GOOD GOVERNANCE FOR COHESION POLICY

Administrative capacity building
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FOREWORD

Cohesion Policy is the main investment support of the EU. Over the past decades, it has made a real difference to people’s lives across Europe. In the coming months, the focus of our joint efforts will be two-fold. We will be doing our utmost to successfully complete the investments in the 2014-2020 period in line with the Commission’s priorities of fighting against climate change and protecting the environment, promoting an economy that works for people, social fairness and equality. At the same time, we will have to make sure that the new generation of programmes for 2021-2027 will be up to the task to continue helping Europe’s regions, and in particular to tackle the challenges and reap the benefits of digital and climate transition.

To do that, we need a mix of factors, one of which is solid institutional set-ups and capacity to implement investment. Indeed, there is ample evidence that quality governance and institutions in Member States and regions are conducive to economic development and effectiveness of public investment, including that co-financed by Cohesion Policy.

The Commission works hard together with the institutions involved at national, regional and local level to help them boost the capacity to manage and implement successfully the EU funds and bring the best results possible for European citizens. I am happy to present a set of initiatives and instruments the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy has developed and promoted together with its partners. Platforms for exchange of good examples and practical solutions to common problems, projects improving professionalisation, transparency and accountability of fund management, while involving more closely partners and citizens in the policy cycle, exploring innovative ways for promoting more sustainable and technologically advanced and socially responsible investment are all part of a toolbox put at the disposal of the authorities and beneficiaries.

The 2021-2027 period will soon start and we all need to put an even bigger emphasis on all these aspects if we want to have investments up and running on day one. In order to be better prepared we tested, together with the OECD and five pilot countries, a more comprehensive and strategic approach in dealing with governance and institutional capacity building. The results will feed into new initiatives and instruments.

I very much hope that you will find the information included in this brochure beneficial and useful to your present and future work.

MARC LEMAÎTRE
Director-General of DG Regional and Urban Policy of the European Commission
Administrative capacity consist of a combination of systems, tools and human resources that determine the performance of an administration. It relies largely on practice and different administrations perform differently in relation to the various aspects of their management processes.

REGIO peer learning tools build on this wealth of experience, supporting public administrations to learn from each other how to better deploy EU regional funding.

TAIEX-REGIO PEER 2 PEER propose three types of exchange where practitioners from one administration meet their peers in another country to transfer knowledge, learn different practices and work together on common challenges.

Administrations can apply online to seek support on any topic related to cohesion policy. The European Commission, via its database, find another administration that has dealt with similar challenges before and cover the costs of the exchange. The applicant can also propose upfront a partner administration to exchange with. Requests are processed quickly and exchanges normally take place within two months.

This scheme is open to all public administrations involved in the management of European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund funding in EU countries. These include, among others, managing authorities, intermediate bodies, audit, certifying and coordinating authorities, and the joint secretariats for European territorial cooperation programmes.

As a complement to this, the REGIO Communities of Practitioners allow for longer-term exchange between administrations. The communities gather practitioners from the entire EU and develop long-term discussions around specific topics. A facilitator helps the practitioners to organise their meetings, while a blog, a newsletter and social media help sharing information and ideas.
Ensuring accessibility and non-discrimination are very important when developing public infrastructure. Everyone – regardless of age, mobility or ability – should have equal access to public services and resources. European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI) require that new projects must ensure access for all to public buildings.

In June 2016, a delegation from the Central Project Management Agency (CPMA) in Lithuania made a study visit to the Swedish city of Borås to learn how to better ensure accessibility in infrastructure projects.

CPMA is responsible for ERDF investments in public infrastructure in Lithuania. For CPMA, Borås was an obvious choice for the study. In 2015 the city won the European Access City Award, which recognises actions to guarantee equal access to fundamental rights and improve the quality of life of all.

During the visit, the Lithuanian delegation discovered Borås’ strategic approach to becoming an accessible city. Participants visited public infrastructure sites that apply good practices for ensuring equal access. They also learned about how the city administration and other stakeholders cooperate to improve accessibility.

