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Toward a New Partnership on Cross-Border Cooperation for the Mediterranean Development

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INTRODUCTION

The traditional analysis and the cooperation policies in the Mediterranean area focus on political, economic, social and cultural issues at macro and national level in the globalization scenario. But crisis phenomena and development opportunities have real territorial roots and effects. Territories are strictly interdependent with the globalization scenario, and glocalization (a double movement of globalisation on the one hand and devolution, decentralisation or localisation on the other) is the new concept that defines the interconnection between the global and the local levels.

In this contest a new regionalism is marking the cooperation relationship in the Mediterranean area, while glocalization and decentralization are legitimizing the new activism of local authorities, and particularly of regions, in external policy. This decentralised institutional activism accompanies social, economic and cultural transnational relations that are emerging among local actors (civil society organizations, small and medium enterprises, universities and research centres), as well as interacting with the incoming flows of multinationals, global media and migrants.

In the late twenty years European integration has changed the opportunity structure. It has furthered the transnational activities of regions through the regional and cohesion internal policies. The adoption of the partnership principle in programming and management of Structural Funds established the right of regions to participate in the multi-level governance of the European development. The partnership is at the roots of the Interreg programme addressed to support cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation among regions to manage common spaces and flows, and to foster a territorial balanced and polycentric development.

The new European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, the Instrument of Pre-Adhesion, and the Third Objective of the Cohesion Policy (2007-2013) represent a new framework of opportunities capable of triggering an enhanced political role for Mediterranean regions and local authorities. These instruments sustain the cross-border cooperation (CBC) that, for the first time, will link internal and external regions along the EU frontiers. Nevertheless, the exploitation of these opportunities will depend on the active participation of regions and local authorities in the process of creating effective partnerships. Common development of the Mediterranean is based on the adoption of the partnership principle by institutions, at different levels and among the diverse countries of the basin, in programming cross-border strategies. It implies embracing vertical and horizontal subsidiarity, decentralisation and democratisation processes, participatory development and a bottom-up approach, and fostering ownership and trust among partners.

The Tuscany Region is strongly committed in the Mediterranean cooperation and it is willing in actively participate to the elaboration and implementation of the new European CBC programming for the period 2007-2013. To this end it has promoted the partnership of several Mediterranean regions to take the opportunity of the Interact programme and to present the idea of the Comparing partnership (Compart) project. The project has identified proposals for a more effective partnerships through the promotion of policy dialogue and multilevel governance between partners involved in the CBC programming and projects.

This publication presents the main results of the Compart project. The Tuscany Region wishes to thank all the partners and to offer the publication as a contribution to the partnership building for a peaceful and cohesive Mediterranean.

1. PROJECT PRESENTATION OF THE COMPART - COMPARING PARTNERSHIPS - PROJECT

An INTERACT project for more effective cross border and transnational partnerships at the European Union external borders

The European Commission is defining new instruments for co-operation with neighbouring countries: the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) and the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENPI) – that are going to replace the current CARDS, MEDA, TACIS programmes – as well as the new Objective 3 of the Cohesion Policy (Structural Funds) on territorial co-operation in European Union (evolution of Interreg). The new scenario is going to face coherence and coordination problems. The COMPART project will contribute to give answers to a strong need of harmonization in terms of shared principles and joint methods in programming and projects.

The strategic objectives

Increase of the political role of Mediterranean Regions (including the Western Balkans) in the joint programming and projects of cross-border and transnational territorial development.

Identification of proposals of rules and procedures for more effective partnerships through the promotion of policy dialogue and multilevel governance between partners involved in the project, central governments and the European Commission.

Taking stock of the current programming in Interreg III (strand A and B) for the improvement of future programming on territorial cooperation in IPA, ENPI and new Objective 3 of Structural Funds for the period 2007-2013.

Actions and outputs

1) Analysis of the reforms underway on the Interreg/Neighbourhood programming methods, considering:

the need of coordination of several instruments, including those related to external assistance (ENPI and IPA) and the relative planning processes and documents (Country Strategy Paper and Action Plans);

the need to define, as proposed by the Commission, strategic priorities and therefore to adopt specific criteria in order to concentrate resources;

the convergence process (ascending subsidiarity) in the definition of National Strategic Frameworks and Regional Strategic Frameworks (Operative Programmes) for cooperation areas;

the possibility of using new legal instruments such as European Groups on territorial cooperation and of creating new Euroregions.

At end of the analysis, a concept paper will show the state of the art, crucial questions to discuss and proposals for an articulated, in-depth definition of principles and methods of partnership in the Interreg/Neighbourhood planning .

2) Definition of new models for more effective partnerships in programming. The concept paper will be used as an instrument for discussion with all the actors involved in planning: the European Commission and its Delegations in partner countries, Central Governments, Regions and the territorial subjects involved in territorial cooperation. Stakeholder surveys will be realised to compare questions and proposals of the various stakeholders in order to improve the planning in the various national and local contexts of EU Mediterranean

countries (France, Greece, Italy, Spain), pre-accession countries (Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina) and nearby countries (Morocco and Tunisia).

3) Benchmarking of partnership experiences in projects. Following the stakeholder survey, attention will be focused on the issue of partnership through a benchmarking method on projects of particular strategic importance in terms of democracy, sustainable development, economic and social local development, in the Interreg strand A (cross-border cooperation: Andalusia/Spain-Morocco; Adriatic cross-border; Western Macedonia/Greece-Albania) and strand B (transnational cooperation: Medocc, Archimed and Cadses). The results of the benchmarking will be synthesized in a paper on partnerships in Interreg projects.

4) Policy dialogue for improving partnerships in programming and projects at the EU external border. In three seminars of policy dialogue the partners with European Commission, central governments - Ministries and bodies involved in territorial cooperation and relationships with Neighbouring Countries, Regional and Local Authorities, Private Sector and Civil Society representatives, - will compare the various political positions to identify common proposals for the improvement of partnership in programming cooperation for territorial development in the Mediterranean. A final policy paper with recommendations for the improvement of joint programming and projects on territorial cooperation at the EU external border will be published.

2. POLICY DECLARATION ON BUILDING PARTNERSHIP IN CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

ENPI, IPA as well as the Third Objective of the Cohesion Policy will represent a new framework of opportunities capable of triggering an enhanced political role for Mediterranean regions and local authorities. Nevertheless, the exploitation of these opportunities will depend on the active participation of regions and local authorities in the process of creating effective partnerships.

The partnership principle is an end in itself constituting an expression of democratic values, as well as being instrumental to improving the efficacy of local development strategies. It forms part of the Action Plans established under the Neighbourhood Policy and of the pre-accession process.

Common development of the Mediterranean depends on the adoption of the partnership principle by institutions, at different levels and among the diverse countries of the basin, in programming cross-border strategies. It implies embracing vertical and horizontal subsidiarity, decentralisation and democratisation processes, participatory development and a bottom-up approach, and fostering ownership and trust among partners. In this sense, it is very demanding at the political level and is capable of having a significant impact on building development, democracy and peace in the Mediterranean countries.

The partnership principle is also very demanding in terms of the implementation of cross-border interventions, particularly due to the different political, social and economic contexts of Mediterranean countries.

If based on weak and fragmented partnerships, the CBC programmes under ENPI and IPA risk having a weak impact on common development in the Mediterranean. Between 2000 to 2006, the Interreg programme helped build the first territorial cooperation infrastructure in the Mediterranean, giving birth to projects that made it possible to set up efficacious cooperation in strategic sectors such as the environment, accessibility, sustainable tourism etc. In general, as an instrument of regional development in the EU, Interreg led to the creation of relationships between Southern, Eastern and Northern Mediterranean partners and the building of key actor networks in the different areas, but without being able to assure their lasting and sustainable impact on common development.

The COMPART project has identified the following critical areas from the Interreg experience:

- Exogenous constraints represented by the different political scenarios (decentralisation process), intercultural problems, economic and social gaps, the increasing mistrust of Southern Mediterranean countries in EU external assistance policies, the increasing fear of a so-called “clash of civilisations” within the EU, as well as a rise in illegal migration flows and the resurgence of conflicts in the Mediterranean area; and
- Endogenous constraints of the Interreg programme structure, which is considered too complex, fragmented and not results-oriented by stakeholders. The latter have also lamented the weak impact of activities implemented on local development. This is especially true for external partners, whose involvement has been limited to project implementation. Moreover, no evaluation has been conducted on the impact of this kind of intervention. The programming process in Interreg has encountered problems of access, due also to the insufficient capacity of diverse stakeholders to effectively take part in it. In turn, capacity problems are also related to territorial disparities and differences between urban capitals, country centres and rural areas.

The new CBC programmes under ENPI and IPA should build on previous experience to overcome the acknowledged limitations and the abovementioned constraints. The instruments offer a new framework of cooperation overcoming external and internal divisions for the achievement of common benefits. Southern and Eastern Mediterranean partners will have access to joint programming, joint structures, joint project implementation and to a single basket of funding.

In light of the above, the partners of the COMPART project commit themselves to:

- Opening up the access of stakeholders to the joint programming process and to project formulation, through the establishment of new communications instruments, of working groups on specific issues and, more generally, through the application of a more proactive strategy towards the territories in question;
- Increasing institution and capacity-building of the various stakeholders (especially of small cities and rural local authorities);
- Negotiating the concentration of CBC resources in integrated projects in order to improve the impact on sustainable development in the Mediterranean;
- Implementing ex-post evaluation on project impacts and developing mechanisms to improve CBC programmes with the involvement of stakeholders;
- Integrating CBC projects into local/regional and national development plans, sharing strategies with central governments from the outset and opening up local networks to the participation of central actors;
- Promoting city-to-city cooperation networks and the participation of rural areas, according to the principles of territorial cohesion and polycentric development; and
- Ensuring greater participation of political representatives in CBC programmes and promoting new modes of governance, for example, through the creation of Medregions;

and request a political commitment from central governments and the European Commission to:

- implement real partnerships in CBC programmes with regional and local authorities. This should enable the sharing of priorities and methodologies which are necessary preconditions to improving the impact of CBC as well as decentralisation and democratisation processes;
- open up access of stakeholders to the multi-level and joint programming process through the setting up of new communications instruments and of multi-level working groups on specific issues;
- support initiatives for the institution and capacity-building of the various stakeholders, and in particular establish a specific twinning sub-programme within the CBC programmes to support the active involvement of geographically remote stakeholders and small and rural cities and the creation of networks;
- complement and coordinate with multilateral (for instance, the UNDP Art Gold Mediterranean programme), bilateral and decentralised cooperation programmes. Furthermore, external coherence of CBC programmes should be established in the Country Strategy Papers and Action Plans prepared under the Neighbourhood Policy, as well as in the Multiannual Indicative Planning Document under IPA;
- improve programming methodology to increase the participation of local stakeholders and the sharing of objectives through specific territorial diagnostic analysis and the facilitation of networking between territorial actors;
- support territorial cohesion and polycentric development principles, establishing a criterion which gives preference to CBC projects which involve outlying territories and their stakeholders significantly;

- make serious efforts to feed back results of (ex-post) evaluations into future planning phases. In this regard, the creation of thematic multi-level working groups to monitor and evaluate actions and to feed the results back into planning could be encouraged;
- support specific city-to-city cooperation networks, since the competencies of city authorities in different Mediterranean countries are quite similar;
- strengthen the governance and coordination capacities of Steering Committees on strategic programming and monitoring/evaluation, in order to develop results-oriented CBC. In order to achieve this aim, regular and periodic multi-level conferences could be held for each joint programme, to raise the political profile of the partnership, strengthen the ownership of CBC outcomes and identify strategic actions to be implemented;
- support CBC by strengthening the link between territorial cooperation and national development plans and by encouraging decentralisation reforms through dedicated policy and pragmatic dialogue between EU Member States and the central governments of Mediterranean partners.

3. BUILDING PARTNERSHIP IN ENPI AND IPA CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

Synthesis of the regional reports on the stakeholder and benchmarking analysis¹

3.1 Stakeholder and benchmarking analysis within the framework of the overview of the decentralisation process and cross-border cooperation in the Tuscany Region

Andrea de Guttry in collaboration with Barbara Nicoletti (Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna, Pisa)

Tuscany has traditionally been a region with an extremely high level of interest for the Mediterranean area. This is due to geographical and historical reasons (including its geographic location, the presence of important harbours, traditional economic interests and trade relations with the Southern basin of the Mediterranean). It is also due to the more recent phenomena of the significant presence in Tuscany of migrants coming from Mediterranean countries, the interest and support shown by civil society in Tuscany for specific problems in the Mediterranean basin (the Palestinian issue in particular), the beginning of a phase of potential competition between Tuscany and other Mediterranean regions in specific areas such as tourism and SMEs and incentives offered by specific EU programmes, such as Interreg.

This interest is manifested in the active involvement of more than eighty Tuscan actors (representing the public sector, NGOs, the private sector, civil society, education and research centres, etc.) in cooperation projects with other Mediterranean partners that range from development projects to humanitarian projects and international solidarity initiatives. From a geographical point of view, Palestine, Western Sahara, Morocco, Algeria and Israel are the countries and territories which mainly benefit from the activities of these Tuscan actors.

In recent years, cooperation with Mediterranean partners has been positively affected by the more strategic approach developed by many Tuscan actors towards international cooperation. While in the past most of the initiatives targeting Mediterranean countries were organised on a case-by-case basis and without looking for potentially more structured and coordinated approaches and/or synergies with pre-existing projects, today the "Tuscan system of cooperation" is increasing the quality and consistency of its cooperation projects with Mediterranean partners with a beneficial impact on the quality and long-term sustainability of the projects themselves.

As far as the analysis of the Tuscan stakeholders is concerned, the 21 identified institutions, who were selected on the basis of their current or potential interest in future development in various types of cooperation activities in the Mediterranean area, definitively represent a fair cross-section of Tuscan active involvement in Interreg programmes and of those stakeholders potentially interested in becoming active partners in these or similar programmes.

Of the eleven interviewed public authorities, seven participate in the Interreg programme, one in the Neighbourhood Programme CARDS, one in the Neighbourhood Programme TWINNING PHARE, one in the "City-to-City" decentralised cooperation programme of UNOPS/UNDP and one in the GOLD Maghreb decentralised cooperation programme. Among the seven institutions participating in the Interreg programme, there is only one Province and one Municipality, while the others represent Regional offices or instrumental

¹ The complete regional reports are downloadable by the web site of the Compart project www.compartproject.org.

The complete reports comprehend also the analysis carried out in Western Macedonia region, Tangeri Teotuan region, Andalusia region.

agencies. The two respondents participating in Neighbourhood Programmes are regional agencies and the two participating in decentralised cooperation programmes are a Municipality and a Provincial instrumental agency.

Of the eight respondents representing civil society, three participate in the Interreg programme (two universities and one cultural association), two in the SEENET decentralised cooperation programme (NGOs), one in the Gold Maghreb decentralised cooperation programme (NGO) and two in two different programmes funded at national and regional level (universities).

The two private actors participate in Interreg and the Neighbourhood Programme MEDA respectively.

Interviews were conducted taking into account the nature of the responding stakeholders (public authorities, civil society and private actors) so as to identify converging/diverging attitudes and approaches to the different set of issues presented.

In relation to partnership in decision-making, one of the most interesting points worth highlighting is the difference in views between public authorities (PA) and civil society (CS) actors regarding the openness of the decision-making process. Indeed, CS actors declared that they had good access to official information on the decision-making process coupled with a good level of knowledge of the process. Similarly CS actors maintained that they had been involved in the planning phase and were able to have a significant impact on it. Interestingly, however, PAs presented a totally different picture when describing partnership with CS actors and the private sector. Indeed, PAs declared that the planning process was not open to the participation of all stakeholders, that CS and the PS had not been involved in the planning phase and that, in any case, the partnership with CS and the PS had not been significant in the planning process. This trend was also confirmed by the fact that only two out of eleven PAs mentioned NGOs as being influential actors in programming while four out of seven CS actors indicated CS associations and NGOs as being more influential.

As far as financial resources are concerned, PAs surprisingly did not report particular problems in coordinating within and among public institutions and mild problems with different and complicated procedures. Although the spending for Programmes/projects was perceived as having been results-oriented, unfortunately it seems that the Programmes/projects themselves did not end up mobilising additional resources.

In general terms, as far as Tuscan stakeholder respondent suggestions and proposals were concerned, there was an almost general consensus on the fact that external territorial cooperation has a great potential for boosting economic, cultural and social development especially at the local level and offers great opportunities for integration and dialogue, as well as providing a useful tool to diminish local conflict potential. However, external territorial cooperation was perceived as often being too dispersed and too heavily fragmented. In addition, overly complex bureaucratic procedures along with problems relating to different cultural, economic and social contexts such as language barriers and know-how and expertise differences were generally reported as negatively affecting the functioning of cooperation activities.

In terms of the necessary conditions for making partnership in territorial cooperation effective, it is interesting to highlight that besides the need for strategy and objective sharing, information flows and a results-oriented approach, both PAs and CS actors reported the need for ensuring that external partners have access to the management of financial resources in order to carry out project-related activities within their territory.

It is interesting to note that, almost without exception, Tuscan civil society actors shared a common view on what their successful experiences in cooperation planning had been. These corresponded to instances of progressive and systematic involvement of both sides' actors, the use of a planned and shared working methodology, the establishment of a long-term

cooperation relationship and, more broadly, NGOs' methodology in establishing partnerships and cooperation planning that involves civil society actors.

On possible ways of improving the various aspects of planning, interviewed stakeholders highlighted the importance of training for both decision-makers and administrative personnel on the project proponents' side as well as of development of external partners' expertise and commitment on the "non-EU" side. The simplification of procedures and the reduction of administrative burdens was identified as equally significant, as was the necessity of increasing the involvement of representatives from civil society and ensuring a proper role for each partner within the partnership together with the opportunity for autonomous management of financial resources.

