (see Angelos Sanopoulos's presentation).
- **National authorities** can support an increased strategic approach of programmes, as they can coordinate and link up needs and concerns **of different national actors**, not only in European Territorial Cooperation but also **in other mainstream programmes** (See Roland Abter's presentation).

4) The data collected in the project selection phase and during programme implementation through the monitoring system should be useful, significant and relevant to be used in the dissemination of programme achievements and in the evaluation of impacts. Therefore from the very beginning, projects should collect result-oriented data on outputs:

- Who will be able to use the project outputs? How? If used, project outputs should lead to project results.
- At the same time, we can assume that project results will be used somehow by somebody to reach the expected impacts. See the applied study on Process monitoring of Impacts.

5) Effective communication to the programme stakeholders, as well as to decision-makers and the public, all along the programme life cycle is key. Projects are the programme's ambassadors.