

Innovation, research & technology development Programme Capitalisation

Feedback Seminar

19 May 2010 – Brussels/Belgium

Event report

The feedback seminar was organised in the framework of the programme capitalisation on the sub-theme “Innovation, Research and Technology Development” launched by the INTERREG IVC programme. As the analysis carried out by EURADA had progressed significantly (fact sheets on projects site visits were completed for the most part) it was time to have the first feedback on the findings from the experts team and to further fine-tune the analysis. In addition, this seminar was an opportunity for project partners to react on the main findings and to further exchange with the experts and with the other projects on content- and process-related issues.

Similarly to the 1st thematic seminar, the majority of the projects (14 out of 21) were present at the event together with representatives of the EURADA team of experts; representatives from DGs of the European Commission and from INTERACT and URBACT II programmes.



Michel Lamblin, Director of the INTERREG IVC programme, welcomed the participants and in his introduction highlighted that contrary to the last event where mainly process-related issues were tackled, more emphasis should be placed this time on content-related issues (i.e. issues related to regional innovation policies).

Jean-Marc Venineaux representing DG Regio expressed that the Commission is very attentive to the work of the 2 networking programmes (INTERREG IVC and URBACT II), whose overarching aim is to speed up knowledge transfer between EU regions. Both programmes are organised around the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategies with a forward-looking view to the objectives of the EU2020 “smart and green growth”. The present 21 projects represent a critical mass for this

initiative and in case the experiment is successful can form the building blocks of a future generalisation of the capitalisation experiment to the whole programme.

Erwin Siweris, Deputy Programme Director reminded the participants of the steps already taken (initial analysis of the participating projects via fact sheets and site visits) and on what still needs to be done (preparation of the final report, inclusion and presentation of results to the Monitoring Committee). He underlined the importance of the present experiment as, depending on the outcome, the experiment could be generalised and further extended to the other programme themes.



Christian Saublens representing EURADA continued and presented the achievements so far and the ways the 21 projects could potentially be clustered at project, programme and good practice level. During the analysis various factors were taken into account in order to determine the grouping of the projects. These were: clustering by specific objectives, by critical issues, by response to critical issues and by place of the project in the regional innovation system. Based on the issues tackled and the tools addressed, he also highlighted several synergies, on which further exchanges could be built among projects.

Furthermore, *Christian Saublens* listed the different capitalisation expectations linked to the policy, methodology, project management and practice level. He also highlighted that in order to better capitalise on the results, several factors were central and needed to be developed: the creation of a good practice database, the organisation of thematic events, the availability of a pool of experts linked to the good practice repository and the reinforcement of bilateral contacts between projects.

Afterwards, participants reacted on the main findings and issues raised and a constructive discussion ensued. One debate centered on the level of involvement of SMEs in different projects. *Erwin Siweris* highlighted that due to the nature of the programme SMEs are not directly involved in projects. However through the participation of different parties (e.g. Chambers of Commerce) the programme has an impact on them and they indeed are represented in the different working groups. Projects also explained that, although they were not directly eligible, businesses and in particular SMEs were still closely associated to the work carried out within their cooperation. As the findings also reflect there are certain areas which are less covered by projects (e.g. access to finance, Intellectual Property rights, access to market etc.)

Another suggestion was to include the financing of the testing of good practices during the project life time as part of the capitalisation process. However, *Nicolas Singer*- Senior project officer -

explained why the ‘implementation work’ remains limited in the context of INTERREG IVC. The programme core focus is on the exchange of experience among public authorities. The size of the programme budget also reflects this point and would not allow funding numerous pilot actions or experimentations. Therefore, the core part of the good practices implementation can only be financed from other sources. Furthermore, if the programme would go for large scale implementations, they could easily turn into purely local actions, without any relevance to INTERREG IVC where all activities have to be of clear interregional character. Finally, several project representatives expressed that the involvement of SMEs is very important in order to intensify the public-private interactions and to reinforce their relationship, which is food for thought for the next programming period.

Group discussions

After the networking break the morning session continued with thematic group discussions in order to fine-tune the already started analysis of each project. As several projects were present in the same thematic group, this discussion also gave the opportunity for others to identify further synergies and common interest.



During the afternoon session – World Café – participants had the chance to discuss more content-related issues and discuss the matching points/synergies on which a future collaboration could be built. Although several projects are working on very specific topics (e.g. NANO4M – commercialisation of nanotech products or ChemClust – strengthening innovative capacities of chemical clusters) and therefore in some cases it was difficult to find common topics for exchange, most participants agreed that open innovation was of common interest and that future exchanges and thematic events should be enhanced and initiated by the programme.





Conclusion and future steps of the capitalisation experimentation

The discussions during the event gave the opportunity to start informal interactions between projects tackling similar issues. They also gave the chance for 2nd call projects to learn from 1st call projects. Discussions were covering many topics related to tools, processes, facilitation and framework conditions for finance. It can be concluded that there is an interest and willingness from projects to be involved in such an exercise and a better future capitalisation necessitates several tools such as:

- the creation of a good practice repository,
- the organisation of further thematic events,
- the availability of a pool of experts within the involved projects.

There was however a slight misunderstanding during the round table discussion. Following the presentation of the experts' findings with an emphasis on project clustering, some project partners thought that the aim of the experimentation was to make projects work together. In fact, the core aim of this initiative is to help the programme better understand the results achieved in a particular domain of regional policies (in the present case, regional innovation policies). A clustering at project level would only be a possible side effect of this initiative, but is not the primary goal that the programme is pursuing.

Finally, Paul Soto, thematic pole manager gave a short summary on the capitalisation exercise carrying out in the URBACT II programme. In their case the main concerns were linked to the local impact (e.g. making sure that all departments of the city benefit from the cooperation) and demonstrating the value for money through dissemination of results at EU level). Linked to the capitalisation exercise URBACT II organises 3 events per year along with additional articles, case studies, workshop reports. The main aim is to centralise the best outputs on a common platform. Paul Soto concluded that he was stroke by the similarities between the capitalisation process under INTERREG IVC and URBACT II and that further exchanges between the two programmes would be of high added-value.

The future steps of the capitalisation experiment in case of INTERREG IVC include the finalisation of the fact sheets and carrying out the remaining study visit. The final report then will be presented to the Monitoring Committee on its forthcoming meeting, who may decide to

generalise the process and extend it to other sub-themes as well. The report itself will be published also on the INTERREG IVC website.

Lille, 27 May 2010