

Integrated planning along corridors

The survey 'Integrated planning along corridors' is part of the Group of Activities 2.2 in the **BSR Access project platform** co-funded by the Baltic Sea Region Programme. The survey was targeted to cooperation projects, networks and other platforms that coordinate collaboration and communication of stakeholders of transnational transport development (later called 'collaboration networks'). Total 14 collaboration networks that fulfilled the criteria were identified. Collaboration groups that have a mandate by law were not part of the survey. The survey form was sent to the collaboration networks in September 2019 (test run) and October 2019 (full scale) and it resulted 12 responses out of 14 by the end of 2019. The survey report by Wiktor **Szydarowski** at Ramboll, commissioned by Kvarken Council, was published in spring 2020 and is available at

https://www.uudenmaanliitto.fi/files/24774/BSR_Access_Integrated_planning_along_corridors_survey_results_GoA_2.2.pdf

This summary of the survey report is prepared by Malla Paajanen Consulting, subcontracted by Ramboll, for the dissemination webinar on October 21, 2020 hosted by Kvarken Council. The aim of the webinar is to discuss development trajectories for initiatives on integrated planning along transport corridors and draw some policy conclusions.

The survey covers the following collaboration networks (in alphabetical order):

1. Association of the Polish Regions on the Baltic-Adriatic Corridor
2. Barents Euro-Arctic Transport Area (BEATA)
3. Brenner Corridor Platform
4. Central European Initiative
5. Central European Transport Corridor – European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (CETC-EGTC)
6. EGTC Rhine-Alpine
7. EWTCA (East-West Transport Corridor Association)
8. Fin-Est Link
9. Kvarken Council
10. Oslo-Stockholm 2.55 AB
11. Scandria Alliance
12. TRITIA (EGTC)

Organisation of cooperation

The geographical area of networks typically covers cross-border regions between two countries and/or transnational collaboration. The rationale for the joint action often aims at better interregional mobility and cross-border economic convergence through new transport links. The collaboration networks also seek for a higher involvement in corridor investments in order to ensure the highest



possible spatial and regional benefits. Organisations that are members in collaboration networks often operate on several cooperation platforms simultaneously, both temporary and permanent.

The collaboration networks take different forms ranging from a temporary EU-funded or another project format to multilateral permanent collaboration contracts, for instance as associations. The collaboration networks involve themselves typically in various forms of joint actions and joint planning processes and in some cases also joint lobbying. European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) has proven an efficient collaboration format, as the EGTC format increases clarity and visibility of the collaboration network.

Benefits of cooperation

Participants in collaboration networks consider learning and exchanging new knowledge on challenges and solutions of high value. By joint action the participants gain broader and multi-sectorial scope of action and a wider geographical coverage. Through the collaboration network the participants gain a stronger and more visible body to push at national and EU levels those issues that have high local/regional importance. A collaboration network can motivate its members to commit themselves to long-term cooperation by providing them with a more extensive contact networks than they would possess alone. Collaboration networks bring a stronger voice in decision-making to their members and higher efficiency through joint action.

Collaboration networks allow for an opportunity to collaborate with similar interest organisations all over Europe and globally. EGTC has proven an efficient organisation structure and the EGTC Platform founded by the Committee of the Regions offers a valuable access to peer data. Among the survey data, there were three already existing EGTCs and one serious EGTC initiative in process.

A collaboration network provides its members with an opportunity to participate in EU projects as a single entity representing its stakeholders. It allows for an integrated and need-based approach to transport and regional development, yielding increased efficiency.

Communication

Communication forms the external contact surface of collaboration networks to their wider stakeholder environment. The following communication methods were mentioned among the most important ones:

- Active and ambitious organisation of international events, such as seminars and conferences that bring together decision-makers, professionals, practitioners and media. Some events were organised with high-impact global organisations, such as OECD and UN.
- Series of targeted meetings between local and national stakeholders. For instance, young EGTCs considered this important to gain acceptance and importance.
- Writing of a communication strategy and action plan followed by forming of a dedicated communication expert group and communication manager. The communication strategy should



serve the existing partnership but also seek for an enlargement. A communications team was considered as the first element towards building a secretariat (or similar).

- Active participation both in policy-making and operative development work. Many organisations belong simultaneously in several projects and collaboration networks and these are rarely considered rivals in a negative sense.
- Fast and reactive communications in passive and social media, preferably on daily basis.

Success factors

The best feedback of collaboration networks came from members who had encountered continuity, commitment and relevance. Also simplicity, flexibility and non-bureaucratic way of conducting activities were appreciated. At best, collaboration networks keep their members as dedicated contributors to joint action and in this manner offer space for inspiration between members and external stakeholders. However, an open operative policy requires a clear mandate and decision-making structure. Political support, both internal and external, that is based on evidence and fact-finding is important in order to gain trust. Although communication with external stakeholders was underlined the role of internal communications was considered valuable for motivation and for a clear distribution of roles.

Eventually, a collaboration network can gain additional efficiency by organising itself with a coordination unit and dedicated personnel. Such a task force or secretariat, however, requires a permanent vision and dedication by the partnership. For a collaboration network that operates on a high level of ambition and on a wide spectrum ranging from local, national and EU-levels, a secretariat (or similar) was regarded a wise investment in systematic growth in contents, political influence and leverage.