Activities included presentations on accessibility indicators, the city’s accessibility database and social care partnerships, and a display giving an overview of the city’s accessible environment. Delegates also visited a special needs school, recreational area and social care home, along with a private social care company and Borås zoo.

“This visit to Borås city, which has won the European Access City Award, shifted our mindset to another level. We could see in practice that tremendous results are possible if there are constant priorities. TAIEX-REGIO PEER 2 PEER opened opportunities for us to learn from another country, adopt its good practices and develop competencies that we need to implement European Regional Development Fund projects and achieve more effective results.”

Justina Jakštienė, Head of social infrastructure projects unit, CPMA
Their visit demonstrated how accessibility can be integrated into all stages of infrastructure development, from planning to design and construction. Delegates learned from real examples, and had experts at hand to answer their questions, share experiences and provide advice.

The strongest lesson the visiting delegates took away was that accessible infrastructure should be designed to meet the needs of all inhabitants, regardless of ability. It avoids separate entrances, pathways or products for specific groups, a concept known as ‘universal design’.

Delegates found the examples of how Borås applies this principle particularly useful. They were impressed by the high standards of accessibility in infrastructure, whether publicly, privately or NGO-managed. They also saw how good classification, management and availability of data promote equal access to public services.

Since the visit, the CPMA participants have shared their new experiences and knowledge widely, including with specialists from various Lithuanian government departments, municipalities, NGOs and other beneficiaries.

CPMA now promotes accessibility best practices gleaned from Borås in Lithuanian public infrastructure. The agency focuses on the universal design principle, with information and resources available for architects, construction companies and other interested stakeholders.

**Insight into regional revival**

In May 2017, delegates from the Regions of Aragon, Castile and Leon, and Castilla-La Mancha in Spain, the region of Evrytania in Greece and the Croatian County of Lika-Senj visited Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) in Scotland in the United Kingdom.

Participants were there to see solutions from this Scottish government development agency that have reversed depopulation and created sustainable local economic growth in the remote Highlands and Islands region.

All of the participating regions face similar challenges. They have areas that are among the most sparsely populated places in the EU and have to deal with challenges arising from an ageing population, depopulation and economic stagnation. These are issues that impact rural regions throughout Europe.

Initiated by the Government of Aragon, the three-day visit provided participants with examples of best practices HIE implemented in the region to make it more attractive for people to live and work in.
Participants heard from HIE staff about the challenges and characteristics of the Highlands and Islands region, and the solutions HIE implemented to address them. They studied the agency’s good practice on such topics as the development of local businesses and communities, the opportunities offered by digital connectivity and educational measures that help to attract and retain young talent.

Partnerships are also important in achieving these aims. Participants examined the roles of regional, national and European partners, along with social enterprises and the region’s university.

In detailed presentations and group discussions, participants shared information and experiences on rural development. Extensive visits to communities, businesses and a health-science campus demonstrated HIE’s solutions in practice.

This direct exchange of ideas between managers of public funds in an open atmosphere of trust was mutually beneficial. These discussions made it possible for everyone to learn in depth about initiatives in various European communities, not only in Scotland. They highlighted success stories from participants’ regions as well potential pitfalls when drafting new policies.

Overall, the visit provided a wealth of lessons and tools from HIE that participants can use to improve their economies and the quality of life in rural regions. For example, the Government of Aragon used the experience to inform the drafting of a policy directive to reverse rural depopulation.

“Through TAIEX-REGIO PEER 2 PEER, we received exhaustive information about the daily work of a public organisation responsible for the social and economic development of Highlands and Islands region, which has previously faced the challenges related to depopulation and stagnation. We could also hear about the experience from other regions with similar problems which joined the exchange. It has, without doubt, made possible a wide range of future joint initiatives between regions with similar demographic challenges.”

Joaquin Palacín Eltoro, Director General of Territorial Planning, Government of Aragon
Bodies involved in administering the European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund can call on a free-to-use resource to help them boost staff performance.

The EU Competency Framework can be used to identify the skills and knowledge employees need to successfully manage EU funds. It is available for national coordinating bodies, managing, certifying and audit authorities, joint secretariats and intermediate bodies. A complementary web-based self-assessment tool allows employees to rate their own levels of proficiency and then compare it with their supervisor's assessment and development goals laid down in the Framework. Administrations can also compile the self-assessments to provide an overview of their overall performance and areas for improvement.

