



E12 Atlantica Transport

Long-term sustainable cross-border collaboration model

E12 Atlantica Transport (E12AT) has established an approach for long-term sustainable cross-border collaboration within transport and infrastructure development in the Botnia Atlantica region. In cooperation with the Interreg project E12 Atlantica BA3NET (BA3NET), E12AT have described and compared the national infrastructure planning and prioritization processes in Norway, Sweden and Finland. The purpose is to examine whether these nationally oriented processes in themselves constitute border barriers. The findings have been compiled and communicated to the Transport agencies in Norway, Sweden and Finland. Several case studies have been carried out in order to reinforce the partners' connections to regional business life and improve the awareness of commercial and industrial transport and infrastructure needs.

The programme-specific target for the priority axis Transport says: Increasing amount of strategies for sustainable east-west transport links.

E12 Atlantica Transport has promoted this programme-specific target in four steps.

- Cross-border analysis of the transport systems in the BA region
- Cross-border traffic strategy for joint priorities
- Cross-border collaboration form for sustainable collaboration
- Examining and communicating the preconditions for cross-border infrastructure planning

Overall objectives and expected results

The project's objective is to strengthen the BA region's international competitiveness and create conditions for regional growth based on sustainable solutions, according to the requirements and needs of the business actors and the inhabitants. The project shall contribute to continued development of the E12 east-west transport route between Helgeland/Mo i Rana (Norway) – Umeå (Sweden) – Vaasa (Finland) by creating conditions for a functional, efficient and environmentally



friendly transport system for people and goods, based on advanced multimodal nodes and links. A long-term goal is to obtain the TEN-T Core status for the route.

Expected results

- Identify shortcomings, border barriers and development opportunities
- Develop cross-border traffic strategy
- Build up know-how about infrastructure planning, from a cross-border perspective
- Reinforce relations between actors at various levels within transport and logistics
- Invent, compare and suggest organizational structure for future collaboration
- Annual arena for cross-border collaboration in business life and transports
- Case studies in cooperation with business actors
- Suggest forms for the administration and possession of the existing goods database

Results

The E12AT approach for long-term sustainable cross-border collaboration is based on the implemented four steps. The approach creates a solid foundation in order to strengthen long-term regional competitiveness related to necessary infrastructure investments which, in turn, aims at establishing efficient transport solutions for passenger and freight transports.

The system analysis highlights shortcomings along the E12 transport system which need to be addressed in the long and in the short term, on the basis of the partners' objectives for the transport system and its actual functionality.

The traffic strategy is based on the results obtained in the system analysis and summarises joint priorities for the measures in the transport systems as well as important development projects in the future. This creates a joint long-term ambition and will as of how the transport system should be developed in order to meet the region's transport demands and the desired societal development. The strategy points out three priority domains for collaboration: Transport and infrastructure development, Cross-border infrastructure planning, and Social sustainability. A strategy gives sustainability and independence from the persons involved, which was earlier lacking



both in the case of officials and politicians. Clear-cut, long-term and well-founded joint priorities provide reassurance and thereby a competitive advantage towards other regions, in the race for meagre investment resources, which are of crucial importance for the region. Further, the strategy provides a clear picture of the partnership region, its strengths and weaknesses, and thereby helps reach a well-founded understanding of the need for cross-border collaboration. In addition, the partners' ambitions become transparent and visible for new cooperation partners and external players at regional, national and international levels.

Together with BA3NET, the project has documented the prerequisites for cross-border infrastructure planning which is based upon the national processes for infrastructure planning and prioritization of measures in the transport system. The purpose is to examine whether the national infrastructure planning processes as such present a border barrier out of a Nordic perspective. The findings suggest that current shortcomings in collaboration between the transport agencies in Norway, Sweden and Finland and in existing prioritization processes create a permanent competitive disadvantages for the border regions. There is a need to clarify the assignments of the national transport authorities with a Nordic perspective, which aims at creating developed decision making bases for prioritization, arenas for negotiations and new financing options, thus creating equitable conditions for cross-border infrastructure. The project results have aroused a lot of interest in the Nordic Council and other cross-border committees, and an expressed will to continue collaboration on this issue.