Suggestions by interviewed Tuscan stakeholders on the improvement of future cross-border and transnational cooperation in ENPI and IPA planning methodologies were few and varied. Respondents insisted mainly on the need for making planning methodologies easier, enhancing information and training, developing communication skills of staff and expertise within public institutions. CS actors specifically suggested improvements in dialogue with potential partners in order to better identify their needs and priorities. From a strategic point of view, respondents proposed developing intercultural projects around a possible shared Mediterranean identity as well as focussing more significantly on institution building activities in order to provide local and regional authorities with the needed instruments to effectively participate in cooperation programmes.

On the resources and co-financing side, there was a shared belief that complementary funds should be directly managed by non-EU partners for activities within their country and directly linked to cooperation projects. This was, in fact, perceived as stimulating partners' sense of ownership of local development activities as well as enhancing their reliability.

The benchmarking analysis for the Tuscany Region was carried out on the basis of interviews conducted with fifteen institutions selected in close cooperation with the Tuscany Region.

The responding institutions were grouped into the same three categories used for the stakeholder analysis, namely, public authorities (6), civil society actors (7 including 5 non-governmental organisations and 2 universities) and private institutions (2).

All responding public authorities participated in Interreg III B MEDOCC programme projects; three out of the four responding NGOs participated in decentralised cooperation projects and one in an Interreg III B MEDOCC programme project. Both of the responding universities and the two responding private institutions participated in Interreg III B MEDOCC programme projects. In particular, four main projects were identified in which responding institutions participated and upon which the analysis mainly focussed. The projects were: EUROMEDSYS - Systèmes économiques locaux de coopération transnationale; MEROPE – Telematic instruments for innovative services for mobility and logistics in urban and metropolitan areas; SEENET – South East Europe Net; MAEM - Master en affaires euro-méditerranéennes; and RURALMED II - Forum permanent et réseau de centres pour le développement rural en Méditerranée.

For each of the abovementioned projects, three areas were investigated, namely Political Commitment and Partnership Process; Democracy, Participation and Decentralisation; and Ownership. The outcomes were as follows.

As far as the political framework of the analysed projects is concerned, no distinct trend in connections between specific projects and general cooperation agreements could be identified. This is to say that the analysed projects were in some but not all cases connected to a general cooperation agreement. However, where such an agreement existed, it was generally recognised as having been highly significant in facilitating project identification and implementation.

For all the analysed projects, the impetus given by political representatives of Regions and/or Local Authorities was identified as high, with the exception of only one respondent participating in the RURALMED II project. All respondents also indicated that political representatives of Regions and/or Local Authorities participated in project activities and that their political involvement had been medium to high, with the exception of only one respondent participating in the RURALMED II project who indicated it as having been low. In almost all cases, the relevant project was judged as having contributed quite significantly to the continuation of political/institutional contacts after its completion and having led to the planning/implementation of new kinds of projects with the external partners (with the exception of the EUROMEDSYS project). Similarly, in almost all cases, the projects were reported as having created relationships with additional external partners with whom there had been no previous involvement and as having greatly improved partnership dialogue with external partners.

In terms of coherence, coordination and complementarity within the partnership, sectors and departments of participating institutions were judged as highly involved in the projects, with only a few cases where they were judged not to be (one respondent in MEROPE, one in MAEM and one in RURALMED II).

In all cases, the degree to which a project was truly consistent with the local territorial development strategy was judged as medium to high. The influence exerted by projects on the local territorial development strategy was indicated as intermediate.

In the EUROMEDSYS and MEROPE projects, institution/capacity building activities in the project were judged as being implemented to a low to medium degree by local and public authorities, civil society organisations and private actors and as medium to high by universities and research centres. On the contrary, in the SEENET, MAEM and RURALMED II projects, local and public authorities were judged as having implemented institution/capacity building activities to a medium to high degree. Within the same projects, universities and research centres were given scores ranging from very low to very high while civil society organisations and private actors from very low to medium.

All categories of stakeholders were almost universally judged as having satisfactorily or even highly participated in the projects, with the exception of civil society organisations and private actors whose participation was judged on some occasions as having been unsatisfactory.

In all the projects but RURALMED II, the participation of local and public authorities in all phases of the project was judged as satisfactory to significant. In all projects, other actors' performance was rated as poor to satisfactory in all phases of the project with the exception of universities and research centres, whose participation in planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation was judged in some cases as significant.

Almost all respondents indicated that the cross-border/trans-national networks, which had been envisaged as an expected result of the project, had been created and that the project had stimulated the creation of networks with mainly local and public authorities after its completion.

All respondents highlighted a low level of involvement by national government in project activities and a medium level of information on the part of the national government in relation to the project's results. Similarly, all respondents reported that the project had not improved the relationship with central government.

Respondents perceived their ownership of the project as high in all the three phases of identification of objectives, implementation and monitoring and evaluation, with the exception of two respondents in SEENET and one in RURALMED II, who indicated their ownership in the implementation and monitoring (SEENET) and in the identification of objectives (RURALMED II) phases as low.

All respondents reported that the projects had satisfactorily enhanced their capacities, especially in project management and network coordination. Different opinions were expressed on the degree to which the projects had enhanced the resources of the territory.

3.2 Summary of stakeholder and benchmarking analysis in the Friuli-Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region

Benoît Hamende and Paolo Panjek (ISDEE Trieste)

In comparison with other Italian regions involved in the ComPart project, in Friuli-Venezia Giulia (hereafter referred to as FVG) the community of public institutions and private entities participating in EU programmes, though diversified, is less numerous. Bearing in mind this limitation, the selection of regional stakeholders was based as far as possible on the methodological criteria set out in the two stages of the ComPart project. In the first stage (Stakeholder Analysis), this led to the identification of 10 public institutions (of which 7 participate in the Interreg III strands A-B programme and 3 in decentralised cooperation) and 20 private entities (of which 14 participate in the Interreg strands A-B and 6 in decentralised cooperation). The public institutions interviewed consisted of several bodies of the regional administration, provincial and municipal entities, while private entities chosen included: chambers of commerce and industry associations (local entrepreneurship), banks and finance companies (finance), cultural and educational institutions (civil society), universities and research centres (education and research).

Generally, with rare exceptions, the interviewed stakeholders highlighted their scarce or non-participation in the different phases of project planning. Consequently, most of the stakeholders declared that they were not interested in participating in Focus Group activities as they believed themselves to be inadequately prepared for further in-depth analysis. As regards the level of participation of different stakeholders in the planning phase, it seems useful to point out that the FVG Region's administration plays an almost sole-actor role in planning and managing Interreg projects. This results in one of the main characteristics of the stakeholder community: a clear-cut differentiation in planning participation between entities that are directly linked or are part of the regional administration and those outside that "system".

As far as the geographical aspect is concerned, most of the experience of FVG stakeholders in Interreg international collaboration was acquired within cross-border projects with Slovenia, while projects developed with partners from South-eastern European countries, mostly Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina, were few in number and, as well as Interreg projects, included some decentralised cooperation programmes. Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina are considered countries of special interest both for their geographical proximity and for the longstanding relations of these countries with the Region's administration and other actors (both institutional and private) from FVG. Decentralised cooperation with these countries is mainly aimed at sharing the experience that the Region has gained in the management of territorial policies such as in the areas of welfare, training, economic development, institution building and good governance.

There have been no projects developed by FVG stakeholders within the Maghreb area. Two different reasons may explain this fact: firstly, the geographical distance from that area and the absence of a cross-border dimension that led other southern and western Italian regions to develop specific relations with North-African countries; and secondly, the proximity to countries (SEE) with a substantial development gap and reconstruction needs (social and economic reconstruction) which constitute fertile soil for cooperation plans. Another differentiating factor within the stakeholder community is that only a few actors have

functioning specialised internal structures for external cooperation management and have therefore developed substantial international activities. The majority of other actors have only implemented actions in an unsystematic manner. In other words, most of their initiatives were organised on a case-by-case basis, without any form of cooperation or synergy with pre-existing projects.

This latter group complained of a lack of information which led their activity to be mainly based upon self-entrepreneurship. In particular, local authorities (mostly municipalities) which constitute the main group of stakeholders, would like to have an increased involvement in the planning phase, particularly with regards to the setting of priorities and strategic objectives for the international cooperation process. Yet they lack the necessary administrative capacity to assume a more active role in the planning phases.

To overcome these obstacles, several stakeholders have proposed the following suggestions which address various aspects:

- participation in the decision-making process: the majority of stakeholders expressed their desire for greater involvement on the part of the Ministry during the planning phase, that is to say more institutionalised relations during planning and closer connections both in the initial and operational phases;
- improving vertical and horizontal partnerships in planning: several stakeholders preferred to abstain from responding in relation to this point as they believe they are not sufficiently familiar with its mechanisms. Other stakeholders indicated that they would appreciate the establishment of executive agencies at an inter-ministerial level to facilitate the activity of operators, as well as the establishment of a permanent workgroup to facilitate dialogue between selected stakeholders at regular intervals (for example, every six months);
- improving partnerships in planning with external partners: apart from the commonly expressed need to overcome existing problems with financing (i.e. levels of funding and timing of co-funding), stakeholders also expressed the need, in general, for more information on similar organisations of external partners so as to identify beforehand the areas of intervention that are in line with strategic guidelines. In the case of regionally-directed Italo-Slovenian Interreg projects, stakeholders stressed the need to establish operational workgroups to enable the development of direct relations between local institutions of the two countries, thereby involving in the selection process of cooperation areas those very actors who will later be called on to implement them;
- improving planning methods for Interreg and Neighbourhood programmes: some stakeholders declared themselves insufficiently familiar with IPA and ENPI programmes for 2007-2013 and therefore did not respond in this regard. Others, on the other hand, in addition to indicating a need for swifter procedures and the elimination of bureaucratic barriers, once again expressed their support for direct involvement of State-promoted (at ministerial level) consultation groups to involve the institutions at ground level, as well as pivotal institutions that operate in direct connection with ministries, based on the positive example of DG Research of the European Commission which set up a Working Group on the specific issue of scientific research; and
- strategic priorities: stakeholders reported an absence of well-defined guidelines within which to develop their activities in the field of international cooperation. As regards the question of what the geographical scope of external territorial cooperation should be, in addition to strengthening existing cooperation plans with the Western Balkans area, stakeholders expressed their interest in widening the range of partners to include Eastern Mediterranean countries (Turkey and Israel in particular), the countries of the Black Sea and of the Maghreb region. Finally, as regards resources and co-funding,

several stakeholders reported the existence of a paradox whereby, on the one hand, approved criteria require projects to be more and more structured with numerous partnerships, while on the other, different financing sources to which the parties resort turn out to have significantly different timeframes in the implementation phase, entailing problems in terms of consistency within the system. The complexity of funding management seems to have a detrimental impact on minor projects in particular. In order to overcome this problem, some stakeholders have proposed that part of the Community budget should be earmarked for small pilot projects for testing purposes with a more flexible, simplified management arrangement.

In relation to the following Benchmarking Analysis, the criteria set out in Annex 2 of the “Benchmarking methodology” were applied in selecting projects to be analysed and the analysis focused on 2 Interreg III A projects, 1 Interreg III B project and 1 decentralised cooperation project.

Aside from noting the general difficulty inherent in comparing the involvement of stakeholders in projects with such different aims and, consequently, very divergent perceptions of the opportunities and limitations presented by cooperation projects, it is important to underline that the same problems which arose during the previous stage of the ComPart project were also experienced here – in some cases to a larger degree. In particular, apart from a widespread resistance to answering numerous questions on the questionnaire, mostly because of a declared lack of knowledge on matters such as Community planning/programming mechanisms, the analysis showed (except in one case) a very low level of “awareness” regarding participation in wide-ranging territorial cooperation programmes which go beyond the scope of a single project. Consequently, the degree of involvement of interviewees in judging the opportunities and limitations offered by trans-national/decentralised cooperation was limited.

In general terms, all stakeholders stated that the outcomes of single projects were acceptable, but only in some cases did the individual project fall within a wider institutional agreement between Regions and/or local authorities of the involved countries. As a consequence, the project outcomes, even if acceptable, had remained an isolated result, leading to the development of few new forms of cooperation either with the external partners of the same project or with new external partners.

The commitment of the Regions and local authority political representatives was generally rated as medium-level, with variations dependent on the individual experiences of stakeholders. Generally speaking, it was higher in projects falling under Interreg III A and B and lower in decentralised cooperation projects. On the other hand, the level of participation of political representatives in the various phases of the project (steering committees, workshops, upgrading seminars) was judged as medium-high. The role of institutions was seen as positive especially with regards to commitment to and creation of the conditions necessary to involve private partners.

As far as the contribution of individual projects in maintaining institutional political dialogue is concerned, answers differed from case-to-case. In projects that fell within the context of any framework-agreement between Regions and/or local authorities, the contribution was rated as medium-high.

Judgements also differed according to the particular features of projects as regards the participation level of stakeholders in individual phases of the project cycle. For example, in the case of the project managed by a robust financial body and aimed at developing the credit and guarantee systems of the external partners, it was quite clear that participation of private actors was very high. On the contrary, the project aimed at generating musical events was supported mainly by small civil society organisations. The same considerations may be applied to the level of participation of the national government in the various project phases.

In general, it was judged as medium-low, a rating which in any case was medium-high for projects falling within a general agreement between the Regions and local authorities.

In conclusion, as far as the degree of project ownership is concerned, the phases of priority setting, monitoring and evaluating scored medium-high levels, while the goals identification phase scored medium-low. In other words, the same considerations mentioned in the Stakeholder Analysis are applicable in this case: stakeholder involvement was very low during the planning phase.

While judgements differed according to the particular features of individual projects, in light of the problems and criticisms raised several FVG stakeholders indicated needs and suggestions for improving partnerships in future external territorial cooperation:

- the importance of cooperation framework-agreements and the development of a wider strategy to reduce project fragmentation and improve “awareness of participation in wide-ranging programmes” these cooperation framework-agreements should not be too generic and institutional mechanisms should be more operational;
- the need to identify best practice projects/pilot projects for feeding back results and for political follow-up;
- the scope for improving involvement of external partners in the different phases of a programme, including by increasing financial resources and technical assistance.

3.3 Summary of stakeholder and benchmarking analysis in the Calabria Region

Claudia Mularoni and Giulia Rigetti (Pragmata Institute)

The Calabria Region, located in the south of the Italian peninsula, is a mountainous region with 2 million inhabitants spread over 15,080 sq. km. It is characterised by a high level of unemployment, a low level of industrialization and industry based on the services sector, employment in the latter being mainly concentrated in public services.

Business activities in Calabria are restricted to small-scale industry. Apart from a few large firms, industrial development is usually induced by governmental intervention. The main sectors are the building industry, food and textiles. Agriculture remains important in terms of employment: 23.7% of the working population is employed in the primary sector, 18.2% in manufacturing and 58.1% in services. Competitiveness of regional agriculture is inhibited by the small size of agricultural holdings.

The economic strengths of Calabria lie in the potential of the agro-food industry to restructure agricultural activities, the development of IT activities over the past decade, the establishment of a container port in Gioia Tauro and, last but not the least, the potential of the tourism sector. With 800 km of coastline and beaches, Calabria is one of Italy's best-suited regions for tourism. However, despite improvements in recent years, the regional infrastructure still needs to achieve higher standards.

The regional university system comprises the University of Calabria in Rende, the University of Reggio Calabria and the Faculty of Medicine in Catanzaro. The Science and Technology Park of Calabria (Calpark SpA) hosts around 60 organisations. Other innovation support organisations include several research centres mainly promoted by the National Research Council and universities, the information technology and telecommunications research group, the network of chambers of commerce, the BIC Calabria and the InnovaReggio consortium.

As a whole, innovation remains scarce since the regional system presents marginal and lowly-specialised enterprises, being the main consequence of a predominantly local market economy. However, it becomes clear from this introduction how dominant the role of public entities is in all sectors, as well as for local and international development. International and

external cooperation has been based on the willingness of public actors, mainly the regional administration, to improve the openness of the Region towards partners from around Europe.

The main consequence of this has been the interest expressed by the Region and some municipalities in the Interreg initiative. Implementation and utilisation of Structural Funds has been quite low in Calabria, while the opportunities provided by Interreg, financed by the Structural Funds, have been greatly exploited during the last programming period.

The stakeholder community in the Calabria Region is characterised by a variety of actors operating in different sectors, from public entities (municipalities, provinces, universities, chambers of commerce, etc.) to civil society actors (foundations, research centres, associations, etc.)

Public entities particularly are involved in cooperation projects with Mediterranean countries and this is due more to geopolitical conditions and programme requirements than to any defined strategy of intervention.

In this context, it is important to note that cooperation projects over the last few years, corresponding to the EU Structural Funds programming period 2000-2006, have been developed by local administrations only under the Interreg III initiative.

However, the Calabria Region's local administration strove to improve cooperation and cross-border cooperation with Mediterranean countries, in line with the Barcelona Process and overall EU priorities. The main opportunities for creating partnerships in the Mediterranean area identified by stakeholders are:

- the strategic geopolitical position of the Region in the Mediterranean area;
- the strategic role of the Region within the Interreg III initiative, due to its eligibility in both the ARCHIMED and MEDOC strands;
- the high level of relationships created within the Mediterranean area within universities and research centres, in particular in relation to the cross-cutting issue of environmental safeguards;
- the high level of interest of local stakeholders in the infrastructure sector and basic needs of the region as instruments for further development in other economic sectors; and
- the regional administration's support for participation in Interreg projects in all six phases of project cycle management, particularly in the difficult phase of partnership development.

On the other hand, the main constraints indicated by stakeholders are:

- difficulties exist in guaranteeing sustainability and follow-up for some projects;
- the lack of communication regarding other EU programmes and opportunities aside from Interreg in order to enable the continuation of implemented activities;
- territorial constraints due to the nature of the territorial principle of Interreg;
- financial constraints due to Interreg rules; and
- the weakness of the network between stakeholders at the local level and the need to improve communication among partners including at the local level.