The results gained through the self-assessments are used to inform a learning and development plan to help employees and the institution as a whole fill gaps in their competences. Plans could include the delivery of classroom-based and on-the-job training as well as seminars and presentations of good practice for existing staff. They could also suggest the recruitment of new talent or the need to outsource to complete certain tasks more efficiently.

Use of the EU Competency Framework is voluntary for own use of the administration without any benchmarking of results. The Framework's bespoke website is now up and running with information available in 22 languages. Administrations must contact the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy to access the tool.

Driving change in Austrian managing authority

The Secretariat of the Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning (ÖROK) is the managing authority for the 'Operational Programme: Investments in Growth and Employment Austria 2014-2020'. It used the EU Competency Framework as part of a pilot project that also involved managing authorities from Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Poland, and Romania.

The Framework helped ÖROK to gauge the skills that it already had in place while revealing possible future training needs. It also raised awareness of how important it is to undertake a structured analysis of qualification requirements.

ÖROK found the answers provided through the self-assessment tool to be particularly useful as means of
creating an individual profile for each of its employees. The Framework promoted deep discussions between employees and supervisors about skills assessments, which led to a common understanding of each person’s qualifications for their roles. Jointly identifying training gaps means that learning options can be adapted more closely to an individual’s needs and responsibilities.

A final report was produced which contained a list of possible training courses for employees, as well as details about networks that promote know-how on the implementation of EU funds.

While the list of training options is now being used to meet individual employee objectives, the networking information has confirmed the managing authority’s strategy as a whole to improve its corporate knowledge of EU funding issues. For example, it has joined IQ-Net which brings together regional partners from across Europe to improve the management of structural funds programmes.

Using the Framework helped everyone working at ÖROK come together to talk openly about skills needs for different jobs and the abilities of each employee. The information will be used in the preparation of the annual work plan.

The ÖROK team recommends the Competency Framework to other institutions that are involved in administering EU funds like the ERDF. The Framework’s flexibility is a particular strength. The fact that it can be customised to meet the needs of different organisations means that it can be successfully implemented across the EU.

“The Competency Framework has helped us to determine an appropriate level of knowledge through a structured dialogue between managers and employees, in addition to identifying specific training needs. As always, in an exchange with partners from other Member States, there was also the opportunity to learn about management practices in other countries, to reflect upon them in comparison with our own, and to draw experience from them."

Markus Seidl, Managing Director, ÖROK-Secretariat
Taking action in Greece

The managing authority for the ‘Western Macedonia Regional Operational Programme’ in Greece began using the EU Competency Framework as a pilot scheme involving half of its employees.

The results have spurred the authority to use the Framework more widely and to make far-reaching changes in training provision and personnel development. In fact, based on the results of the pilot project, the authority is going to revise its entire human resources strategy.

The authority found the Competency Framework and self-assessment tool to be extremely thorough in defining tasks and sub-tasks. This has helped both the institution and its personnel develop new procedures or adjust existing ones. The Framework allows for a qualitative – as well as quantitative – assessment and classification of competency gaps. The pilot self-assessment tool therefore provided significant assistance to the authority in terms of re-defining training priorities.

After using the resource, the authority took immediate action by creating a training and development plan, which included the following measures:

- The delivery of training by specialised providers in areas such as programme and project monitoring, financial management of projects, communication and evaluation.
- Peer-to-peer, on-the-job training on a range of subjects including project monitoring, financial management and setting-up systems;
- Networking sessions and the use of good practices covering programme monitoring, evaluations and communication.
- Use of outsourcing to deal with technical, issues, evaluations and auditing.
“Implementing the pilot scheme helped everyone involved to gain a much better understanding of the EU’s philosophy with regard to the Competency Framework and, at the same time, it helped the authority to become much more aware of its training needs. It also encouraged us to take further action by planning initiatives to give better and more targeted information to the beneficiaries of the operational programme and to further disseminate the results of EU policies.”