Long-term sustainable cross-border collaboration sets high demands on an administrative platform which finances and facilitates collaboration. E12AT has investigated and compared various European collaboration platforms and finally proposed European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) as the platform of cooperation that best suits the partnerships intentions. EGTC is sanctioned by the European Union, as a tool for the partners' future collaboration and allows



agreement options for both financing and other forms for collaboration in a structured manner.

Three Nordic fora have been arranged during this process. In 2016 a Motorways of the Sea conference, in 2017 workshops in Vaasa on future collaboration, and on 14–15 March, 2018, E12AT's final conference where the project results were reported and discussed.

All in all, E12AT presents an approach to cross-border collaboration which is unique in its kind and fulfils the partnership's expected project results. The approach is founded on the partners' joint vision for societal development and provides a coherent understanding from vision to measures in the transport systems as well as enables the use of indicators in order to follow up the region's development. The approach helps solve prior challenges, e.g. dependency on the persons involved and the funding of collaboration. The project's leverables can be used independently or all together in the overall approach. Consequently, the partners can choose to implement the project results in their operation step by step or as a whole.

Good practices and unexpected results

The processes leading to the partners' system analysis and traffic strategy have focused on inclusion. It has been put into practice so that employees from the partners' organisations have been highly involved in the project's work processes. Thereby it has been possible to achieve permanent improvement in the know-how of infrastructure planning and a joint understanding of the importance of east-west collaboration. One key factor is the unusually large number of beneficiaries in E12AT. The possibility to finance participation in the project activities and the inclusion approach have made it possible to improve the know-how and understanding of the project within the partnership, but it also means that the partners can continually benefit from this improved know-how after the project as their employees will return to their regular jobs. Another key factor for the successful results in the traffic strategy is the integration of equality in the work process. This integration of equality can be described in four steps:

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- Identity the right competence
 - Integrate the competence in the entire process
 - Create know-how and increase awareness
 - Include the results of the process as a natural part of operations

In the case of E12AT, the gender equality officer of the City of Umeå in Sweden was incorporated in the entire work process. In practice, this contribution consisted of knowledge transfer and active participation. An obvious gap in knowledge regarding the integration of the equality aspect in the infrastructure planning process was remedied through a research seminar which was arranged in Umeå, Sweden on 17 October, 2017, as an extension within the project. The applied equality integration process produced a direct result as social sustainability is one of the three collaboration subdomains in the traffic strategy. It is also important to highlight positive indirect effects of the successful equality integration, e.g. changes in group dynamics and innovative thinking about the effects of infrastructure in a social perspective which in the case of this project resulted in a shift of thought towards social development where infrastructure becomes an enabler instead of being an end as such. Questions such as: Who benefits from infrastructure? Whose labour markets are influenced by new investments in infrastructure? were made visible in order to understand better the effects created when the transport system undergoes changes.

The project has continually communicated its processes and results. A particularly happy side effect in the dialogue process on the importance of cross-border infrastructure planning emerged by itself through the fact that E12AT gathered representatives from the national traffic and transport agencies. It became quite obvious that cross-border exchange between national participants is today very limited and several participants clearly expressed the advantages of meeting up with colleagues from other countries and were interested in having a close collaboration across national boundaries. Thus, an unexpected result emerged just by gathering the representatives of a shared issue in the same room. Personal relationships and shared



know-how among relevant actors are important prerequisites in creating a functional Nordic transport system.

During the course of the project, E12AT has cooperated with several other cross-border EU projects, e.g. NSB Core and Tentacle. This collaboration has included participation in joint workshops, exchange of knowledge and participation in E12AT's final conference. These established relationships have also resulted in that the partnership have been invited to participate in the planned BSR ACCESS project which, among others, aims at incorporating social planning more clearly in the transport corridor perspective. Collaboration with the Nordic Council, the Nordic Council of Ministers and other cross-border committees have resulted in a joint address about the importance of cross-border infrastructure planning, to be presented at Almedalen Week in Sweden in 2018.