



IP Valencia Update - Issue No. 2

Strategic Projects

Palermo (IT), 10 March 2009

What is a strategic project? Which are its main characteristics?

In very general terms a strategic project can be defined as an operation about a crucial topic, involving a large programme area with a considerable financial dimension.

But besides this, one of the conclusions of the seminar on strategic projects held in Palermo (IT) is that no common definition of strategic projects exists, even if there are some recurring elements. Most strategic projects deal with common issues like the environment, innovation and tourism, however, selection procedures, for example, may vary considerably from programme to programme.

The European Commission recalls that strategic projects are embedded in the overall programme priorities and one should therefore also reflect on strategic *programmes* and not only projects.



Summary of the Seminar on Strategic Projects

Almost 50 representatives from nine southern European programmes (MAs, programmes' partners, JTS and local authorities) of the IP Valencia and Vienna zones participated in the seminar on strategic projects held in Palermo (IT) on 10 March 2009.

The event was organised in collaboration with the IP Vienna and the INTERACT ENPI Point South and was constituted of an exchange on the generation, assessment and monitoring of strategic projects in southern European programmes.

The approaches may vary considerably from programme to programme, nonetheless, there are also some similarities:

- Most strategic projects deal with environmental issues, innovation or tourism
- The most common selection procedure are calls for proposals, although some programmes use direct methodologies such as negotiated procedures
- Several programmes expressed their concern about the lengthy 2-step selection procedure
- The participation of private partners is sometimes controversial although it could give an added value to the partnership since they could bring investment to the territories involved (doubt in the application of state aid rules)

Participants were given the opportunity to present a "state-of-play" of their experiences gained so far. Some of the examples presented were:

⇒The CBC Spain-France-Andorra is developing two strategic projects: the Cerdanya Hospital, a cross-border hospital in the process to be managed by an EGTC and the Bielsa-Aragouet cross-border tunnel dealing with common security management;

⇒The CBC Italy-Switzerland manages two types of complex operations: the strategic projects which cover relevant themes and a major part of the programme's territory and the PITs (crossborder integrated plans), whose concept can be associated to the INTERREG IIIC Regional Framework Operations, mini-programmes with a strategic impact ;

⇒The CBC Italy-Slovenia has launched its two-step procedure, starting with an assessment process and dealing with the participation of partners from the private sector;

For more detailed summaries of the presentations, please contact ip.valencia@interact-eu.net