

# Fit4Co – Fit for cooperation

Analysis of success factors  
for cross-border cooperation



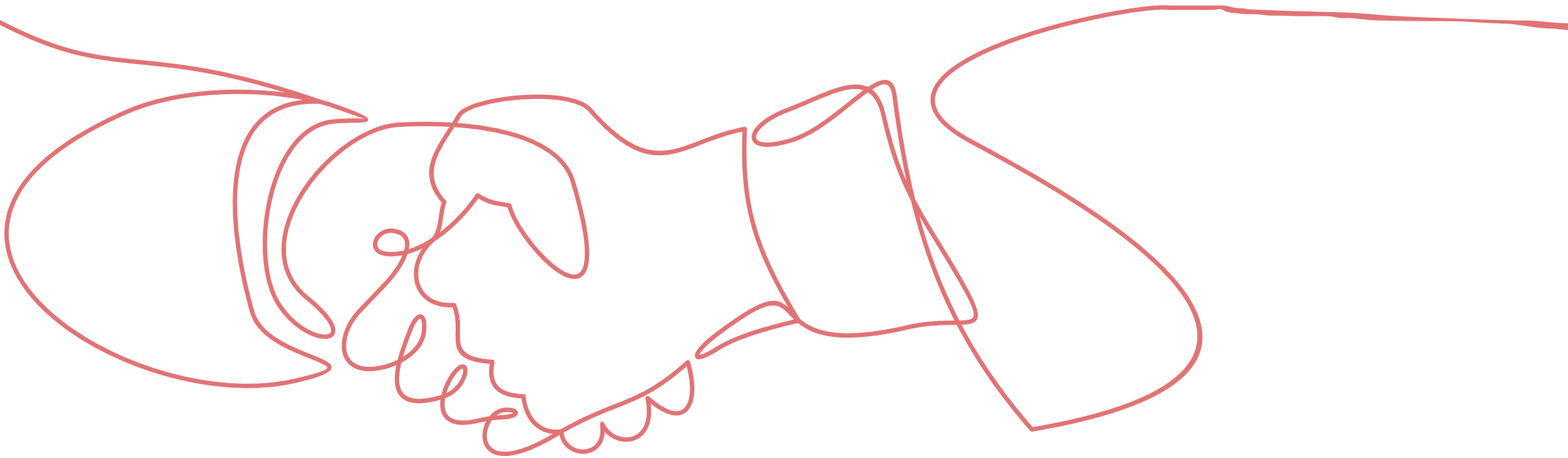
### Milestone 3.1/Analysis

*Identification of positive examples of cross-border cooperation in the project area (Tyrol, South Tyrol, Trentino, Carinthia, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Veneto) and preparation for further communication in the context of this project.*

Success factors for cross-border cooperation: an analysis based upon positive examples of cross-border cooperation in the project area (Tyrol, South Tyrol, Trentino, Carinthia, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Veneto)

This report has been prepared by Eurac Research, Institute for Minority Rights.

## The Euroregion Fit4Co – Fit for cooperation



Alice Engl/Günther Rautz/Maria Tischler  
Final version of analysis (Milestone 3.1) for the Fit4Co  
project meeting held on 15.10.2018 in Venice.

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## 1. Introduction

The “Fit4Co” (Fit for Cooperation) project by the two European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) – the Euroregion of Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino and the Euregio „Senza Confini r.l. – Ohne Grenzen mbH” (Euregio Without Borders) – aims to strengthen cross-border integration and to anchor cross-border issues in regional thinking and the regional “mainstream”. Employees of public institutions and other stakeholders in the respective regions are to be made fit for cross-border cooperation so that they can understand its advantages and apply the instruments of cross-border cooperation themselves.

As part of this objective, this report identifies positive examples of cross-border cooperation in the Fit4Co project regions (Tyrol, South Tyrol, Trentino, Carinthia, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Veneto) and analyses and presents those factors that favour cross-border cooperation.

This analysis of success factors forms among other things the basis for the preparation of the project outline (service 3.2) and the results of the analysis will be included in preparing the project outline.

## 2. Methodology in project selection and in examination of success factors

### 2.1. Project selection methodology

This report aims to analyse and systematically review the success factors for cross-border cooperation, especially in view of the different conditions for such cross-border cooperation. In agreement with the partners, it was decided to investigate twelve projects more closely. This numerical limitation allows for accurate analysis and ensures the generation of reliable data, as the investigation can proceed within an illustrative and factual framework.<sup>1</sup>

The selection of the cross-border cooperation projects to be analysed in detail was made in three steps. The project partners, the EGTC Euregio „Senza Confini r.l. – Ohne Grenzen mbH” and the EGTC Euroregion Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino, initially submitted several lists of already implemented or ongoing projects that they regarded as “examples of good practice” for the thematic focus, structured and goal-oriented implementation and proactive shaping of stakeholder processes.

These various lists were then consolidated by Eurac Research and the 29 projects on the lists were summarised in a general overview and more closely analysed according to the following criteria, which are considered to be particularly relevant for the objectives of Fit4Co:

- programme area (area of Euroregion Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino or of Euregio „Senza Confini r.l. – Ohne Grenzen mbH”)
- project timeframe
- partnership (number and type of partners)
- budget (small, medium or large project)
- thematic focus (reference to space and nature or to culture and education).

<sup>1</sup> See Arend Lijphart, “The Comparable-Cases Strategy in Comparative Research”, 8(2) Comparative Political Studies (1975), 158–177, 72.

Ten projects were then selected from this overview to be examined more closely for the analysis of success factors. Studies with a small number of cases, such as this analysis, often use a differential method in the selection of the objects/cases to be examined in order to improve the validity or generalisability of the results. For this reason, the project selection deliberately chose projects that differed in certain characteristics,<sup>2</sup> such as the type and number of project partners, the size of the budget or the thematic objective. This methodological approach of the differential method aims to ensure that the widest possible, most representative range of experiences can be included in the subsequent analysis of success factors for cross-border cooperation. In such a comparison design the differences between the items to be examined are not regarded as an impediment but rather as an advantage for data collection, as various combinations and conditions can provide information about different factors of cross-border cooperation. In the broadest sense this means not applying a common denominator to the projects but rather drawing conclusions from the difference in their way of working and orientation regarding, for instance, structural uniformity, and finding systematic patterns that are not immediately obvious but still represent essential factors for the success of any project.<sup>3</sup>

This project list was sent to the Fit4Co project partners and adapted and augmented according to the feedback received. Following appropriate adaptation, the final list of projects to be analysed in detail by Eurac Research

**Table 1: Alphabetical overview of the projects studied**

Project	Partners	Number of partners	Funding	Period	Budget
Training without borders: cross-border system for development of joint curricula between Italy, Austria and Slovenia (ESCO)	Istituto Omnicomprensivo "Ingeborg Bachmann" Tarvisio (ITA), BG BRG Villach St. Martin (AUT), Pädagogische Hochschule Kärnten (AUT), Regione Autonoma Friuli Venezia Giulia – Direzione Centrale Istruzione, Università, Ricerca, Famiglia, Associazionismo e Cooperazione (ITA), Educandato Statale Uccellis di Udine (ITA)	6	Interreg IV Italy-Austria	2007–2013	€ 534.818,38
CLLD-Dolomiti Live	Regionsmanagement Osttirol, Bezirks-gemeinschaft Pustertal, Gal Alto Bellunese	3	Interreg V-A Italy-Austria	2016–2022	€ 3.755.000 <sup>4</sup>
CLLD – Terra Raetica Small Projects Fund	Regionalmanagement Bezirk Landeck, Regionalmanagement Bezirk Imst, Bezirks-gemeinschaft Vinschgau, PEB – Pro Engiadina Bassa – Wirtschaftsforum Nationalparkregion	4	Interreg IV/V Italy-Austria	seit 2007	€ 4.149.000 <sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See Donatella della Porta, Comparative Analysis: Case-oriented versus Variable-oriented Research, in Donatella della Porta and Michael Keating, Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences. A Pluralist Perspective (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2008), 198–222, p. 216.

<sup>3</sup> See William J. Gibson and Andrew Brown, Working with Qualitative Data (Sage, London, 2009), 3–5.

<sup>4</sup> Refers to budget for small and medium projects up until 2022.

<sup>5</sup> Refers to budget for small and medium projects.