Europe and the Mediterranean are linked both by geography and shared history. The Mediterranean Sea has always linked the peoples of these areas. An increasing number of residents and citizens of the EU have origins in the Mediterranean, further developing these links at the most basic and personal level. Geographic proximity is a longstanding reality underpinning the growing interdependence between the EU and the Mediterranean countries. The EU, as far as national and local policies in future years are concerned, must reflect these realities and seek to ensure that they continue to develop positively.

The Mediterranean countries are important neighbours and a source of wider collaboration, particularly for southern Italian regions, such as Calabria.

Partnership between territories is a local stakeholder priority. Universities and other research centres are the main actors supporting a deeply-rooted network based on long-lasting relationships. The regional administration also has sound experience of collaboration with Mediterranean partners, leading to a reinforcement of the partnership principle and the fostering of collaboration from the planning phase of a project through to the implementation of activities.

3.3.1 The participatory partnership process within international cooperation in the Calabria Region. The stakeholder analysis

Since Interreg, financed by the ERDF, allows the participation of public authorities or public-equivalent bodies, the main cooperation experiences have been within this initiative for most of the stakeholders, who in some cases are partners and in other cases implementing bodies appointed directly by the Region pursuant to a regional law. In the first case, they gain experience, mostly positive even if difficult, of partnership development during the planning phase. In the second case, they have contact with partners only for the planning of defined and technical activities.

However, it is crucial to understand the role of Calabria Region stakeholders. They are not involved in the planning of the overall Interreg initiative within one of its strands. Rather, they participate in the planning of each single intervention by proposing different kinds of projects.

Due to a wide range of factors, international cooperation is open to EU countries of the Mediterranean area (eligible for ERDF funds to Interreg and EQUAL). But thanks to the E.U.'s New Neighbourhood policy, participation in Interreg is also open to MEDA countries. Calabria is located in a strategic position between Europe and the Maghreb countries and all stakeholders, including civil society which lacks substantial experience, are open to the prospect of enhancing and fostering collaboration with Mediterranean partners.

International cooperation also requires technical assistance, exchange of best practices and, last but not the least, political support. Civil society actors and some very well-organised public actors have been the first to perceive the gap between the opportunities offered by different donors and implemented projects.

In future, it will be important to listen to the needs identified by local actors, create a network between those actors with strong political clout and support project generation with project management support, partnership management, networking events, awareness campaigns and all support necessary to exploit the Calabria Region's potential.

Calabria Region stakeholders showed interest in, and put forward many proposals to improve, effective participation and the role of the Region in the international cooperation sector.

Most public administration stakeholders underlined the importance of receiving more technical assistance from the Region or from external experts in order to more easily deal with problems arising from partnership management. They recommended improvement of vertical and horizontal planning through new bodies/entities/working tables which involve all local stakeholders.

The establishment of new actors or the reinforcement of existing ones was a common proposal of almost all stakeholders interviewed during the project as they felt there was a lack of a local network bringing together different experiences, competencies and knowledge from different fields.

Feedback analysis and a process of learning from previous experiences was considered of utmost importance by research stakeholders as a starting point in improving and enhancing local projects. Research institutes were the main actors who made this proposal with the aim of improving future Interreg planning and the definition of proposals for regulations for ENPI,

IPA and Obj. 3 of the Cohesion Policy. They suggested an analysis based on previous experience and the definition of follow-up measures for projects in progress.

Other stakeholders did not provide clear suggestions on how to improve Interreg planning, the definition of strategic priorities, geographical objectives and resource management.

Regarding the improvement of relationships and the participation process with partners during the planning phase, public entities outlined the importance of holding meetings during this phase, so as to provide an opportunity to discuss project objectives and activities in more detail. Partnership management was perceived as more difficult for public partners, as they often encounter problems of communication and language barriers.

Private sector stakeholders pointed out the necessity of strengthening external territorial cooperation through joint actions based on local strategies and networks. Participatory planning, it was felt, should be fostered not only by individual actors but by groups of stakeholders willing to share experiences and knowledge and to invest in local development by means of international cooperation. They stressed the importance of increased involvement of public authorities, not only within Interreg but also under other financing instruments.

NGOs and local associations were the main stakeholders already applying a participatory approach and working to create networks at local level, due to their very nature of being representative of local needs and applying a bottom-up approach.

The Regional Government is undergoing a restructuring phase and is striving to foster regional internationalisation starting with consultation with local stakeholders. Future strategies are envisaged as being defined through new instruments and methodologies.

3.3.2 The benchmarking analysis

The benchmarking analysis represents the second stage of the COMPART project. It aims to analyse and compare (using a benchmark approach) different applications of the partnership concept in external territorial cooperation projects (project partnerships) while taking different political and institutional contexts into account.

This stage permitted the verification of the strengths and weaknesses of the system, at various levels, namely: project, programme and political institutional levels.

The project strengths, in terms of the issues analysed, were mainly linked to good management from a technical point of view of the projects analysed. Each of the projects analysed presented a close collaboration between the partners, a positive respect of the principles of efficacy and effectiveness and focussed intervention. Out of the five projects considered, one started from a previous agreement and two gave rise to new projects, even if still under the Interreg initiative. However, the role played by implementing bodies in the Calabria Region is one of the main elements to be taken into consideration. In effect, the implementing body is the technical representative of the Region and it is the main body in charge of ensuring the efficacy of the technical aspects of the action and its effective impact on the territory. In Calabria, project implementation from a partnership/technical perspective is carried out through implementing bodies that are conscious of their role and of the opportunities provided by the international cooperation system. On the other hand, political/institutional aspects are dealt with by the regional administration which is responsible for coordination with all partners, the definition of new initiatives and the involvement of external political and institutional actors, thereby ensuring horizontal and vertical subsidiarity, focussed intervention and a new system of governance for local development.

But each strength must be examined carefully as some have not been fully realised and have sometimes represented a potential weakness or threat to a project's achievement of positive outcomes. Relationships with local stakeholders in some activities have been weak,

involvement of all partners in each phase of projects has in some cases been poor and, in all projects, partnership with national actors and political actors has been nonexistent.

The impact at local level has been high during the projects' implementation, however it has been very difficult to guarantee a long-lasting impact and the feeding of previous outcomes into future activities at local level. New methodologies devised through the projects, for example an innovative ICT system applicable to urban management, have scarcely been taken into consideration by local decision-makers as long-term project results.

This is not so much due to the project themselves but rather mainly to the local situation. Another important problem linked to the local situation is the high turnover of representatives in charge of specific sectors within the political area.

In the last few years, the Calabria Region has fostered the participation and active role of territorial stakeholders, however the lack of political support and of knowledge of aspects of project management linked to international programme management have still hindered growth in participation levels. It is, however, important to reiterate how scant the knowledge and interest of actors in the Region is in relation to other types of international cooperation programmes other than the Interreg initiative.

The Calabria Region, particularly the International Affairs Department which is also in charge of the international cooperation, is striving to enhance participation in other programmes (MEDA, CARDS or thematic programmes) and to promote its role as coordinator of the different issues arising from the territory. It has also organised periodical meetings with interested stakeholders but the response has been poor, probably due to the lack of political support and high political turnover.

The interviews conducted as part of the analysis also revealed the different perceptions and roles of stakeholders within partnerships, since they are different kinds of organisations acting in different capacities within projects.

The Department for International Affairs of the Calabrian regional administration is usually the official partner or lead partner of the projects, while the stakeholders assume the role of implementing body, as provided by a regional law. Depending on the specificities and technical issues to be dealt with in a project, the regional administration assigns the task of implementing project activities to a specific local entity (for example, CERERE for cultural issues, ARSSA for food and agricultural issues, etc.)

Since they have different roles in projects, their perceptions relating to certain issues are quite different. Implementing bodies are involved after project approval, so they do not have an overall perspective of project planning, partnership building, the definition of objectives, the devising of activities and budgeting of the project. Moreover, they are sometimes unaware of previous agreements underlying the definition of a project from a political as well as technical point of view.

On the hand, the Calabrian regional administration is less deeply involved in the technical implementation of projects and does not have a clear overview of the implementation process, the impact on local development or the achievement of project results. However, the two types of actors do have similar views regarding follow-up, sustainability and, in some cases, relationships with partners.

The divergence between these different perceptions leads to a situation where within a project there is an administrative and financial body involved in the planning and partnership-building process in the initial stages of the project management process, while there is a second body involved in the implementation stage. They converge during the monitoring and evaluation stage. The process has the beneficial effect of clearly defining tasks and roles according to the capacities and competencies of the respective bodies and allows them to collaborate during all stages when the process restarts, such as for example in devising a follow-up project.

The following areas would thus need to be considered in order to improve the international dimension of cooperation for the Calabria Region:

Technical and administrative bodies should collaborate in all phases of project cycle management (programming, identification, planning, financing, implementation, monitoring and evaluation);

Collaboration should ensure clear, achievable objectives linked to the real needs and constraints of the territory and of the project's target group;

Improvement is needed in the relationship with the political level; and Improvement is needed in collaboration within partnerships.

As stated above, a new partnership model is essential for further development of the Calabria Region's international cooperation with the Mediterranean area. Since the territory has a direct link with the countries of the Mediterranean basin and wide opportunities for cooperation which are also in line with EU priorities, it is extremely important to increase the participation of all local stakeholders in international projects. However, their participation would not only be useful as implementing bodies, which is a useful starting experience, but also as direct partners.

Adopting a bottom-up approach, where the needs and constraints of the territory underpin project planning, is a way of ensuring an efficient and effective partnership model and project implementation. As long as a top-down approach continues to be used, territorial development and the involvement of local stakeholders and political decision-makers will be weak points of the partnership model.

The organisation of working tables, conferences and seminars and the provision of support to local actors to assist them in playing a major role in the new partnership model will be crucial.

3.4 Summary of stakeholder and benchmarking analysis in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Stojanov Dragoljub and Osmankovic Jasmina (University of Sarajevo)

3.4.1 Short presentation on the political situation in BiH and particularly on the decentralisation process

Bosnia and Herzegovina is bounded by Croatia to the West and North and Serbia and Montenegro to the East. A narrow, undeveloped outlet to the Adriatic along the Neretva River in the Southwest is its only direct outlet to the sea. The country is commonly referred to as Bosnia. *Sarajevo* is its capital.

The Sarajevo Economic Region consists of 32 municipalities. The total surface area of the region is 8,699.9 km² where, according to estimates, 703,912 inhabitants live. There is no historical or recent macroeconomic data available for the Sarajevo region. The Sarajevo Economic Region Development Agency (SERDA) has existed since May 2003.

The political structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina is divided into several levels, all subject to a federal government. The most important of these levels is the division of the country into two entities: the Republika Srpska (or Serb Republic) and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina covers some 51% of Bosnia and Herzegovina's total area, while the Republika Srpska covers around 49%. The entities were officially established by the Dayton Peace Agreement in 1995 due to tremendous changes in Bosnia and Herzegovina's ethnic structure. In the Republika Srpska, these changes were caused by the ethnic cleansing of the local Bosnian and Croat population and, in parts of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, of the local Serb population.

Economic overview

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| • GDP | • Purchasing power parity - \$26.21 billion (2004 est.) |
| • GDP – real growth rate | • 5% (2004 est.) |
| • GDP – per capita | • Purchasing power parity - \$6,500 (2004 est.) |
| • GDP – composition | • Agriculture:14.2%; Industry :30.8%; Services:55% (2002) |
| • Labour force | • 1.026 million (2001) |
| • Labour force – by occupation | • agriculture NA, industry NA, services NA |
| • Unemployment rate | • 44% officially; however, grey economy may reduce actual unemployment to near 20% (2004 est.) |
| • Population below poverty line | • 25% (2004 est.) |
-

See: www.answers.com

Since 1996, the power of the entities compared to that of the federal government has decreased significantly. Nonetheless, the entities still retain numerous powers. The Brčko federal district in the North of the country was created in 2000 out of land from both entities. It officially belongs to both but is governed by neither and functions under a decentralised system of local government. With a level of prosperity far above national averages and a multiethnic population, the Brčko district is widely considered a model for future restructuring of Bosnia and Herzegovina's political subdivisions.

The third level of Bosnia and Herzegovina's political subdivision, after the entities and federal government, is represented by the cantons. The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina entity consists of ten, all of which have their own cantonal government subject to the law of the Federation as a whole. Some cantons are ethnically mixed and have special rules to ensure the equality of all constituent peoples.

The fourth level of political division in Bosnia and Herzegovina is constituted by the *municipalities*. The country consists of 137 municipalities, of which 74 are in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and 63 in the Republika Srpska. Municipalities also have their own local government and are typically based around the most significant city or place in the region. Each canton consists of several municipalities. The municipalities themselves are further divided into local communities. Besides entities, cantons, and municipalities, Bosnia and Herzegovina also has four "official" cities. These are: Banja Luka, Mostar, Sarajevo, and East Sarajevo. The territory and government of the cities of Banja Luka and Mostar corresponds to the municipalities of the same name, while the cities of Sarajevo and East Sarajevo officially consist of several municipalities. Cities have their own city government whose power is in between that of the municipalities and cantons (or entity, in the case of the Republika Srpska).

3.4.2 Brief observations on the participation of BiH stakeholders in EU cooperation and particularly in cross-border cooperation. The stakeholder analysis

The selection of Bosnian stakeholders to be interviewed was carried out carefully. Initially, a preliminary list of potential actors to be interviewed was drawn up. The criteria chosen to identify the stakeholders were based, mainly, on the real or potential interest of the stakeholders in past and future involvement in various types of cooperation activities in the Mediterranean area.

At first, there were 30 stakeholders' names on the list. The list was then reviewed and updated during the process. At the end of this preliminary phase, 49 institutions/persons were identified (see the list in the attachment). All of them were contacted several times. The net result was 31 responses were received, divided into 4 negative responses and 27 duly completed forms (listed in the attachment). In many cases, personal interviews were conducted and forms were filled in on the spot. In other cases, a preference was expressed to receive the form via e-mail in order to fill it in later.

The responses covered stakeholders in all categories: local authorities; local entrepreneurship (which, in turn, includes entrepreneur associations, co-operatives and chambers of commerce); finance (banks and non-banking financial institutions); civil society (solidarity organisations, co-operatives favouring social inclusion, single-issue groups, pro-environment movements and cultural organisations); and education and research (universities, research and study institutions and centres for technical and professional training).

We sent questionnaires for benchmarking analysis to the following: Ekonomski Institute Banjaluka (project: European Union Regional Economic Development Project in Bosnia and Herzegovina), IPSA (CARDS), Faculty of Economics Tuzla (Interreg IIIa), Direction for European Integration B&H (Interreg IIIa and Interreg IIIb), MAP Office for B&H (UNEP MAP), LESPnet (Interreg), Municipality of Pale (EURED), Chamber of Economy of Sarajevo (European Academy for Chamber Staff in the Western Balkans), TALDi, City of Sarajevo (Interreg IIIa), SERDA, Municipality of Centar, Kanton Sarajevo. Five completed questionnaires were received for analysis.

From the analysis of the answers to the questions in Section A, one of the most interesting points worth highlighting is the difference in views between the PAs (public authorities) and the PS (private sector, including civil society) regarding openness in the decision-making process. Public institutions claimed to have the best access to official information on the decision-making process with a good level of knowledge of the process. Similarly, public institutions maintained that they have been involved in the planning phase and have been able to have a significant impact on it. Interestingly, however, the private sector presented a totally different picture as regards participation in the planning process. In fact, the private sector stated that planning was not open to the participation of all stakeholders, that the private sector has not been involved in the planning phase and that the PS has not had a significant impact on planning.

As far as financial resources are concerned, the private sector reported that coordination inside public institutions and among public institutions was poor and there were problems with different and complicated procedures. The private sector perceived that spending for Programmes/projects had been results-oriented and that the Programmes/projects did end up mobilising additional resources. An opinion common to all categories of respondents was that external/foreign partners should be significantly involved in planning, that their participation in this stage improved the needs assessment phase and that solidarity motivations were the most important. Limited access to financial resources, slowness of participatory planning, poor information/communication and insufficiently broad involvement of partners were perceived as the main problems regarding partnership in planning. All stakeholders thought that the introduction of innovations and the concentration of resources on strategic priorities

could improve the capacity of partnerships to establish priorities in planning. Knowledge flows, cultural dialogue, institution building and investment were felt to be priorities in foreign/external territorial cooperation. Investment was considered most important by the private sector.

As far as the main perceived problems and obstacles to EU-Mediterranean cooperation are concerned, all stakeholders reported both bureaucratic and context-related (mainly economic and cultural) problems. In relation to the conditions considered necessary for making partnership in territorial cooperation effective, it is interesting to note that besides the need for strategy and objective sharing, access to information and a results-oriented approach, day-to-day management and better cooperation within the country were also felt to be prerequisites. The responses received from the Association for Gender Equality, for the Support of Women in Development, the Association of Business Consulting, the DELUSA private consulting company, the Brock Development Centre, the Foundation for Local Democracy, the Citizens' Association for Local Development Initiatives and the Chamber of Economy of the Sarajevo canton demonstrated greater awareness and reflection than those of other stakeholders. The President of the regional assembly and some entrepreneurs did not take part in this analysis. In relation to possible ways of improving planning, interviewed stakeholders highlighted the importance of training for both decision-makers and administrative personnel.

Thus, for Bosnian stakeholders, great importance is placed on increasing the economic role of Mediterranean Regions (including the Western Balkans) in joint planning and cross-border and transnational territorial development projects, more effective partnerships through the promotion of policy dialogue between local, city, regional and central governments and the European Commission, and the improvement of future territorial cooperation in Structural Funds programming for the period 2007-2013.

The main obstacles to be overcome, according to Bosnian stakeholders, are language barriers and lack of knowledge. Trust, openness, respect and readiness to listen in order to acquire better knowledge and learn more about comprehensive development together with partner commitment, are perceived as the main prerequisites for effective new partnerships in external territorial cooperation.

