Feedback on experiences (so far) in developing the 2014-2020 2 Seas Programme: main challenges and solutions found

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Brussels
State of Play: developing the future 2 Seas Programme

A long process: **17 meetings** of the Programme Preparation Group held (to date)!

- An extended geographical area (addition of new Dutch areas)
- An increased budget (latest figure: total budget is 252 M€ of ERDF / + **50%** compared to the 2007 – 2013 Programme)
- A stabilised Programme strategy (4 T.Os, 4 I.Ps and 6 S.Os)
- Public consultation finalised
Continuing the 2 Seas Programme as it was?

In 2012, the European Commission recommended to merge the 2 Seas and the France (Channel) England Programme.

Discussions between Member States as to merge the two Programmes or keep them separate: in order to take an evidence-based decision, MS decided to conduct a joint socio-economic analysis (2012 – 2013).

⇒ MS decided to maintain both Programmes with their current zones. A strong message was given to ensure strong coordination and harmonisation between them.
Main challenges while defining the Programme strategy (1)

→ Difficulty to have a clear and shared definition of intended result for the different S.Os
- Organisation of a “visioning workshop” (coordinated by INTERACT) in May 2013
- Creation of a common glossary for all key terms of the strategy to avoid misunderstanding between different delegations

→ Different views concerning the choice of some T.Os.
- Organisation of a 1st round of stakeholders consultation at the end of 2013 to confirm territorial demand

→ Very difficult to limit the T.Os to a limited range of target groups and sectors
Main challenges while defining the Programme strategy (2)

→ **Internal consistency** of the strategy: making sure that S.Os are complementary and not overlapping

*Use of the ex-ante evaluators, 1st round of stakeholders consultation and formal public consultation*

→ **External consistency**: Taking into account neighboring Programmes’ strategies (3 crossborder, 2 transnational, 1 interregional) to develop potential synergies and avoid possible “competition”

*Regular meetings/workshops with other ETC Programmes via our joint Managing Authority, INTERACT or other national networks*
Main challenges while defining Programme result indicators

- Very complex issue for ETC Programmes for several reasons:
  - Shift in thinking compared to previous period and difficult to explain to MS involved
  - No clear and practical/operational guidance on how to set up the result indicators and establish their baselines
  - Very difficult to have statistical data available at crossborder level

- Attended many meetings to better understand what the expectations and requirements were: no clear and straightforward methodology to learn from or applicable in our context

- Ex-ante evaluators developed a methodology for qualitative result indicators (and establishment of baselines) in early 2014. The application of this methodology is still ongoing (trying to establish baselines using experts for the different NUTS3)
Other challenges ...

• Agreeing on Technical Assistance budget: different scenarios proposed to MS but none of them has reached a consensus yet

• Strategic Environmental Assessment for ETC Programmes is also a challenging task. For instance, formal public consultation obligations are very different from one MS to another (from 1 week to 3 months in our case).

• Involvement of JTS in the follow up the overall process and of the external consultants: estimated 1,5 FTE over 2013 and 2014 ...
Stakeholders engagement

• External stakeholders have been engaged at different times and for different purposes

⇒ During the 1st round of stakeholder consultation, a limited number of organisations per MS (selected by national authorities) were approached through 5 physical meetings and an online questionnaire to give their feedback on the very first version of the strategy
  
  ⇒ *Allowed to fine-tune the strategy by leading to the addition of an extra T.O and the focus of 3 S.Os to make their complementarity more obvious*

⇒ Official public consultation (3 months) on version 2 of the Cooperation Programme: 155 contributions received, with an even representation of the area.
Lessons learnt from the process so far

- Flexibility is key – timing and required inputs can vary a lot to respond to the evolution of the situation (and status of MS discussions): initial submission date of the C.P to the Commission was sought on December 2013.

- Exchange of information and coordination with neighboring ETC (and regional) Programmes is also very important throughout the process.

- It proved to be very useful to have ex-ante evaluators (but also C.P drafters) involved in other Programmes – brings relevant insights and avoids duplication of efforts (e.g. methodology for result indicators).
Thank you for your attention!

More information about the current and future 2 Seas Programme:

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