Haralambos Kiourtsidis, Head of Managing Authority for the West Macedonia OP

The Framework and self-assessment tool proved so useful that the managing authority is expanding its use to cover all of its employees. It is using the results to establish an annual training plan to address skills gaps. In the longer term, the authority aims to use the self-assessment process on a yearly basis. Those using the tool will include newly appointed staff and those transferring to new jobs internally. The task of further implementing the Competency Framework has been assigned to the quality team.

The authority intends to present the Competency Framework to other institutional bodies in Greece.
The European Commission has produced an action plan which includes a series of initiatives to help administrators and beneficiaries of EU funds improve their public procurement practices, ensure level playing field and use procurement as a strategic tool to pursue key policy objectives.

Strategic (green, innovative and socially responsible) procurement is one of the tools to contribute to the European Green Deal, the most ambitious package of measures that should enable European citizens and businesses to benefit from sustainable green transition. Becoming the world’s first climate-neutral continent by 2050 is the greatest challenge and opportunity of our times. Supported by investments in green technologies, sustainable solutions and new businesses, the Green Deal can be a new EU growth strategy. Involvement and commitment of the public and of all stakeholders is crucial to its success.

One of the actions where the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy works in cooperation with the OECD is about promoting the strategic procurement in Cohesion policy. This pilot project aims at demonstrating added value of strategic way of procuring and is offering practical “hands-on” support to managing and contracting authorities of five pilot strategic procurement initiatives. The idea is to demonstrate how the principles of innovative, green and inclusive procurement can be applied in daily practice. The experiences and lessons learnt from these pilots will be wider disseminated and will show how procurement can be used as a tool to foster strategic objectives and contribute to sustainable regional growth.

The Commission also runs training seminars for administrators and technical experts who are managing EU funds in their Member States and regions. The series of the seminars examined key challenges in strategic public procurement. The two-day course focused in particular on issues related to green, innovative and socially responsible procurement.

Another action is ‘Public Procurement – Guidance for Practitioners’, which outlines ways to avoid common errors related to procurement for projects that receive EU funding. The document is aimed at procurement officers working for contracting authorities responsible for tendering works, goods or services. Managing authorities may also find the guidance useful as they conduct checks on public procurement initiated by EU grant beneficiaries. The guide includes practical toolkits which addresses specific topics in detail, such as risk and contingency planning, designing selection criteria, writing specifications and ensuring compliance.
Seminar builds understanding

Teofil Gherca is Head of Unit for Administration and Management at ESPON EGTC, a European grouping on territorial cooperation based in Luxembourg. The organisation provides regions with policy support and territorial research relating to the EU’s Cohesion Policy and its funding instruments.

It is part of Teofil’s job to use public procurement procedures to buy services for ESPON EGTC, which itself receives support from the European Regional Development Fund. He took part in the training seminar ‘Key changes in public procurement directives & strategic procurement (innovative, green & socially responsible procurement)’.

“The training offered me the opportunity to understand that public procurement should be seen more as an opportunity than a challenge,” explains Teofil. “In the context of the programmes financed by the European Structural and Investment Funds, strategic public procurement could be a very useful instrument to achieve our objectives.”

For its current financing period, the ESPON Cooperation Programme replaced grant subsidies with service contracts, which means the organisation is using public procurement procedures to select its research providers. The transition is seen as a challenge because changing the system can lead to errors. Despite these potential hurdles, Teofil aims to be even bolder and more innovative in the use of the public procurement to achieve ESPON’s strategic objectives.

Participants to the seminar examined various situations that can occur during the implementation of a public procurement. While drawing on personal experiences, they exchanged ideas about solutions to problems based on existing legislation and case law.

“I appreciated the presentation and discussion on case law, and this led me to realise that we need to adjust some of our internal procedures, especially on communicating with the bidders,” says Teofil. “We were also provided with a general picture of all the relevant issues related to procurement – strategic policy objectives, legislation, recent developments, and best practices. This will allow us to analyse further specific topics that are relevant to our professional assignments.”

Because the training provided Teofil with a complete overview of the key changes in the EU legislation on public procurement, he now better understands the context and different provisions of the new PP Directives that should be taken into consideration.

