EUROPEAN GROUPING OF TERRITORIAL COOPERATION
VIA CARPATIA

COHESION POLICY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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This publication was created within the project **EU Cohesion Policy: Read – Watch – Find** [REWAFI č. 2017CE16BAT09S], which was co-funded by the European Union.

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The publication was created within the REWAFI project, which was co-funded by the European Union.

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ISBN 978-80-99926-04-3

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Foreword

The book **Cohesion Policy of the European Union**, which comes to the attention of the readers, is conceived as a tool for disseminating information on the European Union´s Cohesion Policy.

Cohesion policy is one of the most important policies of the European Union and is also one of the most significant investment policies. The Member States have available financial resources under the cohesion policy which they can use to promote economic, social and territorial cohesion. In addition, the European Union offers a number of other tools to facilitate and support cohesion.

The aim of the theoretical part of this publication is to present to the reader the European Union, history, the basic legal framework and objectives of its cohesion policy. The aim of the practical part of this publication is in reference to the theoretical part to point at examples from the individual Member States of the European Union, in particular, at the benefits, problems and knowledge acquired mainly during the implementation of projects co-financed by the European Union programs aimed at promoting economic, social and territorial cohesion.

The publication is created with the support of the European Union under the project called *EU Cohesion Policy: Read – Watch – Find (REWAFI)*. In the preparation of this publication, several projects were visited which were implemented in each Member State of the European Union in order to obtain authentic information on the motivations, outcomes, outputs as well as the problems encountered by project coordinators during the implementation. The most important finding is that without the help and support of the European Union, many of the positive effects of the implementation of these projects could not have been achieved in the Member States and their regions.

The publication is intended for the general public and students of secondary and higher education who are interested in getting the first information about Cohesion Policy of the European Union and European examples of successful projects co-financed by the European Union programs aimed at promoting economic, social and territorial cohesion.

Košice,15.02.2019

Tomáš Malatinec
for the team of authors

Chapter 1

EUROPEAN UNION AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

1.1 Creation of the European Union

The European Union is an international organization "sui generis" and the European integration processes that have shaped it into the present form have deep historical roots. The integration processes in Europe represent a gradual and voluntary association of the states of Europe that formulate and promote common practices and visions. The ultimate goal is to achieve peace, stability and prosperity in Europe.

„The Union´s aim is to promote peace, its values and the well-being of its peoples."
Art. 3 (1) Treaty on European Union

The European Union is a unique economic and political union of 28 European countries[1] whose territory occupies a significant part of the European continent. The rule of law of the European Union forms and affects the rule of law of individual member countries. The European Union assumes responsibility for the exercise of several jurisdictions. The created model by which the cooperation of the European Union and its Member States works enhances its uniqueness.

The organizations that are precursors to the current form of the European Union were founded shortly after World War II. At the time, the efforts of the European countries were, in particular, to re-establish mutual cooperation and to prevent the emergence of new conflicts. These efforts resulted in the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community

[1] Legal status as of 31.12.2018 with respect to the planned departure of the United Kingdom from the European Union in 2019

(ECSC)[2] in 1992. Among the founders were six countries, namely Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. As part of this cooperation, they started to form the first common supranational organs which are the predecessors of, for example, the current European Commission, the European Parliament or the Court of Justice of the European Union. Another important milestone in European integration was the year 1958. In this year, the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM)[3] and the European, Economic Community (EEC)[3] were established. The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) ceased to exist when the Treaty of Paris expired in 2002 and the tasks and powers of its bodies passed to the European Economic Community (EEC), which together with the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and the European Atomic Energy Community EURATOM), were renamed the European Community (EC) due to the gradual extension of its powers and in 1993, together with the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), was transformed into the European Union (EU). The European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) continues to operate alongside the European Union as a separate organization managed by the institutions of the European Union. A further 22 European countries have gradually acceded[4], which have mutually continued to deepen European integration and cooperation, not only in terms of economic policy but also in the areas of security and justice, environmental protection and many other areas.

[2] The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was established by the Treaty of Paris (the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community), which was signed in 1951 and became effective in 1952.

[3] The European Atomic Energy Community (EURATON4) and the European Economic Community (EEC) were established by the Treaties of Rome (the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community and the Treaty establishing a European Economic Community), which were signed in 1957 and became effective in 1958.

[4] Annex No. 1 - Member States of the European Union and the year of their membership

The development of European integration has not been shaped solely by the emergence of the aforementioned organizations. Each enlargement of powers and accession of new Member States has also changed the treaties that governed the rules of cooperation between the Member States and which were based on the basic principles of functioning of a legally consistent state, which the European Union supports.

In addition to the Paris and Rome Treaties, significant in the process of European integration was the Single European Act (1987), which aimed at reforming existing transnational cooperation institutions and the reform of decision-making procedures relating to the introduction of a single market. The Treaty of Maastricht - The Treaty on European Union (1993) introduced innovations in the form of monetary and political union institutes. The European Union is officially established and reforms of existing cooperation between member countries are introduced. The Treaty of Amsterdam (1999) brought about a further reform of the institutions, mainly related to the planned accession of new members. The Treaty of Nice (2003) followed up on implemented reforms while the Treaty of Lisbon (2009) was the last treaty forming European integration (2009). The Treaty of Lisbon is the result of negotiations following the failure of the Treaty on a Constitution for Europe which was not supported in some Member States. Under the Treaty of Lisbon, the European Union acquires legal subjectivity. The Treaty establishes a clear division of powers between the European Union and its Member States. The Treaty, like the previous ones, does not replace but updates the original establishing treaties. According to its wording, the European Union is based on two establishing treaties which have the same legal force and are the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union[5]. The guaranty of rights established by the

[5] Art. (1) of the Treaty on European Union

previous treaties, such as civil, economic and social rights deriving from the citizenship of the European Union, is included in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union[6].

1.2 Objectives of the European Union

The European Union promotes and oversees respect for commonly defined basic values and objectives. Basic values include namely human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, a legally consistent state and human rights. These values are common to Member States and societies where pluralism, tolerance, justice, solidarity, non-discrimination and equality between women and men prevail.

> *„The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.“*
>
> *Art. 2 of the Treaty on European Union*

The main objectives of the European Union[7] may include, in particular, economic objectives (in particular the creation and promotion of an internal market, economic union and monetary

[6] Citizens of the European Union have various rights guaranteed by their membership of the European Union. These include, for example, the free movement of persons, the right of establishment in any Member State, protection against crime and access to justice and others.

[7] SIMAN, M. ; SLAŠŤAN, M. 2012. Právo Európskej únie. Bratislava, EUROIURIS – Európske právne centrum, o. z, I. ed., 1232 p. ISBN 97880-89406-12-8.

union, support for cohesion - territorial, economic and social cohesion), social objectives (in particular the limiting and prevention of discrimination in any form, support of diversity, support and ensuring access to justice), political objectives (in particular citizenship of the European Union, assurance of security) and cultural objectives (in particular the preservation of Europe's cultural heritage, the promotion of cultural diversity in its entirety). The main economic objective of the EU is to create a single market. It allows the free movement of most goods, services, capital and persons. The aim is to exploit the enormous potential of the internal market also in the fields of energy, knowledge or capital markets[8].

The European Union also supports protection of its citizens outside its Member States, cooperates with the rest of the world and contributes to the eradication of poverty and to the promotion of peace, solidarity and protection of human rights. The Member States that violate or disregard the values and objectives of the European Union may be sanctioned. Respect for the values of the Union is a basic precondition for a country's entry into the European Union. The European Union strives to achieve its objectives by appropriate means, within the scope of the powers transferred to it by the Member States.

1.3 Competencies and policies of the European Union

In order to ensure the achievement of the stated objectives and the protection of common values in the European Union, a model of the division of competences between the European Union and the Member States has been established. The exclusive

[8] EURÓPSKA ÚNIA. 2018. Ciele a hodnoty EU. Available online: httpsV / europa.eu [cit. 08.10.2018]

powers of the European Union[9] are those within which Member States decided to transfer the competencies to create legal acts to govern the area in question to the European Union. The Member States have lost legislative and regulatory powers in these areas. The shared competences of the European Union and the Member States[10] (shared competences) are those in which the European Union can exercise competence together with the member countries. In addition to the fact that the European Union has legislative and regulatory powers to manage these areas, this power has also been retained by the Member States. The European Union's supportive, coordinating and complementary powers[11] are those in which Member States have maintained sovereignty and still possess exclusive legislative and regulatory powers. The European Union only has the power to carry out supporting, coordinating and complementary activities in relation to the activities of the Member States.

On the basis of the division of competences, the European Union is developing relevant policies that seek to achieve the goals and support the development of the Member States.

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[9] Exclusive competences of the EU under Art. (3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union are: customs union, the establishing of the competition rules necessary for the functioning of the internal market, monetary policy for the Member States whose currency is the euro, the conservation of marine biological resources under the common fisheries policy, common commercial policy, conclusion of an international agreement [...].

[10] Common competences of the EU and MS according to Art. 4 (2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union covers the following areas: internal market, social policy, economic, social and territorial cohesion, agriculture and fisheries, excluding the conservation of marine biological resources, environment, consumer protection, transport, trans-European networks, energy, area of freedom, security and justice, common safety concerns in public health matters, in the areas of research, technological development and space [...] and in the area of development cooperation and humanitarian aid [...].

[11] EU supporting, coordinating and complementary competencies under Art. 6 of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union is in the following areas: protection and improvement of human health, industry, culture, tourism, education, vocational training, youth and sport, civil protection, administrative cooperation.

Through its policies, the European Union covers many areas in many areas, from human rights, through energy and economic competition, regional policy and agriculture to sport, research and innovations[12]. The basic legal framework for a number of policies is directly governed by the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. The creation of a further policy framework is developed from this. The performance of the policy and its control require their own institutional system. The European Union is characterized by a unique institutional set-up. Institutions, offices and agencies are created so as to have their own voice in the European Union, its member countries and, above all, the citizens.

1.4 The European Union's administrative system

The European Union's administrative system is made up of the official institutions, bodies, agencies and offices of the European Union.

> *„The Union shall have an institutional framework which shall aim to promote its values, advance its objectives, serve its interests, those of its citizens and those of the Member States, and ensure the consistency, effectiveness and continuity of its policies and actions."*
> *Art. 13 (1) of the Treaty on European Union*

Bodies, agencies and authorities may have a different focus depending on the policies that the European Union carries

[12] EURÓPSKA ÚNIA. 2018. tematické oblasti EÚ. Available online: httpsV/europa.eu [cit. 10.08.2018].

out. The official institutions of the European Union include the European Council, the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union, the Court of Justice of the European Union, the European Central Bank and the European Court of Auditors. Each institution acts exclusively within the limits of the powers entrusted to the European Union. Institutions also have an obligation to cooperate with one another.

Defining the European agenda and the political direction of the European Union lies with the European Council[13]. The European Council gives the European Union the necessary stimuli for its development. It does not carry out a legislative function. The European Parliament[14], representing European citizens and the Council of the European Union[15], representing the member countries, have legislative roles. The European Commission[16] represents the interests of the European Union. Its basic roles include overseeing compliance with European Union law and developing appropriate initiatives to achieve the objectives set. Under the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, it carries out coordination, executive and

[13] Art. 15 (2) of the Treaty on European Union: The European Council shall consist of the Heads of State or Government of the Member States, together with its President and the President of the Commission. The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy shall take part in its work.

[14] Art. 14 (2) of the Treaty on European Union: The European Parliament shall be composed of representatives of the Union's citizens. They shall not exceed seven hundred and fifty in number, plus the President. Representation of citizens is (shall be) digressively proportional, with a minimum threshold of six members per Member State. No Member State shall be allocated more than ninety-six seats.

[15] Art. 16 (2) of the Treaty on European Union: The Council of the European Union shall consist of a representative of each Member State at ministerial level, who may commit the government of the Member State in question and cast its vote.

[16] The European Commission is managed by 28 Commissioners, one from each EU country. This team, also officially called the College, is headed by the President of the European Commission.

management functions. It proposes the adoption of legislative acts.

Enforcement and interpretation of European law and, in particular treaties, are provided by the Court of Justice of the European Union. It consists of the Court of Justice, the General Court and the Special Courts. The monetary policy of the European Union is managed by the European Central Bank together with the national central banks of the Member States whose currency is the euro and which form the Eurosystem. Together with the national central banks of all Member States it forms the European System of Central Banks (ESCB). The European Court of Auditors carries out audits of the European Union and reviews revenue and expenditure accounts. It also provides statements of its findings to other institutions of the European Union.

In addition, the European Union has at disposal many other authorities, bodies and agencies that carry out specific tasks. These include, for example, the preparation and execution of special policies, financial management, control activities, advisory activities, and institutional relations. Examples include the European External Action Service, the European Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee or the European Investment Bank.

Chapter 2
HISTORY OF COHESION POLICY

2.1 The origin of Cohesion Policy

The Cohesion Policy of the European Union, also known as the regional policy[17] of the European Union, has been formed since 1957, when it was first incorporated into one of the Treaties of Rome, specifically in the treaty establishing the European Economic Community (EEC). The objective of the cohesion policy was stated in the Single European Act, and in 1988 the first regulations were adopted, officially establishing European Union´s cohesion policy. The long-term goal of the cohesion policy is to reduce regional differences within the regions of the European.

> *„The cohesion concept provides the answer to the question of "what" is the objective of the European Union´s cohesion policy.“*[18]

Cohesion Policy is also the manifestation of solidarity between the Member States and the regions of the European Union.[19] The political importance of a cohesion policy is linked to its objective of ensuring a fairer and more uniform European Union through budgetary transfers from richer to poorer areas. This is to be ensured in particular by a funding mechanism that is formally controlled by the European Commission at the

[17] Some sources regard the European Union´s regional policy as an integral part of the European Union´s cohesion policy. It follows from this that the cohesion policy of the European Union is understood as a more complex area consisting of several partial policies, one of which is regional policy.

[18] LEONARDI, R. 2005. Cohesion Policy in the European Union: The Building of Europe. Palgrave. New York. 232 p. ISBN 978–1–4039–4955–4

[19] BUČEK, M.; REHÁK, Š.; TVRDOŇ, J. 2010. Regionálna ekonómia a politika. IURA Edition, Bratislava. 269 p. ISBN 978-80-8078-362-4.

European level.[2] The achievement of the individual objectives is planned within limited time periods, focusing in particular on the most distant and poorer regions of the European Union, multilevel governance, strategic investments, and the active involvement of local and regional actors. However, it cannot be overlooked that the increase in regional differences is also due to the deepening economic integration in the European Union.

At present, the Cohesion Policy of the European Union is its most important investment policy. In the process of its development, the elements by which this policy ic characterized today were progressively created and reformed. These include, for example, its typical measures and the interventions that it uses, administrative management and the process of management, monitoring, but also controls.

> *„Cohesion Policy has adapted over time without losing its key orientation, namely the effort to achieve the balanced and sustainable development of the regions.“*[20]

In 1957 the European Social Fund was created, which was primarily devoted to promoting employment and gradually focused on topical issues. In 1968, the ž tzDirectorate-General for Regional Policy of the European Commission, the current Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO), was set up. In 1975, the European Fund for Regional development was created. In 1993, the Cohesion Fund and the Selection of Regions were created.

These measures have been accompanied by complementary activities such as the creation of specific

[20] AHNER, D. 2008. *Kohézna politika 1988 – 2008: Investovanie do budúcnosti Európy* In Inforegio Panorama 26, p. 1. ISSN 1725-826X.

instruments to support specific objectives or areas (support for agriculture, support for fishery and others). The European Union lends long-term and continuous support to territorial, social and economic cohesion. However, in practice there has been no consistent definition of cohesion for a long time. At present, however, the opinion can be assumed that cohesion (sustainability) is considered to be that measure of regional differences which is politically and socially acceptable.[21] Cohesion can also be defined as a shared vision and co-ownership in relation to all communities, characterized by diversity and offering equal opportunities for all.[22]

2.2 Importance of Cohesion Policy

The main objective of the Cohesion Policy of the European Union is to reduce regional disparities in the member countries[23]. The Cohesion Policy has also been created with the aim of bridging the gap between the Member States and their regions caused by the formation of the single market in the European Union. A region[24] may be considered as a limited geographical area, and its definition depends on the chosen criteria on whose

[21] MOLLE, W. 2007. European Cohesion Policy. Regions and Cities. Routledge. 368 p. ISBN 9781134072002.

[22] BUČEK, M.; REHÁK, Š.; TVRDOŇ, J. 2010. Regionálna ekonómia a politika. IURA Edition, Bratislava. 269 p. ISBN 978-80-8078-362-4.

[23] The European Union has 274 regions at NUTS 2 level. The classification of regions at this level is also used in the development and implementation of cohesion policy.

[24] a region is a territorial unit corresponding to level 1 or 2 of the Nomenclature of Territorial Unites for statistical purposes (NUTS 1 and 2 levels) within the meaning of Regulation of the European Parliament and teh Council (EC) No. 1059/2003

basis the region will be defined[25]. Each region is characterized by its own internal structure that has been shaped by its past and the factors that have influenced it. I tis precisely the structure of the region that is an important determinant of its further development[26]. The structure means, for example, the location of companies in the region, their spatial concentration, also the spatial concentration of the population, relations with the external environment of the region, the sectoral structure of the region´s economy, and others.

Regional development factors may have an endogenous (internal) or exogenous (external) character. Endogenous factors include, for example, natural potential, human and social potential, financial resources, urban structure, technological potential and others. Exogenous factors include, for example, the development of the country as a whole, relations of the country with foreign countries, national policies and others[27]. The European Union, its Member States and regions are typical of diversity. The regions in the north of the European Union will undoubtable have other characteristics, other potential and other problems as compared to the southern regions of the European Union. The same can be said of coastal and inland regions. Differences stem not only from the location and natural characteristics of the regions, but also from the political direction of the Member States and their previous economic development.

The Cohesion Policy of the European Union has, as a complementary policy to the national and regional policies of the member States, to strengthen the economic, social and territorial cohesion of the regions in the European Union.

[25] VÝROSTOVÁ, E. 2010. Regionálna ekonomika a rozvoj. IURA Edition, Bratislava. 352 p. ISBN 978-80-8078-361-7.

[26] BUČEK, M.; REHÁK, Š.; TVRDOŇ, J. 2010. Regionálna ekonómia a politika. IURA Edition, Bratislava. 269 p. ISBN 978-80-8078-362-4.

[27] VÝROSTOVÁ, E. 2010. Regionálna ekonomika a rozvoj. IURA Edition, Bratislava. 352 p. ISBN 978-80-8078-361-7.

Consequently, cohesion must contribute to overall performance of the European Union. The aim is to reduce regional disparities and strengthen competitiveness and employment[28]. The Cohesion Policy is very important for economic growth and social cohesion throughout the European Union. In many cities, structural and investment funds provide substantial support to large investment programs and projects that directly affect the quality of life of citizens and the viability and attractiveness of the cities themselves.[29]

2.3 Cohesion Policy after 2013

Since 2013, the Cohesion Policy has focused on the thematic areas of research and innovation, information and communication technologies, the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, the low-carbon economy, the fight against climate change, the environment and efficiency of resource use, sustainable transport, employment and mobility, social inclusion, education, and better governance. The priorities of the European Union can be derived from these thematic areas, whose implementation should also be supported by the cohesion policy. Claims and expectations were heavily influenced by the crisis period and the period after the entry of a large number of new members into the European Union.

Cohesion Policy focuses on all regions and cities in the European Union.[30] It supports in particular the competitiveness

[28] VÝROSTOVÁ, E. 2010. Regionálna ekonomika a rozvoj. IURA Edition, Bratislava. 352 p. ISBN 978-80-8078-361-7.

[29] EUROCITIES. 2018. Cohesion Policy. Available online: http://www.eurocities.eu [cit. 20.08.2018].

[30] EURÓPSKA KOMISIA. 2018. Najdôležitejšia investičná politika EÚ. Available online: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy [cit. 20.08.2018].

of enterprises on many areas[31]. It supports in particular the competitiveness of enterprises, the creation and sustainability of jobs, economic growth, sustainable development and the improvement of the quality of life of the citizens of the European Union. The Cohesion Policy provides a necessary investment framework to meet the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth of the European Union. Since 2013 Cohesion Policy has been seen as a catalyst for the acquisition of additional sources of funding, both public and private. This is not just a form of co-financing but, above all, an increase in the potential to attract further investment from the external environment of the European Union. The Cohesion Policy encourages regions and cities from different member States of the European Union to work together and learn from each other through joint programs, projects and networks with a specific impact on all aspects of the economy, including innovation, education, entrepreneurship, employment and the environment[32].

[31] EURÓPSKA KOMISIA. 2014. An Introduction to EU Cohesion Policy. Available online: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy [cit. 20.08.2018].

[32] EURÓPSKA KOMISIA. 2018. Najdôležitejšia investičná politika EÚ. Available online: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy [cit. 21.08.2018].