3.4.3 Main results of the benchmarking analysis

The benchmarking analysis was carried out on the following projects/institutions:

the Business Development Centres in Podrinje aimed at promoting business development in the partner municipalities of Rogatica, Višegrad, Rudo, Novo Goražde, Prača-Pale, Foča-Ustikolina, Foča, Čajniče, Kalinovik. The lead partner is the European Union (the EU Delegation in Bosnia and Herzegovina) (CARDS);

the project of the Association of Business Consultants in Bosnia and Herzegovina LESPnet entitled SAFETYSAUSAGE – Safety of traditional fermented sausages: research on protective cultures and bacterocin (Interreg);

the programme of the Municipality of Centar entitled: Establishment of Agricultural Cooperatives, Tourism: Archaeological Park Debelo brdo, Skakavac Nature Park, Sarajevo viewing places. The lead partner was the Municipality of Centar, and the partner was Kanton Sarajevo with potential partners being SERDA, EU RED, USAID and SEENET (CARDS);

the IPSA Institute highlighted the project entitled Road and motorway management in the PHARE Countries. The lead partner is NEI AND DRD, with sub-consultants from various countries (CARDS); and

the United Nations Human Settlements programme Urban Indicator Guidelines project of the Sarajevo City Council (financed under Interreg IIIa)

The Sarajevo region in Bosnia and Herzegovina borders with two Balkan countries, namely Serbia and Montenegro, which do not have much experience in dealing with European issues. They have a common history, as well as sharing often common cultural reference points and a common environment. Improving trust between them is a necessary precondition for substantial cross-border collaboration. The experience in the NGO project was positive and received a fairly high-rating evaluation. The collaboration was also very efficient. However, the project's low budget did not support the achievement of additional positive results. Concerning the Public Actors (municipalities, cities and regions), all evaluations indicated similar problems. Some of these problems lie in the lack of experts to draw up European programme studies, poor coordination of the actors involved and low participation or, in the most cases, non-participation in the planning phase. The main conclusion is that personal involvement needs to be substantial for programmes to be successful. A future cross-border programme concerning this particular region should focus on three sectors, namely culture, education and the environment. Specifically, new technologies, telecommunications and energy/power are fields for cooperation which could yield such results.

Bosnia and Herzegovina will have new opportunities for participation in local and regional development in the context of the new instruments for cooperation with neighbouring countries – the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) and the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENPI), as well as the new Objective 3 of the Cohesion Policy on territorial cooperation in the European Union. These five projects and cooperation within the framework of the COMPART project provide very useful experiences from which to draw valuable lessons for the period 2007-2013.

3.4.4 Conclusions

For the next programming period, we recommend a new Euroregion project (as a form of cross-border cooperation) in the West Balkans. In European politics, a Euroregion is a form of transnational cooperation structure between two (or more) territories located in different European countries. Euroregions usually do not correspond to any legislative or governmental institution, do not have political power and their sphere of work is limited to the competences of the local and regional authorities which constitute them. They are usually organized to promote common interests across the relevant borders and cooperate for the common good of the border populations. This structure should not be confused with the European Union-sponsored term “regions in Europe” even though the Council of Europe sponsored term "Euroregion" has a similar meaning. Bosnia and Herzegovina participates in three Euroregions: Dunava-Sava-Drava (since 1998), Drina-Sava-Majevisa (since 2003) and Adriatic (since 2006). Around 20% of BiH's territory and around 30% of the Bosnian population come within Euroregions.

But new CBC programmes can only work if they create and strengthen real partnerships. There is a need, in future, for there to be clear and specific cooperation objectives.

Regions have a major role to play in supporting partnerships and in providing territorial relationships with stability. Stability and continuity depend also on the implementation of coordination instruments (regular planning and follow-up meetings, drafting of a cooperation manual, enhancing the role of development agents and the central role of agencies in promoting coordination with a “proactive” strategy). This also includes, for example, the integration of CBC projects within regional and local development plans in addition to coordination between the different departments of regions and local authorities; the establishment of good relationships with central government and coordination between development strategies at different levels of government; the enhancement of the quality of leaders and of institutions; the participation of stakeholders (especially from external partners)

in the identification and monitoring and evaluation of projects, not just their implementation phase; and feeding project results into future strategies.

In the new CBC programmes, strategic priorities should be established. There is also a need to meet the identified preconditions necessary for ensuring effective new and existing partnerships for external and internal territorial cooperation.

Political support from central governments for cross-border cooperation should also be encouraged by strengthening the link between territorial cooperation and local/regional and national development plan

3.5 Summary of the stakeholder and benchmarking analysis in the Istrian Region/Croatia

Patrizia Bosich (Local Democracy Agency Verteneglio)

3.5.1 The decentralization process in Croatia

The decentralisation process in Croatia is still an ongoing process that has not reached a satisfactory level in terms of self-sustainability for a wide number of local self-governing units as a consequence of a low level of fiscal decentralisation. Public consensus is that the level of decentralisation achieved, considering that regional and local development is a national priority, is unsatisfactory.

Croatia is a small country with a high number of local self-governing units that have serious issues to resolve relating to an oversized, slow and, in many cases, inefficient administration at all levels.

According to the Law on Local and Territorial (Regional) Self-governing Units (Official Gazette 33/01), units of local self-government in Croatia are municipalities and cities, and units of regional self-government are counties (or regions). There are now about 122 cities and 425 municipalities, with a total of 547 local units, and 21 counties (including the city of Zagreb), while there is continuing trend towards the creation of new ones.

A municipality is a unit of local self-government that is established for a territory that comprises several populated areas that represent a natural, economic and social entity, while a city is a unit of local self-government that is the seat of a county or any place having more than 10,000 inhabitants. It represents an urban, historic, economic and social entity. A county is a unit of territorial (regional) self-government whose territory represents a natural, historic, economic, traffic infrastructure, social and self-governed entity and is constituted in order to respond to regional interests.

The areas of services that come within the responsibility of the municipalities relate to affairs of local interest, address citizens' needs and fall outside those granted by the Constitution or other laws to state administrative bodies: namely, organisation of localities and housing, spatial and urban planning, public utilities (water supply, electricity, gas, sewage, other), child care, social welfare, primary health services, education and elementary schools, culture, physical education and sports, consumer protection, environmental protection and enhancement, fire protection and civil defence.

Counties administer affairs of regional significance relating to: education, health services, spatial and urban planning, economic development, traffic and traffic infrastructure, planning and development of networks of educational, health, social and cultural institutions.

The extension of the competencies of self-governing structures gives rise to many challenges as local officials need to acquire new knowledge and skills in order to deal with issues that

emerge. There is a corollary need to establish a continuing and structured education and training programme for employees at all administrative levels.

3.5.2 External territorial cooperation

Croatia, with a great number of its counties, borders with five other states: Bosnia and Herzegovina, F.R. of Yugoslavia, Hungary, Slovenia and Italy (by sea). It has 2,372 kilometres of continental borders and 972 kilometres of maritime border. For this reason, in border areas cooperation and communication with the population of the border country is necessary and constitutes a priority for regional development.

The real and direct actors in this process of cross-border cooperation and European integration need to be local and regional players such as citizens, enterprises and local or regional governments. Local and regional authorities in Croatia have a strong political will to cooperate with various partners abroad and view such initiatives very positively. The reasons for the existing cooperation actions of Croatian counties are many and varied, ranging from networking with other nations and cultures to economic cooperation and exchange of experience.

The legal bases for cross-border or interregional cooperation in Croatia are provided in the Constitution and in the Act on Local and Territorial (Regional) Self-governing Units, which regulates cooperation of municipalities, cities and counties with units of local and regional self-government from other countries.

Municipalities, cities and counties may cooperate with their counterparts abroad. The decision to establish a relationship of cooperation, i.e. the signature of the relevant establishing agreement (contract, convention or memorandum) is the responsibility of the representative body of the local or regional unit. After signature of the agreement, prepared in both languages, a copy must be delivered to the central state administration unit responsible for regional and local self-government, which is required to check its legality or recommend its annulment to the Government.

3.5.3 Istrian stakeholders in interregional and cross-border cooperation

The Istrian region is situated on the westernmost border of Croatia and it borders with Slovenia and (by sea) with Italy. Cooperation with institutions of the Italian regions such as Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Veneto and other Italian regions of the Adriatic, as well as with Slovenia, particularly with coastal municipalities, is the result of a natural process of gravitation towards territories that have a shared historical, cultural and linguistic (namely, Italian) ties.

It is a border region that has specific development needs and problems that need to be resolved in agreement with its two neighbouring countries. Consequently, cross-border cooperation is of great relevance for this territory. Indeed, Istria is one of the most internationally active of the Croatian regions.

The stakeholder community in the Istrian Region is varied. Territorial cooperation is mostly carried out by the regional and local self-governing units, regional and local public institutions (i.e. Chambers of Commerce, the Istrian Development Agency and universities) and NGOs. EU Regional policy instruments, initiatives and EU programmes in general are the centre of attention of all interested stakeholders who have expressed a strong will to be included in the programming phase of the upcoming IPA instrument for Croatia.

The majority of the stakeholders of the region active in international territorial cooperation were included in the Interreg initiative, IIIA Neighbourhood Programme Slovenia – Hungary

- Croatia 2004-2006, Adriatic New Neighbourhood Programme or IIIB CADSES and in decentralised cooperation programmes.

The Istrian region has a long history of involvement in cooperation with foreign regions and has been very successful in achieving inclusion in EU initiatives and programmes. The region has signed cooperation agreements with 11 European regions and 1 Chinese region and is a member of a number of international institutions, including the Assembly of European Regions, the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe, the Institute of the Regions of Europe, the Assembly of Wine-Producing European Regions and the Association of European Border Regions in planning.

3.5.4 Main results of the stakeholder and benchmarking analysis for the Istrian region

For the stakeholder analysis, 28 interviews were conducted with public institutions at national, regional and local level within the following categories: Ministry, regional and local self-governing units, the tertiary sector, NGOs, cultural institutions and universities. 12 stakeholders were involved in projects in the Interreg III A - Adriatic New Neighbourhood Programme, 3 in Interreg IIIB - CADSES and 1 in Interreg IIIC. The other stakeholders have not had direct experience in Interreg, but expressed a willingness to participate in territorial cooperation.

Due to Croatia's brief experience with EU programmes and initiatives, none of the interviewed stakeholders at local and regional level have been included in the programming phase of the Interreg programmes opened to Croatia and thus, apart from some regional officials, there is a general lack of even basic information or personal knowledge on the official procedures of Interreg planning processes and principles. The interviewed stakeholders also have no experience in the programming phase of other decentralised cooperation programmes. Among the interviewed institutions, only the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration participated in the planning phase of the Interreg programme. The level of information or knowledge of Interreg methodologies is in general low and is dependent on personal interests or motivations. Accordingly, one of the most immediate needs is institutional capacity building in the general framework of territorial and decentralised cooperation.

For the purposes of benchmarking analysis for the Istrian Region, a total of 3 projects were selected: ADRI.FISH – Interreg III B CADSES, CONSPACE – Interreg III B CADSES and the SEENET programme – decentralised cooperation. For effective, equal and long-lasting partnership in external territorial cooperation, the following emerged as necessary conditions from the three analysed projects in the Istrian Region:

- for active and efficient partnership, a good knowledge among partners of the territory with which they are establishing the cooperation relationship for the implementation of specific activities;
- an active and equal role for partners, in particular of non-EU parties, beginning from the identification of objectives and project definition phases. If not included in the initial phases, the degree of perceived ownership of the project is very low and consequently the results and the visibility of the project are very low for the territory in question;
- the degree of involvement, at least in the planning phase of the project, should be high. In those cases where an Istrian partner had not been included in the planning or objectives identification phase, the project frequently did not relate to the territory's strategic objectives;

- involvement of political representatives is an element that gives better visibility to a project and greater institutional commitment to the achievement of the project's objectives;
- previous actively developed relationships, or at least previous contact, and lasting relations with the foreign territories or institutions in question;
- previous cooperation agreements of the Istrian Region with EU regions, in particular with regions that have lived through common historical events with those territories (such as Veneto and FVG) resulting in many shared cultural, linguistic and traditional aspects that facilitate dialogue between partners and the cooperation process in general;
- for local and regional authorities, political acceptance and willingness are of fundamental importance, firstly for participation in a project and, secondly, for active implementation; and
- involvement of high-level professionals trained in the management of shared projects, both inside a specific local or regional authority and with external foreign partners.

The main perceived constraints in partnership management and development were:

- a lack of identification of common priorities and strategies;
- limited access to financial resources for non-EU members;
- different structural, economic and legislative frameworks;
- a lack of external and decentralised cooperation in strategic development plans or policies and a lack of defined offices inside an institution for external cooperation (in particular in local authority administrations);
- a lack of resources available, in particular, to NGOs;
- Istrian/Croatian/SEE partner-specific problems, including a lack of capacity and resources, a lack of experts in project cycle management and a lack of technical assistance that should be provided by the Regional or State level; and
- low participation in the monitoring and evaluation phase.

3.5.5 Conclusion

Territorial cooperation is seen by all categories of interviewed stakeholders in both analyses as a tool for development and very beneficial form of support which generally opens up new perspectives for regional development. It provides a different vision and various innovative mechanisms for social and economic development of the territory. It is seen as an excellent opportunity to reduce development disparities among regions, particularly Croatian ones.

Strategic for all the stakeholders is the establishment of cooperation with regions or institutions coming from more developed countries, usually from the EU and, in second place, with other third countries particularly in South-eastern Europe. NGOs, in contrast with local and regional public institutions, are more included in projects and are more open to launching common projects with third countries.

Interreg cooperation is considered an excellent training ground for the pre-accession instruments, Structural Funds and EU regional policies, as well as providing a basis for future cooperation within the EU. This benefits drawn from this preparation depend, however, on active inclusion in the implementation of projects and in the programming phase. For Croatian partners, Interreg cooperation offers a greater possibility for engaging in a process of collaboration with neighbouring and other regions, which would not otherwise be possible where there is a lack of proper or national financial resources. It is considered a tool for the acquisition of new know-how and for exchanges of best practices and positive experiences for the strengthening of existing partnerships and the establishment of new networks. Finally, it is

also seen as facilitating development and the resolution of common needs and problems of shared border territories.

3.6 Summary of stakeholder and benchmarking analysis in Western Macedonia

Panos Remoundos (Western Macedonia Region) and *Vassiliadis Dimitris* (Fribourg University, CH Thessaloniki)

Greece is divided into three administrative levels: Municipalities, Prefectures and Regions. Pursuant to the “Kapodistrias Law”, the Municipalities and Communities were reduced in number from around 2,500 to 950. These mergers led to strong reactions in many parts of the country, as each Municipality or Community, for varying reasons, did not wish to participate in the implementation of this Law. There were political reasons, since some did not wish to lose or hand over power to a larger administrative formation. However, in some cases there were also practical reasons, including the fact that often the new Municipal Offices were geographically remote from former Communities or Municipalities. In order to obtain any necessary supporting documents (such as for marriages, births or christenings, or a license for electricity or water supply), residents were forced to go to new distant Municipal Offices, which many of them were not willing to do. Nevertheless, the project finally met with success and most of the objections were overcome. The debate concerning “Kapodistrias 2” has already started since there are still some remaining Municipalities with small populations.

The main problem concerning the Municipalities is resource-related. Although Municipalities have their own income flowing from municipal levies, their finances cannot cover infrastructure works or other services provided to their citizens. Due to poor financial management, most of the Municipalities end up obtaining loans or sometimes even overdrafts, thus a large part of their income from municipal levies goes towards interest payments. The Municipalities are forced to depend on the Central Government for the implementation of major works and to ask Ministries for financial support. Another problem with first-level (Municipalities) and second-level (Prefectures) local self-government lies in the delegation of authority from the Government to these administrations. Although the Constitution provides for a corresponding transfer of resources, most of the time this does not occur and the financial position of the Municipalities is worsening.

Greece has 52 Prefectures. Prefectures do not have separate financial existence nor do they have the right to impose levies. They receive funds from the Regions for infrastructure works while some of their services, such as the issuing of passports, vehicle roadworthiness controls, etc., are funded through service charges. Also, road networks, building of schools, sanitation control services, store trading hours, and services for commerce and culture come within the authority of the Prefectures. They are greatly dependent on the Central Government and their demands, sometimes justified and sometimes unreasonable, cause great friction. The Mayors and Prefects are elected, meaning that a Mayor or Prefect who does not belong to the ruling national party may not be treated equally by successive Governments.

Regions are the third level of self-government. Greece has 13 Regions, defined by geographical criteria. Regions have resources drawn directly from the State budget and also play a significant role in the distribution of funds from the EU. Pursuant to Law 2503/97, each Region was constituted as a unified decentralised administrative unit of the State, with clear authority in relation to the exercise of devolved State powers. Their character as a regional development unit was maintained and their organisational structure was defined. Subsequently, with the aim of reinforcing decentralisation as well as supporting communication between citizens and public services, the Regions’ autonomy vis-à-vis the Government was further amplified by new regulations under Law 2503/97. According to

these regulations, new instrumental units were constituted and many powers were transferred from the Government to the Regions (see Law 2647/98, Law 2910/01, Law 3013/02, Law 3208/03, Presidential Decree 1213/98, Presidential Decree 313/01, etc.). The Secretary-General of the Region is appointed by the Government and is not elected. However, there are currently discussions underway over further reform of the Regions. Under the proposal, all thirteen Regions of the country would be merged into five Super-Regions and Secretary-Generals would be elected. The Prefectures would no longer exist or they would be incorporated into the new Super-Regions and Prefects would not be elected.

In general, decentralisation in Greece has not been effective nor has it achieved the anticipated results. Since the 1950s, Greece has had a strong flows of external and internal migration. In the 1980s, migration abroad came to an end and many immigrants returned to Greece. However, the internal migration still continues. Urbanisation and depopulation of the countryside has continued. Big cities such Athens and Thessaloniki, with better infrastructure in health, education and industry, continue to attract people from smaller regions. Many in rural areas have lost their jobs (mostly in the primary sector, such as agriculture and livestock farming) consequently leading to an increase in unemployment in large urban areas.