Diversity4Kids	Zentrum für MigrantInnen in Tirol (ZeMiT), Eurac Research, Land Tirol, Cinfoimi, Europaregion Tirol-Südtirol-Trentino, Centro Culturale Luciano Tavazza	6	Interreg IV Italy-Austria	2013–2014	€ 320.881
Dolomiti Nordic Ski (East Tyrol/ Pustertal Valley/Alto Bellunese)	Tourism Association Hochpustertal (IT), Province of Belluno (IT), Comunità Montana spettabile Reggenza dei Sette Comuni (IT), Osttirol Werbung GmbH (AT), Comune di Forni di Sopra (IT)	5	Interreg IV Italy-Austria	2010–2012	€ 703.079
Euregio Avalanche Report (ALBINA)	EGTC Euroregion Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino, University of Vienna – Institute for Geography & Regional Development	2	Interreg IV Italy-Austria	2015–2018	€ 915.000
Euregio-Scientific Fund	EGTC Euroregion Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino, FWF Austrian Science Fund	2	Funding by EGTC: extra-ordinary membership fees from Province of Tyrol and Autonomous Provinces of Bolzano/ South Tyrol and Trento	since 2015	€ 3,200,000 (3 <sup>rd</sup> call)
Identity and Cooperatives (ID-Coop)	Eurac Research, Slovenian Business Association Carinthia, Province of Belluno, ARLeF, Municipality of Monfalcone Associated partners: Autonomous Province of Bolzano-South Tyrol, Volksgruppenbüro Kärnten, ZVEZA Bank, Raiffeisenverband Südtirol, South Tyrol Confederation of Cooperatives	10	Interreg IV Italy-Austria	2012–2015	€ 595.590

Improvement of cross-border cooperation (MICOTRA)	Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, Federal State of Carinthia, Austrian State Railways, "Verkehrsverbund Kärnten GmbH", "Ferrovie Udine Cividale" railways	5	Interreg IV Italy-Austria	2010–2013	€ 1.305.000
Small Project Fund Carinthia – Friuli Venezia Giulia-Veneto (SPF)	Province of Carinthia, Dept. 20 Provincial Planning, Veneto Region, Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia	3	Interreg IV Italy-Austria	2007–2013	1.200.000 €
Tourism co-operation in Nassfeld/Praemallo area (COOPTUR)	ARGE Qualitätsbetriebe KIG Karnische Incoming GmbH & Mitgesellschafter, Municipality of Pontebba, Urban Municipality of Hermagor-Pressegger See	3	Interreg IV Italy-Austria	2010–2013	780.480 €
Transport infrastructure monitoring (TRIM)	Federal State of Carinthia, Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, Veneto Region, Venice International University	4	Interreg IV Italy-Austria	2008–2011	€ 1.135.000

This overview once again clarifies certain basic features and differences in the various projects upon which the selection was made according to the differential method.

The central criterion is the partnership, which concerns both the type of partners and the size of the partnership consortia. The projects are composed of different types of partner: these different partner types include, but are not limited to, countries, autonomous regions and autonomous provinces and their departments or offices; municipalities; district authorities and regional management structures; the EGTC Euroregion Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino; other public institutions (e.g. universities); research institutions; associations and civil society organisations, as well as economic players

and enterprises. The majority of projects are based upon a partnership between these various partner types and therefore bring together players from different areas and systems (not only between states, but also within a particular state). The size of the consortia, i.e. the number of partners, also varies. The focus of the analysis is on small consortia with up to four partners and medium-sized consortia of five to nine partners. However, some larger consortia with ten or more partners are also analysed.

Most of the projects are financed through the Interreg IV programme (period 2007–2013). These projects were already completed at the time of the analysis. At the same time, however, some ongoing projects under the Interreg V programme (period 2014–2020) are being examined, as well as a project that is not financed by Interreg funds but instead by extraordinary contributions from the members of the EGTC Euroregion Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino (Science Fund).

The majority of projects have a duration of three to four years. In contrast, the study also covers a number of longer-term projects, notably the small-scale project funds.

Around half of the projects have a budget of between 500,000 and one million euros (one project has a budget of less than 500,000 euros). The others have a budget of over one million euros, with this category also including the various small-scale project funds that have a high overall financial volume but, in actual use, such funds finance small projects with significantly lower budgets.

Finally, it must be emphasised that the label “successful projects” signifies that the selected projects have been particularly exemplary in some aspects, including planning, cooperation, financing, while being representative in their field and enabling public access to project-relevant information (e.g. via their own website or other form of publication). However, the need to reduce the selection automatically entails omission of projects that have also been meaningfully and sustainably planned and then been effectively implemented. This selection should therefore not be seen as a devaluation of the unselected projects but rather as a choice from among the many good, meaningful and promising initiatives: a choice that has been agreed in accordance with the objectives of the Fit4Co project and the participating partners.

## **2.2. Methodology used for examining success factors**

A qualitative exploratory approach was selected as the methodology for examining the success factors. In contrast to quantitative methods in which the subject matter is often subordinated to the methods used, qualitative methods adapt the design of the investigation to the specific conditions of the field examined.<sup>6</sup> This puts the focus on precise case orientation and a limited number of cases, allowing for a more detailed analysis of the individual cases.

In addition, an open and qualitative approach ensures that even unpredictable or unexpected features of the object of investigation can be captured.<sup>7</sup> Qualitative social research should remain open to new information and unexpected findings throughout the research process.<sup>8</sup> This aspect is accompanied by the principle of circular research logic<sup>9</sup> which is used here. This circular process permits new data and insights to be immediately incorporated into the research design without having to interrupt the process. Following this logic, the comments made at the project meeting in Trento on 17–18 July 2018 were taken into account in the subsequent analysis and the interview guidelines were adjusted accordingly.

Expert interviews<sup>10</sup> were carried out as the survey method. Experts are deemed to be players who have special knowledge in relation to the subject matter in question.<sup>11</sup> Expert interviews are used to systematically and methodically tap the specific knowledge of an interview partner in relation to a specific issue.<sup>12</sup> In research practice, expert interviews thus open up access to the “trade craft” of organisations and networks.

<sup>6</sup> See Patrick Heiser, *Meilensteine der qualitativen Sozialforschung: Eine Einführung entlang klassischer Studien* (Springer VS, Wiesbaden, 2018), 45–46.

<sup>7</sup> See Uwe Flick, *Qualitative Sozialforschung. Eine Einführung* (Rowohlt, Reinbek, 2002), 69–71.

<sup>8</sup> See Heiser, 46.

<sup>9</sup> See William J. Gibson and Andrew Brown, 10.

<sup>10</sup> See Alexander Bogner, Beate Littig, and Wolfgang Menz, *Interviews mit Experten: Eine praxisorientierte Einführung* (Springer VS, Wiesbaden, 2014), 8.

<sup>11</sup> See Jochen Gläser and Grit Laudel, *Experteninterviews und qualitative Inhaltsanalyse* (Springer VS, Wiesbaden, 2010), 12.

<sup>12</sup> See Heiser, 103.



They are particularly suitable as an investigatory method where such knowledge is not codified – i.e. not available in written form – but is embedded in everyday practices<sup>13</sup> and is available to respondents themselves at any time in a reflexive manner.<sup>14</sup>

For this analysis of success factors for cross-border projects, experts were held to be the sponsors and funders of cross-border projects, such as lead partners, partners, project managers, or representatives of competent public services. In the specific case of this study, therefore, experts are initiators, participants and/or partners in the projects and are often involved from start to finish. They thus have comprehensive knowledge of the processes in the context of project management, as well as of the obstacles, emerging problems and specific issues, and therefore have the most intensive view from an insider perspective.

Interview guidelines were drawn up to conduct the expert interviews, developed on the basis of programme guidelines, calls for cross-border programmes, guides for good project management, evaluation reports and exploratory discussions with project managers. The guidelines have a high degree of structuring to ensure systematic and structured data collection. At the same time, they are also open to adaptation to the concrete interview process and can pick up on and take into account unexpected comments.<sup>15</sup> The guidelines were then tested within Eurac Research with individuals in possession of project experience before the actual interviews began.

The questions in the interview guidelines cover the key steps of project development and the most important project phases. These questions form the core of the survey and put special emphasis on the project conception phase (idea and elaboration) and on the implementation phase. Some aspects were identified as examples for these phases and then used to structure the surveys.

The project phases that simultaneously represent the structural levels of the interview guidelines are as follows:

- design (consortium, defining of goals, allocating of tasks and finance)
- implementation (cooperation, communication management, achievement of goals)
- final stage (validation, sustainability after project completion)

The data were evaluated on the basis of a qualitative content analysis of the interviews. This method of analysis, in contrast to other methods such as narrative analysis or hermeneutics, focuses on the content of what is said, not on the person.<sup>16</sup> The interview contents are summarised, abstracted and generalised to ensure final generalisation and the transfer of results. The interview results are structured according to certain deductive or inductive order criteria: in this case on the basis of previous secondary research (deductive) and on the fundamental aspects and success factors of a project that emerge during the interviews (inductive). The formal anonymisation of the interviews in the presentation of results is self-evident as a mechanism to protect the privacy of interviewees and interviewers.<sup>17</sup>

The evaluation identifies similarities and differences between the individual respondents. Generalised statements are underpinned by concrete examples from the interviews and projects in order to illustrate the meaning and relevance of each item.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>13</sup> See Heiser, 103.

<sup>14</sup> See Bogner, Littig and Menz, 24.

<sup>15</sup> See Peter Atteslander, *Methoden der empirischen Sozialforschung* (Erich Schmidt Verlag, Berlin, 2008), 124–125 and 133.

<sup>16</sup> See Heiser, 110.

<sup>17</sup> See Heiser, 115.

<sup>18</sup> See Nigel King and Christine Horrocks, *Interviews in Qualitative Research* (Sage, London, 2010), 165.



### 3. Overview of the projects examined

The projects examined are described again below, with Table 1 supplemented by a brief description and a reference to further information.

#### Training without borders: cross-border system for development of common curricula between Italy, Austria and Slovenia - ESCo

**Partners:** Regione Autonoma Friuli Venezia Giulia, Istituto Omnicomprensivo "Ingeborg Bachmann" Tarvisio, BG|BRG Villach St. Martin, Pädagogische Hochschule Kärnten, Educando Statale Uccellis di Udine

Associated partners: Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca, Gimnazija Jesenice, Vrtec pri Osnovni šoli in Osnovna šola Josipa Vandota Kranjska Gora, Municipality of Nötsch im Gailtal, Volksschule Nötsch im Gailtal, Landesschulrat für Kärnten, Istituto d'Istruzione Secondaria Superiore Malignani – Cervignano del Friuli

ESCo has created a trilateral education network to simplify recognition of international qualifications and significantly improve the quality of transnational training projects. A trilingual training programme in Veneto, Carinthia and Slovenia should also be made possible, together with the establishment of transnational school classes in the border areas, in order to fully exploit the linguistic potential of the region. The project therefore ties in with a project aimed at cooperation of kindergartens and primary schools and thus serves to establish linguistic and cultural diversity at all levels of school education.