European Union 2020 targets[33]:

Employment:	increase the employment rate of the population aged 20-64 to 75 %
Research and development:	increase the level of investment to R&D to 3% of EU GDP
Climate change:	reduce greenhouse gas emission sin the EU by 20% compared to emissions in the 1990s, achieve 20% renewable energy, increase energy efficiency by 20%
Education:	reduce the rate of early school leaving to less than 10%, reduce the number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion by at least 20 million
Combating poverty:	reduce the number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion by at least 20 million

The allocation of funds determined for the Cohesion Policy is allocated through a mechanism of shared responsibility between the European Union and the Member States. Countries set their own objectives through which they contribute to the meeting of the objectives of the European Union.

[33] EURÓPSKA KOMISIA. 2018. New Cohesion Policy. Available online: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy [cit. 10.11.2018].

„In the next long-term framework of the EU budget fir 2021 – 2027, the European Commission proposes modernizing the cohesion policy as the major investment policy of EU and one of its most specific expressions of solidarity.“[34]

Currently, the Europe 2020 strategy serves as the reference framework[35]. With regard to the ending of the 2014 – 2020 programming period, the European Commission presented a proposal for a new Cohesion Policy for the years 2021 – 2027. The aim is to modernize and strengthen the policy. The new framework focuses mainly on investment in regional development, a smarter Europe (innovations and digitalisation in the commercial sphere), a more interconnected Europe (strategic transport and digital networks), a greener Europe (transformation of energy and the fight against climate changes) and a more social Europe (job creation, education and integration). The Cohesion Policy will continue to support local development strategies and strengthen its urban dimension. It plans to reduce the administrative burden on small and medium-sized enterprises.

„The need to open markets and the need to balance regional disparities and territorial cohesion continues to influence both the content and the form of implementation of EU Cohesion Policy.“ [35]

[34] The Europe 2020 Strategy is a EU program for growth and employment to the end of this decade. It emphasizes smart, sustainable and inclusive growth as a means of overcoming the structural weakness of the European economy, improving its competitiveness and productivity and strengthening a sustainable social market economy.

[35] BALÁŽOVÁ, E. a kol. 2017. Politika súdržnosti – príležitosti a ohrozenia. Slovenská poľnohospodárska univerzita v Nitre, Nitra. 107 p. ISBN 978-80-552-1778-9.

Chapter 3
LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF COHESION POLICY

3.1 Legal framework of economic, social and territorial cohesion

Economic, social and territorial cohesion is currently[36] regulated in Article 174 and subsequent articles of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. Activities leading to the strengthening of the economic, social and territorial cohesion are implemented in order to promote the harmonious development of the European Union and its regions. Attention is paid to the most backward territories. In the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union itself, the declared intention is to pay the greatest attention in particular to rural areas, areas affected by industrial transition, and regions which suffer from severe and permanent natural and demographic handicaps such as the northernmost regions with very low population density, and island, cross-border and mountain regions.

Cohesion policy – the policy of supporting economic, social and territorial cohesion is one of the common competences of the European Union and the Member States. The European Union and the Member States hold legislative and regulatory powers to coordinate this policy. The other Cohesion Policy rules are regulated by the relevant European Union regulations[37]. They specify inter alia that Member States of the European Union shall

[36] Legal status as at 31.12.2018

[37] For legal acts of the European Union: For the purposes of the exercise of the powers of the European Union, the institutions adopt regulations, directives, decisions, recommendations and opinions.

- A regulation shall have general application. It shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States.
- Directives are binding, as to the result to be achieved, upon any or all of the Member States to whom they are addressed, but leave to the national authorities the choice of form and methods.
- Decisions are binding in their entirety. Where those to whom they are addressed are stipulated, they are binding only on them.
- Recommendations and opinions are not binding.

conduct their economic policies in such a way as to attain the objectives of the Cohesion Policy set out in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Article 174). Achieving these objectives is supported, in particular, through Structural Funds[38], the European Investment Bank and other existing Financial Instruments[39].

Within normative legal acts regulating the implementation of Cohesion Policy, EU Regulation No 1303/2013 may be stated[40]. The Regulation is adopted to improve the coordination and harmonization of the implementation of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds)[41], which provide support under cohesion policy. This Regulation consists of five parts, the first of which sets out the subject of treatment and the definitions of concepts, the second contains the rules applicable to all ESI Funds, the third contains the provisions which apply only to ERDF, ESF and CF, the fourth contains provisions which apply only to ERDF, ESF, CF and EMFF, and the fifth contains the final provisions. Based on the rules set out in this Regulation, the partnership agreements between the European Union and the Member States arise for example, in the current programming period. They further regulate the

[38] European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund – Guidance Section, European Social Fund, European Regional Development Fund

[39] For example: Cohesion Fund

[40] Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council (EU) No 1303/2013 of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions for the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006

[41] European Structural and Investment Funds: the European Regional development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF), the Cohesion Fund (CF) and funds determined for rural development, namely the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the maritime and fisheries sector, the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)

operational programs and priorities of each Member State in meeting the European Union´s fundamental objectives.

Other EU regulations governing the Cohesion Policy include a regulation specifically regulating individual funds, in particular ERDF, ESF, CF, EAFRD and EMFF[6]. Also significant is EU Regulation No. 1299/2013[42], which regulates the procedures for the promotion of European territorial cooperation. This is implemented in particular to promote the harmonious development of the territory of the European Union at various levels. European Territorial Cooperation supports cross-border, transnational and inter-regional cooperation. The Regulation defines the priority objectives of territorial cooperation and contains provisions necessary to ensure effective implementation, monitoring, financial management and effective control of operational programs under the European Territorial Cooperation objective.

3.2 European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation

The legal framework of the European Union´s Cohesion Policy presented in the previous section is also supplemented by EC Regulation No. 1082/2006[43]. On the basis of this Regulation there may be set up a new legal entity, such as the European Grouping of Territorial Co-operation (EGTC). As stated in the

[42] Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council (EU) No 1299/2013 of 17 December 2013 on specific provisions for support of the European Territorial Cooperation Objective from the European Regional Development Fund

[43] Regulation (EC) No. 1082/2006 of 5 July 2006 on the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), as amended by Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council (EU) No 1302/2013 of 17 December 2013, amending Regulation (EC) No. 1082/2006 on the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) as regards the clarification, simplification and improvement of the establishment and functioning of such groupings

Regulation – EGTCs can potentially expand support and stimulate the achievement of the harmonious development of the European Union as a whole and, in particular, the economic, social and territorial cooperation of its regions, and contribute to the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy to ensure smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. EGTCs can also make a positive contribution to alleviating the obstacles to territorial cooperation between regions which have serious and permanent natural and demographic disadvantages, including the specific situation of the outermost regions, and can be an instrument in strengthening cooperation with third countries, overseas countries and territories or peripheral regions of the European Union.

> *„The aim of EGTC is to facilitate and promote cross-border, transnational and/or inter-regional co-operation between its members, with the sole aim of strengthening economic and social cohesion."*
>
> *Regulation (EC) No. 1082/2006*

The European Grouping of Territorial Co-operation has a legal subjectivity and in each Member State enjoys the most extensive legal capacity accorded under the national law of the Member State to legal persons. An EGTC member may be a Member State, a regional public administration body, a local public administration body or other bodies governed by public law[44]. An EGTC consists of members who are located in the territory of at least two Member States.

[44] Public law, unlike private law, is characterized by the dominant use of the mandatory legal forms and the predominant status of public authorities in relation to the person whose subjective rights they decide. Public law is

3.3 National legal regulation of regional policy

In the previous section it was stated that the Cohesion Policy of the European Union is a complementary policy to the regional policies of the Member Countries and their regions. Economic, social and territorial cohesion belongs to the common competences of the European Union and the Member States, and therefore legislative and regulatory powers are retained. In practice, therefore regional policies are developed at both the national and the regional level. These should be carried out in accordance with the Cohesion Policy of the European Union and the different measures should act synergistically. Regional policies set up at national or regional levels are however regulated by the national legal framework.

„European Union law is a complex system of legal relationships of a different kind, content, purpose and origin.“[45]

Within the territory of each Member State of the European Union, in addition to the national legal order and international public law, a separate legal order, the law of the European Union, is also applied. The Member State will implement legislative measures for the setting of Cohesion Policy in dependence on the type of legal act through which the European Union regulates and coordinates Cohesion Policy. This aligns the rules adopted and applied at different levels. Such

characterized by a public law method of legal regulation. Public law field can include, for example, administrative law, constitutional law, criminal law and others.

[45] RUMANOVSKÁ, L. A kol. 2017. Základy politiky súdržnosti v EÚ a SR. Slovenská poľnohospodárska univerzita v Nitre, Nitra. 101 p. ISBN 978-80-552-1777-2.

a procedure is particularly important in view of the implementation of the Cohesion Policy of the European Union.

> *„In the context of the Cohesion Policy of the European Union, multilevel governance relies primarily on the application of the partnership principle. The literature highlights the contribution of multi-level governance to greater policy effectiveness, provided it is done properly."*[46]

Coordination of the Cohesion Policy at the national level belongs under the responsibility of the relevant central government authorities of the Member State concerned (in particular ministries). For the purpose of effective policy management, different coordination and working groups may be set up to participate in the preparation of relevant legislation and strategy papers at the national level. The European Commission works closely with Member States on proposals for the priorities and individual policy objectives of the relevant long-term financial frameworks. In this way the achievement of concordance in the exercise of policy is supported at various levels.

[46] RADZYNER, A. et al. 2014. An Assessment of Multilevel Governance in Cohesion Policy 2007-2013. Európska únia. Available online: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/studies [cit. 15.09.2018].

Chapter 4

FINANCING OF COHESION POLICY

4.1 Multiannual financial framework of the European Union

The European Union has at the disposal its own financial resources available to ensure the smooth running of its administration and the achievement of its set objectives. The basic legal framework for the financial management of the European Union is governed, in particular, in the founding Treaties[47].

> *„For each financial year, all revenue and expenditures of the European Union shall be provisionally computed and included in the budget. Budget revenue and expenditures must be in balance."*
>
> *Article 310 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union*

Under Article 312 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the multiannual financial framework[48] shall ensure that Union expenditure develops in an orderly manner and within the limits of its own resources. It shall be established for a period of at least five years. The objective of multiannual financial planning is to ensure the continuity and stability of the use of financial resources within the European Union.

In the context of multiannual planning, the European Union creates financial instruments that support its policies. The financial instruments designed to support the cohesion policy are

[47] The Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

[48] Legal state of 31.12.2018: The European Union is in multiannual financial framework for 2014 – 2020. Within this period, specific allocations are also allocated for the Cohesion Policy of the European Union itself. Cohesion Policy Funds for 2014-2020 amount to € 351,8 billion.

thus an effective way of supporting the achievement of the objectives set at both European and national levels. Through specific financial instruments, projects and investments can be targeted to help reduce regional disparities between the regions of the European Union. The specific financial instruments are also intended to provide technical support to Member States in building their own capacities to implement EU policies and to create grant schemes. Grants are an important instrument of support that the European Union uses to achieve the goals.

„The grants are direct subsidies from the European Union budget, which are intended to finance a specific action carried out under any of the policies of the European Union."[49]

4.2 European structural and investment funds

A significant volume of European Union financial instruments that are intended to ensure its policies are provided through the European structural and investment funds (ESIF). These funds focus in particular on supporting five priority areas: research and innovation, digital technologies, supporting the low-carbon economy, sustainable management of natural resources and support for small and medium-sized enterprises.

[49] SIMAN, M.: SLAŠŤAN, M. 2012. Právo Európskej únie. Bratislava, EUROIURIS – Európske právne centrum, o. z., First edition, 1232 p. ISBN 978-80-89406-12-8.

„The Funds shall provide assistance which complements national actions, including actions at the regional and local levels [...]"

Art. 9 (1) of Regulation No. 1083/2006[50]

Cohesion Policy is mainly supported through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Cohesion Fund (CF). Rural development is supported by a financial instrument called the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and fishing industry uses the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (ENRF) financial instrument. ESFS financial instruments support the provision of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. In the past, these financial instruments were aimed towards supporting the convergence of the least developed regions, supporting regional employment and competitiveness and European territorial cooperation.

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) contributes to the financing of support aimed at strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion by balancing out the main regional disparities in the European Union through sustainable development and structural adjustment of regional economies, including the conversion of declining industrial regions and less developed regions.[51]

[50] Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006, laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999

[51] Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (EU) of 17 December 2013 on the European Regional Development Fund and on specific provisions concerning the Investment for growth and jobs goal and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006

The European Social Fund (ESF) promotes a higher level of employment and quality of work, improves access to the labour market, promotes geographical and occupational mobility of workers, and facilitates their adaptation to industrial change and changes in the production system necessary for sustainable development, supports a high level of education and training for all, and supports the transition between education and employment for young people, the fight against poverty, improves social inclusion and promotes gender equality, non-discrimination and equal opportunities, thereby contributing to the European Union´s priorities in terms of strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion.[52]

The Cohesion Fund is set up to strengthen the economic, social and territorial cohesion of the European Union in order to promote sustainable development. It supports in particular investments in the environment, including in areas related to sustainable development and energy, TEN-T networks[53] and technical assistance to Member States.[54]

The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) contributes to the European Union´s strategies by supporting the sustainable development of rural areas in all Member States, while complementing other instruments of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), cohesion policy and the Common Fisheries Policy. It contributes to the development of the European Union´s agricultural sector, which is territorially and

[52] Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Social Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006

[53] TEN-T (Trans-European Transport Network) is the European Commission´s policy aimed at implementation and development of a trans-European network of roads, railways, inland waterways, maritime ports, ports, airports and rail-road terminals.

[54] Regulation (EU) No 1300/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the Cohesion Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1084/2006

environmentally balanced, more environmentally friendly and more resilient and more competitive and innovative. It also contributes to the development of rural areas.[55]

The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) contributes to the promotion of a competitive, environmentally sustainable, economically viable and socially sustainable fishing and aquaculture industry.[56]

4.3 Management and control of financial instruments

The Member States and the European Commission, in accordance with the principle of joint management, are responsible for the management and control of programs, and this in accordance with their respective responsibilities as laid down in the relevant legislation and in the rules for individual financial instruments. Member States also ensure that their management and control systems are established in accordance with the Fund-specific rules and that these systems work effectively. Each Member State designates a national, regional or local public authority or a public administration body or a private body for each operational program, such as a managing authority, a certifying authority and an audit authority. The same managing authority, certifying authority and audit authority may be designated for several operational programs. The Member State subsequently lay down in writing the rules governing its

[55] Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFDR) and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005

[56] Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2328/2003, (EC) No 861/2006, (EC) No 1198/2006 and (EC) No 791/2007 and Regulation (EU) No 1255/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council

relationship with the managing authorities, certifying authorities and audit bodies, the relations between those authorities and the relationship of those authorities with the European Commission.[57]

> *„Member States shall ensure that effective arrangements for the examination of complaints concerning the ESI Funds are in place."*
>
> *Article 74 (3) of Regulation No 1303/2013*

A Member State may, on its own initiative, designate a coordinating body responsible for liaising with the European Commission.[58] The managing authorities are primarily responsible for the management of the relevant operational programs. Certification authorities are primarily responsible for the administration and processing of payment applications and their submission to the European Commission or the processing of accounts. The audit authorities ensure that the audit of the management and control system of the operational programs.

[57] Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006

[58] In the case of the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2014 – 2020, each Member State will prepare a partnership agreement with the European Commission in which it will agree on how the funds will be used.

Chapter 5
MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE OF COHESION POLICY

5.1 Concept of multilevel governance

Multilevel governance (MLG) is such a way of managing public policy in which the public authorities have powers and responsibilities at different levels. Within multilevel governance, several actors are involved in the implementation of a policy, and their concerted action is required to ensure the coherence of the policy pursued. The concept of multilevel governance is linked to the functioning of the European Union. The cooperation of the European Union with its Member States is a prerequisite for achieving the objectives of European integration. The European Union is characterized by a reallocation of political and administrative decision-making on several levels.

Multilevel governance contributes to the more coherent execution of public policies implemented at several levels (European, national, regional, local). Multilevel governance is based on the coordinated action of the European Union, Member States and local and regional self-governing bodies, which is based on the principles of subsidiarity[59] and proportionality[60] and partnership, and will demonstrate functional and institutionalized cooperation with the aim of proposing and implementing European Union policy.[61]

[59] Subsidiarity principle means that decisions, within the context of multilevel governance are taken at the level at which they are most appropriate and effective.

[60] Subsidiarity principle means that such a kind of intervention or legal instrument whose content and form is necessary to achieve the objectives of the European Union is taken.

[61] Charter for Multilevel Governance in Europe

> "*Multilevel governance helps towards mutual learning, innovative solutions, sharing best practices and encourages participation in decision-making."*
>
> *Charter for multilevel governance in Europe*

As stated in the Charter, multilevel governance is based on promoting citizen participation in public decision-making, cooperation, building institutional capacities and networks. It also supports pro-European thinking.

> *"The institutions of the European Union are urged to systematically apply the principles of multilevel governance in the development, implementation and evaluation of European strategies and policies."*[62]

Multilevel governance is a dynamic process that has a horizontal and vertical dimension that does not at all interfere with political responsibility. On the contrary, if the mechanisms and tools are right, they help to increase common prosperity and the implementation of interventions.[63] However, the effective implementation of multilevel governance still faces a number of challenges. In particular, this concerns the weak tradition and

[62] Resolution of the Committee of the Regions - On the Charter for Multilevel Governance in Europe 2014/C 174/01

[63] EUROPEAN UNION. 2009. The Committee of the Regions' White Paper on Multilevel Governance. Brussels. 40 p.

experience with the implementation of such a governance approach, the lack of resources, dynamic changes to the objectives and priorities that are subject to multilevel governance, high administrative costs and a deficit of democracy.[64]

5.2 Multilevel governance of EU cohesion policy

In the creating and implementing of cohesion policy, Member States of the European Union are required to proceed in line with the concept of multilevel governance. European Union institutions often point out the need to build a "European multilevel governance culture". The aim is to ensure a balanced and coordinated contribution from all actors involved in the development and implementation of the cohesion policy. In line with the principles of multilevel governance, for example, there a is created a partnership agreement which is a document prepared by a Member State with the partners. It sets out the strategy, priorities and conditions for a Member State to use the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) in an effective and efficient way to pursue the European Union´s strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Multilevel governance is being pursued in order to facilitate the achievement of social, economic and territorial cohesion.

[64] EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT. 2014. An Assessment of Multilevel Governance in Cohesion Policy 2007-2013. Brussels. 90 p. ISBN 978-92-823-5396-7

"Multilevel governance is understood as the participation of a wide range of different types of actors (public, private, social) in the formulation and implementation of policies through formal and informal means."[65]

Multilevel governance of cohesion policy is based on respect for the partnership principle. The partnership created should take into account all relevant communities and groups, can bring benefits and added value in the implementation of cohesion policy through improved legitimacy, guaranteed transparency and better acceptance of funds, and should also be seen in terms of the social and civic values it represents.[66] It is applied throughout the whole cohesion cycle as well as in the relationship between the European and national authorities. In the context of multilevel governance, individual operational programs are created, managed, monitored and evaluated in the member States. Multilevel governance ensures co-operation between all levels of governance and public administration in the exercise of competences and in the decision-making process by which subsidiarity and multilevel governance closely linked to the strong position of local and regional self-government.[67] Successful

[65] EURACTIV. 2014. Hodnotenie viacúrovňového riadenia v Kohéznej politike 2007 – 2013. Available at online: https://euractiv.sk/section/regionalny-rozvoj/opinion/hodnotenie-viacurovnoveho-riadenia-v-koheznej-politike-2007-2013-022255/ [cit. 12.08.2018].

[66] European Parliament Resolution of 21 October 2008 on governance and partnership at national and regional levels and on a basis for projects in the sphere of regional policy (2008/2064(INI))

[67] Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on decentralization in EU and the role of local and regional authorities in setting up and implementing EU policy of 11th and 12th April 2013

multilevel governance of policies and public affairs must be based on a bottom-up approach. The European Union calls on local and regional public authorities to evaluate and use means to intensify their cooperation and liaison with the national authorities and also with the European Commission. The European Union also recommends and actively enforces regular meetings of national, regional and local officials.[68]

[68] European Parliament Resolution 21 October 2008 on governance and partnership at national and regional levels and a basis for projects in the sphere of regional policy (2008/2064(INI))

Chapter 6

PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY EU COHESION POLICY

6.1 Examples of supported projects

A number of projects co-financed by European Union programs aimed at promoting economic, social and territorial cohesion were visited in the Member States of the European Union in order to obtain authentic information on the motivation to prepare and implement the project, on its benefits and on the problems faced by project coordinators during the implementation. In particular, the projects were aimed at supporting employment, growth and investment at regional and national levels and improving the quality of life of citizens, helping to meet the key priorities of the EU and the Member States, including, in addition to job creation and growth, tackling climate change, protecting the environment, strengthening research and innovation, deepening economic, social and territorial cohesion in the European Union and at the same time reducing the gaps between Member States and their regions.

Examples of supported projects offer interesting inspiration for other subjects. The processing of these examples also contributes to the dissemination of information on the objectives and the results achieved. In processing the obtained information, we mainly focused on the reasons for the implementation of the project, its objectives, interesting observations from the implementation of the project activities, and the problems that had to be faced in the implementation process.