The external cooperation powers of the Regions are very few. The Regions have no authority over international relations. They can, however, promote European Union programmes and invite stakeholders to submit their investment proposals within the programme frameworks.

The premises for cross-border cooperation between actors in the Region of Western Macedonia and their counterparts in Albania and FYROM do exist and have potential. There are several problems which could be solved through cooperation and Greece is eager to act upon them. However, the different administrative structures in the countries in question often complicate and obstruct coordination. Also, the different rates of development and the different priorities of each of the countries lead to divergent needs. One of the primary obstacles to achieving cross-border cooperation is a lack of mutual trust. Often, the problems start at the political level (e.g. conflict over the constitutional name of FYROM), but in other cases there are financial causes (the countries do not have or cannot raise the necessary funding to cover the investment needed).

The major prerequisite for a successful outcome to cooperation programmes is the mutual interest of Greece, Albania and FYROM in environmental, cultural and educational issues. Albania and FYROM are in great need of basic infrastructure projects, which leads these countries to adopt a different prioritisation of their needs. However, this does not deter Greece from urging them to consider other priorities, such as protection of the environment and education. Actions geared to these areas could provide an opportunity for these countries to overcome their mutual lack of trust, based on political and historical grounds. Another major problem is the different languages spoken which often complicates communication and contributes to heightening already-existing mistrust. Bureaucracy in all these three countries is also a major problem. In Albania (in particular) and in FYROM, some administrative structures are still being established, making it difficult for actors in Greece to learn who the responsible person/body is for any given field and what their jurisdiction covers.

There is a perceived need for and will to engage in substantial cooperation activities. The countries concerned not only share a common history but also a common future. The need for cooperation also emerges from geographic imperatives. For instance, all three countries border on the Prespes Lake. There are also educational imperatives, which with more assistance, could become a fertile ground for communication and beneficial cooperation.

Culture, environment and education are the preferred fields for cooperation between these countries and all future efforts should be focused on them. In the education sector, there is great interest not only in education but also in the transfer of know-how and in the exploitation of technological innovations. Apart from student exchange programmes, improvement of mutual trust and the promotion of interpersonal relations, there would also be

new opportunities for trade and positions for scientific personnel would be created. The expectation of fostering profit-yielding activities provides an excellent incentive for the implementation of cooperation programmes in this field.

Great results have been achieved in the field of environmental protection through the NGO Arktouros, despite the fact that the programme's budget was very low. The NGO has managed to raise the awareness of neighbouring countries in relation to environmental issues, as well as establishing excellent interpersonal rapport, relationships which have been successfully maintained following the completion of the implementation of the programme.

Cooperation in the cultural sector has also been very positive. The common origin of the peoples of the area, as well as their shared history, has led them to unite in preserving and promoting their cultural heritage. This without the prospect of financial incentives for participation as applicable in the field of education. People from the various countries showed great interest in reaching out to each other, concentrating on the things that unite rather than divide them. Clearly, actions of this kind contribute to building greater trust. While the positive political outcomes may not be immediately visible or measurable, they will play a decisive role in the future.

The basic criterion for choosing particular projects was their representativeness. In the three broad areas of education, culture and environment, the projects that most satisfied the procedural requirements were chosen.

The Region of Western Macedonian, unlike other regions of Greece, borders with two Balkan countries, namely Albania and FYROM, which are not members of the E.U. and have little experience in European affairs. In addition, the level of infrastructure and know-how in these countries is particularly poor. However, what the countries do share is a common history, common cultural reference points and a shared environment. In relation to the latter, we refer to the Prespes Lake, which is being jointly utilized for commercial purposes (tourism and fishery). There have also been efforts by NGOs to preserve the fauna of this region. The wave of immigration from Albania to Greece in recent years has brought both nations closer together. Albanian immigrants have learnt to speak Greek fast and their work has made a great contribution to the development of the Greek economy. Such human resources are the best capital from which to develop further economic activities.

Mutual trust is a necessary precondition for substantial cross-border cooperation. Focussing on the points which unite us will enhance the prospects for greater success in upcoming programmes, though, naturally, the different priorities and needs of the countries will need to be kept firmly in mind.

The experience in NGO projects has been positive and the evaluation given was fairly high. The cooperation proved very efficient. However, the programme's low budget did not support additional positive results being achieved.

In relation to Public Actors (Municipalities, Prefectures, Regions), all evaluations received pointed to similar problems. Some of these problems included a lack of experts to draw up European programme studies, bad coordination of the actors involved and low participation or, in the most cases, non-participation during the planning phase.

The main conclusion is that personal involvement is essential for a successful programme. This is can be rather difficult to achieve as public sector perceptions and ways of thinking differ greatly to those prevalent in NGOs or academic institutions. It would seem that wherever the actor was not just a Municipality or Prefecture but a named person, the results were positive and there was also continuity in the programme.

A future cross-border programme concerning this particular region should focus on three sectors, namely culture, education and environment, but most particularly education, since it could generate additional positive impacts, above all in the fields of new technology, telecommunications and energy.

4. COMPARING STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS IN THE PLANNING OF INTERREG AND NEIGHBOURHOOD PROGRAMMES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN BASIN. THE STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS REPORT²

4.1 Introduction: Stakeholder communities in Mediterranean local contexts

4.1.1. Interest in and perception of the Mediterranean

The Italian regions converge in defining their significant interest in implementing cooperation in the Mediterranean. The geographic location of the Italian regions in the Mediterranean determines the presence of harbours, of migration flows, of traditional economic interests and trade relations³, of common political interests (peace and security) and linkages (civil society sharing of the Palestine and Saharawi issues). Within the framework of the new glocalization processes, public opinion and political elites are increasingly aware of the inevitable interdependence between countries and territories, as well as the importance of increasing relations at regional and local level among the various relevant actors in the Mediterranean sea, exploiting the incentives offered by specific EU programmes, such as Interreg and the new cross-border cooperation component under IPA and ENPI.

On the other hand, it is interesting to point out the case of Calabria whose Mediterranean orientation is considered, due to geopolitical conditions, as “destiny” rather than a matter a choice. International cooperation has evolved exploiting mainly the Interreg programme. Within this context, it is worth noting that cooperation initially started as cultural collaboration in the fields of tourism, cultural heritage, and conservation of landscape and monuments, developing later into commercial and industrial agreements. The intention is to create and support a Mediterranean cultural area of collaboration, where the common historical and cultural roots are re-discovered, protected and promoted and considered as a foundation for new collaboration in other sectors.

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is in the process of integration in the EU as a potential candidate country. It is in a geo-strategic position in the Balkans area. All bordering countries have a strong interest in the peaceful, democratic and economic development of BiH. In that country, awareness of the strong transnational interdependencies is widespread but nationalisms and ethnic tensions continue to persist as does intolerance of the presence

² Andrea Stocchiero and Battistina Cugusi of CeSPI coordinated and prepared the final stakeholder analysis report.

The Calabria Report was prepared by Giulia Righetti and Claudia Mularoni of the Pragmata Institute.

The Friuli-Venezia Giulia Report was prepared by Benoit Hamende and Paolo Panjek of ISDEE.

The Tuscany Report was prepared by Prof. Andrea de Guttry in cooperation with Luisa Nardi and Babara Nicoletti, Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna.

The Greek report was prepared by Vassiliadis Dimitris, Lic. Rer. Pol., Fribourg University, CH Thessaloniki

Philippe Cichowlaz of CRPM drafted Box 2 on the Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur case.

The BiH Report was prepared by Prof. Dragoljub Stojanov in cooperation with Jasmina Osmanković and Adnan Efendić, Faculty of Economics, Sarajevo.

The Croatia (Istria) Report was prepared by Patrizia Bosich of the Verteneglio Local Democracy Agency.

The Moroccan (Tanger/Tétouan) Report was prepared by Youssef Bennouna for the Tangeri-Tétouan Region.

³ But also, as the Tuscan region indicated, “the beginning of a phase of potential competition between Tuscany and other Mediterranean regions in specific areas such as tourism and small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), which has, on the one hand, already caused the relocation of various economic activities from Tuscany to the southern part of the Mediterranean, and on the other, created potential interest in new forms of industrial and technological cooperation”.

(European Union peacekeeping troops – EUFOR) and dependence on the international community. The division among ethnic groups determines the institutional, administrative and territorial structure. Tensions between the three constituent peoples remain high in Bosnia and often provoke political disagreements. Each of the three groups are influential to roughly the same degree in Bosnia with Bosnians being the most numerous, Serbs having their own entity and Croats being the wealthiest and the strongest economically. In this problematic framework, external territorial cooperation could represent an instrument that builds bridges to overcome nationalistic confrontations.

Considering the particular geographical shape of Croatia and the length of its borders, territorial cooperation is of particular importance in the development of its regions, particularly the border ones. Territorial cooperation is considered as a tool of development and a very positive support that generally opens up new perspectives to regional development; it provides a different vision and mechanisms, innovative ones, to the social and economic development of the territory. It is perceived as an excellent opportunity to reduce development disparities among regions and to establish long-lasting relations and networks with EU and non-EU countries.

In the Mediterranean basin Italy, represents for Croatia, and more particularly for Istria, a key partner in the economic sector. The Adriatic Sea is a connection between the two countries that offers a variety of development possibilities, in the transport, tourism and cultural fields.

Even if greater attention is given to the further development of relations with EU and neighbouring countries, cooperation with the Mediterranean area is considered to be a future inevitable and highly necessary condition in a common environmental, economic and social space.

Morocco is also mainly interested in cooperating with neighbouring EU countries. Due to historical links, Morocco cooperates above all with France and Spain and to a lesser extent with Italy. This cooperation involves numerous actors: regional and local authorities as well as territorial and civil society organisations.

The geographic position of the region of Tanger/Tétouan represents a great advantage. Situated in the North-East of Morocco, the region of Tanger/Tétouan boasts two sea coastlines, the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, extending over 3500 km. Moreover, its proximity to the European Union (14km) makes Tanger/Tétouan a bridge between two continents and opens up a great deal of opportunities. The history of the two main towns of the region, Tanger and Tétouan, have been strongly influenced by foreigners. While Tétouan was the capital under Spanish colonization, Tanger was an international town, where people of different nationalities co-habited.

It is worth noting that in Morocco political will exists to open up the country to the Mediterranean area. The region of Tanger/Tétouan will contribute to this through the implementation of the project “Tanger Méditerranée” and in particular with the creation of the infrastructure envisaged by it (motorways; ferries; tourist zones; etc.).

4.1.2 Stakeholder communities

The stakeholder communities of the Italian regions are numerous and varied. For example, in Tuscany, according to a detailed inquiry recently conducted, there are more than 80 actors (representing the public sector, NGOs, the private sector, civil society, education and research centres, etc.) actively involved in various forms of relations with other Mediterranean partners. Out of them, according to the survey, at present there are about 97 projects of cooperation involving an active presence of a Tuscan partner. The nature of these projects varies greatly. In general terms, the projects can typically be divided into development projects, humanitarian projects, international solidarity activities, etc. From a geographic

perspective, the following are the countries and territories mainly benefiting from the activities of Tuscan actors (various projects cover several countries): Palestine (57 projects), Western Sahara (57 projects), Morocco (19 projects), Algeria (12 projects), Israel (11 projects), Tunisia (3 projects). The Tuscany Region is fully involved in the following Interreg Programmes: III A ILES, III B MEDOCC and III C SUD.

The stakeholder community in FVG is quite numerous and varied. But unfortunately, it is currently difficult to quantify the exact number of regional actors involved in cooperation projects.

From the geographic point of view, most of the stakeholders were involved in cross-border cooperation projects mainly with Slovenian partners while projects with the Balkans region represent a clear minority. Nevertheless, all the stakeholders wish to strengthen their cooperation with the Balkans area.

As regards the level of participation in the planning phase, the main characteristic of the stakeholder community is that there is a clear-cut differentiation between the entities that are directly linked/part of the regional government administration and those outside the "system". In fact, the FVG region mainly plays a nearly sole-actor role in planning and managing of the Interreg projects.

Another differentiating factor within the stakeholder community is that some actors have solid specialised internal structures for external cooperation management and have therefore developed substantial international activities. While the majority of other actors have only implemented actions in an unsystematic manner. The latter group complained of a lack of information and consequently that their activity was mainly based upon self-entrepreneurship. In particular, local authorities (mainly municipalities) which are practically the main group of stakeholders, would like increased involvement in the planning phase, particularly as regards the setting of priorities and strategic objectives for the international cooperation process. Yet they lack the necessary institutional capacity to actively participate.

The role of the Region in creating a territorial system for the evolution of external territorial cooperation is highly significant. In Calabria, the regional authority has established good cooperation links with various stakeholders (especially universities and agencies), some of which have been appointed as implementing bodies within the Interreg programmes. Nevertheless, the stakeholders ask the regional authority to play a more important political and strategic role in the spread of information on the different opportunities offered by EU programmes. Moreover, most of them have stressed the importance of having a platform at the regional level capable of support stakeholders in preparing and managing international cooperation projects.

In order to strengthen the capacity-building of the regional system, universities could play an invaluable role, since they naturally play role in the international exchange of studies, research results and project ideas, as well as possessing knowledge and skills relating to making applications for EU-funded programmes. Starting from pre-existing horizontal and vertical relationships, universities could put their technical knowledge at the disposal of the regional and international communities and could improve their level of cooperation by means of innovative methodologies.

In Tuscany the institutional context is more developed. The Tuscany Region decided to map out decentralised cooperation actors and activities. This proved to be of great advantage and helped to provide, in an easily accessible way, relevant information about who is doing what and where, enormously increasing the possibilities of new forms of coordination and synergies. It supported the creation of the so-called "Tavoli di coordinamento" (informal meetings which bring together all those, from both public institutions and private entities, who are active in a given area or country) with the aim of sharing precious information and improving the possible forms of cooperation. The region decided to give preference, in choosing which project should be financed through public funding, to those projects which

involve more than one partner from Tuscany. Finally the Region is offering, free-of-charge for the beneficiaries, a significant number of services for those involved in decentralised cooperation. Such services include, for example, training opportunities, workshops, sharing of information (a monthly bulletin inform@zione per lo sviluppo devoted to presenting new opportunities and policies in the area of decentralised cooperation is sent to all the Tuscan actors involved in decentralised cooperation). All these elements contributed strongly to promoting new and reinforced forms of cooperation among the different Tuscan partners active in the Mediterranean region. In general terms, the capacity of the "Tuscan system of cooperation" is increasing the quality of its contribution by developing and increasing relationships with other Mediterranean partners with beneficial impact on the quality of projects in which it is involved.

In BiH, the stakeholder community is fragmented and dependent on aid but a core of actors having a high level of experience in transnational cooperation is active. For example, the Foundation of local democracy in Sarajevo achieved significant results: around 50 million euro was spent in reconstruction and social development projects; around 3000 visits between representatives of different cultural and educational institutions and non-governmental organizations took place; long-term relations were established with various European cities (especially with Barcelona) which still continue. The Citizens' Association for Local Development Initiatives (TALDI) supports the capacity-building of NGOs in BiH, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia and Kosovo as well as the development of cooperation among relevant stakeholders in several municipalities by creating a platform for the identification of prior needs and the implementation of common projects on dialogue and reconstruction, European integration and regional cooperation, democracy and human rights. The Chamber of Economy of the Sarajevo Canton participates in various projects⁴. It has experience and knowledge, very motivated management and good connections with EU and more distant partners.

The stakeholder community in the Istrian Region attracts participation from various bodies. Territorial cooperation is mostly carried out by the region and the local self-government units, regional and local public institutions and NGOs. EU regional policy instruments and initiatives are the focus of attention of all the interested stakeholders who have expressed a strong will to be included in the programming phase of the upcoming IPA.

The majority of stakeholders of the region active in international cooperation activities are included in the Interreg initiative, IIIA Neighbourhood Programme Slovenia–Hungary–Croatia 2004-2006, Adriatic New Neighbourhood Programme or IIIB CADSES. However, knowledge of programming methodologies under Interreg is poor, due to the lack of inclusion of regional and local institutions in the programming phase for the programmes for which Croatia is eligible.

In Morocco there is a lack of coordination between the different local actors. Thus, there are no consultation mechanisms involving deconcentrated and decentralised local authorities and NGOs. Most of the people working for NGOs disengage themselves from politics. Usually,

⁴ The PARTNERS project (Project of Assistance to Regional Trade and Networking for Economic Recovery and Stability) of EUROCHAMBRES, financed by the European Commission through CARDS Programme, which supported the capacity-building of Chambers of Commerce and Industry and other business organisations in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, in the area of intra-regional trade and international trade services; the EUROPEAN ACADEMY FOR CHAMBER STAFF IN WESTERN BALKANS project trained key players on various EU-related topics to ensure further dissemination of knowledge to the business community and related organisations, as well as to establish appropriate mechanisms and create an environment, which would ensure continuous knowledge transfer. One of the goals was to improve the coordination of CCI staff in former Yugoslav countries and various business organisations in the region resulting in increased economic prosperity and stability.

they are people who have been disappointed by politics or do not trust in it or just wish to be detached from it.

Therefore, the bulk of the work would consist of establishing mechanisms to create synergies between this potential and enthusiasm, to have a greater impact on local development. In order to achieve this aim, it is necessary to ensure coordination between the political and technocratic levels.

4.1.3 The selection of the stakeholders

Implementing the stakeholder analysis methodology⁵ in EU partner regions of the COMPART project, experts selected a majority of stakeholders who participated in Interreg programmes and a minority of stakeholders (especially local authorities and civil society stakeholders) who have been involved in other cooperation programmes supported by multilateral organizations (such as the “City-to-City” Programme and GOLD Maghreb of UNOPS/UNDP), by Italian Cooperation and Regional programmes (SEENET of the Tuscany region), and by other EU programmes (CARDS and TWINNING PHARE, MEDA, LIFE, SMAP, VI Framework Programme, Leonardo, PHARE, DAPHNE and EQUAL).