**Website:** [http://www.interreg.net/de/news.asp?news\\_action=4&news\\_article\\_id=378606](http://www.interreg.net/de/news.asp?news_action=4&news_article_id=378606)

#### CLLD-Dolomit Live

**Partners:** Regionsmanagement Osttirol, Bezirksgemeinschaft Pustertal, Gal Alto Bellunese

The CLLD-Dolomiti Live area was approved under the Interreg V-A Italy-Austria on the basis of its CLLD (Community-Led Local Development) strategy. Its function is to support cross-border projects, from development to project implementation. Implementing the CLLD strategy involves funding small and medium-sized projects that come under one of the following topics: culture, social affairs, tourism, innovation, combating climate change, and sustainable mobility. Projects may be submitted on an ongoing basis until 2022 or until funds have been exhausted.

**Website:** <http://www.dolomitolive.eu/>

#### CLLD-Terra Raetica Small Projects Fund

**Partners:** Regionalmanagement Regio Landeck, Regionalmanagement Bezirk Imst, Bezirks-gemeinschaft Vinschgau, PEB – Pro Engiadina Bassa – Wirtschaftsforum Nationalparkregion

The small and medium-sized project funds of "Terra Raetica" in the region of the border triangle between Italy, Austria and Switzerland promote projects in the areas of nature and the environment, transport, tourism and demography. Applications can be submitted on an ongoing basis and are reviewed at semi-annual meetings of the Interreg council.

**Website:** <https://www.terraaetica.eu/de/terra-raetica/willkommen.html>

#### Diversity4Kids

**Partners:** Zentrum für MigrantInnen in Tirol (ZeMiT), Eurac Research, Federal State of Tyrol, Cinfoirmi, EGTC Euroregion Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino, Centro Culturale Luciano Tavazza

Using narrative methods, children between the ages of eight and fourteen are introduced by teachers to topics such as inter-cultural issues and diversity. Those who have often been differently socialised are taught the values of good coexistence through play so as to counter xenophobia and proactively apply the approach of anti-discrimination. They learn to appreciate the advantages of living and working together and to get to know each other anew. The aim of "Diversity4Kids" is to start in children's groups and school classes in order to lay the foundations for a society of togetherness.

**Website:** <https://www.diversity4kids.eu/de>

#### Dolomiti Nordic Ski (East Tyrol/Pustertal Valley/Alto Bellunese)

**Partners:** Tourism Association Hochpustertal, Province of Belluno, Comunità Montana spettabile Reggenza dei Sette Comuni, Osttirol Werbung GmbH, Comune di Forni di Sopra

The Dolomiti Nordic Ski project aims to find a solution to cross-border cross-country ski resort problems, namely the lack of connections between ski resorts due to administrative boundaries; the need to ensure safe cross-country skiing by adapting the trails and distributing information on "safe cross-country skiing"; the absence of links between Nordic skiing and other local resources (nature, culture, tradition) with a limited ability to attract new users who are spending several days in the region and who could thus bring benefits to the local economy.

**Website:** <http://www.dolomitinordicski.com/de/interreg-iv.html>

## Euregio Avalanche Report - ALBINA

**Partners:** EGTC Euroregion Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino, University of Vienna – Institute for Geography and Regional Development

Associated partners: Federal State of Tyrol – Avalanche Warning Service, Autonomous Province of Bolzano-South Tyrol – Avalanche Warning Service, Autonomous Province of Trento – Avalanche Warning Service

The ALBINA project focuses on cooperation and connection between the three avalanche warning services of Tyrol, South Tyrol and Trentino. The result of such cooperation in the region will permit a regular Euregio avalanche report to be introduced from the 2018/19 ski season once the project is finalised in 2018. In addition there will be maps of snow and snowfall levels, air temperatures and wind data that can provide useful information to the public and tourists.

**Website:** <http://www.europaregion.info/de/Euregio-Lawinenlagebericht.asp>

## Euregio Science Fund

**Partners:** EGTC Euroregion Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino, FWF Austrian Science Fund

A “flagship project”, the Euroregion Science Fund of the EGTC Euroregion Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino aims, through the targeted promotion of research projects, to promote transnational cooperation in the field of science and to strengthen interregional projects. To this end over one million euros can be disbursed annually, publicly tendered in calls. The fund and its promotional work aim to ensure that the Euroregion is perceived as a scientific landscape and research area and can develop accordingly.

**Website:** <http://www.europaregion.info/en/euregio-science-fund.asp>

## Identity and Cooperatives (ID-Coop)

**Partners:** Eurac Research, Slovenian Business Association Carinthia, Province of Belluno, AR-LeF, Municipality of Monfalcone

Associated partners: Autonomous Province of Bolzano-South Tyrol, Volksgruppenbüro Kärnten, ZVEZA Bank, Raiffeisenverband Südtirol, South Tyrol Confederation of Cooperatives

Remote areas in the Alps are often faced with demographic difficulties and are also in special situations economically and culturally. ID Coop is intended to slow down the outwards migration of the younger generation and provide them with a sustainable form of protection for living and income via the cooperative system.

The attractiveness of the areas concerned is to be increased through local orientation of the objectives of the cooperatives and the incorporation of cultural factors.

**Website:** <http://www.id-coop.eu/de/Pages/default.aspx>

## Improvement of cross-border cooperation (MICOTRA – Miglioramento Collegamenti Transfrontaliero)

**Partners:** Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, Federal State of Carinthia, Austrian State Railways, “Verkehrsverbund Kärnten GmbH”, “Ferrovie Udine Cividale” railways

MICOTRA aims to improve the cross-border Austria-Italy rail link between Villach and Udine. The trains are operated by Austrian State Railways and the regional Friulian railways, Ferrovie Udine Cividale. The aim is to shift traffic from road to rail, strengthen cooperation between institutions and services and promote the region's economic development along with cross-border cohesion.

**Websites:**

<http://www.ferrovieudinecividale.it/mi-co-tra-villach-udine-trieste/>

<https://www.obb-italia.com/it/ab-italien/micotra.html>

<http://www.regione.fvg.it/rafvfg/cms/RAFVG/infrastrutture-lavori-pubblici/infrastrutture-logistica-trasporti/FOGLIA21/>

## Small Project Fund Carinthia – Friuli Venezia Giulia – Veneto (SPF)

**Partners:** Province of Carinthia, Dept. 20 Provincial Planning, Veneto Region, Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia

This small project fund has permitted the Austrian Federal State of Carinthia and the Italian regions of Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia to support a total of 17 projects from 126 applications in the fields of culture, education, agriculture, sport, health and the economy. This fund, which has been implemented in numerous Interreg consortia, reinforces and enhances cross-border cooperation, which in turn has a positive impact on the local community and its stakeholders.

**Website:** <http://coopterritoriale.regione.veneto.it/Interreg-IV-Italia-Austria/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/SPF-Evaluierung-11.04.2013.pdf>

## Tourism cooperation in the Nassfeld/Pramollo area (COOPTUR)

**Partner:** ARGE Qualitätsbetriebe KIG Karnische Incoming GmbH & Mitgesellschafter, Municipality of Pontebba, Urban Municipality of Hermagor-Presegger See

Carinthia's largest ski area, the "Skiarena Nassfeld", serves as a mediator for this cross-border cooperation that develops transnationally and links the already existing tourism infrastructure. One particular aim is the expansion of "family tourism" and all-year-round coverage through various tourist offers. This will be accompanied by support for regional companies and players who will be able to benefit from the innovations in tourism.

**Website:** <https://www.keep.eu/keep/project-ext/6389/TN%2FP>

## Transport - Infrastruktur – Monitoring (TrIM)

**Partners:** Federal State of Carinthia, Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, Veneto Region, Venice International University

Using a cross-border approach, TrIM creates a transnational traffic graph that connects existing national traffic graphs across national borders, thus improving traffic-related information infrastructure for transport planning, management and resources. The project will collect reliable and up-to-date basic data on the transport network in the project area. TrIM promotes ecologically sustainable traffic management in the area of traffic organisation and in the field of intermodal logistics.

**Website:** [www.trim-interreg.eu/downloads/TrIM-Brossura\\_Italiano.pdf](http://www.trim-interreg.eu/downloads/TrIM-Brossura_Italiano.pdf);  
[http://www.prisma-solutions.at/pmc/images/prisma/documents/TrIM\\_Ergebnisbericht\\_Deutsch.pdf](http://www.prisma-solutions.at/pmc/images/prisma/documents/TrIM_Ergebnisbericht_Deutsch.pdf)

## 4. Success factors for cross-border cooperation: positive examples in the project area

A whole catalogue of factors could be compiled under this one key question.

The triad of "Strategy – Partnership – Region" has proved to be essential, which is reflected time and time again in the cooperation and interaction of the project partners, in the methodology and its implementation as well as in the innovation and sustainable impact seen.

While the technical and conceptual basis is formed by strategic considerations on meaningful projects in the Alpine area and its adjoining regions, together with their implementation and organisation, more than just shared benefits and precise planning are required in the area of partnership. Proportionality of tasks in relation to the possibilities and resources of the participating parties and equality in representation and responsibility in particular lie at the core of cooperation that is realised not simply between peers but, above all, closely together. Above all this is the region, which is no longer to be understood nationally, but increasingly in a cross-border sense, becoming ever more tangible through these exemplary projects.