6.2 Summary

Implemented visits to projects co-financed from European Union programs aimed at promoting economic, social and territorial cohesion resulted in a number of interesting and

important observations. Many interesting and inspirational ideas in the member countries and their regions that have been formulated as part of project plans and subsequently implemented. Many are very different, but their common feature can still be found. It is the fact that they have been realized thanks to the European Union.

Based on the project coordinators´ comments, it can be concluded that many of the results achieved today could not have been brought about without financial support and support from the European Union. Financial resources provided from programs to promote economic, social and territorial cohesion have made a significant contribution to the realization of projects with a positive local, regional or national impact. The motivation for the implementation of the projects was mainly the improvement of the existing state and the creation of added value for the target groups.

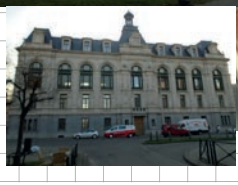
However, the most important problems that project coordinators encountered during the implementation of the project activities cannot be omitted. The administrative environment in the individual Member States, as well as the procurement processes, are problematic. Difficulties may also require the involvement of a large number of co-operating bodies, their coordination, and the need for consistent procedures. Last but not least, innovation that replaces the stereotype may not always be welcome, and it is therefore important to focus on the work and activities of the target group.

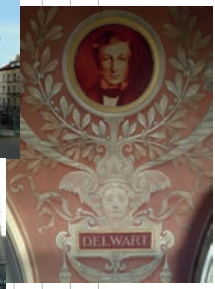
In the next part, examples of projects implemented in the individual Member States of the European Union and co-financed from European Union programs aimed at promoting economic, social and territorial cohesion will be progressively presented.

Examples

Belgium

ANDERLECHT VETERINARY SCHOOL





Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Brussels Capital Region

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Belgium

Total Investment: 11 548 620 EUR

EU Investment: 4 086 000 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim of the project was an energy-efficient refurbishment of the old Veterinary School in order to create the first-rate office space for start-ups and local SMEs as well as a conference centre.

Background

By realising this main objective, the municipality of Andrelecht manages to preserve heritage, to kickstart the revamp of the neighbourhood and to contribute to the energy saving objectives of the Brussels Capital Region.

LESSONS LEARNED

Establishment of a business hub in one of the most challenging areas will help to foster job creation.

"We wanted to keep as much of the historical building as possible and try to re-use the original materials."

The Project's Technical Manager

Main Problems During the Implementation

Limitations imposed on any sort of renovation or maintenance work on the historical parts of the building since the building is classified as a historical monument.

"The project will have a very positive influence on the surrounding neighbourhood."

Member of the Project Team

The idea behind the project *was to transform the old Veterinary School into a business hub with low-energy consumption features, while keeping it's beautiful architecture.*

CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE IN SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Brussels Capital Region

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Belgium

Total Investment: 1 120 000 EUR

EU Investment: 560 000 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim of the research institute is to execute the applied research and to distribute the knowledge acquired through building sector and contractors and to encourage the use of innovative techniques for sustainable building.

Background

Improve the competitive position of companies related to eco-construction and sustainable development can be done by improving the quality of interventions, raising the technological level and favouring innovation, and providing training and information on innovative technologies.

LESSONS LEARNED

Collective research results and state of the art practices with innovative construction companies and frontrunners on a multitude of themes related to sustainable construction in Brussels.

“Discover innovative construction ideas and concepts, and inform Brussels building professionals as a first step in their innovation process on which future developments can be based.”

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

A few months before the deadline, there was a huge fire outside the building that impacted all the laboratories, so the infrastructure had to rebuild.

"The Greenbizz, energy positive building, supports entrepreneurship and start-ups in a sustainable economy and creates local labour opportunities."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *was to develop an urban development pull in economic sectors linked to the environment with the objective to support the Brussels canal zones.*

BRUSSELS GREENFIELDS

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Regional Competitiveness and Employment

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Belgium

Total Investment: 4 621 131 EUR

EU Investment: 2 310 565 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim of the project was to encourage entrepreneurs to step up their business on the polluted sites by financing depollution and providing business advisory services.

Background

The "Brussels Greenfields" program has chosen 10 projects that have been targeted for urban renewal on the polluted sites in the Canal zone. Eco-friendly projects and social economy ventures received grants to clean up the land contaminated with industrial waste and integrated support from various Brussels organizations for sanitation and launching economic activities.

LESSONS LEARNED

The project combines sustainability with a focus on economic and social renewal.

“The project created approximately 1 800 full-time jobs and generate significant collective benefits.”

Member of the Project Team

Main Problems During the Implementation

The biggest problem was the administrative burden of the employees in order to follow very strict rules. Another problem was also the restricted area of the Canal zone.

"The biggest added value for the Region is that new economic projects came true on polluted brownfields."

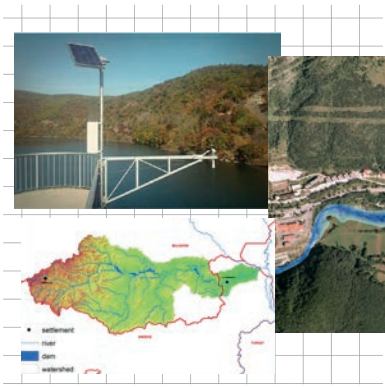
Member of the Project Team

The idea behind the project *was to treat and rehabilitate polluted land around the Canal zone in order to help to boost the area by creating economic activities and jobs.*

Examples

Bulgaria

FLOOD WARNING SYSTEM FOR MINIMIZING THE RISK IN THE BG-GR CBC REGION ARDAFORECAST



Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Greece-Bulgaria

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Bulgaria

Total Investment: 823 221 EUR

EU Investment: 699 737 EUR

Principal Objective

The project was devoted to the creation of a flood warning system in the cross-border region. It supports the implementation of flood mitigation measures and reduces the adverse consequences of flood events for human health, environment, cultural heritage and economic activity.

Background

Arda River is a cross border river that springs in Bulgaria and continues into Greece. The river is generating the most hazardous floods in the southeast Balkans, which are propagating downstream to Maritza/Evros causing serious losses.

LESSONS LEARNED

The integration of water management and research type partners in a complex project like flood modelling and forecasting gives fruitful results. The use of local expertise is crucial for the sustainable operation of real time flood warning system beyond project duration.

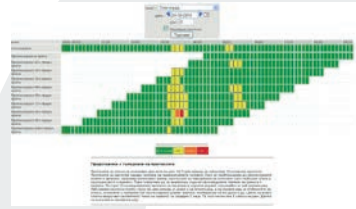
„Confidence in flood warning might be approved across the border if the service is working reliably 365 days a year."

Project Manager

Main Problems During the Implementation

Previously created studies and information were required for the successful completion of the project e.g. high accuracy geodetic and GIS data to determine flooded areas.

The analysis of reservoir influence on the flood wave propagation and the modelling of optimal reservoir operation is a complex issue requiring a lot of resources.



"We established reliable flood forecasting tools for accurate and timely flood forecasts with sufficient lead time. There are no readymade solutions in flood forecasting and warning, specific models and software should always be developed according to the river basin, sensitive infrastructure and trans-boundary conditions."

Scientific Responsible

The idea behind the project *was to promote the cross-border cooperation in the field of flood prevention and to raise awareness and preparedness on flooding at the local level.*

SOFIA TECH PARK

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Development of the Competitiveness of the Bulgarian Economy

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Bulgaria

Total Investment: 41 052 944 EUR

EU Investment: 34 712 171 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim was to establish a science and technology park, as a platform for the exchange of knowledge and ideas among academic field, business, government, and society.

Background

The focal areas of the park are information and communication technologies, life sciences (biotechnologies, pharmaceuticals, agriculture and food) and green energy.
The park supports competitiveness of science and entrepreneurship in Bulgaria by providing assistance to start-ups and innovative ideas along with commercialization of scientific research. What is on campus: Labs complex, Incubator, Convention center and Interactive science center for kids.

LESSONS LEARNED

Sofia Tech Park contributes to the development of economy and knowledge in the country. It has a unique opportunity to attract the brightest young talents in science and business to start working together.

"Sofia Tech Park is a project of national and regional importance – its expansion to other cities through its platform is a matter of future development."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

The biggest issue was a lack of sufficient funding for science, research and innovations. That was in addition to the existing gap in communication between education, business and science.

**"The biggest added value for the region is the creation of an environment for research and innovations by building science, event, exhibition, sports, leisure and other infrastructures.
Increasing the competitiveness of the economy and generation of additional employment is also very important."**

Member of the Project Team

The idea behind the project *was to boost innovation, research and technological development and to support the innovation ecosystem at one-stop shop.*

EXTENSION OF THE SOFIA METRO

The 3rd metro line,
Stage I & Stage II: from "Gen. Vladimir Vazov" blvd.
to "Ovcha Kupel R.D." - "Sofia Ring Road"

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Transport and Transport Infrastructure

Programming Period: 2014-2020

Countries: Bulgaria

Total Investment: 643 930 387 EUR

EU Investment: 331 725 204 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim of the project was construction of the city's third metro line which provides a convenient direct link between large residential areas and city centre of Sofia.

Background

The project improves connections between different types of public transport and increases the sustainability of urban transport.
The new metro line also helps to reduce traffic accidents, emission of CO2 and fuel consumption as well as transport maintenance costs.

LESSONS LEARNED

By diverting passengers away from other modes of public transport and cars, the new metro line is also helping to reduce traffic accidents.

"Modernization of the metro network makes transport quicker and safer, thereby improves the quality of life of local residents."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

- Densely built-up residential areas
- Weak and soft soils
- High levels of underneath waters
- 24-hours working regime of the 1400-tons Tunnel Boring Machine

"The reductions in travel times are expected to generate savings for the economy of over 19 million EUR by 2020."

Member of the Project Team

The idea behind the project *was the necessity of efficient public transport in the direction of the largest passenger flows.*

Examples

Croatia

E-SCHOOLS: ESTABLISHING A SYSTEM FOR DEVELOPING DIGITALLY MATURE SCHOOLS (PILOT PROJECT)

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund

Operational Programme: Competitiveness and Cohesion, Efficient Human Resources

Programming Period: 2015-2022 (Pilot Project 2015-2018)

Countries: Croatia

Total Investment (Pilot Project): 40 000 000 EUR

EU Investment (Pilot Project): 34 000 000 EUR

Principal Objective

Building the capacity of primary and secondary education system in order to meet the needs of the modern labor market by creating competitive young individuals, ready for further education and lifelong learning.

Background

Pilot organizational, technological and educational concepts of ICT implementation in educational and business processes in selected schools, and based on the experiences in the pilot project, develop the strategy for implementation of the digitally mature schools system in the entire primary and secondary school education system in Croatia.

LESSONS LEARNED

10% of Croatian primary and secondary schools have been involved in the pilot project, which ensured the digital transformation of educational and business processes in the schools.

"The results are valuable at the EU level. External evaluation of digital maturity showed significant advancement of the schools included in the pilot project."

Project leader

Main Problems During the Implementation

Foreseeing the duration of certain public procurements contributed to the prolongation of some procedures, which impacted other activities on the project.

"e-Schools pilot project outcomes rely on synergy between infrastructure, contents and tools, e-services, education and user support. Combined funding from two different funds and careful coordination of all activities ensured successful implementation and measurable results."

Project coordinator

The idea behind the project *was the development of the ecosystem of digitally mature schools which connects the elements of Leadership, Planning and management; ICT in learning and teaching; Development of digital competences; ICT culture; ICT infrastructure.*

BIOSCIENCES TECHNOLOGY COMMERCIALISATION AND INCUBATION CENTRE

BIOCentre

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Enhancing the Competitiveness of the Croatian Economy

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Croatia

Total Investment: 18 823 995 EUR

EU Investment: 13 919 949 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim of the project is to provide the infrastructure and tailor made services necessary for the growth and development of the early stage biotech companies and to facilitate the collaboration between academic institutions and industry.

Background

The Biocentre provides top-quality support to advisory services in order to enable its clients to develop into successful entrepreneurs. Services are available to both start-ups and existing businesses, as well as spin-offs from universities and other research institutions operating in the field of biotechnology. Tenants and clients of Biocentre can also choose from a wide variety of courses on business and technical competences important for their success in the field of bioeconomy.

LESSONS LEARNED

Available capacities with modern equipment and technologies support the creation of new entrepreneurial ideas and sustainable high added value jobs.

"Stronger links and collaboration between researchers and business promote regional development and boost industrial competitiveness of the country."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

During the project implementation, there were problems associated with large investment and infrastructure building.

"The Centre offers modern equipment and technology and it already has supported several important business and research ideas."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *is targeted to start-up businesses in the field of bioscience. The aim was to help to meet companies' needs in terms of infrastructure, incubation support, technology transfer, education, training and networking.*

Examples

Cyprus

ELECTRONIC CYPRUS UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Sustainable Development and Competitiveness

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Cyprus

Total Investment: 4 000 000 EUR

EU Investment: 3 400 000 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim of the project is to provide students, lecturers and other staff with an extensive range of electronic services accessing all resources using SSO (single-sign-on) from any geographic location. The project also improved higher education structures.

Background

The Cyprus University of Technology has set as a strategic target to become an e-University and use technology to the benefit of the academic community.
The completion of 3 phases of the 'Information Systems and Technology Service' development plan provided the necessary infrastructure to achieve this target.

LESSONS LEARNED

People must follow recent developments in the field of electronic technologies.

"Knowledge of employees needs is very important in order to revamp electronic services."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

The public nature of the institution did not allow flexible decision making. There were also administrative difficulties during the public procurement process.
Another issue was, that human capital was missing although resources were available.

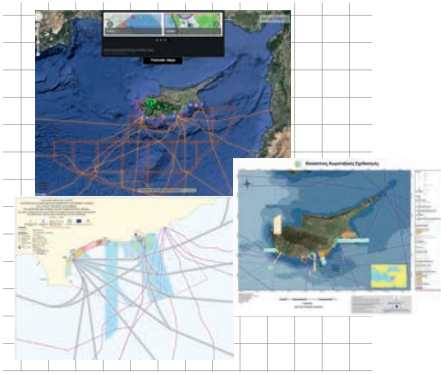
"The Moodle was customized within the project. Identity Management System and Student Information System were introduced."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *is to facilitate and simplify the work of university students and staff. At the University there was a need for support in the effective use of electronic technologies.*

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION FOR MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING DEVELOPMENT

THAL-CHOR



Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Greece - Cyprus

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Cyprus, Greece

Total Investment: 3 210 683 EUR

EU Investment: 2 568 547 EUR

Principal Objective

The project aims at developing a methodology for Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) and then using this methodology for pilot implementation in selected areas in Cyprus and Greece for drafting maritime spatial plans, as well as for preparing both countries for the imminent implementation of the EU Directive on MSP.

Background

MSP is one of the key cross-cutting tools of the Integrated Maritime Policy of the European Union and an important instrument for sustainable development of marine areas and coastal regions as it contributes to the objectives of an ecosystem based management approach.

LESSONS LEARNED

Interconnection of the institutional and scientific pole has brought effective results, which are fully used by the state.

"The Maritime Spatial Plan reflects the vision of each country for the exploitation and sustainable development of its marine space."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

Practical and administrative problems have arisen mainly in the area of cooperation of a large number of public institutions. Coordination of various public sectors was also required as well as consultation with relevant stakeholders and the public concerned.

"The results helped fill the knowledge gap and gain experiences in the effective implementation of the EU MSP Directive."

Member of the Project Team

The idea behind the project *is the resolution of spatial conflicts between different uses of the sea, better coordination between stakeholders, strengthening cross-border cooperation, and creating conditions for achieving sustainable development in line with the strategy "Europe 2020".*

Examples

Czechia

PREPAREDNESS OF THE FIRE RESCUE SERVICE OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC FOR FLOODS

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Integrated Operational Programme for the Period 2007-2013

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Czech Republic

Total Investment: 58 377 714 EUR

EU Investment: 49 621 057 EUR

Principal Objective

The main aim of the project was to improve the quality of emergency solutions and at the same time, the project improved the preparedness of the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic as an essential component of the integrated rescue system for extensive immediate floods and solving other emergencies.

Background

The objectives of the project were achieved by the acquisition of modern technology for rescue and liquidation work and the creation of material conditions for more effective management of the logistic provision of humanitarian aid to the population in endangered and flooded areas.

LESSONS LEARNED

The output of the project (equipment and capabilities) enables to the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic a more effective intervention in emergencies and can possibly lead to save more human lives as well as the growth of saved property.

"The task of the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic is to save lives, health and property. Effectivity of these procedures is limited by technical and tactical equipment. The structural EU funds offered a proper opportunity for focusing on this matter and building the capacity to technically manage all sorts of emergencies."

The Head of Project

Main Problems During the Implementation

The biggest problem was the exactly set period of time for preparing and realizing the public procurements and whole project.

"The biggest benefit for the country after implementation of the project is that in case of floods newly received equipment together with bigger capacities are immediately accessible in sufficient amount with a wide reach to ensure the same quality of rescue and clean-up operations in a short period of time throughout any region within Czech Republic".

Member of the Project Team

The idea behind this project *was conceived as an effort to improve the preparedness of the Czech Republic for floods, especially with experiences gained from the latest events.*

DEVELOPING TOOLS FOR IMPROVING PRO-FAMILY POLICIES BY EMPLOYERS IN THE LIBEREC REGION AND THE SOUTH MORAVIAN REGION

Basic Information

Fund: European Social Fund

Operational Programme: Human Resources and Employment

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Czech Republic

Total Investment: 283 069 EUR

EU Investment: 240 609 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim of the project was to create effective tools for the reconciliation of family and working life and to inform employers how to use them in the implementation of pro-family policies in practice.

Background

The regions covered by the project were characterized by a high level of unemployment, especially among women after maternity leave. The project created motivational courses for candidates and roundtables where discussions were held with employers on a family-friendly approach.

LESSONS LEARNED

Thanks to the powerful intention to create this project, they have contributed to significant changes in legislation that was not accurately set up at that time.

"We knew we had to overcome the stereotype of being a mother with children at home and at the same time, we knew that there was a lack of support services in both of these regions to help mothers return to the labour market."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

The biggest problem was the classical stereotypical thinking of employers that it is only woman who cares about children and taking care for all family.
One of the obstacles was also getting men into professional childcare. Unless the credit for the childcare profession was not increased, this type of the job was not interesting for them.

"Sometimes it was hard to convince employers but those who attended the roundtable were more open to this approach and were interested in audit of pro-family policies in their companies."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *was the absence of childcare provision services in both regions and the loss of women's potential in the labour market.*

SUSEN: SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

Phase II

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Research, Development and Education

Programming Period: 2014-2020

Countries: Czech Republic

Total Investment: 30 583 773 EUR

EU Investment: 24 150 011 EUR

Principal Objective

The second phase of the SUSEN sustainable energy project involves the installation of technological instruments in a sustainable energy research and development (R&D) centre in the Czech Republic.

Background

Phase one of the project comprised the construction of two new buildings and extension or reconstruction of five existing ones.
The installation is spread over several sites in the South-West and Central Bohemia regions which together comprise the R&D facility. The work of the centre is focused on natural sciences and engineering, particularly in relation to the use of ionising radiation and nuclear energy.

LESSONS LEARNED

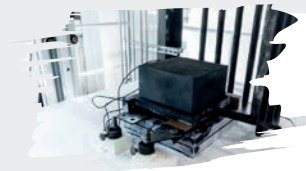
Thanks to its multi-disciplinary nature, the project generates opportunities for education, research and developmental synergies linked to ionising radiation and nuclear energy, as well as other research activities. The results will be applied practically in the sustainable energy sector.

"The centre provides approximately 130 jobs, 60 % of which are for scientific research staff."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

At the outset, the infrastructure was expected to be completed by December 2015. However, the disaster at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in Japan, the following earthquake and tsunami, brought about changes in policy and requirements in the nuclear energy sector. Therefore, it was necessary to adjust the scope of the centre's research activities.



"The project represents a major step forward for R&D infrastructure in Central Europe and establishes close working relationships within the European Research Area."

Member of the Project Team

The idea behind this project *was to strengthen technological development and innovation, particularly in the South-West and Central Bohemia regions and in Central Europe as a whole.*

Examples

Denmark

GREEN BUSINESS GROWTH CLEAN, DENMARK

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Innovation and Knowledge

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Denmark, Region South
Partners: 20, Triplehelix Cooperation

Total Investment: 1 500 000 EUR

EU Investment: 768 500 EUR

www.cleancluster.dk
www.grønerhvervsvækst.dk

Principal Objective

The aim was to create new green jobs within energy efficiency in buildings. The Green Business Growth has a holistic approach and addresses the entire value chain of energy renovation from the home owner and craftsmen to businesses of building and energy suppliers, educational institutions and authorities.

Background

The Green Business Growth has developed a concept for post-educating master craftsmen, so they could act as energy ambassadors for the municipalities' green ambitions and, at the same time, meet the demands of homeowners of the knowledge of new energy efficient materials and solutions. The project has also developed a concept for evening classes and energy events and fairs targeted at private home owners.

LESSONS LEARNED

The close cooperation between partners and craftsmen is one of the benchmarks for the project success.