In external countries, the majority of stakeholders did not participate in Interreg and Neighbourhood programmes but in other cooperation programmes. In the case of BiH, most stakeholders did not participate either in Interreg or in other cooperation programmes. However, experts selected a representative sample of stakeholders who were potentially interested in external territorial cooperation.

In accordance with the criteria established in the stakeholder analysis methodology⁶, the COMPART partners made the following selection:

In Calabria, 30 stakeholders were interviewed (14 Public Authorities (PA) provinces, municipalities, agencies, a harbour authority and a public consortium; 3 chambers of commerce and 1 financial institution – Private Actors (PrA); 4 educational and research

⁵ The COMPART project experts were required to conduct about 30 interviews with actors who have and have not participated in the planning of Interreg programmes or in other decentralised cooperation programmes as follows:

- 2/3 of interviews with stakeholders that have been involved in the planning of Interreg programmes;

- 1/3 of interviews with stakeholders that have participated in other decentralised cooperation programmes.

This variegation ensures the collection of data which enables a comparison of different experiences in planning and potential interest in participation.

⁶ Three macro-categories of stakeholders were identified. In square brackets, the approximate number of interviews per each category is indicated.

The European Commission, EU delegations

Public institutions at national, sub-national/local level [10]; particular criteria for selecting sub-national/ local level were: municipalities of different dimensions (for example, one large city and two small towns; their significance for Interreg and decentralised cooperation; their geographic location (nearby and far from the border); aggregation of municipalities and/or of rural communities that are participating in transnational and cross-border cooperation.

Actors belonging to the territory (private sector – profit-making, tertiary sector – non-profit, universities etc.) [20]

In turn, the great variety of actors that fall within this third category can be broken down into four fundamental sub-categories:

c1. Local entrepreneurship (which, in turn, includes entrepreneur associations, cooperatives, chambers of commerce) [5]

c2. Finance (banks, non-banking financial institutions) [3]

c3. Civil society (solidarity organizations, cooperatives favouring social inclusion, single-issue groups, pro-environment movements and cultural organizations) [7]

c4. Education and research (universities, research and study institutes, centres for technical and professional training) [5].

institutes and 8 civil society actors (CS)). In FVG, 30 stakeholders were also interviewed (10 PA – regional services, provinces and municipalities and 20 CS and PrA).

In Tuscany, 31 institutions/persons were contacted several times. In the end, 21 duly completed forms were collected (11 PA; 8 CS; 2 PrA).

The Calabria region organised focus groups. A seminar on "Tuscany and Mediterranean: partnerships and cooperation networks" was organised in Viareggio on February 10, 2006 by the Tuscany region. The seminar offered an opportunity to present the specific experience of the Tuscan system in the Mediterranean area over the last decade.

In Greece, the collection of information and the conducting interviews took place through focus groups, personal interviews and by e-mail. The regional stakeholder analysis concerned 11 stakeholders (1 NGO; 2 universities and research centres; 7 public authorities), involved in more than one of the 50 Interreg programmes implemented in the Region of Western Macedonia.

In BiH, 27 stakeholders in all categories were interviewed: local authorities; local entrepreneurship (which, in turn, included entrepreneur associations, cooperatives and chambers of commerce); finance (banks and non-banking financial institutions); civil society (solidarity organisations, cooperatives favouring social inclusion, single-issue groups, pro-environment movements and cultural organisations); education and research (universities, research and study institutes, centres for technical and professional training). Some of them were from the USA and participated through EU countries.

In Croatia (Istria), 28 stakeholders participated in the analysis, 15 PA from different administrative levels and 13 CS and PrA (4 universities and research centres, 7 social and environmental associations and 2 entrepreneurial associations).

In Morocco, the stakeholder analysis covered 20 stakeholders from the T/T region (4 central public institutions; 1 regional authority; 2 municipalities; 2 chambers of commerce; 1 professional association; 3 education and research centres; and 7 NGOs).

In general terms, it may be argued that the identified stakeholders are quite representative of the different territorial realities operating within Interreg programmes or potentially interested in becoming active partners in external territorial cooperation.

The stakeholder analysis was conducted with a questionnaire divided in two sections: section A which is a semi-closed questionnaire that can be filled in by the interviewee with the assistance of the interviewer and section B which is a semi-structured open questionnaire that should be filled in by the interviewer.

In section A, a scale of value for stakeholder perceptions was used. The scale of value ranged from level 1 - very low degree , to level 2 – low degree, level 3 – insufficient, level 4 – sufficient, level 5 high degree and level 6 - very high degree.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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The questionnaire had the objective of analysing the different involvement modes of partners in the planning of external territorial cooperation (partnership programming), taking their different political and institutional contexts into account. But most stakeholders (particularly external actors) have not been involved in the planning phase of programmes. Consequently some of them responded to the questionnaire referring not to planning of programmes but of projects.

4.2 Stakeholder perceptions of partnership in Interreg planning

4.2.1 EU-region stakeholders

PARTNERSHIP IN DECISION-MAKING

In Tuscany, PA and CS declared they had sufficient access (4 out of 6) to official information on the decision-making process coupled with a sufficient level of knowledge of the process (4 out of 6). Only the PrA claimed insufficient access and knowledge (3 out of 6).

In Calabria, the average of access to official information and knowledge of the decision-making process was considered sufficient (4 out of 6), with interesting differences among the categories of stakeholders (low level for chamber of commerce). In particular, it is worth noting that on average, civil society and research centres perceived that they had good access to the official information and a good personal knowledge of the process of decision-making.

In FVG, on average access and knowledge were considered insufficient especially for PA and CS, while PrA and research and training institutes reported a sufficient level, because they worked with the Region in the design and implementation of projects and because of their interpersonal relationships.

In Western Macedonia, all categories of stakeholders judged the level of access to official information and their own knowledge of the decision-making process as insufficient (2 out of 6; 2,6 out of 6), except universities and research centres (4,5 out of 6; 3,5 out of 6).

In Tuscany, the majority of stakeholders participated in the planning phase and they evaluated it as sufficient, but few of them indicated the bodies they were involved in.

In Calabria, although PA have been the most involved in planning, civil society and education and research actors considered they had a high degree of participation (5 out of 6) in the planning of projects.

By contrast, in FVG the majority of stakeholders did not participate. Only a few of them were involved due to specific institutional and interpersonal relationships and to the fact that the identification of the projects depended on the Region. PA in particular complained of a very low degree of participation.

Generally the bodies indicated were consultative ones.

In the case of Western Macedonia, only one public authority took part to the planning phase. In addition, universities and research centres were also involved in planning through seminars, working tables and organizing committees. The NGO interviewed had not participated.

In Tuscany, CS perceived that their capacities and effective influence on the decision-making process was sufficient, while the other actors declared they had insufficient capacities and effective influence. Similarly, in FVG, the majority of stakeholders considered that they had a low degree (2 out of 6) of capacity and influence, except for research and training institutions (4 out of 6) that were involved in the planning of the projects.

On average, in Calabria the degree of capacity and influence was quite high for public institutions, research and training institutes and civil society (5 out of 6), whereas it was insufficient for chambers of commerce (2 out of 6).

In Western Macedonia, stakeholders perceived their degree of participation in the planning phase as insufficient (0 out of 6). The only exception concerned universities and research centres which considered they had a high degree of participation (5 out of 6).

In general, stakeholders maintained they have an insufficient capacity to participate in the planning phase of the programmes. In Tuscany, "it is interesting to highlight that 2 out of 7 Public Authorities reported the lack of human resources devoted to the project within their

organisation as the main reason for their scarce involvement in planning". By contrast, in FVG access problems of stakeholders were mainly due to Regional institutional choices.

RESOURCES

In Tuscany, as far as financial resources are concerned, PAs surprisingly did not report particular problems in coordinating within and among public institutions (2 out of 6) and mild problems with different and complicated procedures (3 out of 6). Although spending on programmes was perceived as having been sufficiently results-oriented (4 out of 6), it seems that programmes did not end up mobilising additional resources (2 out of 6).

By contrast, in FVG the PA reported a high degree of problems resulting from complicated procedures and coordination within and among public institutions. Complicated procedures also limited the spending, while stakeholders did not have sufficient knowledge to answer the results-oriented and resources mobilisation questions.

As far as the Calabria regional authority is concerned, it stressed the difficulty in managing financial resources because of the lack of coordination inside the region and among the other participating public institutions (6 out of 6), but also the difficulty of dealing with different and complicated procedures (6 out of 6). Moreover, as in the case of FVG, in Calabria the complexity of procedures also appears to be one of the main problems in spending resources. Notwithstanding this, all Calabrian stakeholders perceived that spending was considerably results-oriented (5 out of 6).

Western Macedonian stakeholders did not encounter particular constraints in spending financial resources. Only universities and research centres had a more critical attitude towards the lack of coordination among public institution and the complexity of procedures (3,5 out of 6). Moreover, the latter problem was considered by public institutions as a limitation to the mobilisation of new and additional resources (4 out of 6). Spending was considered as insufficiently results-oriented (3 out of 6) by all stakeholders except universities and research centres (5 out of 6).

PARTNERSHIP AMONG PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS (VERTICAL SUBSIDIARITY)

In Tuscany, stakeholders perceived that partnership among public institutions was insufficiently applied to the planning process. In FVG and in Calabria, on the other hand, the average indicated a sufficient partnership, but not on the part of local authorities.

Regions were reported to be the most crucial public institution in planning and decision-making, especially in the Interreg programmes. Central government was also considered a pivotal institution with reference to other decentralised programmes, while local authorities were seen as marginal actors.

The partnership among PA was considered sufficiently significant (though in the case of FVG, this is to be considered an observation regarding the future) for planning (4 out of 6), but not in the opinion of PrA (2 out of 6).

In Western Macedonia, public authorities and universities and research centres interviewed believed that partnership among public institutions was applied quite sufficiently (3,5 out of 6) during the planning process, whereas partnership among public institutions was considered highly significant (4,6 out of 6) in the preparation of cooperation programmes. In the planning phase, local self-administrations, sectoral ministries (Ministry for Public Works, Ministry for Development, Ministry of Finance), the region and the Interreg managing authority were judged the most influential actors.

PARTNERSHIP WITH CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR (HORIZONTAL SUBSIDIARITY)

In the case of Tuscany, Calabria⁷ and Western Macedonia stakeholders considered that civil society and the private sector have been insufficiently (3 out of 6; 2 out of 6 in the case of FVG and Western Macedonia) involved in the planning phase. But there is a difference in perception: the PA reported a lower degree of horizontal subsidiarity (2 out of 6) than CS (4 out of 6) or PrA (in the case of FVG). On the other hand, in Greece civil society stakeholders were more critical (1 out of 6) than public authorities (3,5 out of 6), whereas they agreed in considering the planning process insufficiently open (2 out of 6).

The PA demonstrated a scattered perception about who were the most influential CS and PA stakeholders in planning. But in the case of Tuscany, CS perceived themselves as influential particularly in decentralised programmes.

The PA considered planning was narrowly (2 out of 6) open to the participation of all stakeholders, while CS (and financial institutions in the case of FVG) reported it was sufficiently open.

However, in the end, all stakeholders judged partnership with civil society and private sector organizations was insufficiently significant in planning.

PARTNERSHIP IN PLANNING WITH EXTERNAL PARTNERS

The main Mediterranean partners for Tuscan stakeholders were PA, local NGOs and universities in Morocco and Serbia Montenegro, followed by Tunisia and Croatia. All stakeholders indicated an intention to expand their cooperation with other Med countries (from Maghreb countries to Turkey and the Balkans area).

In the case of FVG, stakeholders first of all indicated different actors in Slovenia as partners, and then Croatia, BiH and Serbia/Montenegro, while no one reported links or interest in creating new relationships with countries in the Southern Mediterranean.

Western Macedonia also cooperated predominantly with its neighbouring Balkan countries (Albania, FYROM) while Calabrian stakeholders cooperated mainly with Southern Mediterranean countries (Tunisia and Morocco).

An opinion common to all the categories of respondents was that external/foreign partners should be significantly involved in planning (5 out of 6; 4 out of 6 in Western Macedonia) (but PrA in FVG gave a minor score considering the low capacity of external partners in planning).

According to the majority of stakeholders in Tuscany and Calabria, the participation of external partners was sufficient (at project level). In FVG, stakeholders had a different view: CS and research and training institutions rated their level of participation as insufficient, while PrA rated it as high (probably because they experienced good relationships with external partners in the planning of a greater number of projects with significant budgets).

The majority of Italian stakeholders maintained that the participation of external partners improved the needs assessment phase, as well as sufficiently generating new areas of cooperation beyond the programme (but not according to PA in Tuscany, Calabria and FVG). PA demonstrated a lower capacity to develop cooperation than PrA.

On the other hand, in Western Macedonia the involvement of external partners in planning was considered insufficient (2 out of 6), resulting in no significant impact to the needs assessment (2 out of 6) stage.

Stakeholders that the obstacles to external partners participating in cooperation programmes were mainly financial.

⁷ Except for universities, considered by the regional authority to be a crucial actor in the planning process.

In Tuscany, coordination problems (4 out of 6) linked also to a limited degree of decentralisation in Southern Mediterranean countries was reported, while minor importance was placed on political and capacity problems (2 out of 6 in Tuscany; 3 out of 6 in FVG, due to the low knowledge of the programmes by the PA of external countries). By contrast, Calabrian stakeholders did not identify any particular problems in involving external partners in project planning.

As far as Western Macedonia is concerned, poor coordination and a lack of capacity on the part of external partners were indicated as significant (4 out of 6) obstacles to cooperation.

Generally, the choice of external/foreign partners were reported as being made in accordance with the objectives and core missions of stakeholders. But an important difference of attitudes was recorded between the Italian Regions oriented towards the Southern Mediterranean and FVG oriented towards the Balkans area.

In Tuscany, CS reported their main motivations as political and solidarity-related (4 out of 6; whereas PA rated them as only 2 out of 6 and surprisingly PrA rated peace and security as 6 out of 6), while PrA naturally also indicated economic interests as important; less significant was the cross-border relationship (2 out of 6) while for PA, occasional contacts were considered to be particular importance (4 out of 6).

By contrast, geographical proximity had a high degree of significance for stakeholders in FVG, while political and solidarity motivations scored low in importance. All the stakeholders reported a sufficient and high degree of importance for lasting relationships and cooperation agreements with specific foreign territories (4 out of 6).

In Calabria, on the other hand, political and solidarity motivations were considered sufficiently important for PrA (4 out of 6), whereas in the case of CS and research centres, the choice of external partner was mainly driven by lasting relationship concerns (4 out of 6).

As regards external partners in Western Macedonia, the choice of public authorities was mainly driven by the geographical proximity criteria (5,6 out of 6), whereas economic interests and lasting relationships with specific foreign partners were motivations common to all Greek stakeholders (4 out of 6).

PARTNERSHIP FOR PLANNING

In Tuscany and Calabria, the main (4 out of 6) problems regarding partnership in planning were reported by PA and related to the high level of complexity and the slowness in the participatory planning, and the limited access to financial resources. In FVG, stakeholders (above all PA) pointed to bureaucratic difficulties, problems in the broad scale involvement of partners and poor financial access.

Stakeholders from Western Macedonia also indicated these five criteria as the main obstacles (4 out of 6) to establishing a partnership for planning.

In particular, stakeholders indicated the following categories of bodies, mechanisms and devices to facilitate participation in planning:

the sharing of tools such as the logical framework approach and GOOP approach and the creation of an intranet system for the participants in a project;

the creation of networking facilities, such as permanent coordinating and working groups, meetings and events; the establishment of a focal point in the partner territory, a system of committees at three level (steering, executive and awareness-raising committees), and the acknowledgment of the capacity of NGOs to support the process of facilitating participation in planning, joint scientific committees;

training on the functioning of the programmes and project;

studies and the sharing of best practices;

more integration among policies.

PARTNERSHIP IN ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES IN PLANNING

The Tuscan and Calabrian stakeholders perceived that partnership in planning had sufficiently improved the impact on local and trans-local development, the coherence in planning and the introduction of innovations, while the concentration of resources on strategic priorities was considered insufficient.

By contrast, in FVG and Western Macedonia stakeholders reported insufficient impacts due to poor participation in planning.

Box 1. Multi-level partnership in territorial cooperation: the Italian case

According to the Ministry of Economy (MoE), which had a pivotal role in the negotiation of the Cohesion policy (and consequently on objective 3 of territorial cooperation), the Italian case is one of the most advanced in the implementation of the partnership principle. The Italian government set up a committee where all the different stakeholders were involved through various representative institutions: Regions and national representatives of Provinces and Municipalities, entrepreneur organizations, trade unions, civil society organizations, environmental groups, cultural associations and so on. Networking opportunities were provided to facilitate the participation of all stakeholders. Specific working groups and general meetings were organised to debate the various contributions that the stakeholders put forward for defining the Italian position in the negotiation of the Cohesion policy. A specific working group on territorial cooperation was created based on an agreement between the central State and Regions.

In 2006, the MoE led the preparation of the National Strategic Framework with the same partnership structure. Italy is one of the few Member States that is assigning an important role to territorial cooperation in the NSF. Each Region is defining its Regional Strategic Framework and various working groups have been set up: one specifically on territorial cooperation and another on internationalisation. The mechanism is working well due to the experience developed by the MoE and all the stakeholders.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) had a pivotal role in the negotiation of ENPI and IPA (and consequently on their cross-border cooperation components). The MFA established a consultative group to inform various stakeholders on the EC proposals and to invite suggestions. The MFA opened up privileged relationships with the regions to involve them more closely in the working process.

The MoE and MFA are in close contact and they have involved representatives of the regions in informative meetings organised by the EC in Brussels.