But even if these three focus points and their various levels are achieved in full, the awareness of problems and obstacles plays a role that can significantly contribute to the success of the project. By looking at tricky and possibly problematic situations in for instance (multilingual) communication, financing or legitimacy in respect of the civilian population, incomprehension and escalation can be actively prevented and counteracted in order to set and maintain not only short-term fixed points, but also sustainable focuses.

While all these qualities make up reasonable approaches and ideas in their respective fields, it is their interplay that transforms these many individual building blocks into one large whole to create a good, promising and effective project at this point.

The following analysis now considers these characteristics and their implementation in the selected projects ordered according to their fundamental aspects.

Before going into the catalogue of factors in more detail, the working definition of “success” or of a “successful project” should first be explained.

**“Success” in this analysis means that the following aspects are largely cumulative:**

- Financing of the project
- Successful, (almost) problem-free implementation of the project, i.e.
  - the planned objectives are achieved
  - the planned resources are coherently allocated to the planned project activities
- The project provides added value for the project area and for the project partners involved
- Sustainability, e.g. in the form of continuing outputs or potential networks for future projects

Within the framework of this analysis, a project is considered to be “successful” if it has been financed and its implementation has been successful. This means that the planned goals were achieved within the planned timeframe with the resources planned for them. The project should also bring added value to all partners and to the area and society. This added value does not always have to be measurable, but may only be perceived subconsciously. In addition, the projects must have a lasting impact, e.g. in the form of continuing outputs or potential networks for future projects.

## 1. Preparation of a project

**Success factors:**

- Activity plan – take enough time for precise planning of the project (deadline, time and cost planning) – consideration of the required resources (personnel and budget)
  - Attentive reading of the funding/programme criteria in the event of inexperience with the funding programme
- Include calculation of the different framework conditions of individual partners (thus preventing possible problems) – framework conditions to be checked by project manager
  - Framework conditions also to include varying competencies and powers of partners
- Regular, timely personal meetings – teambuilding
- If Interreg: experience with project tenders of this kind or, in the event of inexperience, commissioning of third parties to draft the project application

Numerous interviews have shown that it is particularly important to take enough time at the beginning of a project for precise planning. In particular, the extra work required in cross-border cooperation should not be underestimated, not least because of the different languages involved. The project idea should be well thought out from start to finish. Time and cost factors must at all events be thoroughly incorporated into the planning, as the resources required for a project (budget and staff) are essential and must not be ignored. Similarly, the guidelines of a funding programme and the eligible costs must also be taken into account as appropriate. Accurate preparation and planning should ensure that all project partners intensively address the project idea, thereby becoming aware of what they are getting involved in and what needs to be considered in the implementation of the project. In so doing the partners must be aware (at this point in time at the latest) that the various partners are confronted with different framework conditions. The fact that this may result in problems should therefore be included in the calculations (more on this at point 7).

However, it may happen that despite detailed preparation and design of a project, unforeseen changes or problems can arise during the project run period. Open discussions between the project partners are necessary to solve these. The expert surveys show that it is helpful to organise regular, timely meetings right from the preparation phase. Such initial meetings not only help to define and develop the project idea together, but also simultaneously help form a team from the project personnel. In addition it seems helpful to develop a project idea in part on the basis of existing personal contacts and, especially with regard to standardised funding projects, to involve project partners who have prior experience with the relevant call for tenders.

“X and Y previously worked on an Interreg project. This means that they already knew each other personally, they knew the funding programme and they knew the GTS [General Technical Secretariat]– all of which made the application process much easier.”

“The application must be well prepared and thought out. This results in fewer problems, e.g. calculating and including sufficient costs for translation.”

“And then we submitted it and we received a negative response because we had not adequately addressed certain points and some things were simply unclear. We were recommended to seek professional help with the drafting.”

“We had no experience with projects of this kind. However we applied our way of working and our vision to this platform and it cost us a few months to study it. We held several meetings of this group and we detailed the project proposal.”

## 2. Partnership

### Success factors:

- Solid partnership, which may be based upon the following:
  - trust between partners
  - possibility of informal personal familiarisation
  - time and patience in developing a new partnership
  - existing acquaintances
  - all partners have an interest in the project topic (personal matter)
- Formation of a partnership on the basis of the scale of the project area or the project orientation
- Development of partnerships through project-related bodies
- Lead partner with experience and sufficient resources to take over control level
- Identical partner structures facilitate subsequent cooperation
- Distance between partners not too great

The most important factor that all experts have emphasised for successful cross-border cooperation is the need for a solid partnership, i.e. a partnership based upon trust and reliability. A solid partnership can be built on various foundations. Essential foundations that emerge from the expert surveys are trust between partners, opportunities for informal and personal familiarisation, time and patience in developing a new partnership, existing acquaintances, as well as a common interest in the project topic.

One particularly important aspect of developing a partnership is for those involved to get to know each other personally. It is therefore recommended that the project partners organise face-to-face meetings in the initial phase. Another possibility is to make use of the services of regional management, district authorities or LAGs (Local Action Groups) that can for example facilitate the establishment of personal contacts through themed workbenches. These bodies have information about organisations on the other side of the border and facilitate the formation of partnerships since they know which organisations are motivated to start projects in the same or similar subject areas. Another possibility is to develop a new partnership via a small project that serves to get to know each other better and develop a basis of trust.

However, partnerships can also arise from existing acquaintances, i.e. the players already know each other, often because they have worked together on a project in the past. The advantage here is that mutual strengths and weaknesses are already familiar.

The reason for a partnership may also however lie within the scope of the project area.

The lead partner should be the partner with the most experience of project work and resources, not least because it has in principle more work to do and bears the overall organisational, content-related and financial responsibility for the project. One task that the lead partner usually takes over automatically is the control function, i.e. it will ask the partners, either when deadlines are approaching or generally during the project, how far along they are with the service to be provided, whether they will make the deadline, whether they need help, etc. In this sense the lead partner assumes the role of project coordinator and endeavours to ensure that the project runs smoothly.

A positive influence on the partnership and a boost for cooperation (point 6) will occur if the partners have similar structures or similar institutions and if the geographical distance between the partners is not too great. The former helps as the structure has an impact on the way of working and partners with similar structures may find the work organisation more familiar and easier to understand. Smaller geographical distances facilitate the organisation of personal meetings, which in turn help to create a team out of the individual partners, which again contributes to a positive partnership relationship.

"We already had an existing partnership and now have another Interreg project with X, i.e. there have been exchanges between X and Y for ten years now. The partners already knew each other and that has been a bonus."

"X was a partner with colleagues who had known each other for many years and had wanted to work together for many years but had never found the opportunity – the more you know one another the better it is. As an example, communication worked better with X, with which they have a great relationship, and the relationship already existed."

"Partner X had both experience with project work and the internal resources for supporting it – a project management office."

"The partner in X was selected partly because the programme area is like that and you have to illustrate that too."

"We have already been working for 5–6 years together. So there was already a basis of trust that would not otherwise have existed."



### 3. Objectives of cooperation

#### Success factors:

- > Clear and realistic objectives (analysis/evaluation of the initial situation is helpful)
- > Definition of output and effect
- > General interest in topic (in addition to financial interest) – presence of basic motivation regarding the topic at all levels
- > Tips for the definition of objectives (especially for as-yet inexperienced players):
  - topics that influence society
  - topics where low opposing interests exist – no or few competing ideas
  - topics with which the players have a broad scope of action
  - project partners should be interested in, enthusiast about and convinced of the topic
  - topic fits into regional or supra-regional strategies
- > The project must offer added value to the partners

A specific objective is in principle necessary. The overall objective, i.e. the end product, must be well-defined, realistic and achievable from the very beginning. The definition of objectives should be shared by the partners, who should all be convinced of the objectives and their added value.

A bilateral or multilateral project should bring added value to each partner, requiring a well-structured distribution of both tasks and finances. Individual details cannot all be planned, but will arise during project implementation. This requires a degree of flexibility from the sponsors in order to react to any changes. Support can here be found from regional managements, district authorities, LAGs and regional coordination offices. In addition to the objectives, project sponsors should also be aware of the impact of the project and its measurability, i.e. it must be clear what has been achieved at the end of the project.

For a successful project it is helpful if the reason for collaboration goes beyond mere financial interest. The project partners must be convinced of the necessity and added value of the project. There is in addition a need for an interest and experience of in the topic: the more this corresponds to a personal concern, the more committed project collaboration will be and the easier it is to achieve the project goals.

For partners who as yet have no extensive experience of cross-border projects, it is helpful to select a topic where the interests of the partners overlap to avoid any potential for conflict. It is also advisable to select a subject area in which the players if possible have wide scope for action, with this scope

similar for all players. Furthermore, it is easier to realise projects where the topic is seen and appreciated by the population. This among other things facilitates the continuation of project measures following the end of the project, thereby contributing to long-term added value in the area.

“They reached all the goals that they wanted to achieve, which was also because they set achievable goals.”

“In the course of the project you encounter things, including subject areas, that were not quite as clear in the application. If matters are not clear from the outset, then discussions will arise.”

“We started with the name and then we said, what do we need? So we then needed advertising material, [...] we need the data from each area [...], so we created a [...]network of individual regions and of the entire area, plus the events.”

### 4. Sustainability

#### Success factors:

- > Transferability of the project
- > Synergies with other measures/projects
- > Future orientation: advance planning of how and which project measures can continue following the end of the project (planning of resources (budget, “carers”), self-sufficiency)
  - Projects lead to a higher level of cross-border exchanges and contacts continue to exist after the end of project – depending on partnership, interest in topic, commitment
  - Establishment of a fund for aftercare (possibly through EGTC)
- > Visibility of cooperation
- > Projects are usually both demand-oriented and supply-oriented
- > Sustainability on three levels: social, economic, ecological
- > Development of sustainability concepts
- > Continuing outputs, potential network for follow-up projects
- > Follow-up projects – depending on partnership and on success of previous project, etc.
- > Political support is desirable and for some projects also necessary so as to guarantee sustainability (especially if the project partners do not possess the necessary skills)

Sustainability is ultimately crucial for a project, i.e. the effectiveness of a project over its run period. The sustainability of a project is a critical aspect, because it is on the one hand fundamental to the long-term impact, but on the other it cannot be enforced. It is in the nature of a project that it will have a defined beginning and end.