"The post-educated energy master craftsmen have experienced a 29% turn-over increase, thanks to their new knowledge and supporting communication and energy events, where they could meet the buyers.The master craftsmen point out the network, marketing and business development as new and innovative to the trade."

Project Coordinator

Importance of frame conditions

The project has benefit from economic crisis 2010-2013, where many craftsmen were worried about their employment and, therefore, were motivated to search development and jobs in new business areas. At the same time, there were subsidies to save energy and the energy prices were high, so the home owners had economical motivation to lower their costs.

"During the evening classes, the home owners gained knowledge on renewable energy and knowledge on the most cost-effective energy investment in their houses based on consumption data and thermal photographs."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *was to develop an educational concept, which aimed at enabling craftsmen to develop energy renovation businesses using the latest technical know-how and new knowledge of how to meet the homeowners needs.*

COPENHAGEN CLEANTECH CLUSTER

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Innovation and Knowledge

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Denmark

Total Investment: 19 477 000 EUR

EU Investment: 9 738 500 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim of the Copenhagen Cleantech Cluster was to create the best conditions for fostering new business ventures by supporting new green ideas within existing companies as well as start-ups.

Background

The project was an initiative launched by Danish cleantech companies, research institutions, and public organizations to sustain and develop world-class cleantech competencies.
The Copenhagen Cleantech Cluster carries out projects within five focus areas, each specifically designed to meet the needs of an ever-changing cleantech industry. The focus areas are: Test & Demonstration (Proof of Concept), Matchmaking (Partnership & Networks), International Outreach (Knowledge transfer & Collaboration), Innovation & Entrepreneurship (Support for start-ups) and Facilitation (Communication & Coordination).

LESSONS LEARNED

Clean technologies are about collaboration between the public sector, the private sector and universities.

"The cleantech sector is the fastest growing sector in Denmark. During the project over 1 000 new jobs has been created."

Member of the Project Team

Who are Copenhagen Cleantech Cluster?

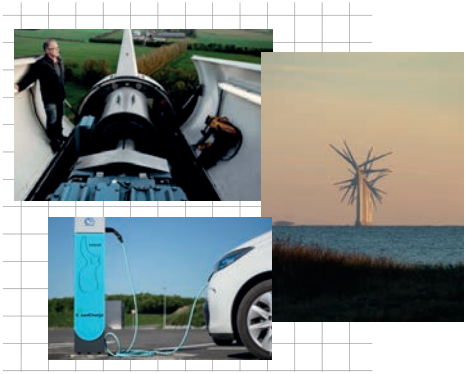
A unique group of partners are behind the Copenhagen Cleantech Cluster. The partners represent the entire value chain of the Danish cleantech industry.

"Bringing new solutions to the global market is of upmost importance to Copenhagen Cleantech Cluster."

Member of the Project Team

The idea behind the project *was to facilitate matchmaking between research institutions and companies and build networks with relevant stakeholders that improve business performance or efficiency while reducing pollution, costs, inputs and waste.*

SAMSØ ENERGY ACADEMY



Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Innovation and Knowledge

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Denmark

Total Investment: 1 280 000 EUR

EU Investment: 640 000 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim was to implement renewable energies in order to make the entire Danish island of Samsø self-sufficient in terms of energy supply.

Background

The project represents a practical approach to accumulating, creating and disseminating knowledge about renewable energies and promotes environmentally sustainable regional development.
The Denmark's Energy Academy stimulates innovations through research and development, and consultancy services to businesses as well as citizens.

LESSONS LEARNED

We can do more than we expect when we work as a community.
Setting up an ambitious idea and realizing it makes capacity grow.
The positive side effect is more trust and confident participation.

"The project created a sound basis for business competitiveness, in terms of low energy cost and accumulated knowledge about renewable energies."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

In a small community, there is a lack of competence. During the implementation, the project faced some real challenges with the coordination of many contractors.

"Nowadays, Samsø is the first island in the world 100% powered by renewable energy and has become a global example of how to create a sustainable community through local ownership and community engagement."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *was to liberate the island's dependence on fossil-fuel energy supplies from the mainland.*

Examples

Estonia

ESTONIAN BORDER GUARD MULTI-PURPOSE SHIP

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Development of Living Environment

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Estonia

Total Investment: 33 100 000 EUR

EU Investment: 29 800 000 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim of the project was to acquire a new multifunctional vessel and thereby increase the capability of detecting, locating and eliminating marine pollution, helping to minimize potential environmental damage.

Background

The multifunctionality of the ship is essential to carry out daily prevention and monitoring and to have the capability to react as quickly as possible to pollution detection and start immediately with the localization of pollution and with the collection of the spill. It ensures preparedness for disasters, emergencies in the Baltic Sea region in order to prevent habitat contamination and disturbance and to preserve their favourable status, ensure the functioning of vital areas and reduce the risk to human health and life.

LESSONS LEARNED

Good cooperation with the specialists can be prepared, and to protect our fragile marine environment damages.

"In case of an alert, the ship is ready to leave from the harbour within 1/2 hours, and if the ship is on the sea it is ready to react also immediately because the oil collecting system is integrated on board."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

During the bidding phase, the disputes led to delays in the procurement process. There was no problem after contract signature and during construction.

"The direct impact of the project is the improved safety of marine environment. As a result, marine pollution prevention and response capacity in the Estonian marine area has increased."

Member of the Project Team

The idea behind the project *was to reduce deliberate pollution at sea, through preventive and monitoring activities and to be ready for rapid and effective elimination of marine pollution in order to ensure sustainable development of the region.*

PURCHASE OF PASSENGER TRAINS FOR ESTONIA

Basic Information

Fund: Cohesion Fund

Operational Programme: Development of Economic Environment

Programming Period: 2009-2014

Countries: Estonia

Total Investment: 79 500 000 EUR

EU Investment: 67 575 000 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim was to replace old electric trains with new, modern and efficient models. Electric trains feed the braking energy back to the catenary line. Trains are equipped with air conditioners, video surveillance systems and fast and free 4G wireless internet.

Background

The new train procurement project is unique because Estonia is one of the first countries in Europe that changed the entire fleet of passenger trains at once. Estonia's fleet of passenger trains average age is now around 3 years and previously it was 30 years. Elron offers innovative, fast, comfortable, safe and environmentally friendly public transportation that meets the conditions found in Estonia, and is also an excellent alternative to road transport.

LESSONS LEARNED

Estonian people liked the new trains and passengers flow in period 2013-2018 increased more than 70%. At the moment we see the needs to have more new trains to reduce loading of the current fleet.

"The new trains are more energy efficient. All trains are using braking energy to power its onboard systems."

Member of the Project Team

Main Problems During the Implementation

Main challenges during the implementation were to switch for the new rolling stock operation in a short time period, to prepare the infrastructure - all platforms in Estonia were rebuilt to the new trains standards height 550mm and conduct personnel training.

"People are opting to take the train more often over using a car or bus and it benefits to the economy and the environment."

Member of the Project Team

The idea behind the project *was to make train traffic in Estonia faster, quieter, safer and better by replacing old electric trains and improving the quality of service.*

THE CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION OF THE X-ROAD

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Development of Economic Environment

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Estonia

Total Investment: 352 000 EUR

EU Investment: 250 000 EUR

Principal Objective

The main aim was to create a data exchange platform between agencies and grant citizens and public servants access to state databases as one integrated entity.

Background

The X-road software is an open source data exchange layer solution that enables organizations to exchange information securely over the internet. It is a centrally governed distributed integration layer between information systems, which provides a standardized and secure way to produce and consume services. The X-road ensures confidentiality, integrity and interoperability between data exchange parties.

LESSONS LEARNED

X-Road has enabled data exchange between different information systems as well as cross-border data exchange between countries. The biggest challenges have not been technical but organizational. Change management is playing a key role in enabling data exchange.

"The X-Road has built-in support for connecting two X- Road ecosystems with each other, which enables native cross-border data exchange between countries using X-Road – Estonia and Finland."

CEO

Joint Development

Estonia and Finland developed the X-Road core together from 2015 until June 2018 when the development was handed over to Nordic Institute for Interoperability Solutions (NIIS), an association founded jointly by Finland and Estonia. Since then NIIS has been responsible for all the aspects of the X-Road core.

"The platform enables secure connectivity, searches and data transfer between various governmental and private information systems and services."

CEO

The idea behind the project *was to create a joint data exchange platform, to link up public and private sector and to simplify the international exchange of information.*

Examples

Finland

RAIL BALTICA GROWTH CORRIDOR

RBGC

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Baltic Sea Region Programme

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany

Total Investment: 3 587 090 EUR

EU Investment: 2 836 000 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim of the project was to foster the competitiveness of the Baltic Sea Region by improving the accessibility of its Eastern part by boosting the building of multimodal transport network that connects all major forms of transport in an economically sustainable and environmentally friendly way.

Background

The Rail Baltica Growth Corridor was part of a flagship project within the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. The set of project activities addresses the problems of interoperability and the disconnected composition of the transport sector actors in the Eastern Baltic Sea Region. The work plan consisted of two pilot activities based on stakeholder research in the project region and policy dialogue between high-level decision makers in the fields of transport and regional development.

LESSONS LEARNED

The synergy of the project activities was reached through the policy dialogue.

"Growth corridors and especially fast passenger and freight transport connections have been proven to accelerate economic growth."

Member of the Project Team

Main Problems During the Implementation

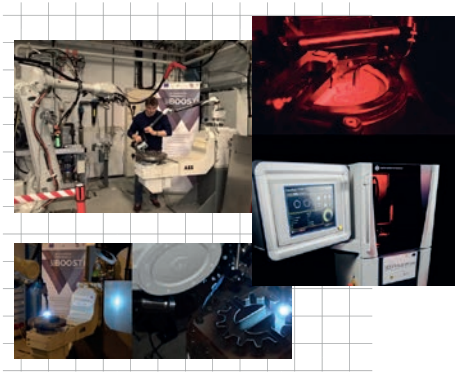
The project brought together over 20 partners and a number of associated organizations so it was sometimes challenging to coordinate and manage all project activities.

"The project has been built on the cooperation of cities, metropolitan regions and regional authorities."

Member of the Project Team

The idea behind the project *was to promote modern railway infrastructure in the Eastern Baltic Sea Region and ensure the best possible interaction of railways with other modes of transport along the Rail Baltica route.*

3D BOOST AND INVEST



Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Sustainable Growth and Jobs

Programming Period: 2014-2020

Countries: Finland

Total Investment: 2 300 931 EUR

EU Investment: 1 223 779 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim was that a VET provider, a university of technology and a university of applied sciences partner join their forces with companies so as to explore and boost the potential offered by 3D printing technology, for the benefit and competitiveness of the region.

Background

The curricula and the training have been developed anticipating the skills needs set by the labour market of the future. Sasky has even started the vocational field of 3D printing, supplying skilled professionals for the needs of the industry of the region. Through this project, the companies were able to test the technology and to see what kind of possibilities are offered by plastic printers, metal printers and ceramics printers without running the risks of making heavy investments.

LESSONS LEARNED

It is crucial to share the expertise among teachers, to develop it even further and to keep up-to-date about the development of the field of 3D printing.

"All seven 3D printers purchased in the project are used in teaching and research and, at least the ones used by Sasky are used for printing out the real parts needed by companies."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

There were no real obstacles during the project, but the main challenge was - and remains – how to disseminate the skills to a larger number of teachers.

"As for both companies and schools, the understanding of the possibilities of 3D printing, as well as the practical knowledge has increased."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *was to integrate the new technology, 3D printing, to the teaching at different levels of education, by all three participating training organisations, according to their own orientations.*

DESIGN-LED INNOVATIONS FOR ACTIVE AGEING

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Interregional Co-operation Programme

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Finland

Total Investment: 2 022 700 EUR

EU Investment: 1 366 133 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim was to learn from the best senior service practices across Europe, increase the understanding of the complexity of senior care, and show how service design can create real pathways for innovative services and solutions that help address the demographic challenges in Europe.

Background

The project brought together eight cities that were seeking sustainable solutions for demographic ageing. Innovations for senior care were developed through service design. The method focuses on the needs of users and emphasises stakeholder involvement in the design process. The partner cities concentrated on different problems, learned new methods of innovation and gained a deeper understanding of senior care problems.

LESSONS LEARNED

New innovative collaboration models and service design methods present useful and strategic tools for future challenges.

"The design methods, in particular, prototyping and testing new concepts were considered very useful because it provides the opportunity to modify the service before launch and thus saves time and effort."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

Some cities faced problems in getting the city administration.

"The project contributes to social innovation and public sector transformation in the field of senior care."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *is the fact that Europe has an increasingly ageing population and there is an existing need for innovative solutions and improved policies that enable efficient social and health care services.*

Examples

France

CROSS-BORDER INNOVATION

InnovARC

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: France-Switzerland

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: France

Total Investment: 715 536 EUR

EU Investment: 207 360 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim of the project was to increase the cooperation between enterprises on strategic innovation projects and support growth in French-Swiss Jura mountains areas.

Background

The InnovARC develops the innovative projects related to the needs of the market and valorizes the advanced skills of regional actors on both sides of the border. The InnovARC project is based on the positive experience of the MinnovARC project.

LESSONS LEARNED

The project helped to build the method to encourage the companies to work together.

"We are organizing events and workshops in order to raise awareness and generate new ideas stepping up to new solutions."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

One of the obstacles was cultural differences between these two countries. A different currency brought also some difficulties during the implementation of the project.

"The InnovARC is providing partnering service and coaching in setting up cross-border projects."

Project Coordintor

The idea behind the project *was to strengthen synergies and cooperation culture between French and Swiss stakeholders.*

THE SMART RENEWABLE ENERGY NETWORK

Massileo

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur

Programming Period: 2014-2020

Countries: France

Total Investment: 9 660 950 EUR

EU Investment: 941 938 EUR

Principal Objective

Massileo is a temperate water network that provides buildings with heat and cooling from the sea thermal energy.

Background

The seawater is pumped in the port of Marseille at a depth of four meters. Heat exchangers transfer the energy in this temperate water to a freshwater network. The seawater is then discharged back into the natural environment. Then, in an underground heat transfer unit below the eco-district, the freshwater loop is connected to reversible water heat pumps. Depending on the current need, these pumps convert the calories into heat and hot water, or air conditioning in summer.

LESSONS LEARNED

Almost every building could produce renewable energy by recovering waste energy while heating or cooling. If an energy network connects all the buildings together and to a renewable energy source such as sea-water, large amounts of renewable energy can be produced in a cost-effective way.

"An additional process recovers the heat given off by air conditioning offices to produce domestic hot water and vice versa. As a result, no energy is wasted."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

One of the obstacles was to get many authorizations during the project from different bodies, for example to pump sea water.

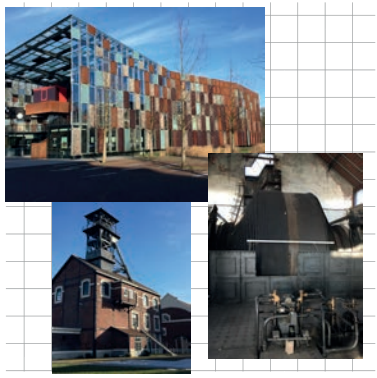
"Massileo, a trademark of Dalkia Smart Building, is providing 75% of heating and cooling for the eco-district using renewable energy. Compared to gas-fired plant, Massileo reduces greenhouse gas emissions by 80%."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *was to create a solution that is as innovative as it is unprecedented in terms of its extent.*

MÉTAPHONE AT OIGNIES: AFTER THE COAL COMES THE MUSIC

9-9bis



Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Competitiveness and Employment

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: France

Total Investment: 6 106 578 EUR

EU Investment: 2 548 876 EUR

Principal Objective

The 9-9bis project aims not just to juxtapose cultural and artistic axes: artistic creation and diffusion, conservation, heritage development and living history, cultural and educational actions, tourist development, but to understand them globally in overall coherence. Creation is obviously one of the unifying elements. The uniqueness of the project is that the axes of development are as vast as the site itself.

Background

Since 2003, 9-9bis (the former mining site) has been the subject of work with the installation of reception facilities for the practice of cultural activities related to music and heritage and the installation of tertiary activities with spaces dedicated to businesses.
Since 2012, it has been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

LESSONS LEARNED

The originality of the project lies in the articulation between the heritage dimension of the buildings and the creations from the hosted artists. It is useful to amplify these synergies by implementing events throughout the year.

"The redevelopment has been a great opportunity to revive the site while valuing its mining heritage and associated memories."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

The Metaphone is a concert hall but also a musical instrument. It was very difficult to finalize the installation of the instruments and the "sound skin".
From 2018, mechanical instruments are put into service and play short pieces in reference to the chimes and jaquemart of Northern buildings and the East of France.

"Our wish is to create new collaborations and to enhance this heritage while widening the repertoires with musical groups of the whole world."

Member of the Project Team

The idea behind the project *was to encourage original interactions between music and heritage.*

Examples

Greece

COMPLETION OF THE ROAD SECTION KOROMILIA-KRISTALLOPIGI ON THE VERTICAL AXIS OF EGNATIA ODOS "SIATISTA - KRISTALLOPIGI - GR/AL BORDERS"

Basic Information

Fund: Cohesion Fund

Operational Programme: Improvement of Accessibility, Transport Infrastructure, Environment and Sustainable Development

Programming Period: 2007-2013, 2014-2020

Countries: Greece

Total Investment: 99 752 800 EUR

EU Investment: 84 789 880 EUR

Implementing Body: EGNATIA ODOS SA

Principal Objective

The aim of the project was the completion of the last 20,3 km long section of "Koromilia-Kristallopigi". The completion of the vertical axis of the Egnatia road "Siatista - Kristallopigi" contributes to the enhancing international transport and travel safety.

Background

The Egnatia Motorway is the most important modern infrastructure project for the development and communication of Greece with the rest of Europe, as well as the Balkans and Asia Minor.
Egnatia Motorway unites and ensures outlets to a wider area, where distances are being diminished, acting as a catalyst for its development. It constitutes a part of the Trans-European Transport Network and has been one of the priority projects of the EU.

LESSONS LEARNED

The development and modernization of transport infrastructure has a favourable impact on the competitiveness of the local production system.

"The objectives of the Company are to design, construct and operate the Egnatia Motorway axis from Igoumenitsa to Kipi and the main vertical axes that connect Greece with Balkans and further with Central Europe."

Member of the Project Team

Main Problems During the Implementation

The mountainous terrain of the region that required big technical works like reinforced embankments.
Adverse weather conditions during the winter led to delays.
The need for extensive archaeological excavations during the construction phase, due to a prehistorical settlement in the region.

"Completion of the vertical axis "Siatista - Kristallopigi-GR/AL-Borders" contributes to the development of the Prefecture of Kastoria and of the wider Region of Western Macedonia in Greece. The significance of the axis is high considering that it links the road network of Greece, through the Egnatia Motorway (TEN-T axis), with the system of road axes in the southern regions of Albania and the Western Balkans in general, through the connections to the Pan-European Axis VIII."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *was to improve transport infrastructure in order to strengthen the economy and further development in the crossborder area between Greece and Albania in terms of commerce, industry and tourism.*

UPGRADING OF THESSALONIKI WESTERN INNER RING ROAD

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Central Macedonia

Programming Period: 2007-2013, 2014-2020

Countries: Greece

Total Investment: 120 445 217 EUR

EU Investment: 103 616 707 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim was to refurbish the existing Western Internal Ring Road of Thessaloniki over a length of approximately 6km as a three-lane dual carriageway in order to improve road safety and increase the traffic capacity of the road.

Background

The project included the construction of five interchanges with the aim to ensure an uninterrupted flow.
The replacement of safety barriers, central reserve and bituminous carpet over the overall length of the road, as well as interventions on the side and local road networks, have also been done during the implementation phase.

LESSONS LEARNED

This initiative enhanced the attractiveness and competitiveness of local companies.

"We reduced travel times and we also contribute to the reduction of the pollution for local residents by the construction of overpasses, bridges and underground roads."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

The project was implemented in a populated area and the main problems where the expropriations and the removal of the public service networks that were very time-consuming. Also, the existing Western Internal Ring Road was functional and the heavy traffic should be relocated a lot of times for the project's construction.

"The biggest added value for the region is the improved, quicker and safer transportation for the everyday local and regional movements."

Member of the Project Team

The idea behind the project *was to reduce traffic congestion by bypassing Thessaloniki city centre, to increase the Ring's capacity and to improve the road safety for drivers and pedestrians.*

THRIASSIO PEDIO FREIGHT COMPLEX IN ATTIKI

Phase II

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Attiki

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Greece

Total Investment: 251 mil. EUR
Investment for Programming Period 2007-2013: 45 318 184 EUR

EU Investment: 37 074 806 EUR

Principal Objective

The scope of the project is to assemble all railway and freight activities, which until the project's implementation were carried out in facilities dispensed in various points of Athens, at the premises of the Thriassio Pedio Complex.

Background

The modern freight Complex in Thriassio Pedio area has been constructed by ERGA OSE. The Complex contains shunting yard, container terminal, customs office, freight station, warehouses, group of stabling tracks for rail vehicles carrying dangerous loads and cleaning facilities.
The transfer of the facilities in a single location outside Athens city limits has considerable environmental and land planning advantages for the whole urban complex of Athens.