“The training offered me a new perspective: public procurement is not just about buying things – it is also a tool to encourage innovation and sustainability. I have passed this message to my colleagues and we are already planning to implement some innovative procurements as a basis for a more extended use of this type of procedure in the future.”

Teofil Gherca, Head of Unit, Administration and Management, ESPON EGTC
Public support is vital for regional development. EU state aid rules make sure that such support does not distort Europe’s internal market. The European Commission supports national and regional authorities in Member States to navigate these complex rules in order to achieve both goals: regional development and fair competition within the internal market.

The European Commission organises different kinds of training for authorities applying state aid rules to European Structural and Investment Funds. The general state aid seminars explain how to apply state aid rules in the context of Cohesion Policy, touching upon topics like the General Exemption Block, regulation, de minimis aid or simplified cost options. They target Cohesion Policy practitioners who are not experts on state aid.

Thematic seminars focus on state aid for specific sectors, such as SMEs, broadband or research, development and innovation (RDI). They are more targeted to state aid specialists with a link to Cohesion Policy. All training materials are also publicly available on the website of DG Regional and Urban Policy.

The European Commission will also offer specialist training for national audit authorities and organise roundtables to discuss in-depth topics such as aid for infrastructure projects.

Authorities giving aid tend to avoid complex state aid schemes by relying on simple but often inefficient solutions, such as de minimis aid. To avoid this trap, national and regional bodies can request direct assistance from the European Commission in form of an external state aid expert who would provide independent advice.

Adding value in technology transfer

A priority in Romania’s current regional operational programme is to support technology transfer and innovation take-up by SMEs for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

To meet this goal, the programme’s managing authority planned to fund infrastructure investments and technology transfer services. The idea was to use regional investment aid for infrastructure and de minimis aid for technology transfer services.

However, both options were limited. Regional investment aid can only fund up to half of the cost of large undertakings, and then only the initial investment rather than operational costs. Meanwhile de minimis aid has a ceiling of EUR 200,000 for the whole project over three years.
When the Romanian managing authority asked for support, the European Commission contracted Cristina Lungu. She is a state aid expert with more than 10 years of experience at the Romanian and EU competition authority.

Ms Lungu analysed the situation and explored options to use the funds more efficiently within EU state aid rules. She advised to structure the financing for technology transfer organisations and science and technology parks in such a way that it would be classified as non-aid. This freed it from the restrictions of regional investment aid and *de minimis* aid.

In turn, the SME support could be qualified as ‘innovation aid’, as long as the aid complied with the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER). This meant that the Romanian managing authority could invest up to EUR 200,000 per SME over three years for technology transfer and fully fund all innovation advisory or support services.

Key stakeholders in the technology transfer scheme helped Ms Lungu to come up with her recommendations. In a meeting in Bucharest, she explained to stakeholders how state aid rules would apply to the scheme and what financing options were available.

The meeting was also an opportunity for stakeholders to comment on the guides for funding applicants, which were then revised, and for Ms Lungu to note questions that the Managing Authority later clarified with the Romanian Competition Council.

“Cooperation between the national, EU authorities and industry stakeholders was excellent,” she says. “The pool of thematic experts initiative not only substantially increased the funding available for technology transfer in Romania, but also created a sense of shared ownership of the project.”

She found that work with an established network of stakeholders also improved her technical knowledge.

“It has been a very enriching experience and an opportunity to learn for all involved,” she says.
Corruption has significant economic and social costs. Public procurement is often perceived as a corruption hotspot. To improve transparency and efficiency in public contracting for EU-funded projects and increase the effectiveness of the EU investment on the ground, the Commission and Transparency International (TI) are promoting the use of Integrity Pacts. The initiative launched in 2015 contributes to better protecting the EU taxpayers’ money and to enhancing accountability and trust in public authorities, thus benefitting citizens and a wide range of public as well as private sector stakeholders.

The “Integrity Pacts – Civil Control Mechanism for Safeguarding EU Funds” pilot project brings together public authorities, private sector and civil society.