The following are some specific observations on the Italian experience:

- The well-established partnership among Central Ministries and the stakeholders was not replicated identically at the regional level: not all the Italian regions implemented methods to facilitate the involvement of local stakeholders.
- The Ministry for Transport and Infrastructure, which is the national coordinator and Managing Authority of the Interreg Medocc Programme, has a close relationship with the regions but did not involve other stakeholders as it considered that there were problems of representation and it would hold up the work of the programme.
- The MFA is trying to develop a new approach to planning external territorial cooperation with the regions. Some innovative and experimental actions are in progress, but no experience is yet available and the regions have difficulty in agreeing a shared position.
- There are difficulties in structuring the co-development principle both at a national and regional level: the MoE supports the national interest in implementing territorial cooperation aimed at promoting the competitive development of Italian territories, while the MFA is trying to put in place an external territorial cooperation initiative aimed at promoting mutual benefits to Italian and external territories and overcoming competitive conflicts between partners.

Generally, the choice of priorities for external territorial cooperation corresponded to the different core missions of the stakeholders. In this sense, PA as well as CS attributed more importance to institution-building, cultural dialogue, environmental issues and migration flows, while PrA accorded a higher priority to trade and investment (joint ventures and

industrial cooperation, enhancement of textile capital). However, it is interesting to note that a low degree of priority was assigned to transport, while all stakeholders considered knowledge flows as first priority. In FVG, cultural dialogue also received a high score, while in Calabria some stakeholders stressed the importance of transport.

Box 2. Multi-level partnership in territorial cooperation: the PACA case

The cooperation activities of the region of Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur (PACA) in the Mediterranean area are carried out mainly under Interreg III B MEDOCC. PACA has also acquired good experience in decentralised cooperation with Maghreb countries (Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria). Moreover, there is a wish to extend this experience to the Balkans.

In the case of PACA region, the contribution to the stakeholder analysis was provided by the CRPM, on the basis of a meeting with: the "SGAR" (General Secretariat responsible for regional affairs), as representative of the State; the "Prefet", as representative of the State at regional level; and a representative of the regional council. In addition, the CRPM also conducted an interview with the director of the "Institut de la Méditerranée" (IM).

These are the only institutions involved in the planning phase of the programme, as well as in other of programming steps. The partnership is functioning quite well and the co-responsibility between the State and the Region is considered effective.

However, as far as horizontal subsidiarity is concerned, it is worth noting a discrepancy between the very positive perception of the State and its representative at regional level, and that of the IM. The latter considers the horizontal subsidiarity in MEDOCC programme to be very low.

The IM plays a key role both in the case of vertical and horizontal partnership. This institute is co-financed by the "PACA" region, the province of "Bouches du Rhône", the city of Marseille and the Chamber of Commerce of Marseille. It is the implementing tool of these 4 stakeholders for cooperation projects under the Interreg initiative at transnational level. Over the last few years, the "Institut de la Méditerranée" was responsible for the technical management of the following projects: AMI, AMAT, C2M, PIC RM, STRATMED-MEDISDEC and I2C.

External partners have not been involved in the planning phase of cooperation programmes. While the central and regional authorities explained this as a result of a lack of financial resources, IM identified other possible causes such as the lack of capacity on the part of the external countries and poor coordination between the partners. However, there is a clear political will to involve southern partners. Around 50% of the Interreg projects have an external partner in the south but without financing they are not active. Consequently as far as the participation of Southern Mediterranean regional and local authorities is concerned, it is fairly token.

The external partners referred to above were chosen on the basis of the lasting relationships criteria, and to a lesser extent according to solidarity motivations and economic interests. The different sub-categories and categories of the stakeholders in the south are universities, regional and local authorities, research centres and sometimes socio-economic partners.

One of the main obstacles to the PACA region's Mediterranean cooperation relates to the limited means for engaging in in-depth cooperation, mainly because of the limited competencies and financial resources of the regional level in France (especially compared to those in Italy or Spain). The amount of French regional resources for Mediterranean cooperation is quite low compared to the numerous transnational areas where France is involved (South-Western Europe, the Atlantic Arc, North-West Europe and Alpine areas).

Rather, the importance of the regional level consists in the capacity to mobilise other levels of partnership and to exercise political influence over the national government. In fact, the real problem is the lack of cooperation between central French policies for the Mediterranean Area and the Interreg programme managed at the regional level. There are no clear links between them. Furthermore, the capacity for the regional level to influence the State level in the planning phase of bilateral cooperation is often very low. As a result of this, central State priorities are not the same as those of the regional level.

For all the reasons described above, the CRPM concluded that PACA region will mainly be able to facilitate the exchange of experience but not more in the next programming period for territorial cooperation. This analysis also emerged from the AMAT project. On the basis of these remarks, the European Commission will need to adopt a more realistic approach.

4.2.2 Mediterranean external region stakeholders

THE CASE OF THE SARAJEVO REGION (BOSNIA – HERZEGOVINA)

PARTNERSHIP IN DECISION-MAKING

In most cases, Bosnian stakeholders did not participate or did not have information about Interreg, Neighbourhood Programme 2004-2006, decentralised cooperation programmes (for example, the City-to-City programme of UNOPS/UNDP) or other initiatives. Only 7 (3 PA, 3 CS and 1 PrA) out of 27 stakeholders had participated in cross-border or transnational cooperation programmes.

From an analysis of the answers to questions in Section A, one of the most interesting points to highlight is the difference in views between PA and CS regarding the openness of the decision-making process. Public institutions declared they had sufficient access (4 out of 6) to official information on the decision-making process with a good level of knowledge of the process. They were involved in the planning phase and had a significant impact on it.

The private sector presented a totally different picture as regards participation in the planning process. Indeed, the private sector declared that planning was not open to the participation of all stakeholders (2 out of 6), that the private sector had not been involved in the planning phase (2 out of 6) with a consequent low degree of significant impact (2 out of 6). Together with CS actors, they requested “more access and sharing of relevant information ... the introduction of transparent mechanisms ... better communication ... for tenders to be published in newspapers ... considering that the participation of stakeholders in the decision-making process is very relevant and has positive impact”.

RESOURCES

As far as financial resources are concerned, the civil sector surprisingly did not report particular problems in coordinating within and among public institutions and mild problems with different and complicated procedures (N.A.). The private sector reported a low incidence of problems in managing and spending of financial resources (1 and 2 out of 6). These remarks did not relate to Interreg programmes but other cooperation projects. On the other hand, PA indicated slightly more problems in the coordination and procedural management and spending (3 out of 6).

Furthermore PrA thought that spending on projects had been results-oriented (5 out of 6) and that the projects did end up mobilising additional resources (5 out of 6).

PARTNERSHIP AMONG PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS (VERTICAL SUBSIDIARITY)

Perceptions among CS/PrA and PA regarding vertical subsidiarity differed. CS and PrA maintained that there was a high level of vertical partnership and significance (5 out of 6). By contrast, PA reported a low degree of partnership (2 out of 6).

PARTNERSHIP WITH CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR (HORIZONTAL SUBSIDIARITY)

CS and PrA were more critical as far as horizontal subsidiarity is concerned. They reported a low degree and insufficient level of access and involvement. On the other hand, PA felt they had a high degree of openness (5 out of 6) but a low level of involvement. All the stakeholders maintained that they had a sufficient level of significance on horizontal partnership (as an observation regarding the future).

In relation to these issues, stakeholders put forward suggestions for improving information flows (e-communication, regular meetings, informative workshops, public debates), increasing institution and capacity-building and enhancing the involvement of CS and PrA in

needs assessment. In this regard, the Directorate for European Integration is “planning to develop a system of horizontal co-ordination during 2006”.

PARTNERSHIP IN PLANNING WITH EXTERNAL PARTNERS

In BiH, stakeholders agreed on the geographical scope of external territorial cooperation which covers the EU and Neighbourhood countries, and ex-Yugoslav countries particularly. But some of them underlined the need to go beyond the border concept: “Today the world is being based on the globalisation of all nations and help should be encouraged and enlisted from many diverse nations and cultures in order for this country to try and catch up with, be a part of, and participate with it all”.

An opinion common to all the categories of respondents was that external/foreign partners should be significantly involved in planning and that their participation in this stage had improved the needs assessment phase (4 out of 6).

Stakeholders accorded practically all the criteria for choosing external partners with a similar degree of preference (4 out of 6). Solidarity motivations obtain a slightly higher preference, while surprisingly PA assigned a lower degree of preference to political motivations (2 out of 6).

All stakeholders agreed that the main obstacle to sharing priorities with external partners was a lack of financial resources (4 out of 6). Other problems were related to the low levels of political involvement (indicated especially by CS and PrA) and coordination (3 out of 6)

Stakeholders also stressed the necessity of building a system of connections, an information network with the external partners, of organise “interest groups and committees with clear obligations and rights for each partner”.

PARTNERSHIP FOR PLANNING

Limited access to financial resources (4 out of 6), the slowness of participatory planning, poor information flows/communication and the lack of wide-scale involvement of partners (3 out of 6) were seen as the mains problems regarding partnership in planning. These responses underline the access and capacity problems mentioned above. Stakeholders in BiH also suggested the same kind of proposals put forward by EU stakeholders.

PARTNERSHIP IN ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES IN PLANNING

All stakeholders thought that partnership could be improved by the introduction of innovations and the concentration of resources into strategic priorities (4 out of 6) with a positive impact on local development. Knowledge flows, cultural dialogue, institution-building and investment needed to be priorities in the external territorial cooperation. Furthermore, investment was considered the most important priority by the private sector (5 out of 6), which also gave a high score to cultural dialogue. PA assigned more importance to environmental issues, investment and transport and CS to institution-building and cultural dialogue.

However, some stakeholders pointed out the very important political problems facing BiH. Government institutions as well as the international community are in a stalemate. “The country lacks defined and positive leadership in any direction, whether in terms of democracy, a market-driven free competitive economy or even issues of discrimination. The International Community has hinted at all of these issues, but it really has not been strong or instrumental in accomplishing anything concrete.”

THE CASE OF THE ISTRIAN REGION (CROATIA)

PARTNERSHIP IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Among Croatian stakeholders, 15 have been involved in Interreg programmes (Interreg Neighbourhood programme Italy/Adriatic; Neighbourhood programme Slovenia/Hungary/Croatia; Interreg II B Neighbourhood CADSES).

Almost all the stakeholders judged as very low the degree of access to official information concerning the process and mechanisms of decision-making (1 out of 6). The only exception was the Ministry of EU Integration (MFAEI), which declared it was sufficiently informed.

The partnership principle, though, was not applied in the planning phase, since the MAEIE was the only institution involved in the preparation of the Interreg programmes. However, the degree of participation of the MFAEI was also low. All the programming documents were completed before Croatia was considered a full member, following the entry into force of the Neighbourhood approach. Only the European Union partners participated actively in the planning phase, whereas the participation of MFAEI was limited to seminars, meetings and workshops.

It is also true that at that time, the Croatian MFAEI was not ready to play a stronger role from an institutional capacity point of view. It must be borne in mind that in the last few years, MFAEI has been challenged by numerous methodological changes due to the pre-accession process.

RESOURCES

In relation to resources, the main problem faced by Croatia was the difficulty of finding additional resources and, to a lesser extent, the complexity of Interreg methodologies and procedures. The co-financing principle was perceived as an obstacle, above all by local authorities. On the contrary, it was considered an incentive by associations and NGOs.

VERTICAL PARTNERSHIP

Despite very low level of participation in planning, the majority of Croatian stakeholders perceived partnership with national public institutions as quite important for cooperation. In particular, it was felt that this partnership should concern not only the ministerial level but also regional and local authorities.

HORIZONTAL PARTNERSHIP

The actual involvement of stakeholders from civil society and the private sector was quite low, as was the actual openness of the planning phase to the participation of these kinds of stakeholders. Notwithstanding this, their participation in the planning phase was perceived as very important (5 out of 6), even if it was limited by specific criteria which did not envisage their involvement.

PARTNERSHIP IN PLANNING WITH EXTERNAL PARTNERS

In Croatia, the majority of stakeholders cooperated with European partners, but only to a limited extent with actors from other third countries, except for associations and NGOs which did cooperate with third country partners.

The choice of external partners was made predominantly according to criteria of geographical proximity and lasting relationships with external partners (4 out of 6).

In the case of cooperation with third country partners, Croatian stakeholders agreed on the importance of actively involving those partners in planning, at the same level as other partners

(4 out of 6). Moreover, their involvement was considered very useful (5 out of 6) for the assessment of the needs for cooperation. Notwithstanding this, the Croatian MFAEI considered low levels of political inclusion and insufficient financial resources as obstacles to effective participation of external partners in the planning phase (4 out of 6).

Ongoing cooperation programmes have generated new cooperation areas only to a limited extent. However, the majority of the stakeholders interviewed were quite satisfied with their partners, even if they expressed a wish to improve and deepen their existing relationships.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that Croatian stakeholders did not show any interest in building relationships with other developing third countries, but rather indicated that they were mainly interested in European or other developed countries.

PARTNERSHIP FOR PLANNING

As far as partnership in planning is concerned, the Croatian MFAEI did not indicate any particular problems.

Although the Croatian MFAEI considered the degree of vertical partnership in planning insufficient, several bodies for facilitating participation in planning exist, namely: the Interreg coordinator established at a ministerial and regional level; the national body for the coordination and implementation of Interreg; technical working groups; and EU info points. But the other stakeholders observed that those bodies were insufficient.

PARTNERSHIP IN ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES IN PLANNING

Institutional building and environmental protection were considered the main priorities of cooperation in Croatia (6 out of 6), followed by trade, information flows, cultural dialogue and investment (5 out of 6).

THE CASE OF THE TANGER/TÉTOUAN REGION (MOROCCO)

PARTNERSHIP IN DECISION-MAKING

The majority of stakeholders in Morocco have not participated in the planning of cooperation programmes. This was the case not only for Interreg programmes (Medocc and Interreg ES/Morocco), but also for other European Programmes (such as Tempus and MEDA). Consequently, none of them had the opportunity to influence the decision-making process.

Notwithstanding this, Moroccan stakeholders indicated they were quite interested in territorial cooperation. Almost all of the actors interviewed had participated in an Interreg project. Thus, despite a mediocre knowledge of the decision-making process in Interreg and a low level of access to information, the country stakeholder analysis in Morocco provided interesting results in terms of perceptions and suggestions from Moroccan actors, especially as regards their participation in project planning.

RESOURCES

In the T/T region, public institutions did not encounter specific problems in spending resources, whereas the mobilisation of new resources was considered quite problematic.

As regards Interreg programmes, the spending of resources was not considered to be results-oriented. This is the result of two fundamental limitations of Interreg. On the one hand, because of a lack of participation in the planning phase of programming, the identified priorities of cooperation have not always reflected local needs. On the other hand, since the ERDF does not allow money to be spent outside the EU territory, the lack of financial resources on the part of Moroccan stakeholders has limited the impact of Interreg projects.

Most of the time, they involved small-sized projects and their activities were mainly limited to the exchange of experience, transfer of know-how and the organisation of workshops and seminars. Moreover, Moroccan stakeholders observed that some of their European counterparts had an opportunistic attitude.

PARTNERSHIP AMONG PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

As mentioned previously, none of the Moroccan institutions participated in the planning of Interreg programmes, including in the transitional phase 2004-2006. The Neighbourhood approach will apply only partially to Interreg programmes at the external borders with southern Mediterranean countries. Although the vertical partnership principle will be improved by involving the Moroccan Ministry of Finance and the European Commission Delegation, their participation will concern mainly the management and implementation of the programme and not the planning.

Notwithstanding this, it is worth noting that all the stakeholders interviewed perceived vertical partnership as being very important in planning.

In general, the interviews revealed a lack of information sharing among central institutions on the one hand and between them and the regional and local authorities, on the other.

Moroccan regional and local authorities have developed significant experience in decentralised cooperation programmes, even though the law does not envisage these kinds of activities as being within the sphere of their responsibilities. In practice, Moroccan regional and local authorities can sign cooperation agreements or conventions with their foreign counterpart institutions. In this case, the approval of the Ministry of the Interior (autorité de tutelle) is required. However, they are able to autonomously decide on participating in cooperation projects. In the latter case, however, deconcentrated authorities (especially the wali) and development agencies were recognised as the most significant actors, followed by decentralised institutions (regions and municipalities) and chambers of commerce and industry.

HORIZONTAL PARTNERSHIP

Despite the numerous cooperation activities carried out, lack of coordination characterised the cooperation activities of territorial and civil society actors both with deconcentrated and decentralised authorities.

Moroccan stakeholders perceived horizontal partnership as essential for making the planning phase of cooperation activities more effective and to avoid overlapping. To this end, they stressed the need to establish consultation and coordination mechanisms between regional and local authorities and territorial and civil society actors.

Civil society actors were considered sufficiently involved in project planning. In particular, the most relevant actors were seen as: NGOs, industry associations and cooperatives.

PARTNERSHIP IN PLANNING WITH EXTERNAL PARTNERS

The cooperation of Moroccan stakeholders has Mediterranean overtones, being mainly oriented towards Spain (in particular with Andalusia), France and Italy. To a lesser extent, there are also examples of cooperation with the following: Belgium, Germany and international organisations (e.g. Bureau International de travail, INTA and OXFAM).

Most of the time, external partners were the initiators of programmes and the main actors in their preparation. Furthermore, it is worth noting that all the stakeholders considered that cooperation with external partners considerably increased the sectors and opportunities of cooperation.

Moroccan stakeholders considered geographical proximity as one of the main criteria for identification of external partners. All the stakeholders expressed a wish to extend their cooperation activities to actors (mostly of the same category) from other regions of Mediterranean countries, but also from other countries (especially Germany, but in some cases also Eastern Europe and the Balkans).

Apart from geographical proximity, the stakeholder analysis revealed that Moroccan stakeholders choose their external partners according to different criteria. Thus NGOs' cooperation relationships were mainly driven by the solidarity motivations, whereas regional and local authorities as well as industry associations were guided by economic interests. Moreover, all stakeholders also considered lasting relationships as a key criterion for cooperation. Finally, it is worth noting that, most of the time, the establishment of new partnerships was made possible through contacts with previous partners.

