

Art of Cooperation - Integrated territorial development tools panel discussion summary

The workshop was designed to present integrated tools going beyond the traditional logic of individual cross-border projects as well as identifying and developing functionally interlinked cross-border areas. As an introduction, the moderator, Gyula Ocskay, secretary general of CESCO gave a brief summary on the integrated tools implemented by the CBC Programmes so far, namely the PIT (integrated cross-border plan), PITEM (integrated thematic plan) and PITER (integrated territorial plan) introduced by the French-Italian ALCOTRA, the CLLD (community-led local development) applied by the Italy-Austria and the ITI (integrated territorial investment) used by the Italy-Slovenia CBC Programmes. One further instrument, the territorial action plan for employment (TAPE) launched by the Slovakia-Hungary CBC Programme was presented by one of the panellists, Mr Silvester Holop, deputy head of the joint secretariat. The TAPE has been developed based on the PIT model, including 2 to 7 projects facilitating employment (investments in production infrastructure by SMEs and in industrial areas by municipalities, development of training, job-seeking, retailing, R+D+I services, brand building, etc.) and one further project for coordinating the management and communication at TAPE level. The projects have been selected through a two-round selection procedure, involving also the regional authorities. The programme provided the applicants with an ERDF funding of EUR 35 million.

Ms Marcela Grodeanu, head of unit of the Managing Authority of the Romania-Bulgaria CBC Programme and Ms Andrea Mayrhofer, representing the Joint Secretariat of the Bavaria-Austria CBC Programme presented the development of territorial strategies enabling the implementation of the *Europe closer to citizens* policy objective (PO5) during the current budgetary period. The applied methodologies differ in the two Programmes. In the case of the Bavarian-Austrian PO5 planning process 6 euroregions have been assigned to develop their own, narrower territorial strategies focusing on 3 main objectives (from among which one was tourism), and implement the strategy through calls managed, monitored and administered by the euroregions themselves (with a total ERDF budget of EUR 12.8 million). The Romania-Bulgaria CBC Programme opted for another solution: with the involvement of a multisectoral set of stakeholders from the whole programming area (within the so-called Strategy Board), the experts identified a flagship topic, i.e. the development of the EuroVelo 6 cycle highway around which a joint strategy and different tourism, heritage protecting, local product developing, etc. projects have been built up (with a total budget of EUR 65 million).

The speakers' opinions differed regarding the maturity of the beneficiaries for such complex and complicated interventions which bear serious risks (e.g. the stakeholders involved in the planning do not understand why they need to develop a new strategy; the SMEs have a fundamentally different way of thinking compared to the logic of the CBC programmes; the lack of experiences with management of territorial interventions at local level, etc.). At the same time, the tools bring along obvious advantages. From a pedagogical point of view, the beneficiaries are forced to look beyond the frames of their individual investment purposes and define a spatial strategy which clearly stretches over the border and has a longer timely perspective. From the programme management point of view, the projects create longer, strategic partnerships as well as more durable outcomes and results than the traditional ones. All speakers agreed that appropriate governance and coaching (on behalf of the programme bodies) are the major guarantees for these advantages.