An ‘Integrity Pact’ (IP) is a legally binding agreement between a contracting authority, bidders and an independent civil society monitor who oversees the implementation of the pact and ensures all parties uphold their commitments. The IPs aim to strengthen transparency and accountability, reinforce trust and reputation, save money and intensify competition through better procurement practices. Beyond clear societal and economic benefits, IPs can also trigger institutional reforms in areas such as digital innovation, public administration, regulatory environment and, ultimately, improvements to governance and public service delivery for people and companies.

18 projects co-financed by the EU were selected to pilot Integrity Pacts in 11 EU Member States: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovenia, Portugal, Romania, Italy and Poland. They cover a wide range of sectors from research and innovation to environment and culture, from transport and territorial development to institutional building and healthcare.

In addition, TI and the partner civil society organisations are providing trainings on anti-corruption and open contracting principles to those involved in the pilot project.

The experience from these pilots will be further disseminated and replicated, as it can be applied to other EU co-financed projects in the future.

Learning from the lessons of the Integrity Pacts, DG REGIO is also launching new initiatives to ensure more active participation of and closer cooperation with citizens and civil society in the governance and implementation of Cohesion Policy and management of dedicated EU funds. Through a more active citizens’ engagement, institutions can become even more transparent and accountable, while investments will bring more and better results on the ground.

The Commission applies zero tolerance to fraud and corruption and is constantly engaged in protecting EU taxpayers’ money. The aim is to make sure that every cent of the EU budget is spent for the benefit of the citizen. The Commission is monitoring the implementation of EU programmes and funds on the ground. If Member States or final beneficiaries spend EU money incorrectly, the Commission takes recovery measures. To prevent fraud and corruption, it also helps national and regional authorities enhance their capacity to assess risks and to detect, report and correct problems in an effective and timely manner, through professional trainings and learning tools.
Corruption in public procurement is a serious issue and no EU country is immune. This is true also in Slovenia, particularly in areas such as infrastructure and healthcare. In the past, Slovenia had experience with hospitals being poorly built and furnished with equipment that costs more than it should.

That is why, one of the first IPs to be signed as part of the initiative, tackles these issues head-on and provides oversight of the introduction of energy efficiency measures at Slovene hospitals. The first project was implemented in Trbovlje General Hospital, which lies 60 km east of Slovenia’s capital Ljubljana, while currently the renovation of Novo Mesto General Hospital is ongoing. Slovenia’s Ministry of Health is partnering with TI Slovenia in this endeavour.

The IP has a strong emphasis on ensuring that all parties involved in the tendering process focus on their social responsibility to provide a safe, high-quality project for the hospital’s staff and patients, which is why TI Slovenia is also monitoring the effects of the renovations to ensure a lasting positive impact. TI Slovenia is actively working on raising public awareness about the initiative whilst contractors will be expected to buy in to the IP ethos by demonstrating honest business practices. Also, as part of its oversight, TI Slovenia is developing procedures to ensure safe reporting channels for whistleblowers.

The IP is a continuous learning process: the contracting authority is improving its capacity to run complex procedures while TI Slovenia is increasing its capacity to monitor public procurement and its ability to identify risks and irregularities. All actors involved will use this knowledge to further strengthen their risk prevention mechanisms, as well as to develop whistleblower protection programmes, which is especially important in the context of the recent EU Whistleblower Protection Directive. Meanwhile, people using the hospital will be more informed on how public money is spent on the project for better results.

The success of the project will have a wider impact because EU’s Cohesion Policy is a key contributor to Slovenia’s infrastructure development, including investments for energy efficiency improvements in public buildings.

“The latest Eurobarometer on businesses’ attitudes towards corruption is another testament to the low confidence in the public procurement processes in Slovenia. To improve trust, strengthening preventive anti-corruption mechanisms and bringing procurement processes closer to citizens are key. This is something we strive towards with our Integrity Pact. More broadly, our ambition is to have a positive impact on participatory and democratic processes.”