In order to achieve results at the end of a project that can generate long-term effects beyond the project's end, various aspects must be taken into account in the project work. Even in the planning phase, a certain orientation towards the future is needed, i.e. thought and planning must be given to beyond the time horizon of the project. It must be clarified beforehand which effects should continue beyond the project and how the project measures can continue to exist. For example, the interviews clearly show that cross-border exchanges between project partners and project staff are maintained or even increased in successful projects even after the project has ended. This also depends on how well the partnership has worked and what financial resources are available for possible follow-up projects or other initiatives. The sustainability effect can also be complemented by continuing and expanding the project after it ends or by developing new cooperative ventures from the project. Sustainability can be further ensured through the modern design of the project, e.g. via apps and by offering perspectives for the population.

The continued existence of project measures after the end of the project will also be facilitated if sustainability is actively pursued, e.g. by using the outputs. With the transition of the project to productive status, the measures will also be used by some users in their everyday lives.

Looking at the levels to which the sustainable impact of a project can be attributed, it can be seen that the chances of the sustainable impact of a project are increased when an attempt is made to guarantee sustainability both at the socio-cultural and at the economic and environmental levels. If we for example consider the implementation of a cross-border public transport system, this will have a positive effect on the quality of life of citizens while promoting the mobility of socially disadvantaged persons (socio-cultural), increase the accessibility of the border area and contribute to the touristic and socio-economic improvement of the area (economic), while at the same time reducing CO2 emissions (ecological).

Another starting point for the sustainability of a project is the possibility of transfer. This means that the project can be transferred to similar situations and regions, the findings and project results are accessible to both participants and non-participants, and these can use and develop them in other contexts. It is also helpful to create synergies with other measures and projects. One project not infrequently influences another,

or several projects will influence each other. In this way the measures of various projects can be coordinated with each other, complementing one another and permitting existing projects to be continued through follow-up projects. The extent to which this happens depends in turn on the success of the projects.

During the analysis of successful projects, the question arises as to why some projects continue to exist after the end of the project while others do not. In order to discuss this question, in addition to the above explanations, some aspects that have emerged in the course of the analysis are described in more detail:

#### **- Topic**

The project topic plays a role in the context of sustainability insofar as the more it reflects the spirit of the times, i.e. speaks to the population/target group and the public and forms part of the (European) trend, the greater the demand will be for the products/outputs developed in the project. The choice of topic and the project development should reflect the needs of the target group or society. The topic also determines how long the measures developed in the project can be continued, as some measures have a shelf life that depends on their nature. This can for example be illustrated by comparing project measures for the organisation of workshops on the one hand with the introduction of public transport on the other. The workshop will have after a certain time achieved its purpose for all elements of the target group in a certain area and it is therefore in the nature of the measure that it will come to an end (follow-up projects may arise as necessary); if on the other hand we consider a public transport project, it must be assumed (provided that it corresponds to the spirit of the times and demand is met) that it will not (immediately) have a foreseeable expiry date. In this case, however, the financial resources are required to continue operation even after completion of the project, as well as a person/institution to take care of it.

#### **- Stakeholder interest and availability of resources**

As already indicated, the sustainability of the project requires adequate funding so that, even after the official end of the project, there is someone to take care of it (both administratively and, if necessary, financially). In order for the necessary (above all financial) resources to be or be made available, the project must arouse some interest in the stakeholders.



This effect is in turn dependent upon the topic (did it correspond to the zeitgeist?) and upon demand. With high demand the need for the measures developed becomes apparent and financial resources for the continuation of the project measures can thus be organised more easily as necessary. It is helpful if politicians are interested in the topic, support the project and, in the best case scenario, provide further funding. In order to achieve this it is important to draw people's attention to or seek their involvement in the project at the political or policymaking level. In general, it is desirable for the project to move to a so-called productive status and be continued by the stakeholders. To ensure that private institutions continue projects or their results/measures with their own resources there must be some economic benefits, with demand here too playing a crucial role.

Another way to increase the sustainability of projects would be to set up funds for project follow-up.

"After the last very successful project we looked to see whether there was another opportunity to work together and so we used existing channels and connections and wrote a new application."
"The big problem is the continuation of the measures. The project got very good feedback, it was well-rated, teaching materials were distributed to the schools, there was a ready pool of coaches, but then the project was over. You would have needed just a fraction, say €15,000–20,000 a year, and then these workshops could have been continued."
"They have no follow-up projects in sight because they have included certain funds for further development in the sustainability budget and this is intended to guarantee the continuation of the project measures."
"There will be more cross-border cooperation because the services are dealing with the same problems – problems do not stop at administrative borders."
"The project became a success precisely because of the response from users, citizens, tourists, all those who began to use X. There was already a growing number during the [...] and then these registered numbers grew further in subsequent years, justifying the continuation of X and the continuation of the investments from the two regions."
"That other project definitely helped X to become a success. It actually had a very strong impact/link. Because, even if they were implemented at slightly different times, over a period the implementation of the two projects overlapped, but then in reality both continued in existence following the end of the project, each mutually providing necessary resources to the other."
"The politicians supported it all because they saw and believed in this project, both on the Italian and on the Austrian side."

"At that time the right people were in the right place and they simply wanted it together. Because, if people see a common goal and see there is sense to it, then it will work. So the right people have to come together at the right time and the topic has to fit."

"We first had a [...] with Slovenia and we said that would also be possible with Italy. Then we took the initiative and conducted preliminary talks with our colleagues from Friuli and Veneto and from that we have created this [...]."

"It was always the aim that the project would be continued afterwards. The importance of cooperation was simply recognised and today it is not an issue. And we have created a consortium from this working group that is still active today and where all the partners are still involved. And this consortium is still looking after the project."

## 5. Collaboration

### Success factors:

- Dedicated project coordinator (mostly in-house, but can also be external person); dedicated project staff (who have the time to deal with the project – possibly released from other business) – social skills are essential in addition to resilience
- Active people are required with a real interest who want to realise the idea: commitment, enthusiasm and interest in the topic are also helpful in solving problems
- Each project partner needs at least one person to take care of the project both administratively and operationally
- Continuity in the organisational structure (among project staff)
- Direct contact as often as possible (personal acquaintance is essential)
- Soft skills (team skills, willingness to compromise, openness, communication)
- Defined timetable (buffers) – control level
- Partners are similar institutions or have similar structures (if possible)

Most of the interviews show that the figure of project coordinator is crucial to the success of a project. This is a person whose main job it is to take care of the project. The task of project manager or project coordinator can be assigned either to an in-house or to an external person. It is important for in-house persons that they have sufficient time to deal with the project and are possibly released from other work. This also applies to the remaining project staff who must be able to spend adequate time on the project.

As a result, it is important that not only the project coordinator, but also the other project partners (and staff) are fully committed to the further development and implementation of the project. In turn, strong commitment is easier to achieve if the project topic reflects the personal interest of the project partners and the project was not started solely on

the basis of financial support. Interest in the topic on the part of the project partners is the most important basis for cooperation.

It is also crucial for cooperation that the project partners are frequently in direct, personal contact. It is also important that people working in cross-border cooperation situations are familiar with so-called soft skills (ability to work in a team, willingness to compromise, openness, communication, etc.) and have a certain stamina for project work. With regard to the persons themselves, it is also desirable that the staff of those working on the project remain (almost) unchanged throughout the project, as this is the only way to ensure continuity in the project work.

In order to keep track of the project during its implementation, it is helpful to work out a timetable and determine exactly when each deliverable is due. Regular monitoring is necessary to keep to such a timetable. In most cases, this supervisory and monitoring function will be performed by the lead partner who will use a checklist to request the agreed deliverables or to remind people of their due date. To avoid difficulty it is helpful to provide time buffer zones and thus avoid any delays.

Another factor that can facilitate cooperation in a cross-border project and thus contribute to its success is for the project partners to have similar structures (similarity of institutions, similarity of organisational form), as this may offer similar ways of working and processes.

"Mostly, in the case of in-house project managers, they are over 100% busy. But LAG has had very good experience with in-house people. Nevertheless, external project management is helpful. Basically, the carer is needed as a success factor, so that someone holds all the project threads together and takes care of the partners and the project."

"You need considerable trust to realise such a project with a partner; you have to be sure that everything is right. The following are important when dealing with problems: willingness to compromise, flexibility, social attitudes, tools and behaviours, as always and everywhere in life."

"A control level is needed where we can say, we have agreed when certain work will be done by and where a check will be made as to whether it has actually been done and what must be done by the next meeting. Controlling is very important, because you have to see if the work has really been completed."

"We had our working committee: there was a working group for the project with a representative of each region and they worked it out and completed it."

## 5.1. Support from project-related bodies

### Success factors

- > If Interreg: perception of information events of the GTS in the project development phase, support from the GTS in project execution
- > If Interreg: perception of consulting services of regional coordinating bodies, both in the project development phase and in the project execution phase
- > Support from bodies that know both two sides

Those questioned frequently pointed out that use should be made of the support and advisory role of the responsible bodies (GTS and regional coordination bodies for Interreg programmes, regional managements, district authorities or LAGs) both in the project development phase and during the implementation phase.