LESSONS LEARNED

Moving of all rail freight activities into one place, away from residential areas has significant environmental and urban benefits.

"The freight Complex is directly connected with the North, the South-East and the West of the country. The road access is provided through direct connection to Attiki Odos highway and the National Road Athens-Corinth."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

Delays during the land acquisition procedures. The competent court's decisions to determine the unit price for compensation were issued in significant delay.

Delays during the tender procedure of the contracts by which the Complex was implemented. Some of the participants in the tender procedure submitted appeals which had to be settled.

"Thriassio Pedio Complex helps to reduce the costs of product transport and shift traffic from the roads to the railways."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *was to create an important international goods transport hub linking central Europe with ports on the North, Baltic, Black and Mediterranean seas.*

Examples

The Netherlands

BUILDING THE RIGHT INVESTMENTS FOR DELIVERING A GROWING ECONOMY

BRIDGE

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Regional Research and Innovation

Programming Period: 2014-2020

Countries: Netherlands

Total Investment: 6 247 030 EUR

EU Investment: 4 997 624 EUR

Principal Objective

The BRIDGE project addresses the urgent urban challenge of better aligning young people's educational choices with future labour market needs.

Background

New economic opportunities and challenges are changing labour market needs. Consequently, qualification and skill gaps are expected to grow significantly.
The target area of South Rotterdam has major disadvantages across key socio-economic indicators compared to the rest of Rotterdam and the country. The BRIDGE has developed a sophisticated, humorous and carefully targeted mass media campaign which takes its lead from the perceptions of its target audience.

LESSONS LEARNED

The interventions developed through this project have huge potential for encouraging collaboration and mutual learning.

"The goal of the project can be achieved through close cooperation between employers, schools, students and parents."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

Schools are difficult organizations and sometimes it is hard for them to cooperate for different reasons. Cultural preferences and lack of social capital in the families could be also seen as an obstacle. Another issue is, that sometimes it is very difficult for employers to think ahead. Employers want to solve just the current problems so if the job market is changing, the employers are very bad in predicting this change.

"If you want to try something really innovative, the EU funding is very helpful."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *was to create the link between choice and level of vocational qualifications and employment prospects in the city's growth industry sectors.*

AMSTERDAM SMART CITY

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Kansen voor West

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Netherlands

Total Investment: 3 910 390 EUR

EU Investment: 1 564 140 EUR

www.amsterdamsmartcity.com

Principal Objective

The aim at the start was to create a platform for a futureproof and liveable city by making smarter use of knowledge and resources addressed of energy conservation, reduction of CO2 emissions and innovation-based economic growth.

Background

A Smart City is a highly dynamic, interconnected and interdependent environment that is mixed with smart technology, thereby creating an ongoing learning loop for a more sustainable city.
Amsterdam Smart City was founded as a unique public-private partnership between companies, governments, knowledge institutions and the people of Amsterdam, plus an international community. By sharing knowledge and by collaborating they come up with innovative solutions for metropolitan issues of a social, economic and ecological nature. This way they ensure that the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area remains liveable, now and in the years to come.

LESSONS LEARNED

Collaboration is key with a central role for citizens. What is a smart city without smart citizens?

"Amsterdam as a Smart City facilitates the process of creating new ecosystems and provides the access point and network to connect stakeholders."

Member of the Project Team

The Biggest Challenge

How can we connect partners in the smart city, fighting climate change and implementing the energy transition, who do not know each other yet?

"Amsterdam Smart City is constantly challenging businesses, citizens, the municipality and knowledge institutions to come up with and apply innovative solutions for urban challenges."

Member of the Project Team

The idea behind the project *is to connect all relevant partners in the city, who can innovate together to create a real smart city with citizens in the core of it.*

Examples

Ireland

TELLUS BORDER GEO-ENVIRONMENTAL SURVEY OF THE NORTH OF IRELAND

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Ireland

Total Investment: 5 565 350 EUR

EU Investment: 4 174 012 EUR

Principal Objective

Tellus is a concerted cross-border investment in terrestrial geosciences, intended both to stimulate exploration for natural resources and to generate essential data for environmental management. The data collected during the project will provide information that will benefit the economy, environment, energy and agriculture.

Background

The Tellus survey is a national programme to gather and examine the chemical and physical properties of soil, rocks and water. The grant financed a continued analysis of the Tellus data in Northern Ireland and further airborne geophysical surveys and ground geochemical sampling programmes of the six northern counties of the Republic of Ireland.

LESSONS LEARNED

Geological hazards such as Radon gas can be mapped allowing the targeting of areas with health concerns.

"For the survey data to be useful it is important to work with stakeholders throughout the project. Value added products such as soil chemistry maps are useful to farmers to understand the fertility of their land."

Geologist

Main Problems During the Implementation

Delays to the airborne survey resulting from mobilization and aircraft maintenance issues resulted in delays to spending targets.
Compliance with procurement and strict spending rules resulted in considerable administration work.

"Geological features like rivers do not stop at political borders and therefore the aim of the project was to create seamless merged datasets and maps across the whole region."

Geophysics Programme Manager

The idea behind the project *was to make a geological map that would cross the border. Mapping was already done in Northern Ireland so the project looked to continue the mapping on the other side of the border.*

MICRO-HYDROPOWER IN THE WATER INDUSTRY

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Ireland - Wales

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Ireland

Total Investment: 974 907 EUR

EU Investment: 625 721 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim of the project is to improve the sustainability of the water industry. The recovery of energy in water pipe networks using Micro-Hydropower turbines at points of high excess pressure in the system.

Background

With the increasing global awareness of the impacts of energy consumption and CO2 emissions on climate change, humankind, finite resources and the environment as a whole, efforts to reduce such impacts are underway in all sectors of society. Water pipe network optimisation software was also developed to enable the optimum location and number of Micro-Hydropower turbines to be installed in a given network, to be determined maximising energy production while maintaining acceptable pressure standards.

LESSONS LEARNED

Effective collaboration between stakeholders is substantive to ensure the successful, cost-effective and time-effective implementation.

"During the implementation, the project examined over 300 water infrastructure sites across Ireland and Wales for their suitability for Micro-Hydropower energy recovery."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

The main problem encountered during the implementation of this project was difficulty in getting access to data on water infrastructure or equally the absence of data on the flow and pressure in water networks in the region.

"New engineering design guidelines were developed to cater for changes in water demands in the future, so it enabled Micro-Hydropower design to be resilient to the climate change."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *was to present the water supply and hydropower industries in Ireland-Wales with a clear framework from which to create economic activity and to improve the sustainability of water supply, reducing its climate change impacts.*

Examples

Lithuania

TRANS-EUROPEAN NETWORK LINK

THE VILNIUS CITY WESTERN BYPASS

Stage III

Basic Information

Fund: Cohesion Fund

Operational Programme: Operational Programme for the European Union Funds Investments in 2014-2020

Programming Period: 2014-2020

Countries: Lithuania

Total Investment: 106 946 617 EUR

EU Investment: 84 062 280 EUR

Principal Objective

The Vilnius bypass consists of several stages. The third phase of building the western bypass helps to cut journey times and vehicle operating costs, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase road safety standards and improve quality of life for residents and local environment.

Background

The city lacked a complete network of bypasses and high-speed roads, and transit traffic often had to use city streets that are unsuitable for high traffic volumes.
The building of the bypass marks full integration of Vilnius into the Trans-European Transport Network North Sea-Baltic Corridor.

LESSONS LEARNED

Within delivery of Vilnius city western bypass and adding a new connection to Trans-European Transport Network the traffic conditions in the centre of Vilnius have improved.

"It was the biggest infrastructure project implemented in Vilnius and it would not be possible without funding from the EU."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

The big projects have always some number of obstacles in the implementation stage. The main obstacle to implement this project was to cable the electric line and the acquisition of private land plots.

"The traffic congestion in the city centre has decreased, travel time has shortened, traffic safety has improved, and air pollution has decreased."

Member of the Project Team

The idea behind the project *has started 30 years ago. Vilnius had the worst transport infrastructure in terms of possibility to cross the city fast and conveniently compared to other main cities of Lithuania.*

RURAL AREA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY BROADBAND NETWORK

RAIN

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Economic Growth

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Lithuania

Total Investment: 21 508 200 EUR

EU Investment: 15 519 800 EUR

Principal Objective

The main goal of the project RAIN is to help eliminate e-divide of broadband infrastructure between cities and rural regions, to increase social cohesion and contribute to economic growth by achieving these goals.

Background

The project RAIN created 3357 kilometres of broadband infrastructure that liked 467 rural elderships with the municipalities of the country. Around 330 educational institutions were also connected to this infrastructure. The fibre-optic infrastructure developed during the project reached settlements with a population of over 300 000 residents. The project RAIN formed 51 separate networks, geographically located within the municipal areas. Different municipalities have not been connected to each other in the network development stage.

LESSONS LEARNED

Detailed planning and active collaboration with all project stakeholders are key factors for the successful project implementation.

"It results in a substantial improvement in the quality of life for rural residents."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

"The project RAIN launched in 2005. We were among the first to start developing the broadband infrastructure in rural areas and all the experience we could get was really valuable. A detailed plan and a precise vision of the next steps helped to overcome all the problems and implement the project."

"The project had been one of 12 EU-best practice examples, presented in European Commissions 'Guide to broadband investment'."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *was to create an electronic network infrastructure required for wholesale broadband services in Lithuanian rural areas beyond the reach.*

Away from landfills by

IMPLEMENTATION OF WASTE TO ENERGY PROJECT, CASE OF VILNIUS CITY

Basic Information

Fund: Cohesion Fund

Operational Programme: Environment, Sustainable Use of Natural Resources and Adaptation to Climate Change

Programming Period: 2014-2020

Countries: Lithuania

Total Investment: 147 464 520 EUR

EU Investment: 48 553 044 EUR

Principal Objective

The main aim of the project is to reduce landfilling of municipal waste in order to reach targets of circular economy strategy and to increase energy independence by decreasing electricity and fossil fuel (natural gas) imports.

Background

The plant will treat up around 160 000 tonnes of municipal solid waste identified as not suitable for recycling, mainly at mechanical biological treatment facilities. This municipal waste will be incinerated for simultaneous recovery of heat and production of electricity.

LESSONS LEARNED

The experiences and know-how gained by the implementation of the largest energy project for the combined heat and power plant in Lithuanian capital can help develop other projects of this complexity.

"Managing and implementing the project of this complexity is a huge challenge, but we are doing it successfully. This is how we approach Lithuania towards a circular economy and energy independence, avoiding landfills."

Chief Projects Manager

Main Problems During the Implementation

Unfortunately, targets of circular economy and the role of waste-to-energy in it are not so clear for the society. "Our goal is not only to build the plant but also to explain to our neighbours why it is important for Lithuania to have the waste to energy infrastructure, what is the environmental benefits of it."

"The EU grant allows us to produce not only heat but also electricity, and it allows us to make the project economically affordable."

Member of the Project Team

The idea behind the project *was to avoid landfilling as well as strengthen national independence in the energy sector by utilizing local resources.*

Examples

Latvia

CONSTRUCTION OF NEW HOSPITAL BUILDING A1

Pauls Stradins Clinical University Hospital

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Infrastructure and Services

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Latvia

Total Investment: 86 211 665 EUR

EU Investment: 24 076 323 EUR

Principal Objective

Improved quality of inpatient and outpatient health care services and effective patient treatment process in Pauls Stradins Clinical University Hospital by optimally locating patients and health care services, ensuring that minimal time is spent on patient and tests logistics, hospital facilities management processes etc., allowing faster and more efficient patient treatment.

Background

Pauls Stradins Clinical University Hospital is one of the leading high-profile hospitals in Latvia with special achievements in cardiology, ophthalmology, oncology, transplantation and surgery, but its buildings were in poor technical conditions and did not meet modern requirements, thus preventing provision of health care services in a required amount and quality.

LESSONS LEARNED

Implementation of the project provided invaluable and unique knowledge, which is great advantage in planning and developing the 2nd phase of the hospital.

"For the successful implementation of the project, constructive cooperation between the European institutions, the national authorities and the beneficiary is crucial. In the process of project implementation, we have benefited greatly from all forms of cooperation - institutional support and interest, consultation and meaningful review."

Project Manager

Main Problems During the Implementation

During the implementation of the project, the main problem was the ability to balance existing regulations and planned activities in the project and constantly changing requirements during the project implementation - continuous technological development, changing clinical practice and increasing patient expectations.

"The biggest challenge in implementing the project was the transfer of hospital work - designing, setting up, installing and smooth moving of equipment, technology, personnel and patients - without interrupting the hospital's core business at any time. New working conditions, routine changes, work in multidisciplinary teams required flexibility and adaptability from the entire hospital team."

Project Manager

The idea behind the project *was to avoid preventable loss of life and to reduce the length of stay in the hospital by reducing the risk of hospital-acquired infections, more efficient patient flow and reduced response time in patient care and treatment.*

SPIKERI QUARTER

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Infrastructure and Services

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Latvia

Total Investment: 7 705 116 EUR

EU Investment: 3 628 323 EUR

Principal Objective

The project aims to transform the brownfield area and adjoining riverbank into an accessible and safe cultural, educational and recreational space, thus creating conditions for spatial and socio-economic growth.

Background

Infrastructural improvements, linking of environmental, economic, social and cultural aspects and the effective public-private partnership was needed.
The revitalisation of brownfields in the city is important for economic activity in the area and it contributes to the creation of local jobs.

LESSONS LEARNED

Revitalised space has attracted private investment. The new design of the city promotes innovation. The implementation of the project and results were brought snowball effect for a wider territory of the city.

"The vision was to improve conditions for economic and social development."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

Unpredictable historical threats emerged during the implementation of the project. However, a major challenge was the re-allocation of existing and ongoing activities.

"If there were no EU money, the process of revitalisation would be slower and activities would have to be divided into longer stages."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *is to support efficient use of territory in the city. The potential of the area was not fully exploited and did not provide what the local community needed.*

RIGA TRAM INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Basic Information

Fund: Cohesion Fund

Operational Programme: Growth and Employment

Programming Period: 2014-2020

Countries: Latvia

Total Investment: 123 854 000 EUR

EU Investment: 65 669 331 EUR

Principal Objective

The project aims to build new tram lines and to modernize the existing tram lines in Latvia's capital Riga. The project also aims to improve connections between the neighbourhood of Skanste and the city centre.

Background

By promoting a means of transport which emits low levels of greenhouse gas and strengthening links between nodes for various types of transport, the project will contribute to the development of environmentally sustainable intermodal mobility in the city. It will also support the shift towards a low-carbon economy, which is an important EU policy priority.

LESSONS LEARNED

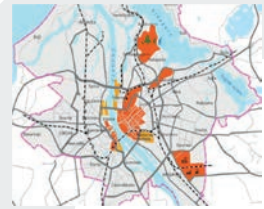
The project development and implementation require daily identification of needs.

"New infrastructure takes into account the needs of the local community, especially people with reduced mobility."

Member of the Project Team

Main Problems During the Implementation

It is a long process from the creation of an initial idea until the implementation of the project.
Cooperation between many types of institutions is demanding and public procurement is very time-consuming.



"The tram is the backbone of the city's public transport. As a result of the implementation of the project, there will be an increase in the number of passengers in trams, from private car users, and also by attracting users of other public transport modes."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *is to facilitate the use of sustainable public transport in Riga by including less connected city development areas in Riga public transport network.*

Examples

Luxembourg

SOLAR DRYING WASTEWATER SLUDGE TREATMENT PLANT

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Regional Competitiveness and Employment

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Luxembourg

Total Investment: 3 500 000 EUR

EU Investment: 875 000 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim of the project is to dry wastewater sludge by using a solar power plant. The dried sludge can then be used as coal substitute in industrial firing processes.

Background

The water is removed from wastewater sludge by using the environment-friendly solar energy. By removing the moisture of the sludge the calorific value will raise from zero up to the value of lignite.
As a benefit, the solar dried sludge can be burned CO2 neutral.
The dried sludge is neutral in odor, biologically stable and easy to store and handle.

LESSONS LEARNED

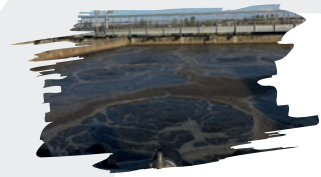
This pilot project in Bettembourg/Luxembourg shows that a new solution can be found by using the new sustainable and cutting-edge technology to reduce the impact on the environment, human and nature.

"We have the second biggest wastewater treatment plant in Luxembourg. This plant works also for the French neighboring region and partly for the industries and companies in the South of Luxembourg, including major steel- and chemical industries."

Chief Engineer

Main Problems During the Implementation

As the project was really new to everyone, all the stakeholders have to be convinced that this solution was the best for this region.



"The project led to decreasing quantities of nitrates, phosphates and heavy metals on agricultural fields."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *was to find a new solution as the wastewater sludge will no longer be used as a fertilizer on the fields in the future.*

TECHNOPORT

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Luxembourg

Total Investment: 8 000 000 EUR

EU Investment: 2 000 000 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim was to offer the best environment for the creation and development of technology-oriented and innovative companies/projects in Luxembourg and to reduce the failure rate by giving the entrepreneurs access to the coaching (internal and external), as well as to an adequate infrastructure and work environment.

Background

The coworking space at Technoport has developed itself in a well-known event space. Many events and hackathons were held there, thus contributing a lot to the overall ecosystem development. In 2013, was launched FabLab, a digital fabrication laboratory, which today is one of the most well-equipped prototyping platforms in the greater region.

LESSONS LEARNED

Incubators for young and innovative companies, like Technoport, are key in the Luxembourg economic diversification strategy.

"Our vision is to bridge ideas to success by creating the right ecosystems around innovation and entrepreneurship."

Project Coordinator

THE NAME TECHNOPORT

Is a combination of two French words: "technologie" for technology-oriented companies and "port", as a harbour, where entrepreneurs can moor and then leave to expand into new and bigger markets. A harbour is usually an area protected from rough water by piers, jetties and structures, similar to what an incubator should be for these entrepreneurs. It is a place you can also return to.

"The Luxembourg startup ecosystem has never been so rich, diverse and innovation-driven than in recent years."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *was to foster and support the creation and the development of Luxembourg based innovative technological companies within the framework of the national economic policy.*

Examples

Hungary

HUSK EDUCATIONAL & TRAINING PROGRAM

THE REVIVAL OF TORNALA'S DRESS FACTORY BY HUNGARIAN CUSTOM DESIGN

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Hungary-Slovak Republic

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Hungary

Total Investment: 312 120 EUR

EU Investment: 252 037 EUR

Principal Objective

The main purpose of the project was to decrease unemployment and social intolerance and to create jobs for the socially disadvantaged population. Another important aspect was the promotion of Roma culture.

Background

The brand Romani started as a labour integration program, that carried out important education and training activities in order to empower Roma youth and Women. The training programme was focused on specific fashion-related skills such as tailoring, sewing, clothing design but also on general skills sets such as social competences and vocational training.

LESSONS LEARNED

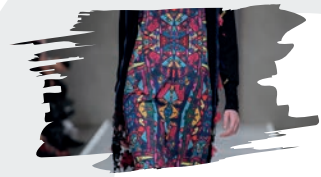
Creating bridges among cultures through fashion can fight stereotypes.

"Fashion means to me what words mean for writers, colours for painters. Through my clothes, I can express my identity and create a world in which I enjoy living."

The Designer

Main Problems During the Implementation

It was hard to choose the participnats of the educational programme, because the number of candidates was higher than planned.
The level of knowledge of the participants was different. Somebody was a beginner, others had some experience and wanted to develop it. They were also Romas and "not Romas", educated and "not-educated" girls and women, so the personal mentoring, coaching and organization of community programs was very important.
Cultural diversity of the participants. Personal mentoring, individual development and support helped them to solve these problems.



The idea behind the project *was to help unemployed women who have been excluded from and discriminated against in the labour market due to being Roma or their family and social status.*

"The brand Romani gives not only jobs but also motivation and perspective to these women."

The Designer

DEVELOPMENT OF ELECTRIC, COMPOSITE BUSES

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Southern Great Plain

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Hungary

Total Investment: 2 619 767 EUR

EU Investment: 1 307 449 EUR

Principal Objective

The main purpose was to identify solutions to the increasing demand for buses and the optimization of costs while preserving local production.

Background

Every city requires a special solution to develop its public transport systems. The development of the Modulo revived Hungarian bus production, offering the new types of environmentally friendly urban buses, for example, a compressed natural gas bus, a trolley and serial hybrid or electric bus; plus charger station.

LESSONS LEARNED

The innovative environmentally friendly energy solutions made the project more sustainable.

"The operational costs of hybrid electric-fuel buses are 40% lower compared to conventional steel-made buses."

The Constructor

Main Problems During the Implementation

Can we create the city bus version from 45 to 85 passenger capacity with standardized five modules to achieve the minimized tooling cost?

"Thanks to its drastically reduced weight and environmentally friendly powertrain solutions the impact of the Modulo buses on the environment is significantly less and the fully electric powertrain produces no emissions."