Sebastijan Peterka, Project coordinator and researcher
Transparency International Slovenia
Famed since antiquity for its great wealth and luxury, the 2 800-year-old Greek city of Sybaris had become a lost part of Italy’s history, buried without a trace somewhere in the Calabria Region until archaeologists discovered its ruins in the mid-20th century. Now it is considered one of the most important archaeological sites in southern Italy.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage has established two major science and tourism projects to restore and preserve Sybaris. The first project involves the modernisation of the Sybaris Museum; the second will allow visitors access to a Roman-era religious temple known as the ‘White House’, which was discovered by archaeologists during recent excavations. Worth a combined EUR 2 million, these public works projects receive EU funding.

ActionAid Italy is monitoring both contracts using an IP mechanism, initially in partnership with two independent civil society organisations – Monithon and Gruppo Abele. The objective is to ensure that the public procurement contracts for the projects are run successfully and deliver on their objectives: preserve vitally important ancient history and benefit nearby communities economically and socially.

The IP has featured the role of ‘citizen monitor’, allowing members of the public to act as qualified observers of the local public authority’s decision-making process. The monitoring community has been established involving people from the local area and from other cities in Calabria. ActionAid is organising training sessions and webinars to address issues such as rules on procurement, access to information, open government, and participatory processes, such as crowd-mapping or practices of participatory management of cultural heritage.

“There are many benefits to using an Integrity Pact on important public works projects. The presence of a third party ensures that procedures are properly followed. The Pact has also enabled us to share knowledge about public procurement and reinforce people’s awareness of their right to access information. Moreover, the tools we are creating to prevent corruption will benefit both the public agency and bidding companies.”

Christian Quintili, Former ActionAid, Italy
Through the IP, meetings and discussions between citizen monitors, public agencies and contractor firms take place, moderated by ActionAid. Additionally, a specific training has been developed for local authority officers to help them understand the IP and the instruments available to prevent corruption. The training will also help officials to establish a good dialogue with the general public.

Work is also in progress to improve the way digital documents are exchanged and to develop an Open Data tracing system. The goal is to increase transparency of tendering processes.
STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE OF COHESION POLICY THROUGH ROADMAPS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY BUILDING

Taking inspiration from the Italian experience of Plans for Administrative Reinforcement (PRA) the Commission launched a pilot action in 2018 to encourage a more strategic use of funding for capacity building. The proposed regulations for cohesion policy 2021-2027 refer to the possibility for Member States to develop roadmaps for administrative capacity building. The aim of the pilot action is to test this new approach to collect experiences that can inspire and help Member States to develop such roadmaps.

The Commission is implementing the pilot action using the expertise of the OECD. In the first phase of the pilot the OECD supported five participating managing authorities to design roadmaps for administrative capacity building. The programmes concerned are the following:

- the ‘Regions in Growth’ programme in Bulgaria,
- the ‘Competitiveness and cohesion’ programme in Croatia,
- the ‘Transport Infrastructure, environment and sustainable development’ programme in Greece,
- the Lubelskie regional programme in Poland, and
- the Extremadura regional programme in Spain.

The roadmaps were developed using a participatory process involving a wide range of stakeholders to ensure ownership of the roadmap and its implementation. The first step included assessing the strengths and weaknesses and the most urgent capacity development needs in three different challenge areas: 1) People and organisational management, 2) Strategic planning and coordination, and 3) Framework conditions. Following this, actions to address the needs were identified, as well as responsible and implementing actors, deliverables and timing for implementation. The roadmaps also include a detailed analysis of the strengths and weaknesses supporting the actions identified. The OECD has published a report on the pilot that includes their key findings and conclusions and recommendations for managing
authorities, national authorities and the European commission. The experiences from the first phase of the pilot have inspired the design of a practical toolkit on how to develop roadmaps on administrative capacity building.

The pilot managing authorities have started to implement their roadmaps. In the second phase of the pilot that started in early 2020 they are receiving support from the OECD to implement a few key actions of the roadmaps.
IMPROVING HOW FUNDS ARE INVESTED AND MANAGED

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http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/p2p

REGIO COMMUNITIES OF PRACTITIONERS

TRAINING FOR MEMBER STATES EXPERTS:

COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/competency

GUIDANCE ON PUBLIC PROCUREMENT:

INTEGRITY PACTS:

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