"We had meetings with the General Technical Secretariat to provide orientation. And they in fact gave us some good tips. We attended meetings organised by the Secretariat that were open to the public."

"LAG regularly calls the sponsors to ask how they are getting on, if they can help, and to answer questions."

"Good support. We got to know each other a little because there was a personal meeting with the FLC when preparing the application. Otherwise we would simply have used email. "

## 6. Dealing with problems

### Success factors:

- Solid partnership, which may be based upon the following:
  - trust between partners
  - possibility of informal personal familiarisation
  - time and patience in developing a new partnership
  - existing acquaintances
  - all partners have an interest in the project topic (personal matter)
- Communication/discussion and willingness to compromise
- Conviction on the part of all those involved in the project: all decisions/actions should aim for achievement of the project objective ("for the benefit of the project")
- Development of transparent schemes for problem and conflict resolution
- Mediation/support for differences in administration and different legal conditions through bodies that are acquainted with both structures; contact with legal departments
- Assignment of one person to the administrative management of a project
  - EGTC: provide competent support team
- Preparation and awareness-raising among players of administrative burdens/bureaucracy (task could be performed by EGTC)
- In case of inexperience with projects:
  - If Interreg: bodies to provide advisory service;
  - If Interreg: start with small projects
- Mediation (e.g. in the event of disputes between partners) and support by project-related competent bodies (e.g. Interreg via regional coordination bodies)
- Obstacle: language (see Communication under point 7)
- Obstacle: financing options outside of EU projects (mainly a problem for smaller players)
  - Possibility of EGTC providing financial instruments
- Differences to be regarded as positive if possible and the attractiveness of the projects to be seen in them

Dealing with problems is a key aspect for the successful implementation of a project. Open dialogue and the willingness of all partners to compromise are fundamental in dealing effectively with problems. In this context too, the already frequently mentioned "conviction" of the project partners of the project and its goals must be mentioned, as such conviction significantly facilitates dealing with problems. If all project partners are striving to implement the project and its objectives, solutions to complex problems are likely to be found and consensus achieved in the event of disagreement.

In addition, mediation and support by regional managements, district authorities or LAGs can be very helpful as they have wide knowledge of project work and are aware of the circumstances of the cross-border partners.

The administrative burden can be reduced by appointing a person whose sole function is to take care of administrative tasks. At this point EGTCs may also act in support of players, for example by providing dedicated support teams. In addition, players should be prepared for the deterrent effect of bureaucracy through awareness-raising, transparency and communication work, especially by regional authorities.

If the players are still inexperienced in project work (e.g. Interreg), it is advisable to take advantage of the advisory services of the various bodies. It is in addition recommended to start with a small project.

Although the differences between project partners often represent an obstacle, these can also be viewed positively. Differences are at the heart of cross-border projects, helping to share knowledge and broaden perspectives and, in general, cross-border projects adding value to each partner's own territory, which could not otherwise be achieved without the cross-border element.

Concerning funding, it should be noted that, with the exception of EU financing, it is difficult for smaller players to obtain funding. This could prompt EGTCs to offer further financing instruments for cross-border cooperation.

"X has always been very clear, present, available, composed. When problems arose they faced them calmly, they tried not to get offended."

"Once a partner contacted us saying that one of the partners was doing nothing. The LAG then informed the other LAGs that they it was talking to the partner concerned and helping it to get back to work again. Then things functioned again."

"Small projects are often useful for partners to get to know each other and build trust. This can then also be used and be of help in a follow-up project."

"Cross-border cooperation started through Interreg projects, which gave the impetus to start not only crossing the border, but also working together and finding common ground. [...] Without third-party funding such cooperation would certainly not be possible."

"In any case it brings added value. The mountain-bike tour, for example, absolutely needs cross-border cooperation so that part of the tour can run in the northern part and part of it in the southern area. So that's definitely something very valuable, be it in tourist terms or for locals."

"There have been discussions, but we always ended them as friends. Hard but fair, and after that we simply went for a drink."

"Everyone was convinced of the project and this helped us to find a compromise in the spirit of the project, even with fundamental differences of opinion. Because everyone above all wanted to implement the project, so they always opted for a solution that was best for the project and different personal views thus took a back seat."

## 6.1. Legal and administrative differences

### Success factors:

- Taking advantage of possible benefits that result from the various framework conditions:
  - creating a project out of differences
  - knowledge transfer – benefiting from the knowledge and expertise of partners and obtaining a different view of your own challenges
- Overcoming differences with the help of mediation/support by bodies that know both structures:
  - EGTC as a mediator between both systems
  - clear, unambiguous contracts to govern the legal situation and financial framework (very helpful especially for private players)
  - overcoming differences thanks to political support
- Good informal coordination between the various administrations
- Exchanges with the project partners over differences in systems, mutual assistance in the event of problems with the prerequisite that all partners know the framework conditions of their area
- Country-specific structures may lead to a partner's procedures being incomprehensible

Legal and administrative differences can make cross-border cooperation and the implementation of joint projects more difficult. In order to address these differences it is possible to use differences to the benefit of the project, or to attempt to mediate between or overcome the legal and administrative discrepancies. Legal and administrative divergences may not only be an obstacle to cross-border cooperation, but can also be targeted as a starting point for cooperation; for example, if benefits arise from the differences. For example there are advantages in knowledge transfer, i.e. the players come into contact with other systems and thus expand their level of knowledge and, at best, can (partially) apply the advantages of such newly acquired knowledge to their area. The advantages that result from differences can also for example be systematically used in the form of a joint project and lead to regular cooperation or joint service provision. Differences in cross-border projects should not only be seen as obstacles, but also as an added value. It is precisely these differences that represent the appeal of developing such projects.

Another way of addressing differences between administrations and legal systems is to try to overcome them via a person or institution that knows both systems and can act as a mediator. As overcoming legal and administrative differences is very complex and difficult for players, especially as they rapidly reach the limits of their abilities, EGTCs, regional managements and regional coordination bodies could play a central role in this regard.

As these institutions know the various legal and administrative systems on both sides of the border, they are more likely to be in a position to act as mediators between the systems, for instance as networking agents and providing their own expertise in respect of the other system.

For private players in particular it is also advisable to clarify the legal and financial framework by means of unambiguous contracts, thus removing any doubts and creating a framework of legal certainty.

In general, players need to be aware that they are facing different framework conditions (apart from the common rules for funded projects). However, all project partners are familiar with their own country-specific conditions and, in the event of possible difficulties of understanding with their counterparts, targeted exchanges between the project partners can be helpful, i.e. the players help each other via open confrontation and dialogue and are thus able to overcome any possible problems.

"The biggest problems between partners are not substantive or technical, but rather of an administrative nature."

"We have experienced problems and differences with certain administrations. The [...] administration is much more meticulous and cumbersome than the Austrian one. Its meticulousness is either unnecessary or incomprehensible. The EGTC office however was a great help in solving these problems."

"We can help each other because everyone knows the country-specific system in their area. You can ask questions at project meetings and then receive an ad hoc reply, and so we address the problems with one another."

"Partners do things in ways that the other partner may find a little strange or the other partner only understands the reason after it has been done. The reason is sometimes because the relationship with the administration is different, because X in Austria is organised very differently than in Italy."

"Through these differences we obtain different perspectives and see ways of doing things in other regions. And the idea is of course that we learn from each other and thus gain something."

"You need constant comparison, absolutely constant dialogue with your counterparts in other regions, both when you think of the project and when the project is implemented, because even when implementation is the same, it is inevitable that you face issues that were not previously budgeted for."

"We can say that the differences were useful. In the end, we published a book about the experience and distributed it around the world, and it was the basis for an academic publication by this professor who was guiding us. So eventually the project became well known."



## 6.2. Cultural differences – different ways of working

### Success factors:

- Existing awareness of cultural differences among all project partners
- Flexibility and understanding
- Respect and interest towards other cultures/forms of behaviour
- Openness and open-mindedness for the unknown and the new; trust (building) as early as the project development phase
- Intercultural skills – sensitivity in the intercultural area
- Recognising the advantages of cultural differences; use of the variety or dynamics of the project team; difference as an added value and a stimulus to develop the project
- Creation of common rules for cooperation
  - If (EU-)funded project: common rules are set out by the project
- Constant exchanges with project partners
- Confidence in partners and their working methods (just because they differ from your own does not mean that they are worse)

Unlike national projects, cross-border projects present a particular challenge in terms of management and execution. Difficulties may arise in terms of cultural differences and different ways of working and behaving. In order to avoid conflict, wasted time and costs, it is vital that both project manager and project staff are aware of the differences. Conscious handling of these differences and respect and interest towards the other culture/behaviour is an important success factor. Only in this way can the synergetic effects of cross-border cooperation be better utilised. The project coordinator has a key role to play in dealing with cultural differences: he or she should be aware of the cultural differences and ensure that project participants feel comfortable at joint meetings.

Especially with cross-border projects or cross-border cooperation, cultural differences should be seen by project participants as a way to learn more about the behaviour of the institutions/organisations/people on the other side of the border: players should not obstinately stick to their usual way of working, but each player's behaviour should instead be characterised by a degree of flexibility. If all project partners demonstrate interest and open-mindedness in their opposite numbers it will be possible to seek common solutions to possible problems through dialogue. Even though cultural differences can undoubtedly place a strain on cross-border cooperation, they should nevertheless in principle be perceived as positive, because an open-minded outlook makes it easier to bridge such differences. Even

greater than the challenge of integrating cultural differences is that of anchoring them as a productive factor in the project.