The Constructor

The idea behind the project *was to make the optimized transport system in Budapest more sustainable and cost- effective, but also to start with 'clean' vehicle production across the country and thereby strengthen the Hungarian economy.*

CULTURAL, TOURISM AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE A38 SHIP

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Central Hungary

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Hungary

Total Investment: 1 259 101 EUR

EU Investment: 909 553 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim of the project was to expand the A38 ship, a popular cultural hub and thus increase the space with the second vessel. In line with efforts to bring public transport on the Danube back to its former glory, the extension has also been equipped with a docking facility for boats.

Background

The extension hosts a wide range of cultural events with an international programme. Its interesting, well-equipped spaces provide an outstanding opportunity for social evenings, company programs and friendly gatherings.

LESSONS LEARNED

A38 Ship offers a wide range of international cultural programs to convey the importance of modern and traditional European values. Having redefined the historical form of shipping traditions by attaching a modern side-boat to the former stone-carrier ship, A38 created a unique world of architectural design which has also become an iconic spot in the cultural life of Budapest.

"The name comes from Artemovsk, which is the name of a ship prototype, and this one was the 38th unit of the 'Artemovsk' class."

Project Manager

Main Problems During the Implementation

It has always been a challenge for local citizens to connect directly with the Danube. Due to urban planning and development, high-speed car traffic on the lower quay makes it hard to access the river bank.
"We believe that A38 Ship can stand as an example for others to help the Danube become a directly accessible living space for everyone."

"The A38 ship is a place with an attitude."

"The vision is to be a culturally open, exciting, vibrating place in an open, exciting and vibrating city."

Executive Manager

The idea behind the project *was to transform a former Ukrainian freighter ship into a multi-functional space in one of the most fascinating venues in Budapest.*

Examples

Malta

SETTING UP OF A MECHANICAL AND BIOLOGICAL TREATMENT PLANT IN THE NORTH OF MALTA

Basic Information

Fund: Cohesion Fund

Operational Programme: Investing in Competitiveness for a Better Quality of Life

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Malta

Total Investment: 59 243 056 EUR

EU Investment: 26 700 334 EUR

Principal Objective

The overall objective of the plant is to treat Municipal Solid Waste that will not be treated at the Sant'Antnin Waste Treatment Plant, combined with the treatment of animal husbandry waste (manure).

Background

Without an increase of waste processing and treatment capacities, in particular for mixed municipal wastes, Malta would not be able to reach some of the quantitative targets defined in the EU Directives related to the waste sector, most importantly those under the EU Landfill Directive.

LESSONS LEARNED

The important role that a mechanical and biological treatment plant plays in delivering a sustainable recovery of value from waste is something that Malta will benefit greatly from as will the robust and safe treatment of organic waste.

"Most people do not understand the waste management process, and if they do not understand the process, they will not feel responsible to dispose of waste in a responsible way."

Chief Projects Manager

Main Problems During the Implementation

The one of the largest issue is that Malta is growing so much at the moment in terms of industry and many contractors are busy so it is difficult to find right people because they all have a job.

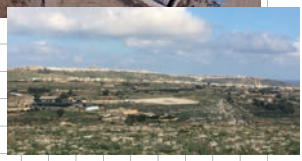
The sea can be also seen as a problem. If you have foreign partners because anything that comes and goes away to Malta has to go by ship.

"The added value is that we reduce the volume of waste going to the landfill avoiding the use of more land. We will also enhance our waste management practices."

Chief Projects Manager

The idea behind the project *is the need for a mechanical treatment plant, which can process remaining waste rather than sending it directly to the landfill.*

SETTING UP OF THE GOZO TRANSFER AND MATERIAL RECOVERY FACILITY



Basic Information

Fund: Cohesion Fund

Operational Programme: Investing in Competitiveness for a Better Quality of Life

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Malta

Total Investment: 9 952 586 EUR

EU Investment: 6 040 892 EUR

Principal Objective

The overall objective is to improve waste management in Gozo by providing a sheltered and controlled facility for the reception, sorting, processing, interim storage and a more efficient transfer of wastes originating from Gozo and Comino while capturing and treating all emissions before they are spread into environment.

Background

The accumulation of waste and the concentration of pollutants as a consequence of the increased waste generation bring about the degradation of environmental quality and thus a decline in human welfare. If waste is not treated according to the established standards, the public health threats will degrade community as well as economic well being with consequent implications on economic productivity.

LESSONS LEARNED

The adequate waste management infrastructure is crucial for ensuring the environmental protection.

"The economic growth is based on transforming resources into products and services which implies increasing the use of such resources. For this reason, the economic growth tends to be associated with increased waste generation."

Chief Projects Manager

Main Problems During the Implementation

The facility was built in a prime area with high visual impact. Wasteserv used a disused quarry to build a facility to mitigate the impact on the area and in turn to use a committed site. The restrictions of the quarry limited the available space for construction and operation.

"The proper waste management is necessary to maintain a healthy tourism industry on which the Maltese economy is much dependent."

Chief Projects Manager

The idea behind the project *concerns the proper management of solid waste in the Maltese Islands, specifically in the Island of Gozo. Improvements have been registered in the past few years but in order to achieve sustainability in this sector the additional intervention is needed.*

NATIONAL FLOOD RELIEF PROJECT

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Investing in Competitiveness for a Better Quality of Life

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Malta

Total Investment: 60 100 000 EUR

EU Investment: 43 100 000 EUR

Principal Objective

The project aims to develop an integrated approach to stormwater and valley management along with alleviating the increasingly adverse effects of climate change on urban areas that are particularly sensitive to flash floods.

Background

The project involved the construction of a network of underground canals and tunnels together with the reconstruction of a number of bridges which will be capable of improving the draining of flood water into the sea. These interventions consisted in 16 km of lined tunnels equipped with access ramps, 3.1 km of large culverts and the reconstruction of three road bridges.

Mitigation of flooding was made in nine different localities with five project components.

LESSONS LEARNED

Avert any increase in risks to life and property and control damages caused by flash floods reduces vulnerability to climate change.

"We are trying to mitigate the impacts of flash floods on population and urban areas and to create scope for water conservation as far as feasible."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

The biggest problem during the implementation of the project was that areas affected by the storms and flooding are highly urbanized.

"We found out that re-use of rainwater from the project itself was not viable economically because the amount of water that we gathered is limited to those few events that happened. To store that water, treat and re-use it is very expensive even to run because you have to double your infrastructure."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *tie to a major flood event in 2003 when the Government of Malta decided to tackle the problems that arise as a result of uncontrolled street surface water runoff by adopting a catchment-based approach to stormwater management and as much as possible encourage the re-use of rainwater.*

Examples

Germany

HISTORICAL LANDMARK BECOMES SYMBOL OF A NEW ERA IN GERMANY'S RUHR REGION

Dortmunder U

Basic Information

Fund: Cohesion Fund

Operational Programme: Jobs, Growth and Investment

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Germany

EU Investment: 46 500 000 EUR

Principal Objective

The New Centre for Art and Creativity, the Dortmunder U, underlines the city's and the region's potential for the innovation and will to change. The Centre is based on collaboration between various users of Dortmunder U building.

Background

The aim of the project is the city's development for its further forward-looking transformation in urban development and culture.
From the historical point of view, it was built over 80 years ago. The main purpose of the building was a storage tower for the Dortmunder Union Brewery, that's where the illuminated "U" comes from. The Dortmunder U is both living memory and the future.

LESSONS LEARNED

The Dortmunder U has become an important hub and delivered momentum to the Ruhr's structural change from heavy industry to a region in which research and science, creativity and culture are the most important resources.

"U is a place where local creative community can meet with creative workers from all over the world."

Member of the Project Team

U-Tower breathes new life into a whole district

For a long time, the area around Dortmund's U-Tower suffered from effects of de-industrialisation, such as vacant buildings and lack of investment.

"For the U project, we invested not only in bricks and mortar but also in creative minds and therefore in region's future."

"The U stands for union, uniqueness, undertaking, upgraded architecture and urbanity."

Member of the Project Team

The idea behind the project *was to revitalize impressive place of the former industrial building and thereby breathe life into it.*

SMART SERVICE POWER

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Nordrhein-Westfalen

Programming Period: 2016-2020

Countries: Germany

Total Investment: 2 808 606 EUR

EU Investment: 1 404 303 EUR

Principal Objective

The goal of the project is the intelligent digitalization and linking of different data sources in order to support the age-appropriate technology-supported housing in the neighborhood.
Another goal of the project was the development of a different data usage concept while respecting data protection and data security.

Background

Monitoring was mostly done by a body-worn tag, which transmits the data through sensors. The „classic approach" to wear them around the neck or arm tapes failed, that's why the consortium around VIVAI Software decided to distribute the sensors at home. The software analytics, which is based on Big Data methods and machine learning techniques automatically, detects deviations from the normal all-day course of the resident based on long term observations. It reacts without the resident needs to be active.

LESSONS LEARNED

The most important point is to build trust because we deal with highly sensitive data. We need a new ethical approach to personal data usage.

"This project helps us to convince municipalities, nursing services, health insurance, housing cooperatives and - above all – seniors and their relatives, that intelligent technology can be a great part of their solution."

Director of Business Development

Main Problems During the Implementation

The project was dealing with many technical difficulties, sensors suddenly disappear from the market, lacking interoperability of the devices and software and the intelligent aggregation of data from different sources.

"The biggest innovation was made in data integration by recording, collecting and analyzing."

Director of Business Development

The idea behind the project *is the fact that Europe has an increasingly ageing population and that Smart Service Power tries to enable the elderly to stay longer autonomous and self-determined in their familiar environment.*

GEZONDE KAS/HEALTHY GREENHOUSE

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Netherlands - Germany

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Germany, Netherlands

Total Investment: 10 163 600 EUR

EU Investment: 3 966 037 EUR

Principal Objective

The objective is an entirely new, integrated crop protection system for modern greenhouses that notifies the presence of pests and diseases before visibility of symptoms, supports decision making and advices and facilitates the application of necessary measures with a minimal input of chemical control agents.

Background

The building blocks of this Gezonde Kas system consist of equipment for DNA- and sensor- techniques and automated image processing, but also of software tools, biological control strategies and precision spraying techniques.

LESSONS LEARNED

Early detection is not worth anything if you don't know what to do with the knowledge it gives you. The added value lies in the combination of the repeated cycle of the steps detection, interpretation of data and action. The integration of different disciplines was the strength of this project.

"In the past, a gardener has always had to trust his own eyesight in order to know whether a plant is healthy or not but now high-tech machinery is taking over this job."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

The economical, environmental and health benefits of the Gezonde Kas system have been clearly shown during the project. Some of the elements are being applied by growers. However, some need to be specifically optimized in order to provide tailor-made products for the growers. This requires additional research. Moreover, growers are hesitating to buy all the Gezonde Kas elements since it is a relatively big investment.

The idea behind the project *was related to increasing quality demands, emission constraints and requirements for minimization of crop protection agents. Besides, it has become much more difficult for growers to successfully control pests and diseases in the nowadays big modern greenhouses.*

"I enjoyed working with cross border colleagues working on so many different disciplines."

Member of the Project Team

Examples

Poland

GDANSK URBAN TRANSPORT PROJECT

Stage IV

Basic Information

Fund: Cohesion Fund

Operational Programme: Infrastructure and Environment

Programming Period: 2014-2020

Countries: Poland

Total Investment: 124 138 944 EUR

EU Investment: 65 733 560 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim of the fourth stage was to construct double-track tram lines along with related infrastructure including a bus-tram interchange node and parking for vehicles and bicycles. Other elements entail the construction of shelters for passengers and information panels at public transport stops.

Background

The fourth stage provides further support for the development of low-carbon public transport. It contributed to reducing traffic congestion and made traffic flow smoother, thereby mitigating the negative impacts of transport on the environment, particularly noise and air pollution.
In addition, the project facilitates the adaptation of the municipal transport system to the needs of people with reduced mobility, for example with low-floor trams.

LESSONS LEARNED

The improvement of safety, comfort and quality of public transport increases the attractiveness of its use.

"Most of trams were modernized thanks to this project and the new tramway lines were built in new areas of the city."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

The project was done almost without troubles. The only problem was that at the end of one of the lines there is an intermodal place close to the inhabited area. People were afraid, that traffic loops can increase noise in those areas.

"Nowadays, people can rely on public transport. Earlier, when tramway was not in good technical conditions, from time to time trams got out of the tramway and it caused delays."

Member of the Project Team

The idea behind the project *was to improve quality and performance of the public transport system in Gdansk in a long-term period of time.*

GDANSK WATER AND SEWAGE PROJECT

Phase I - II

Basic Information

Fund: Cohesion Fund

Operational Programme: Infrastructure and Environment

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Poland

Total Investment: 86 210 302 EUR

EU Investment: 40 882 315 EUR

Principal Objective

The project comprises measures to improve quality and management of drinking water as well as collection and treatment of wastewater in the city of Gdansk in order to comply with EC Directives. The project so far has been implemented in two stages. However, the new, third phase has been already started to be financed in the new programming period.

Background

Gdansk Water Utilities on behalf of the City of Gdansk plays the role of the owner of water supply and sewer systems in Gdansk. Main goals of the project are improvement of the water supply security in the city and the increase of the level of the city's sewer system coverage. However, the extent of the network increased the amount of sewage sludge to be managed.

LESSONS LEARNED

The project increased the access to the municipal sewer system in Gdansk, assured the drinking water quality, which now complies with both national and European regulations and standards, as well as solved the problem of sewage sludge management.

"We act for a high quality of drinking water and environment-friendly sewage discharge."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

There were some obstacles with the application and some issues regarding the operator of the network, which is a private French company. It had to be explained that there was no possibility for the private sector to be the beneficiary of funds, and so the benefits were only for the public.

"Within the project, we constructed a sewage sludge incineration plant at Gdansk-East Wastewater Treatment Plant, which went together with the facility for "green energy" production from biogas (CHP)."

Member of the Project Team

The idea behind the project *was to comply with commitments in terms of the necessity to adapt the development of the waterworks and sewer systems to the dynamic development of the city as well as in terms of solving the problem of the sewage sludge management.*

Examples

Portugal

THE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY PARK OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PORTO

UPTEC

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: North Regional Operational Programme

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Portugal

Total Investment: 22 000 000 EUR

EU Investment: 15 400 000 EUR

Principal Objective

UPTEC was designed to drive a long-term structural change in the North Region's innovation system. The aim of the project is to foster the creation and development of business projects in the sciences, technologies and arts, through sharing knowledge between the university and the market.

Background

The University of Porto, the largest research institution in Portugal, created UPTEC as an instrument to respond to some of the region's challenges: unemployment, brain drain and low-tech and export-focused industry.

LESSONS LEARNED

The proximity to the university, and therefore to a qualified critical mass, was a distinguishing factor of the project.

"UPTEC has supported more than 550 business projects. The project generated more than 2700 highly qualified jobs contributing to the economic growth of the region."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

UPTEC'S biggest challenge was to change the region's mindset for the potentialities of a transdisciplinary approach to innovation, entrepreneurship, and creativity. And the possibilities of bringing academic knowledge and business close together.

"The biggest added value for the region was the contribution to the emergence of a more knowledge-intensive economy."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *is to become a world-class Science and Technology Park that contributes to the development of the new economic paradigm, more transparent, ethical and sustainable.*

INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN HEALTH

i3S

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: North Regional Operational Program

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Portugal

Total Investment: 20 561 006 EUR

EU Investment: 17 476 855 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim was to foster economic transformation and international cooperation in health and life sciences and technologies in order to improve the peoples' well-being and quality of life.

Background

The i3S installation was set up by the Institute for Molecular and Cell Biology, the Institute for Biomedical Engineering and the Institute of Pathology and Molecular Immunology of the University of Porto.
The i3S hub established a top-level research centre and a shared network of knowledge and resources with increased synergy creation between three institutes, without duplication or loss of effectiveness. It also fosters the continuous advanced training for scientists and a solid implementation in the community to answer present and future societal challenges.

LESSONS LEARNED

The possibility to share knowledge and facilities with renowned regional hospitals can close the gap between research and the clinic.

"The pillars of i3S are scientific excellence and health as a research priority."

Member of the Project Team

Main Problems During the Implementation

Given the distinct but complementary scientific nature of three institutes that formed i3S, the major challenge during the implementation was the scientific and technological alignment of all consortium research groups in a prospect of increased competitiveness and scientific production, as well as consolidation of the position of this new Institute in the international ecosystem of research and innovation in health.

"Wide participation of schools, research institutes and hospitals in a research institute is unique in Portugal and is a valuable asset for science and technology development."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *was a cluster concept which leads to improving the healthcare sector in northern Portugal while promoting job creation, education, outreach and internationalization.*

NEW CRUISE TERMINAL FOR THE PORT OF LEIXÕES

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: North Portugal Regional Operational Programme

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Portugal

Total Investment: 45 541 041 EUR

EU Investment: 25 495 826 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim of the project was to improve the port commercial efficiency by maximizing the attractiveness of cruise activity as a high growth potential segment and also a better urban integration.

Background

The Porto Cruise Terminal is the largest project ever for the opening of the Port of Leixões to the city and an important gateway of Porto and North Region boosting the number of cruise ships and passengers at Leixões.

The building arises from the synthesis of several movements and flows of a tentacle leading to the ship, other leading to the curve of the south mole of the port, another one into the city and finally a fourth one falling inwards in a helical ramp connecting the internal functions within a quadruple height space.

LESSONS LEARNED

The Porto Cruise Terminal is a multifunctional building, which makes it one of a kind worldwide. It proved to be an extension of the city of Porto, an area previously unreachable and now accessible to the entire community.

"The Porto Cruise Terminal is already an icon for the region, a masterpiece that has completely changed the entire maritime coast of the northern region of Portugal and has already won some national and international prestigious architecture awards. This innovative architectural work was designed by the architect Luís Pedro Silva."

Project Coordinator

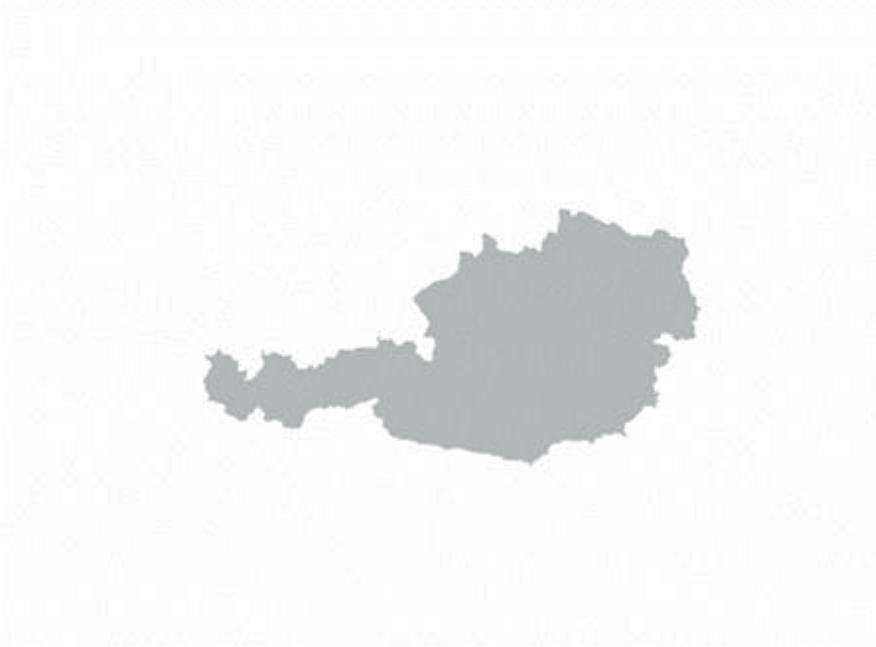
Main Problems During the Implementation

The biggest difficulty is the complexity of managing a building with different valences. Apart from a cruise terminal, open to the city for visits or major events, it also houses the University of Porto and nearly 200 researchers and students on a daily basis. All this, 700 m inside the sea.

"Located in the Atlantic front, the Porto Cruise Terminal is perfect to link up circuits of the Mediterranean and North Europe."

Member of the Project Team

The idea behind the project *was that the port's cruise facilities were not sufficient to accommodate the average size of ships and passengers.*



Examples

Austria

STRATEGIES TO REDUCE AND MANAGE FOOD WASTE IN CENTRAL EUROPE

STREFOWA

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Central Europe

Programming Period: 2014-2020

Countries: Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Poland

Total Investment: 2 363 175 EUR

EU Investment: 1 938 349 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim is to find and design new ideas dealing with food waste in order to reduce food waste or to treat it in a better, more useful way.

Background

STREFOWA is an international strategic project focused on preventing unnecessary food waste in five selected countries.
Through pilot activities on farms, schools, homes, supermarkets or hotels, they are experimenting with innovative solutions, building tools and practical training for different sectors that enable them to actively prevent food waste from "farm to fork". This project focuses on every element across the food chain and is also experimenting with new ways of collecting and processing food waste.

LESSONS LEARNED

From a circular economy point of view, it is necessary to reduce and manage food losses occurring along the whole supply chain.

"Up to 45 % of the produced vegetables are wasted."

"Around 30% of food is wasted along the supply chain."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

At the beginning during the first accounting period, the project lost one of the partners because the partner realized, how much administrative work is necessary to make during the project.