When dealing with cultural differences in cross-border projects, it is also advisable to ensure transparency regarding the project objectives and to establish common rules for cooperation. Another important factor is trust, which should have already been built up in the project development phase. Start-up workshops are helpful in this respect and permit the project team members to get to know each other personally.

The necessary factors needed to ensure that cultural differences add value to cross-border projects can be summarised as intercultural skills, i.e. a combination of social, cognitive and communicative skills, combined with a knowledge of one's own culture/way of working and of that existing over the border.

"You have to be open to different ways of working and behaving, but that's what makes these projects so appealing."

"We know that X reacts differently to some issues than Y's administrators, but that's no problem."

"If we agree something, then we do it ourselves, i.e. we carry out what we have agreed. If something is agreed with X, it is then passed on to a consulting agency to do, which means that the result may be different or gains a certain extra bandwidth. In other words we use very direct communication, while X has more intermediate stations, and we had to get used to this different way of working with X."

## 6.3. Success factor "small project"

### Success factors:

- Best opportunity for small players to receive EU funding
- Formal project sponsors may be regional bodies
- Reduced bureaucratic and administrative burden
- Lower risk
- CLLD approach – approach directly to people – brings people into contact across borders
- Ideal introduction to project work – partnerships built up – trust built up
  - can provide a basis for future projects
  - support for inexperienced partners from adequate bodies

A certain quantity of resources is necessary so as to remain competitive in large projects. For smaller project partners (e.g. voluntary associations) it is therefore often difficult to obtain financing from certain funds because they have neither the time nor the financial or human resources for this and hardly have any of the necessary know-how. The establishment of small project funds is therefore an important opportunity to permit smaller players to finance project ideas. Projects in this format are not only less costly and wide-ranging, but also help to build partnerships.

The advantage of small projects that are funded under the CLLD strategy is first that regional bodies are the formal sponsors of some of these projects, meaning a lower risk for the players. The bureaucratic burden is also largely assumed by the regional offices and the players can thus concentrate on the content and the essential aspects of the project work.

Small projects are also ideal for all those who are still inexperienced in project work with third-party funding. As already mentioned, this format means a lower risk for players. Small projects are therefore ideal for newly established partnerships, since they give players the opportunity to get to know each other better and to build up a sound basis of trust. Partnerships founded in this way have a certain solidity and form the basis for possible future medium-sized and large projects.

"Small projects are often useful because the partners get to know each other and build trust, which can then be used and help in a follow-up project."
"Small projects were an important way for us to practise cross-border cooperation in the last funding round. They have proven themselves to be a guarantee of success."
"Public institutions were also involved in [...], not just private ones. But the project sponsors also included music bands and cultural and sports associations, and of course community representatives."
"Visible projects and easier administrative projects must be realised on that basis and we need a kind of umbrella project so people are not overtaxed with these major administrative burdens."

## 7. Communication

### Success factors:

- > Regular personal meetings (scheduled in timetable and budget)
- > Regular correspondence (via email, phone, Skype, etc.)
- > Transparent, effective and targeted communication
- > Handling different languages:
  - bilingual/multilingual project coordinator
  - plan resources for translation
  - English as language of communication
  - avoid misinterpretation (especially in translation) via direct communication
  - support from EGTCs

Good communication, in which everyone involved is on the same level in terms of information and can support one another, also forms the foundation for a successful project. Several factors that are conducive to good communication can be determined from the interviews. Thus many interviewees mentioned that regular face-to-face meetings are crucial for good communication within a project. These meetings should be organised as part of the preparatory phase of a project and then held at regular intervals. This must be scheduled according to the timetable and budget.

When implementing the project it is also necessary for partners to be in constant contact with one another via email, phone, Skype, etc.

Another important aspect of communication is the handling of different languages. It is therefore important for communication purposes to assign the management of the project to bilingual/multilingual persons who can coordinate all communications.

As bilingualism is mandatory for Interreg projects, it is also necessary to include the resources required for translation in the planning. In some cases English has been used in a project as the language of communication in order to facilitate everyday communication.

"Every six months they hold a big meeting with all the partners. They meet twice as often at a technical level and we are in contact with the individual partners weekly, if not more often. On average someone travelled to Bozen/Bolzano or Trento every ten days."

"Communication is very much done by phone, especially via Skype conferences. But the partners also meet regularly, e.g. the LAG will provide a meeting room."

"Meetings were regular to very regular and in the meantime we used emails, phone calls and Skype. We would call and email at least once a week, and often several times a day. We often spoke in English."

"Everything had to be signed off in two languages. The EGTC was very supportive. Simultaneous interpretation was available at all meetings."

## 8. Division of tasks and finances

### Success factors:

- > Clear division of tasks
- > Consideration of structure and skills of partners
- > Consider possible problems of pre-financing from the outset and try to remedy them (especially for small private partners)

From the expert surveys it is clear that a project will be successful when the tasks and finances are clear and properly distributed. It is helpful for the proper distribution of tasks and finances if the various structures and skills of the partners are recorded and the division of tasks and finances is then accordingly determined. This permits smart use of the partners' strengths, while compensating for their weaknesses.

As far as finances are concerned, the main difficulty lies in the pre-financing of amounts and the waiting time for reimbursement. This is especially true for small private project partners, where the pre-financing is associated with a certain risk if there are mistakes in accounting. A fundamental and comprehensive analysis of pre-financing and accounting is thus extremely important when dividing tasks and finances.

"We would have had to assume more external costs. Something that is also important is that 50% (i.e. not full-time) jobs are not a sensible way to use money, especially if the position is located in Bolzano, because nobody can be found to meet the requirements, i.e. academics, bilingual examination grade A, temporary work. If there is a job, then it can only be a 100% job."

"We were able to build on our personal experience and then incorporate it into the division of tasks by assigning to X those tasks that it could do well as a small organisation, while those tasks for which the larger structure of partner Y was helpful (Y had various resources such as graphics department, etc.) were assigned to Y."

"We gladly took the lead because as an institution we were in a position to do so: X is not used to managing money and has no experience in this, whereas we have the resources to do this."

"But the bigger problem lay in pre-financing because we always first spent the money, then settled up. There were delays in accounting and that meant that we sometimes pre-financed the project costs for up to 9–10 months and that was always very difficult for us as a small to medium-sized association."

"One problem or hurdle is the pre-financing, especially for smaller players such as associations. They have to spend at least half a year waiting for the money after the pre-financing until all the bureaucracy is completed and until the accounting documents are submitted..."

## 9. Accounting

### Success factors:

- > Include sufficient time and resources (people) in planning
- > Good preparation is required to prevent problems (training, advice from competent bodies)
- > Experience (staff who already have experience of dealing with the rules)

Almost all respondents pointed out that the accounting for projects is very complicated and time-consuming. It is therefore important for the success of a project to provide enough time and resources for accounting. Such people should ideally have experience with accounting procedures. The more someone has dealt with the rules, the more experience and expertise this person will gain.

It is also essential to prepare for accounting in advance, for example by attending training courses or by drawing on the advice of regional coordination offices, regional management, district authorities or LAGs.

"We were already prepared for the effort involved because we have over ten years of project experience and we could make a fair estimate of it."

"We offered very specific training, both in-house and for our partners. Whenever we met we had an accounting session. At first the partners did not take it too seriously because they saw it as something far into the future."



"Preparation for accounting, e.g. inviting all project partners following project selection (after project approval) and providing appropriate training – one half-day as a minimum – where X explains what to watch out for and, regarding payments, that it is better to ask before doing anything so they do not get it wrong and get billed."

## 10. Project and society

### Success factors:

- Projects should reflect the needs of society
- Intensive PR work via press releases, events, newsletters, Twitter, Facebook
- Cooperation should bring people together
- Communicate project to society

Each project is embedded in a specific social context, and should be actively linked to that context insofar as the project should reflect the interests and needs of society, and there should be active communication to anchor the project socially. The project's embedding in such interests and needs is closely related to its objectives and should be taken into account when defining such objectives. The further social anchoring of a project will be achieved through widespread and intensive public relations work so as to transport the project into society. A successful project will come about if the population is involved in the project or if the project's output reflects the needs of the population.

"We staged an event on the Kreuzberg Pass to present the project together with the press, and there were numerous local people there, perhaps also because of the presence of Reinhold Messner. But this all massively increased its visibility."

"Society was involved. We held meetings all over. We staged a mega-meeting at the outset in Bolzano with a world café. We used newsletters, Twitter and Facebook to communicate information on the project to society."

"There were calls for tenders, press releases and kick-off events in every region; we also made press calls, i.e. we made official calls to let people know that the project exists."