"Within STREFOWA project, the project partners are leading awareness-raising campaigns to #reducefoodwaste in Central Europe."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *was to give an overview of relevant facts as well as best practices and initiatives on reducing food waste in Europe.*

SMART TRAINING NETWORK FOR INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN EMERGING SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC SECTORS

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Central Europe

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Slovakia

Total Investment: 2 004 055 EUR

EU Investment: 1 560 868 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim of the project was to help young people to gain entrepreneurial skills and to set up their own business via innovation awareness-raising and training. To facilitate this, the project established a permanent inter-regional entrepreneurship centres called 'SMART Points'.

Background

The i.e. SMART has developed a completely new approach to innovation and entrepreneurship. The European entrepreneurial ecosystem started with a competition looking for the best new business ideas in the areas of information-communication technology, creative industries and the green economy. Contestants presenting the best ideas from each of the seven participating regions were invited to the SMART Campus.

LESSONS LEARNED

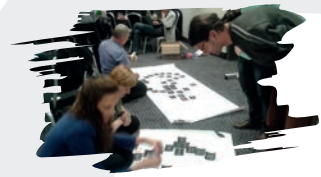
To remain competitive in a globalised economy, EU countries need to enhance the excellence of domestic research and increase their capacities in innovations.

"Due to success of the project, entrepreneurship education has been 'put on the map' in all of the seven regions and young peoples' awareness of entrepreneurship has increased."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

Involving political stakeholders is always a challenge. The question is: at which stage of project implementation do you approach them. i.e.SMART involved them at a very early stage and still it was difficult to fully ensure their support.



"Every child has a good idea and through this project, we could help them to develop their ideas and dreams."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *was to create a training network in order to tackle challenges such as lack of interest in innovation and entrepreneurship, a low survival rate of business start-ups, demographic and socio-economic brain drain.*

WIENWIN

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Central Europe

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Austria

Total Investment: 1 340 000 EUR

EU Investment: 671 595 EUR

Principal Objective

The City of Vienna is using the power of its public procurement budget to help support local innovations and entrepreneurs by encouraging them to offer their services to the city and enable Vienna to act as a lead market for innovation.

Background

The WienWin project has set out to make Vienna a 'greenhouse' for research and innovation. At its core, it is a partnership between Vienna's technology agency ZIT and the city administration authorities. The web portal 'WienWin' provides an instant database of available innovative goods and services. When city officials are interested in particular innovative services and products, the businesses concerned are invited to present their solutions personally in so-called City Talks.

LESSONS LEARNED

The WienWin initiative is a database of innovative products and services offered by Viennese entrepreneurs and research institutions. It is a systematic overview of Vienna's innovative potential.

"WienWin is a useful concept which can be adapted for other cities and regions in Europe."

Member of the Project Team

Main Problems During the Implementation

There were not many obstacles during the implementation phase of the project.

"In Austria, the demand-driven instruments for technology policy are anchored in the Austrian government's strategy for research, technology and innovation."

Member of the Project Team

The idea behind the project *was to foster the public procurement of innovative goods and services as well as common activities in research and development by city administration, local research institutions and innovative enterprises.*

Examples

Romania

REHABILITATION OF RAIL LINE AT NATIONAL BORDER FROM CURTICI TO CONSTANŢA

Section II, III

Basic Information

Fund: Cohesion Fund

Operational Programme: Large Infrastructure

Programming Period: 2014-2020

Countries: Romania

Total Investment: 2 070 901 278 EUR

EU Investment: 1 306 130 096 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim is to modernize the 141 km long double-track section of the railway crossing Romania. Upgrades and curvature adjustments increase the top speed for trains to 160 km/h.

Background

The improvements of the Romanian railway complete an important component of the core Trans-European Transport network, with the railway forming part of the network's Orient/East-Med and Rhine-Danube corridors. Both corridors are strategically important for freight and passenger transport.

LESSONS LEARNED

Investments in rail infrastructure represent an economic development opportunity for a country, supported by the following advantages: generating new jobs, generating additional revenue, the growth of the national economy, improving competitiveness, considerable mobility benefits for customers and upgrade technology.

"As a result of the railway improvements, handling of transit traffic in Romania has been greatly improved."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

The tendering procedure is a very long process, so it caused delays during the project implementation. The project had to face also some legislative changes.

Another obstacle was related to the expropriation of the land. Sometimes, it was hard to identify the owner and to find a common agreement to compensation.

"The project has also an economic impact on the region. During the project, materials originated from our country have been used and we created a lot of local jobs during the implementation phase."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *was to improve transport infrastructure and help to cut journey times in terms of the possibility of the railway crossing the country, from the Hungarian border to the Black Sea.*

EXTENSION AND MODERNISATION OF WATER SUPPLY AND WASTE WATER TREATMENT SYSTEMS IN BISTRIȚA-NĂSĂUD COUNTY

Phase II

Basic Information

Fund: Cohesion Fund

Operational Programme: Large Infrastructure

Programming Period: 2014-2020

Countries: Romania

Total Investment: 13 302 841 EUR

EU Investment: 8 621 564 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim is to extend the existing water service areas to the localities, currently without water and where existing potable water sources are able to provide the service cost effectively. This applies to Bistrița, Beclean and Năsăud water service areas.

Background

The project improves the quality of life of urban populations living in the service area by ensuring the access to potable water and sanitation services both in quantity and quality according to EU Directives 98/83 and 91/271. These directives have covered financial and commercial management, leak detection and control, improvements to operational maintenance, improvements to customer services and all aspects of environmental compliance.

LESSONS LEARNED

The regionalization of water services, by creating regional operators, is considered a key element in improving the quality and cost – efficiency of water infrastructure and services, in order to fulfil environmental targets as well as assuring sustainability of investments.

"New networks and extensions ensure the necessary sewer collection, covering 90% within the project area."

Member of the Project Team

Main Problems During the Implementation

The legal situation of the land needed for the investment latency in obtaining permits and authorizations during the bidding period.

"One of our objectives is to replace all non-operation wastewater treatment works with new regional works serving wherever possible the maximum number of agglomerations."

Member of the Project Team

The idea behind the project *was to rehabilitate key sections of the potable water networks in all urban areas identified with high losses and to rehabilitate sewer networks where are known cases of infiltration or exfiltration and poor structural integrity.*

CROSS-BORDER INNOVATION NETWORK FOR TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

CONTENT

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: ENPI CBC Programme Hungary- Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Romania, Ukraine, Hungary, Slovakia
Applicant: Ukraine

Total Investment: 264 317 EUR

EU Investment: 237 885 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim was to create the innovation cross-universities network at Hungarian, Slovak, Romanian, and Ukrainian partner Universities to establish an effective system for partnership with regional enterprises and start to transfer Universities technologies into the market.

Background

During the project, have been organized one training workshop (RO), two Summer Schools (UA and HU), four technological fairs (SK, HU, UA, RO) and a dissemination conference (SK).

LESSONS LEARNED

With excellent cooperation of the partner's Universities, the project CONTENT ensured an exchange of good practices.

"During the project, the partner from UA created with the collaboration of other partners a new web-portal and the new cooperation links among partners were established."

Member of the RO Project Team

Main Problems During the Implementation

There were not many obstacles during the project, but the challenge was sometimes just a technical issue, such as personal meetings with the Ukrainian partner (visa problems). In order to solve this problem solutions have always been found.

"The biggest added value is a link between researchers and enterprises, so the experiences of research can meet the enterprise's needs."

Member of the RO Project Team

The idea behind the project *was to facilitate technology transfer in the cross-border region and ensure that the targeted partner Universities are in positions to offer new technologies, which are on the changing needs of the cross-border regional enterprises.*

Examples

Slovakia

PURCHASE OF ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY LOW-FLOOR BUSES

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Integrated Infrastructure

Programming Period: 2014 - 2020

Countries: Slovakia

Total Investment: 6 735 916 EUR

EU Investment: 6 399 120 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim of the project was to modernise the bus fleet by purchasing the three-axle low-floor buses and electric buses. The other aim of the project was to increase comfort of passengers and attractiveness of the public transport and to reduce emissions of substances and noise that are harmful to the environment.

Background

The project aims to complete and modernize the bus fleet by environment-friendly low-floor buses. The purchase of 9 buses, 18 meters long, diesel and complying with the strictest emission standards, and 9 electric buses represents a new, innovative and modernizing trend of transport with the emphasis on the increase of passengers´ comfort and reduction of negative effects of transport on the environment.

LESSONS LEARNED

The project realization permits to continue in building an integrated transport system in the city of Košice.

„The bus drivers will also profit from modern vehicles because they will reduce the number of defects or dropped connections during passengers transport, and thus also the number of conflict situations. The bus carrier will profit mainly by the increased sales, higher reliability, lower costs of operation and maintenance of new vehicles compared to the old vehicles replaced.“

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

During the implementation there were no issues that could have threatened the completion of the project.

„In synergy with other projects handled currently in the area of urban transportation of Košice, the project boosts the development of modern transport systems in passenger transport. In addition, it ensures the proportional development of particular types of transport and enhancement of transport safety.“

Member of the Project Team

The idea behind the project *was to improve passenger comfort, operational fluidity and speed of transport.*

SMALL PROJECTS FUND

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Interreg Cooperation Programme V-A Slovakia - Hungary

Programming Period: 2014 - 2020

Countries: Slovakia, Hungary

Total Investment: 7 332 186 EUR

EU Investment: 6 232 558 EUR

Principal Objective

The main objective of the Small Projects Fund (SPF) is to strengthen the social cohesion of cross-border regions by supporting the local level cooperation and thus improve the long-term collaboration between actors on both sides of border.

Background

Within programming period 2014 – 2020 of the European Union, the cohesion policy is a fundamental investment instrument in order to support central priorities of the Union as provided for in Europe 2020 strategy, i.e. a strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and related targets. The European territorial co-operation is one of targets of the cohesion policy and concurrently a frame for the co-operation on internal borders of the European Union.

LESSONS LEARNED

The implementation of SPF enables to support small-size projects.

„Within Small Project Fund, supported are activities tending to the development of cross-border collaboration and creation of new links between subjects of cross-border areas such as cultural exchange, human resources, planning and development studies, economic development, environment, tourism and communication."

Member of the Project Team

Main Problems During the Implementation

The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Via Carpatia has not so far had experience in implementing a similar project. Before starting the implementation the SPF management documentation was also missing so the documents had to be prepared by SPF projects managers. All the changes during the preparation of the call and also after the call have had to be approved byMonitoring Committee of SPF. This slows down the whole process of project implementation.

The idea behind the project *is to create a possibility for applicants with limited financial resources and so to help them implement their project ideas.*

„Within SPF the decision power is delegated to the regional level, consequently, this may have a positive impact on the development of regions concerned."

Member of the Project Team

TRANSFER OF KNOW-HOW TO ENSURE BETTER CARE FOR CYSTIC FIBROSIS PATIENTS IN ZAKARPATSKA REGION

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: ENPI CBC Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Slovakia-Ukraine

Total Investment: 121 152 EUR

EU Investment: 99 999 EUR

Lead Partner: Slovak Cystic Fibrosis Association (SCFA)

Principal Objective

The main goal of the project was to improve the quality of life of patients with cystic fibrosis and their families, in the Zakarpatska region of Ukraine.

Background

Cystic fibrosis is a rare hereditary disease that shortens the patient's life and has a major impact on the daily quality of patient's life and their families.

In order to improve the quality of life of patients has been organized three workshops in the area of education of professionals and family members, one in Košice and two in Ukraine, all with the participation of top professionals.

During the project were also purchased flutters and nebulizers for CF patients and Chest Vest for Slovak Hospital. For the Ukrainian Hospital were purchased Sweat test machine, Spirometer, pulsoxymeter and other equipment.

LESSONS LEARNED

Thanks to better treatment and care, the life of cystic fibrosis patient can be prolonged...

"Knowledge acquired by experts in diagnostics, treatment and rehabilitation, which we handed over to experts in the Transcarpathian region, are permanent."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

The Slovak Association of Cystic Fibrosis is a patient organization having limited personnel and financial capacities.
The project's initiator was a Ukrainian partner but nevertheless, there were some communication problems. The reason was the lack of knowledge of the English language and insufficient experience with similar projects.
Repeatedly travelling to Ukraine due to invalid visa of the partner representatives increased project preparation costs.

"For parents, our effort was to make them aware of day-to-day care, focusing on home care, rehabilitation, exercise, activities and eating."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *is to increase the professional skills and knowledge of physicians, physiotherapists and medical staff in the area of diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation.*

Examples

Slovenia

CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR SPACE SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGIES

SPACE-SI

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Strengthening Regional Development Potentials

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Slovenia

Total Investment: 9 254 218 EUR

EU Investment: 7 866 085 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim of the project was to develop a complete Earth observation system that includes an advanced microsatellite, ground control infrastructure, automatic satellite data processing chain, as well as a multidisciplinary laboratory for integration and testing of satellite systems and components.

Background

Research activities of SPACE-SI are focused on high resolution interactive remote sensing and formation flying missions. The data sources from small satellite missions have been combined with data from large space programs to enable frequent and cost-effective remote sensing applications.

LESSONS LEARNED

The new satellite technologies helped to raise public awareness of the ecological and socio-economic benefits that can be achieved in the region.

"There is hardly any socio-economic or environmental challenge related to monitoring of water, food production and use of natural resources in which the space-borne earth observation data is not very helpful."

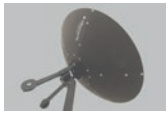
Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

In different phases, there were many different obstacles, but the main issue was financial aspect of the project. At that time, Slovenia wasn't in good financial situation, so it was very hard to get a loan from the bank.

"We developed a high precision interactive remote sensing for acquiring multispectral images and real-time HD video."

Project Coordinator



The idea behind the project *was to benefit from advantages of small satellite technologies and applications in Earth observation, meteorology and astrophysics.*

MOBILE APPLICATION FOR FARMING

MAK

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Strengthening Regional Development Potentials

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Slovenia

Total Investment: 347 821 EUR

EU Investment: 295 647 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim was to bring modern information and communications technology into agricultural sector and to create digital tools to make daily activities of farmers easier.

Background

The project first went through a preparatory phase with a prototype and test user feedback, resulting in a versatile mobile application. Combining cutting-edge technology with a user-friendly interface ensured the success of this prototype and officially launched the production.

LESSONS LEARNED

Strengthening the position of farmers with proper tools leads them to maximize profitability and to be environmentally sustainable.

"We offer farmers the cutting-edge products and services that enhance their agricultural business."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

During the project, it was found that there is a big problem with accountants. The level of knowledge of accounting services for farming was very low in Eastern Europe.

No. of Animals by FADN Categories (sheep/goats)

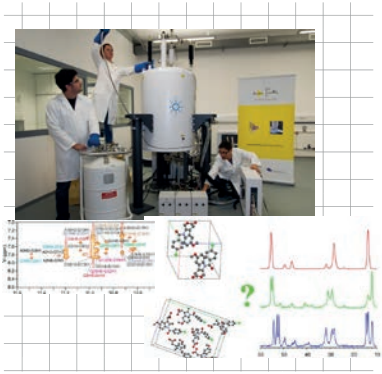
"Getting access to good advisory services for farmers ensure the sustainability of the project and increased productivity."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *was to transform innovative solutions into usable tools to enhance farmers business efficiency and to make farming simpler.*

EXCELLENT NMR - FUTURE INNOVATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE TECHNOLOGIES

EN-FIST Centre of Excellence



Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Strengthening Regional Development Potentials

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Slovenia

Total Investment: 9 970 013 EUR

EU Investment: 8 474 511 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim of the project was to support research excellence and to develop an innovative environment in high priority fields of research and technological development.

Background

EN-FIST, centre of excellence, supports research and development of companies in the fields of chemistry, biochemistry, physics, pharmacy and related interdisciplinary sciences.
Activities are directed towards development and implementation of good practices and models for cooperation with companies, which will enable the transfer of knowledge into products and services.

LESSONS LEARNED

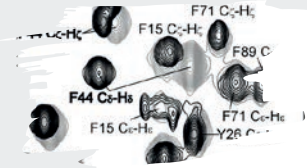
The project supports the development of energy-efficient economy and promotes low-carbon society.

"We wanted to foster deeper international relations in order to facilitate the transfer of knowledge."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

Administrative requirements were very high. However, the biggest challenge was to make research units sustainable in long term.
"We are proud that Slovenian NMR centre has been expanding its capacities and became an attractive and reliable partner in the region of Central Europe and worldwide."



"The biggest added value for the region is strengthening of research facilities and integration of efforts of academy and industry."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *was to create conditions for the best research support for companies in the field of their business and to encourage scientists and companies to work together.*

Examples

United Kingdom

GREEN AND BLUE SPACE ADAPTATION FOR URBAN AREAS AND ECO-TOWNS

GRaBS

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Interreg IVC

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: United Kingdom

Total Investment: 3 183 000 EUR

EU Investment: 2 430 000 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim of the project was to reduce the long-term vulnerability of communities in urban areas to the environmental, economic and social damage related to a changing climate, with a particular focus on incidents of flooding and heatwaves.

Background

GRaBS has brought together a network of 14 pan-European partners to explore actions and urban design solutions that put in place green and blue infrastructure such as green roofs and walls, green corridors, water bodies and sustainable drainage systems, to ensure existing and new mixed-use urban development is adapted to the impacts of a changing climate.

LESSONS LEARNED

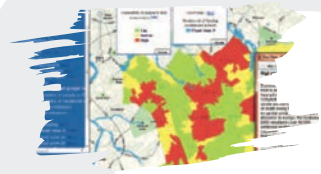
The project facilitated the exchange of knowledge and experience of good practice on climate change adaptation strategies, to local and regional authorities across Europe.

"During the study visits, partners gained a greater understanding and awareness of best practice in order to create climate-resilient urban areas and then feed this knowledge into the development of their individual Adaptation Action Plans."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

One of the problems in the UK was lack of regions. During that time the government changed and the UK didn't have any regions for planning anymore. Another obstacle was to get a political awareness or commitment.



"Through the GRaBS project, climate change adaptation has been integrated into policy at various strategic levels."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *is the fact that climate change adaptation is often focused on biodiversity and the survival of ecosystems, and too little attention has been paid to the impact of extreme weather on our towns and cities and the social and economic devastation that this can cause.*

LONDON GREEN FUND

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: United Kingdom

Total Investment: 170 000 000 EUR

EU Investment: 85 000 000 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim of the project is to support the development of green infrastructure to contribute to London's carbon reduction targets: to make London one of the world's leading low carbon capitals by 2025 and a global leader in carbon finance.

Background

The London Green Fund consists of three urban development funds targeting investment in energy efficiency, waste and greener social housing. It was set up using a 'holding fund model' and therefore did not invest directly in projects, but rather made contributions to smaller Urban Development Fund's.

LESSONS LEARNED

Having an independent Investment Board to steer the process, adjust the investment strategy and ensure sound decision-making.

"It has been important to have a mix of skills and experience at governance levels, with a combined understanding of commercial investment requirements and of economic development objectives, and for all parties to appreciate the complexities in generating (sometimes innovative) green infrastructure projects."

Member of the Project Team

Main Problems During the Implementation

A key challenge during the set up was fitting the Fund into Regulations somewhat more suited for grant support.
During implementation, the London Green Fund has had to respond to changes in the market. Interest rates during the economic crisis have been low and the public sector has been able to borrow from the Public Works Loan Board very cheaply, thereby reducing the potential market for the LGF.

"London's transition to a low carbon economy has already seen the creation of over 2 000 jobs."

Member of the Project Team

The idea behind the project *was to create a long term sustainable solution for London in order to reduce CO2 emissions by 60% by 2025 and to cut the amount of waste that ends up in landfill.*

INNOVATIVE COLLABORATION NETWORKS FOR SMART GROWTH

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Enhancing and Exploiting Innovation

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: United Kingdom

Total Investment: 1 490 000 EUR

EU Investment: 750 000 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim was to assist disadvantaged design micro-enterprises to access the competitive, global market place by encouraging innovation and collaborative networks.

Background

The project has been delivered through exploiting new media and online tools in order to support collaboration, creating smarter business models, collaborations with specialists as well as practical learning. Cross-sector collaboration between partners boosted the profile of the project and contributed directly to its success.

LESSONS LEARNED

Encouraged a vibrant community of design SMEs and created a culture of innovation, better surviving in a competitive market.

"In 2013 we incorporated the latest technology to our Hidden Art E-Shop www.hiddenartshop.co.uk linking designers and makers with design lovers worldwide."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

The biggest problem during the implementation of the project was the administrative burden of the employees in order to follow very strict rules.

"Since 1989 we have helped thousands of designers transform their passion into products and connect them with design lovers who appreciate their work."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *was a need to help crafts people at a local level to equip them with the skills to market their products locally, nationally and internationally.*

DEVELOPMENT OF A UNIT COST FOR R&D IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme for Northern Ireland

Programming Period: 2014-2020

Countries: Northern Ireland

Total Investment: 40 000 EUR

EU Investment: 20 000 EUR

Principal Objective

The key objective was to simplify the entire application, administrative and reporting process. The result is introduction of Simplified Cost Options, that streamline the accounting and verification process and reduces the chance for errors in high- volume, low-value transactions.

Background

By reducing the audit burden of managing an ERDF-funded project, it has removed a key obstacle to companies wanting to participate in R&D activity.

LESSONS LEARNED

Start early, apply sufficient dedicated resource to establishing the simplified cost options. Involve auditors as consultants from the outset.

"Do not be afraid to be bold, the benefits will far outweigh the initial efforts."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

Some uncertainty about the volume and time period of data required for analysis created a delay in finalizing and implementing the unit cost. This meant that some beneficiaries did not benefit from the simplified approach.

"The biggest added value for the regions is a much more proportionate approach to compilation and verification of claims that means that companies can get on with achieving their aims and objectives."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *was that the administrative requirements placed a disproportionate audit burden on many Northern Ireland companies, which was a disincentive to participate in ERDF-funded R&D activity.*

Examples

Spain

EUROPEAN COWORKINGS EOI

Basic Information

Fund: European Social Fund

Operational Programme: Employment, Training and Education

Programming Period: 2014-2020

Countries: Spain

Total Investment: 4 500 000 EUR

EU Investment: 80% for the less developed and in transition regions; 50% for the most developed regions

Principal Objective

The aim of the project is to promote entrepreneurship and self-employment in Spain through training and mentoring and boosting business ideas that might have an international dimension.

Background

An international business pre-acceleration program aimed at entrepreneurs that receive free training and ad-hoc mentoring, both online and in-situ at an entrepreneurship centre located in an EU member state. Once the mentoring process is finished, each entrepreneur comes up with a final Business Pitch that will present at the Wrap-up Event to an Assessment Committee. In this event panel discussions and debates among European mentors and entrepreneurs are facilitated, best mentoring practices on entrepreneurship are exchanged and lessons learned are discussed.

LESSONS LEARNED

The European Coworkings would not be possible without their European partners (entrepreneurship, innovation and acceleration centres). Thanks to the fruitful and enriching collaboration an outstanding network of European mentors has been set up.

"The European Coworkings Programme offers to the entrepreneur a personalized mentoring from international experts working in a European Innovation/ Acceleration/ Incubation centre."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

Identification of Spanish entrepreneurs with a very clear business idea in the less developed and in-transition Spanish regions with a fluent level of English.

Coordination of a 15 EU member-state network of Incubation and acceleration centres all around Europe.

Travel logistics (50 entrepreneurs, 5 weeks in the EU in 15 countries).

"Entrepreneurs must really get out of their comfort zones and dive into the local entrepreneurial ecosystem in EU regions."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *is to create a European network of mentors that can guide entrepreneurs to reinforce the international business strategy of their newly created firm or simply make their business grow as to achieve a stronger European dimension.*

VIVES EMPLEA: TEAM BUILDING FOR SOCIAL AND LABOUR INCLUSION

Basic Information

Fund: European Social Fund

Operational Programme: Employment and Social Inclusion

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Spain

Total Investment: 8 400 776 EUR

EU Investment: 5 837 473 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim was to facilitate access to the professional world of people at risk of social and labour exclusion by improving their employability and labour skills.

Background

The economic crisis has hit Spain hard, especially for those who already face the challenges of poverty and social exclusion. Knowing that these challenges are influenced by factors such as employment, education, housing and health, the Vives Emplea project, has responded with a model that increases the employability of that portion of the population most at risk of social exclusion. At the core of the methodology is the belief that individuals are more likely to succeed when working together with other people from similar backgrounds.

LESSONS LEARNED

Transformation of society due to a new way to address the unemployment situation, a new methodology with very positive results and high social impact.

"Vives Emplea is a program with an innovative methodology based on the team as the core of support for the job searching activity."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

"We strongly believe in the results and impact of our project, but sometimes to gain the trust from the entity that supports the development of the project takes time.
We collaborate with local entities in order to have a space to develop the project, but sometimes, due to changes in their space planning, we have had to change the location of the project quickly. This is why we always try to multiply and diversify our alliances at the local level, in order to have other alternatives."

The idea behind the project *was to promote the personal and professional development of the participants improving their social skills and labour competencies and to create networks and synergies to facilitate processes of change.*

"Participants strengthened their personal, social and work skills in order to change their lives, to choose the path they want to follow and to act to achieve their goals."

Project Coordinator

MITTIC: MODERNIZATION AND TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION BASED ON ICT IN STRATEGIC AND TRADITIONAL SECTORS

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Cross Border Cooperation Spain – Portugal

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Spain, Portugal

Total Investment: 1 609 581 EUR

EU Investment: 1 207 186 EUR

Principal Objective

The MITTIC project has aimed to incorporate technological innovation in strategic and traditional economic sectors of the southwest of the Iberian Peninsula. Specifically, the areas covered by the project are the regions of Extremadura, in Spain and Alentejo and Central Region in Portugal, where agriculture, forestry, ranching and agri-food have a huge economical and social weight.

Background

The project has been coordinated by the Center for Scientific and Technological Research (CICYTEX), and has involved eleven partners. A set of several innovative proposals and tools is the main products of the project results. All of them mainly focused in traditional and characteristic products of these Spanish-Portuguese regions, such as products of the pastureland (acorns, meat products, cork); oils; fruits and vegetables.

LESSONS LEARNED

The creation of a web platform for the knowledge of biomass resources in the regions of Extremadura and Alentejo has facilitated the increasing demand of biomass as an energy source.

"During the project the open source software application based on QR codes technology have been developed for the fruit, cork and natural stone industry. Its use allows a better management of these products traceability, giving information from its origin to the final purchase by the consumers."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

The economic structure in the area reveals a poorly diversified economy and not intensive capital industries, where agriculture, forestry, ranching and agri-food have a huge economic and social weight and are their main economic activities with small and medium enterprises as their principal actors.

"Very good cooperation between institutions of Spain and Portugal has allowed joining efforts to solve common problems, in a multidisciplinary and integrative way and, on the other hand, conducting performances of high economic impact and applicability in the productive sectors."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *is to provide technological user-friendly solutions that can be used by farmers and companies to optimize production processes, to improve the marketing of their products or to increase the information given to consumers about their products origin and quality.*

Examples

Sweden

INFRAGREEN

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Sweden-Norway

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Sweden

Total Investment: 291 700 EUR

EU Investment: 163 550 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim of the project was to develop a fast charging infrastructure to facilitate electric vehicles traffic.

Background

The project promoted the cross-border knowledge exchange of electromobility and biogas as a fuel for vehicles in Sweden and Norway. Norway was a leader in electric vehicles and Sweden in biogas.
During the project 122 16A chargers were installed, 14 fast charging points, and 2 compressed biogas-fuelling stations. Within the 2 years of duration of the project 15 workshops and seminars were organized.

LESSONS LEARNED

A very important element was to build know-how and to support each other.

"Testing is essential to start to believe, so the municipalities were offered a free trial of electric vehicles for a month."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

The technology was new, so some of the fast chargers didn't work initially. Another problem was the lack of electric car models at the start of the project.

"The biggest success factor was timing. The project has started exactly at the right time."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *was to make a more environmentally friendly road link between Sweden and Norway.*

SCANDTICK

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Öresund - Kattegat - Skagerrak

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Sweden

Total Investment: 1 869 143 EUR

EU Investment: 515 350 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim of the project was to promote the cross-border cooperation in the field of health and to fight the incidence and spread of Tick-borne infections.

Background

The project brought together partners from Sweden, Denmark and Norway in order to compile, review and evaluate diagnostic methods used to detect Tick-borne Encephalitis and Lyme disease, as well as a prevalence survey of infected ticks.

LESSONS LEARNED

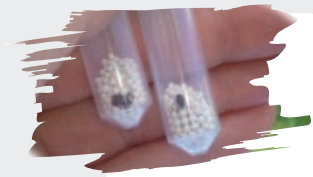
Awareness of Tick-borne diseases in the population has increased vaccination.

"Tick-borne diseases are increasing and in general, the bacteria and viruses don't respect any border, so it was very easy for everyone to understand the importance of the project."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

One of the obstacles were different law regulations in the partner countries. Other obstacles were, for example, using completely different diagnostic methods for Tick-borne Encephalitis among the countries.



"Some people are not taking this disease seriously."

Professor, Clinical Microbiology

The idea behind the project *was to improve the implementation of preventive measures and to formulate the sustainable ways of sharing information on tick-borne diseases.*

SMART GREEN REGION MID SCANDINAVIA

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Sweden-Norway

Programming Period: 2014-2020

Countries: Sweden

Total Investment: 3 644 000 EUR

EU Investment: 1 134 000 EUR

Principal Objective

The aim of the project was to help strengthen the competitiveness of SMEs by promoting entrepreneurship, developing business models and facilitate the creation of new innovative environments across the border.

Background

The project is a joint venture between the three cities of Sundsvall, Östersund and Trondheim. It facilitates travelling from coast to coast with transport based on sustainable energy, including charging infrastructure and filling stations for biogas.
Smart Green Region Mid Scandinavia contained three parts: a fossil fuel free transport corridor "Green Highway", the northernmost pilgrim trail in the world "Saint Olav's Way" and "Ski Region".

LESSONS LEARNED

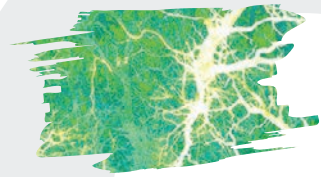
The Interreg projects can constitute a constructive, transparent and neutral platform for collaborations between public sector and private enterprises and even for dialogue between potential competitors in identifying mutual comprehensive goals when the market is still new and immature and thereby facilitating its evolvement, without losing the element of competition.

"The project has emerged as one of the flagships of the Interreg Sweden-Norway program in the previous years."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

The uncertainties regarding the long term market conditions, mainly due to a slow and/or repressive legislative process from a national level as well as the European Union, has been and still is a vast obstacle for the transformation to a fossil free transport sector in the region. Small and mid-sized enterprises are well aware and ready for change, but margins and risks are often too high in order to make secured strategic investments.



"The development of three strong brands, that points out to some of this region's core strengths, and the results based on collaboration between municipalities, small and mid-sized enterprises and other project partners show that even remote sparsely populated parts of the European Union can, through dedicated collaboration, achieve great things that echo far beyond the regions borders."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *was to connect regions across the border and to create the best conditions for an economically strong region with an attractive living environment.*

Examples

Italy

STRUCTURAL INVESTMENTS TO IMPROVE THE PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM IN SICILY:

MEDITERRANEAN INSTITUTE FOR ORGAN TRANSPLANTATIONS AND HIGHLY SPECIALISED THERAPIES

ISMETT IRCCS

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Sicily

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Italy

Total Investment: 17 583 417 EUR

EU Investment: 10 720 922 EUR

Principal Objective

The overall objective was to upgrade and expand the facility of the Mediterranean Institute for organ transplantations and highly specialized therapies (ISMETT), which is part of the regional public healthcare system and a registered national research institute. Two adjacent buildings have been linked to the original hospital. The first is transformed in a modern outpatient clinic with diagnostic services. The second is equipped with new beds for adult and pediatric patients and connected by a futuristic bridge. The hospital bed capacity increased from 78 to 114.

Background

Healthcare services in Italy are in general at a good level, however between the North and the South the availability of modern equipment and the access to highly specialized services show profound regional differences.

LESSONS LEARNED

With a great teamwork, the Institute has been able to succeed in realizing a high-level technological upgrade and the expansion of working area, in a region where public works often do not meet the expectations or simply fail.

"The hospital has got the accreditation from Joint Commission International, one of the most advanced accreditation systems for hospital quality and safety, since 2009, among the first in southern Italy – The new areas have been inspected in 2018."

Project Leader

Main Problems During the Implementation

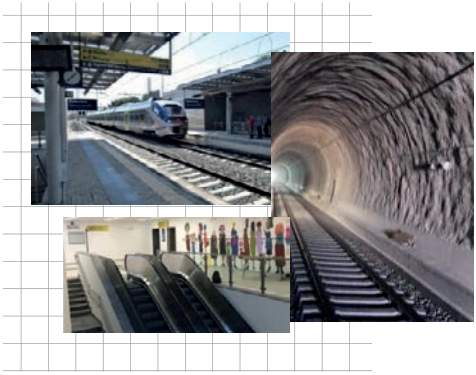
The biggest problem was to manage the interference of massive works with the clinical service of a 100% operating hospital. The effort of both technical and clinical staff has been challenging, but successful.

"Thanks to ISMETT, Sicilian patients affected by solid organ failure can receive high-quality care and transplants in their own region, since 1999, without having to go to northern Italy or abroad."

Senior Physician

The idea behind the project *was the need to sustain and enhance public health systems in southern regions of Italy.*

NEW DOUBLE-TRACK RAILWAY LINE LINKS PALERMO-CARINI



Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Sicily

Programming Period: 2007-2013

Countries: Italy

Total Investment: 294 000 000 EUR

EU Investment: 210 886 331 EUR

Principal Objective

The project concerns the connection between Palermo and the international airport Falcone-Borsellino through an electrified double-track railway, to be mainly realized running along existing single-track sections, partly overground and partly underground, and also the modernization and the implementation of technological systems along the line and station.

Background

The track forms part of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) railway line which runs through Berlin and Rome to Palermo in order to upgrade infrastructure across Europe.

LESSONS LEARNED

Upgrading of the transport infrastructure helps movement of goods and services through all EU Member States.

"The new double track railway line increases capacity and heralds cleaner urban transport."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

The most important obstacle was the bureaucracy, especially to get authorization from the local authorities, not technical issues.
From the financial point of view, it is hard to respect the timetable in order to get another part of the grant. The major problem is the coordination of the parts involved.

"The project created about 3 000 jobs during the implementation phase."

Member of the Project Team

The idea behind the project *was originally to link the airport with the city but also to contribute to the mobility in the town and large metropolitan area.*

NEW PUBLIC TRANSPORT LINK TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY IN PALERMO

Basic Information

Fund: European Regional Development Fund

Operational Programme: Sicily

Programming Period: 2014-2023

Countries: Italy

Total Investment: 476 314 157 EUR

EU Investment: 461 787 651 EUR

Principal Objective

The project consists of two main objectives. The first is to reduce urban congestion in the municipality and the second is to increase cycling and pedestrian mobility as well as the use of the tram.

Background

It is necessary to intervene on the infrastructural system of the cycle paths and the tram network as well as to carry out an adequate restructuring of public road transport and increase the use of underground car parks.

LESSONS LEARNED

It is necessary to protect the public health and the historical and monumental artistic patrimony of the city from the aggression of the polluting elements emitted by the private cars from the factories and the conditioning systems.

"In recent years, Palermo is trying to grow in the field of sustainable mobility."

Project Coordinator

Main Problems During the Implementation

The opening of construction sites in most parts of the city will be a serious problem for mobility as well as the generation of polluting powders and noise produced by the equipment.

"To help develop sustainable mobility in Palermo, we want to create and build a network of cycle paths, especially in the historic city center, which is able to work with the new tram network system under construction and in addition ensure maximum safety to pedestrians."

Project Coordinator

The idea behind the project *was to promote "environmentally friendly" mode of transport and reduce the number of cars, traffic congestions and engine emissions.*

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Annex No. 1

The Member States of the European Union and the year of the origin of their membership

Belgium	1958
Bulgaria	2007
Czech Republic	2004
Croatia	2013
Cyprus	2004
Denmark	1973
Estonia	2004
Finland	1995
France	1958
Greece	1981
The Netherlands	1958
Ireland	1973
Lithuania	2004
Latvia	2004
Luxembourg	1958
Hungary	2004
Malta	2004
Germany	1958
Poland	2004
Portugal	1986
Austria	1995
Romania	2007
Slovakia	2004
Slovenia	2004
Spain	1986
United Kingdom	1973
Sweden	1995
Italy	1958

Annex No. 2

Example of good practice

European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Via Carpatia

The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Via Carpatia with limited liability

The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Via Carpatia with limited liability (hereinafter only "Via Carpatia RGTC") was established in 2013. Via Carpatia EGTC was based on valid and effective national and European legislation and is a natural result of cooperation between two border regions lying on the eastern border between Slovakia and Hungary which combine common historical and cultural-linguistic traditions. More than 1.5 million inhabitants live on this territory with an area of approximately 14,000 km². The Košice Self-governing Region (Slovakia) and The Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County Government (Hungary) became the founding members of Via Carpatia EGTC.

"Via Carpatia combines historical and cultural-linguistic traditions."

The founders of Via Carpatia EGTC have concluded a Framework Agreement on Cooperation between the regional self-governments in the field of economic development, tourism evelopment, development of transport and information infrastructure and the environment. The representatives of both regions have expressed an interest in the continuous deepening of this cooperation, also with the help of the new European Union Instrument for Strengthening Cohesion and Cooperation of Border Regions, in the form of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC).

Via Carpatia EGTC was established to facilitate and support cross-border, trans-national, and interregional cooperation between its members in order to strengthen economic, social and territorial cohesion, notably through the implementation of cross-border cooperation. The tasks entrusted

to Via Carpatia EGTC by its members do not concern the exercise of the powers conferred by public law or obligations to ensure the general interests of the State or the protection of the general public interest of other public authorities such as regulatory powers, justice and foreign policy.

Via Carpatia EGTC is a legal entity operating on the basis of Regulation EC No 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council on European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation and Act No. 90/2008 Coll. on European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation and on amendment to Act No. 540/2001 Coll. on State Statistics as amended. In matters relating to Via Carpatia EGTC, Slovak law is applicable.

"Via Carpatia EGTC is established for an indefinite period. The Via Carpatia EGTC territory represents an administrative system of its members."

The core tasks of Via Carpatia EGTC include advisory-consulting activities in the field of regional development. This includes, in particular preparation and supporting the development of strategic and developmental documents, the preparation and implementation of joint projects to achieve the objectives of joint development strategies, support for the implementation of cross-border cooperation programs financed by the European Union, support for integration in transport, environmental protection, social services and others.

Since its origin, Via Carpatia EGTC has also focused on supporting small and medium-sized enterprises, promoting and preservation of the common natural, cultural and historic heritage of the Košice Self-governing Region and the Boršod-

Abaúj-Zemplén County Government and promoting cross-border cooperation between public and private entities from the border areas.

Via Carpatia EGTC is mainly financed by membership contributions from its members. Business activities are carried out as a supplementary activity directly related to the support of local players and their involvement in development projects. Via Carpatia EGTC is actively involved in various grant schemes.

Activities of Via Carpatia EGTC

Via Carpatia EGTC has from its origin been implementing several projects co-financed by the Slovak Republic, the Republic of Hungary or the European Union and actively engages in activities and interventions to support regional development on the territory of its members.

Since its establishment, it has successfully implemented four projects focusing in particular on building up its administrative and technical capacities, promoting the skills of its employees, and promoting networks between regional and local players. In addition, Via Carpatia EGTC participated in the creation of project documentation for selected sections of EuroVelo 11 and Zemplín Cycle Route in the Košice Self-governing Region, but also in building a partnership within the Via Carpatia thematic route. It has implemented a successful forum for searching project partners and several thematic routes. It is actively involved in the preparation of a strategy for managing the silver economy on the territory of the Košice Self-governing Region and analysing the needs of the aging generation.

At present, Via Carpatia EGTC oversees the Small Projects Fund within the Interreg V-A Slovak Republic – Hungary

program. The Small Projects Fund represents a tool to support smaller scale projects at a regional level. The main objective of the Small Projects Fund is to strengthen the economic, social and territorial cohesion of border regions by promoting cooperation at the local level, and to improve long-term cooperation between actors on both sides of the border. Within the Small Projects Fund, actions are being promoted in particular to develop cross-border cooperation and to create new links between entities in border territories in areas such as culture, human resources, strategic documents, economic development, environment, tourism and communications. The Small Projects Fund is implemented under the two priority axes of Interreg V-A Slovak Republic – Hungary program, namely:

- PO1 – Nature and Culture
- PO4 – Support of cross-border cooperation between public administration authorities and persons living in the border regions

The aim of these priority axes is to promote the sustainable development of local economies, to increase and improve social, economic and territorial cohesion by promoting common activities in the area of culture, nature conservation and increasing the number of visitors in the territorial area of the program. Furthermore, strengthening cross-border cooperation between citizens and enhancing live cross-border exchange of experiences, improving institutional capacities and strengthening interest in cross-border activities, better mutual understanding, increasing the number of long-term (institutionalized) partnerships and a high number of common sustainable events and activities related to a bigger part of the program territory, as well as improving bilingualism within the region.

Via Carpatia EGTC is also implementing a project to promote dissemination of information on EU cohesion policy.

Project activities focus on dissemination of information on EU cohesion policy, its history, development, and legislative and political framework, with an emphasis on the results achieved in EU regions. The dissemination tools include a book, video, infographics and a pilot test of innovative competition. The outputs will be translated into several official languages of the EU and into Russian.

From 2019, Via Carpatia EGTC will be involved in implementing three cross-border cooperation projects aimed at (1) promoting employment and strengthening the local economy, (2) improving the innovative capacities of peripheral urban centres of the Central Europe by introducing a circular economy system into partner cities and (3) preparing a toolkit with practical guidance on how to involve seniors and businesses in user-focused and open innovation.

ISBN 978-80-99926-05-0