## 5. Overview and summary of the success factors identified

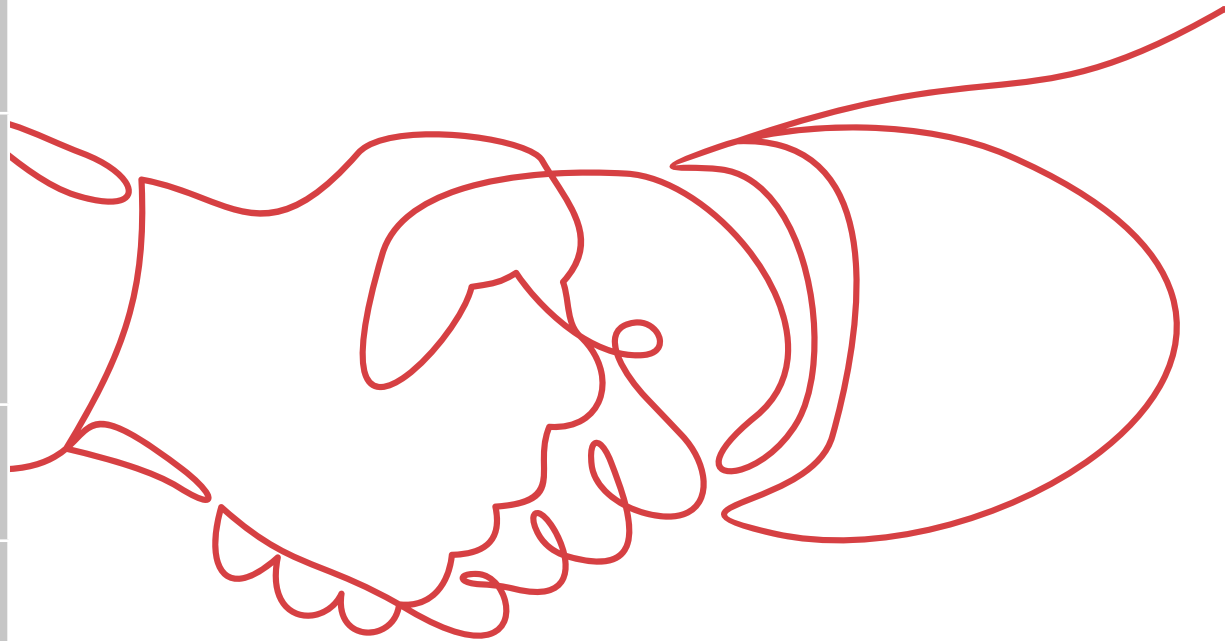
Basic project aspects	Success factors
<b>Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Activity plan – take enough time for precise planning of the project (deadline, time and cost planning) – consideration of the required resources (personnel and budget) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attentive reading of the funding/programme criteria in the event of inexperience with the funding programme</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ Include calculation of the different framework conditions of individual partners (thus preventing possible problems) – framework conditions to be checked by project manager <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Framework conditions also to include varying competencies and powers of partners</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ Regular, timely personal meetings – teambuilding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If Interreg: experience with project tenders of this kind or, in the event of inexperience, commissioning of third parties to draft the project application</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Partnership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Solid partnership, which may be based upon the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• trust between partners</li> <li>• possibility of informal personal familiarisation</li> <li>• time and patience in developing a new partnership</li> <li>• existing acquaintances</li> <li>• all partners have an interest in the project topic (personal matter)</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ Formation of a partnership on the basis of the scale of the project area or the project orientation</li> <li>➤ Development of partnerships through project-related bodies</li> <li>➤ Lead partner with experience and sufficient resources to take over control level</li> <li>➤ Identical partner structures facilitate subsequent cooperation</li> <li>➤ Distance between partners not too great</li> </ul>
<b>Objective of cooperation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Clear and realistic objectives (analysis/evaluation of the initial situation is helpful)</li> <li>➤ Definition of output and effect</li> <li>➤ General interest in topic (in addition to financial interest) – presence of basic motivation regarding the topic at all levels</li> <li>➤ Tips for the definition of objectives (especially for as-yet inexperienced players): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• topics that influence society</li> <li>• topics where low opposing interests exist – no or few competing ideas</li> <li>• topics with which the players have a broad scope of action</li> <li>• project partners should be interested in, enthusiast about and convinced of the topic</li> <li>• topic fits into regional or supra-regional strategies</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ The project must offer added value to the partners</li> </ul>

<b>Sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Transferability of the project</li> <li>➤ Synergies with other measures/projects</li> <li>➤ Future orientation: advance planning of how and which project measures can continue following the end of the project (planning of resources (budget, "carers"), self-sufficiency) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projects lead to a higher level of cross-border exchanges and contacts continue to exist after the end of project – depending on partnership, interest in topic, commitment</li> <li>• Establishment of a fund for aftercare (possibly through EGTC)</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ Visibility of cooperation</li> <li>➤ Projects are usually both demand-oriented and supply-oriented</li> <li>➤ Sustainability on three levels: social, economic, ecological</li> <li>➤ Development of sustainability concepts</li> <li>➤ Continuing outputs, potential network for follow-up projects</li> <li>➤ Follow-up projects – depending on partnership and on success of previous project, etc.</li> <li>➤ Political support is desirable and for some projects also necessary so as to guarantee sustainability (especially if the project partners do not possess the necessary skills)</li> </ul>
<b>Collaboration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Dedicated project coordinator (mostly in-house, but can also be external person); dedicated project staff (who have the time to deal with the project – possibly released from other business) – social skills are essential in addition to resilience</li> <li>➤ Active people are required with a real interest who want to realise the idea: commitment, enthusiasm and interest in the topic are also helpful in solving problems</li> <li>➤ Each project partner needs at least one person to take care of the project both administratively and operationally</li> <li>➤ Continuity in the organisational structure (among project staff)</li> <li>➤ Direct contact as often as possible (personal acquaintance is essential)</li> <li>➤ Soft skills (team skills, willingness to compromise, openness, communication)</li> <li>➤ Defined timetable (buffers) – control level</li> <li>➤ Partners are similar institutions or have similar structures (if possible)</li> </ul>
<b>Support from project-related bodies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ If Interreg: perception of information events of the GTS in the project development phase, support from the GTS in project execution</li> <li>➤ If Interreg: perception of consulting services of regional coordinating bodies, both in the project development phase and in the project execution phase</li> <li>➤ Support from bodies that know both two sides</li> </ul>

<b>Dealing with problems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Communication/discussion and willingness to compromise</li> <li>➤ Conviction on the part of all those involved in the project: all decisions/actions should aim for achievement of the project objective ("for the benefit of the project")</li> <li>➤ Development of transparent schemes for problem and conflict resolution</li> <li>➤ Mediation/support for differences in administration and different legal conditions through bodies that are acquainted with both structures; contact with legal departments</li> <li>➤ Assignment of one person to the administrative management of a project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EGTC: provide competent support team</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ Preparation and awareness-raising among players of administrative burdens/bureaucracy (task could be performed by EGTC)</li> <li>➤ In case of inexperience with projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If Interreg: bodies to provide advisory service;</li> <li>• If Interreg: start with small projects</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ Mediation (e.g. in the event of disputes between partners) and support by project-related competent bodies (e.g. Interreg via regional coordination bodies)</li> <li>➤ Obstacle: language (see Communication)</li> <li>➤ Obstacle: financing options outside of EU projects (mainly a problem for smaller players) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possibility of EGTC providing financial instruments</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ Differences to be regarded as positive if possible and the attractiveness of the projects to be seen in them</li> </ul>
<b>Legal and administrative differences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Taking advantage of possible benefits that result from the various framework conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• creating a project out of differences</li> <li>• knowledge transfer – benefiting from the knowledge and expertise of partners and obtaining a different view of your own challenges</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ Overcoming differences with the help of mediation/support by bodies that know both structures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EGTC as a mediator between both systems</li> <li>• clear, unambiguous contracts to govern the legal situation and financial framework (very helpful especially for private players)</li> <li>• overcoming differences thanks to political support</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ Good informal coordination between the various administrations</li> <li>➤ Exchanges with the project partners over differences in systems, mutual assistance in the event of problems with the prerequisite that all partners know the framework conditions of their area</li> <li>➤ Country-specific structures may lead to a partner's procedures being incomprehensible</li> </ul>

<b>Cultural differences – different ways of working</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Existing awareness of cultural differences among all project partners</li> <li>➤ Flexibility and understanding</li> <li>➤ Respect and interest towards other cultures/forms of behaviour</li> <li>➤ Openness and open-mindedness for the unknown and the new; trust (building) as early as the project development phase</li> <li>➤ Intercultural skills – sensitivity in the intercultural area</li> <li>➤ Recognising the advantages of cultural differences; use of the variety or dynamics of the project team; difference as an added value and a stimulus to develop the project</li> <li>➤ Creation of common rules for cooperation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If (EU-)funded project: common rules are set out by the project</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ Constant exchanges with project partners</li> <li>➤ Confidence in partners and their working methods (just because they differ from your own does not mean that they are worse)</li> </ul>
<b>Success factor "small project"</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Best opportunity for small players to receive EU funding</li> <li>➤ Formal project sponsors may be regional bodies</li> <li>➤ Reduced bureaucratic and administrative burden</li> <li>➤ Lower risk</li> <li>➤ CLLD approach – approach directly to people – brings people into contact across borders</li> <li>➤ Ideal introduction to project work – partnerships built up – trust built up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• can provide a basis for future projects</li> <li>• support for inexperienced partners from adequate bodies</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Regular personal meetings (scheduled in timetable and budget)</li> <li>➤ Regular correspondence (via email, phone, Skype, etc.)</li> <li>➤ Transparent, effective and targeted communication</li> <li>➤ Handling different languages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• bilingual/multilingual project coordinator</li> <li>• plan resources for translation</li> <li>• English as language of communication</li> <li>• avoid misinterpretation (especially in translation) via direct communication</li> <li>• support from EGTCs</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Division of tasks and finances</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Clear division of tasks</li> <li>➤ Consideration of structure and skills of partners</li> <li>➤ Consider possible problems of pre-financing from the outset and try to remedy them (especially for small private partners)</li> </ul>
<b>Accounting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Include sufficient time and resources (people) in planning</li> <li>➤ Good preparation is required to prevent problems (training, advice from competent bodies)</li> <li>➤ Experience (staff who already have experience of dealing with the rules)</li> </ul>

<b>Project and society</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Projects should reflect the needs of society</li> <li>➤ Intensive PR work via press releases, events, newsletters, Twitter, Facebook</li> <li>➤ Cooperation should bring people together</li> <li>➤ Communicate project to society</li> </ul>
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## Notes





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