PARTNERSHIP FOR PLANNING

As far as the preparation of programme/projects is concerned, the main problems encountered were: the low degree of involvement; poor information and communication sharing; and difficulty in agreeing on priority axes and creating a synergy between the needs and priorities of each partner.

PARTNERSHIP IN ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES IN PLANNING

It was felt that external territorial cooperation should concentrate resources on measures capable of producing tangible and sustainable results in terms of local development. In terms of the most important priorities of cooperation, Moroccan stakeholders identified migration flows, information society, investment, trade and cultural heritage.

As regards areas of priority for cooperation, there was also a perceived need for institution-building of the stakeholders concerned, especially through training and seminars. The 'Twinning programme' could represent an effective tool for these purposes.

4.3 Constraints on and opportunities to improve partnership in external territorial cooperation

Stakeholders complained of low participation in planning of Interreg and Neighbourhood programmes, depending on the different regional contexts, but especially in Mediterranean external countries. They stressed that without sufficient experience, they had difficulty in suggesting improvements for partnership in planning other than requesting greater involvement. Consequently, many of the identified constraints did not concern the Interreg planning phase but all programming in general, and particularly project implementation. This is due to the fact that the stakeholders participated actively in the execution of programmes. However, many criticisms were received, as well as suggestions for the improvement, in relation to the Interreg programme with a view to future external territorial cooperation.

The various stakeholders reported that "external territorial cooperation has great potential for boosting economic, cultural and social development and offers great opportunities for integration and dialogue"⁸.

⁸ Other comments made by Tuscan stakeholders highlighted "the need for enhancing external cooperation in the Mediterranean as the gap between the two shores is huge"; External territorial cooperation is "a strategic area for local and regional development within institutions, the economy and society". It may provide "a very important

Stakeholders noted that the many constraints of different kinds can be divided into exogenous and endogenous, into those relating to access and capacity. Some remarks were specifically tied to different regional and country contexts.

4.3.1 Exogenous constraints independent of the Interreg programme

Stakeholders pointed to problems related to the “political, cultural, economic and social context in the Mediterranean area such as the North - South divide, knowledge gaps, differences in commercial systems, in administrative and business structures, in legal and institutional frameworks and specifically in the varying degrees of decentralisation, language barriers, potential and current competition between economic systems, the presence of economic disparities which create mistrust and cultural biases, a sense of frustration of Mediterranean countries together with a lack of well-established democracies”.

In Western Macedonia, in particular, the unclear and often unstable political context of neighbouring countries functioned as a disincentive to cooperation. The heavy presence of bureaucracy in these countries, such as in Greece, but also in the bureaucracy inherent in EU programmes, is a discouraging factor in deciding whether to undertake joint actions. Political disputes between countries such as in relation to the adoption of the name FYROM, were also cited as obstacles to cooperation. Reference was also made to visa issues, which complicate movement and contact with neighbouring countries. The organisational structures of neighbouring countries were viewed as being in an early stage. These countries were also considered as having deficiencies in their legal frameworks.

The same kind of constraints were also reported by stakeholders participating in decentralised cooperation programmes aside from Interreg. They focussed more on problems related to the external context: difficulties in finding reliable and experienced partners; cultural differences; differences in economies; a lack of methods for coordination; and difficulties in adapting complex legislative frameworks to different economic systems. One perceived problem was also low level of political attention accorded to the Mediterranean area by the EU and the low credibility of Italian external policy.

In the case of BiH, stakeholders underlined the very critical situation of their country. They agreed on the marginality of BiH in EU cooperation. “The country has developed a bad reputation and it is considered a high risk. This can be seen from the “donor fatigue” that exists, where more and more donors are simply disappearing.” There seems to be no end in sight for the transition process. Relationships of trust have not positively evolved. The very complicated political and ethnic situation represents a great constraint and it is mirrored in the specific multi-level subdivision of territorial institutions. According to one stakeholder, “The best way to overcome such problems is to take a long hard look at the internal capabilities and resources to come up with a strategic plan for “self help” programmes. This will help prove to the international community that this country is trying and making an effort to move in a specific and positive direction. How this can be achieved is the real question!” Another stakeholder underlined the need for “a reform of the public administration system and

tool for fostering multi-track diplomacy, especially in situations of transition to democracy, useful to diminish local conflict potential”. It is “a useful instrument for involving territorial actors not dedicated to international cooperation”. In FVG, stakeholder indicated a high priority was accorded to cross-border cooperation. In BiH, stakeholders reported that “external territorial cooperation is very important, very useful for knowledge, experience, capital transfer, for free movement of people and information”. In Croatia, stakeholders considered external territorial cooperation as an innovative tool for supporting regional socio-economic development and reducing economic disparities between regions. As a candidate country for accession to the EU, external territorial cooperation acquired even more importance in Croatia. It was considered that these kinds of programmes would help Croatia to familiarise itself with the mechanisms and procedures of Structural Funds.

institutional development, as well as strengthening of the role of NGOs as implementers of development support actions. Since BiH, as a transition country, faces serious structural problems and has a high unemployment rate, development priorities for its integration in the European economic context are related to a wide range of needs". In this context, external territorial cooperation could have a special role to play. But the question remains: What role?

4.3.2 Endogenous constraints dependent on the characteristics of the Interreg programme

Stakeholders reported problems of access in relation to the programme. It was perceived as being too heavily centralised and overly complex and bureaucratic. "The process for writing, submission and evaluation of proposals takes too long, while the time provided for the implementation phase is too short ... too much attention is paid to formalities while too little is given to substance ... the inability of public authorities to self-certify expenses places a burden on the administrative process within institutions and discourages participation". Other complaints related to the lack of instruments enabling participation in the planning phase, poor coordination, difficulties in communication and weak integration among political and technical/administrative bodies, and the tendency to replicate EU hierarchies and bureaucracy.

In BiH, stakeholders complained of a "lack of information about who is doing what and where as well as an insufficient number of formal and/or informal meetings bringing together all public institutions, private entities, civil society and financial institutions that are active in a given area or country, with the aim of sharing precious information and improving possible forms of cooperation. It was felt that actions to overcome access problems would enormously increase the possibilities of new forms of coordination and synergies". The same kind of problems were also reported in Croatia and Morocco.

Problems of capacity were also stressed as regards technical matters, including a lack of know-how (especially on the part of external partners and of minor stakeholders), expertise in project management and planning methods. These problems "are also related to the territorial disparities and differences between capital and countryside cities, industrial and rural regions, geographical accessibility and the communications infrastructure of different regions" in BiH. In Croatia, stakeholders also faced disparities in capacity and resources between the big urban centres and outlying areas. Especially at a local level, it was felt that human resources and capabilities to deal with these kinds of programmes need to be strengthened.

Other constraints relating to the structure of the programme: the programme was considered too much scattered and fragmented, with a weak identification of priorities. The initiatives appear to be too scattered and not integrated, often replicating each other. The impact on territorial development was not evaluated. A major limitation for the active participation of external partners was the lack of financial resources to fund activities outside EU territories. Other remarks were directed at "an almost exclusive focus on economic issues; territorial cooperation that is not on the top of the political agenda; the poor connection between the local level and national strategy for decentralisation".

4.3.3 Needs and suggestions

In connection with the problems and criticisms raised, stakeholders indicated many needs and put forward suggestions to improve partnerships in future external territorial cooperation. A general area consensus emerged regarding the partnership concept: it was seen as implying the necessity of ensuring equal dignity and access to the management of financial resources for external partners, as well as of identifying real mutual interests, accompanied by the need for enhancing political and technical involvement and increasing reciprocal trust between partners. It was also considered as necessitating the creation of social capital among partners.

It involves a time-consuming process that requires concrete results for linkages to be strengthened.

The stakeholders considered the establishment of partnership mechanisms both at vertical and horizontal level as a necessary precondition to improving external territorial cooperation. This implies action to open up access and build capacities.

It was considered that opening up access to decision-making, especially to local authorities, civil society and private actors and improving vertical and horizontal participation in planning could be pursued by:

- simplifying procedures and technical terminology that is often unclear;
- making planning methodologies easier and transparent;
- circulating more information regularly (“enhance communication processes”, “improve early stage communication to local stakeholders”) to encourage participation (including within institutions) especially “the participation of marginal stakeholders that are penalised because of the greater attention to big centres” and “to allow small municipalities to cooperate in defining their priorities of cooperation”;
- setting up information units on cooperation both at ministerial level and within local institutions (request by Moroccan stakeholders);
- identifying specific activities at stimulating the involvement of weaker stakeholders (integrated with capacity-building actions);
- implementing smaller programmes and supporting small pilot projects in order to reduce bureaucracy and administrative burdens, enabling the participation of minor stakeholders, and possibly sub-programmes, where necessary, with separate steering committees;
- increasing the involvement of representatives from civil society groups and private actors in the identification of priorities and needs of the territory, in the preparation of guidelines within the programme, through working tables and other participatory instruments, and through ex ante analysis of the social and economic structure of the territories;
- organizing regular meetings between the different administrative levels, aimed at defining common priorities on cooperation and agreeing on the division of labour and responsibilities;
- providing territorial stakeholders with clear terms of reference. These should assign the appropriate role in territorial cooperation, thus avoiding a situation where participation is simply due to the request of local authorities;
- setting up multi-level working groups on specific themes, such as that established by the DG-Research of the European Commission on scientific research;
- setting up a permanent conference on project development with the participation of local external actors, but also with a view to identifying new programming priorities; and
- increasing access to project-level planning (“the participatory approach in planning processes implemented in the formulation of projects”, “to enhance the linkage between Programme objectives and the formulation of projects”).

It was considered that it would be possible to raise the capacity to participate in planning and management of projects by:

- providing training for decision-makers on lobbying as well as specific training and workshops for technicians and administrative personnel on planning and project cycle management and language courses;
- strengthening the capacity of local institutions and civil servants, to receive and integrate input coming from civil society and private actors, through governance and participatory mechanisms;

- improving coordination and communication capacities through periodic meetings and permanent working groups among partners;
- funding bodies should provide expertise in devising appropriate participation processes and building capacity. Local authorities should also invest more in specific training for their personnel;
- setting up specific agencies to improve coordination among institutions, support capacities and facilitate networking;
- establishing an international panel on participatory planning to identify methodologies that enable intensive participation by local and regional authorities and civil society organisations with a certain degree of flexibility; and
- transferring know-how and exchanging experience and best practices.

Increasing capacity strengthens the reciprocal trust and autonomy of actors. In the external partner countries, these actions converge with the assistance supporting decentralisation strategies and democratic participatory processes. Consequently, a coordination mechanism should be established to link external territorial cooperation with multilateral, bilateral and decentralised cooperation programmes aimed at supporting decentralisation.

In order to reduce the fragmentation of actions and to identify strategic priorities, a process and evolutionary approach should be adopted in external territorial cooperation. Considering the low partnership level with external partners during the previous Interreg programme, there is a need on one hand to create linkages and reciprocal trust and, on the other, to share the identification of relevant priorities and actions “for achieving concrete results” and high visibility.

The creation of linkages and of reciprocal trust is a necessary precondition of external territorial cooperation and it should provide for important networking opportunities and planned and shared working methodologies. According to various stakeholders a “strategic priority should focus more on institution and trust-building, in order to enable local and regional authorities to participate in operations and to develop cross-border networks and management with special emphasis on those projects creating links among border communities”. Many stakeholders have put forward suggestions to network reciprocal knowledge, information and communication, practices and evaluation outcomes⁹. “Separate funding for needs assessment and participatory planning mechanisms as well as for exploratory meetings and conferences” should be put in place. In this sense, specific priority should be accorded to social capital building. These actions would promote “the progressive and systematic involvement of both sides’ actors” creating the knowledge and trust necessary to identify strategic priorities and results-oriented projects.

Furthermore, some stakeholders proposed certain strategic priorities. In Tuscany, CS stakeholders indicated the “development of intercultural projects around a possible shared Mediterranean identity and the need to support more culture as it plays a key role in Euro-Mediterranean relations; to spread a culture of peace, democratic participation and respect for human rights as guiding principles for cooperation; and to provide for the mainstreaming of territorial participation at the EU level”. Private actors participating in Interreg suggested it

⁹ Tuscan stakeholders made the following suggestions: “to increase the opportunities for partners to get to know each other and share experiences, increase knowledge of different customs and cultures, facilitate best practice transfer among local actors of different countries, create efficient mechanisms of coordination with day-to-day contacts, create opportunities for mutual acquaintance in the process of formulating of the projects, increase venues for mutual acquaintance in order to gain a better understanding of potential partners before starting cooperation activities, make funding procedures easier for meetings and staff exchanges before the implementation of programmes, increase information, vocational training and communication, hold more frequent meetings and conduct more monitoring in the field with greater attention paid to substance rather than form, as well as conduct surveys among decision-makers and administrators ...”.

was necessary “to give priority to local strategies that respond to local needs with a long-term outlook as well as to give support to partners in identifying their own solutions”. Some stakeholders pointed out opportunities to cooperate in the fields environment, tourism, culture and business, according to their missions and experience¹⁰.

The answers in section A of the questionnaire (Chapter 2) underlined the general significance of the issue of knowledge flows and specific country priorities, such as migration flows in the case of Morocco and the environment in the case of Croatia. Stakeholders in BiH underlined the specific needs of their country and the lack of a strategically-oriented plan, particularly regarding external territorial cooperation. Stakeholders in Istria pointed out that until now decentralisation strategy has not been implemented and that a partnership mechanism should be established to identify common priorities. In Morocco, central bodies determine strategic priorities and the lack of synergy with the various stakeholders reduces their opportunity to participate. In this sense, the identification of priorities should be accompanied by an increased effort to involve stakeholders and promote partnership.

Perhaps a process approach in identifying priorities based on successful experiences arising from a few themed areas and on a widened core of actors could satisfy, on the one hand, the need for concentration and effectiveness of the scarce resources and, on the other, the need to open up partnership to various stakeholders.

In relation to providing continuity and sustainability to partnerships with external partners, the real challenge is to build up and maintain long-term relationships. Continuity would:

- reduce the risk of fragmented cooperation
- be conducive to more structured actions and to their greater impact
- increase the credibility of the partners and the programme
- raise the capacity of external partners to directly manage financial resources in order to carry out activities within their territory.

To achieve continuity and sustainability, the external territorial cooperation programme should:

- “be based on the establishment of long-term cooperation relationships”;
- involve “more broadly the NGOs which have good methodologies in establishing partnerships and cooperation planning with civil society actors”;
- conduct “in-the-field ex post evaluation of the results achieved by projects that would allow for a proper understanding of the objectives achieved and provide a starting point for subsequent complementary cooperation”;
- link projects and planning: “the participatory approach in planning processes should be implemented in the formulation of the projects”.

In order to create systems that raise the efficiency of partnerships in external cooperation programmes, stakeholders also suggested various proposals to enhance the involvement of partners in territorial cooperation, focussed on clarifying the role of different partners, the division of labour, complementarity and integration among partners, the establishment of performance reward mechanisms and the adoption of flexible management practices¹¹.

¹⁰ “External territorial cooperation is very important for economic and social development in the Balkans. Cooperation within the neighbouring area (Serbia, Croatia, Adriatic basin) is most important. For example: cooperation in relation to the Sava river, the Drina river (in the fields of tourism, environment, hydro-potential, water), cooperation in Trebinje, Dubrovnik and Herceg Novi (South Adriatic) in the fields of tourism and environment, cooperation in Mostar-Dalmatia and on the Adriatic coast (on tourism, food and water), and cooperation in Sarajevo, Banjaluka with other centres of business, culture, education, etc.”

¹¹ The following remarks were made by Tuscan stakeholders: “cooperation should be implemented by similar institutions within a broader framework and the partnership based on a clear division of labour according to each actor’s specific expertise”, “to guarantee integration between institutional partners and representatives of social categories, attributing to each of these proper room for action and financial resources”; “reward mechanisms

In relation to financing, stakeholders supported the proposal of the new EU regulations on IPA and ENPI establishing funding for external partners in cross-border and trans-national cooperation: “complementary funds should be directly managed by non-EU partners for activities within their country and directly linked to projects”; “an equal distribution of financial resources might make partners more reliable”. Some suggested “providing for financial resources to be available also to civil society organisations and not only to territorial bodies” and complained that “public institutions should improve their internal procedures on the management of resources as they are too complicated and slow. In addition, public institutions should mobilise new resources for cooperation programmes to be made available especially to NGOs”.

Finally, some observations related to the need to support the external territorial cooperation in conjunction with central governments. Policy dialogue should reinforce the sharing and coherence of planning on external territorial cooperation between regions and central governments. The Italian case of broad partnership in the negotiation and planning of the Cohesion Policy might constitute an important point of reference.

But it is especially in external partner countries that the strong commitment and political support of the central governments on territorial cooperation should be encouraged. In this regard, the identification of relevant and concrete pilot projects on a few but strategic shared priorities is essential.

should be established ensuring effective exchange between partners in the planning phase and acknowledgment should be given to the added value of a certain type of partnership contribution (i.e. the emphasis should be on practical aspects not numbers)”; “flexible management practices should be implemented”, “accountability of people and not only of institutions” should be required; a “clear indication of the coordinator’s role” should be provided and the “attribution of responsibility” should be structured “according to the role within the project and not to the financial or institutional weight”.

5. THE BENCHMARKING ANALYSIS ON PARTNERSHIP IN THE PROJECTS OF INTERREG AND DECENTRALISED COOPERATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN. THE BENCHMARKING ANALYSIS REPORT¹²

5.1 Introduction

The benchmarking analysis is the second work phase of the Compart project. It has the objective of analysing and comparing (through a benchmark approach) the different implementations of the partnership concept in external territorial cooperation¹³ projects (partnership in project) taking the different political and institutional contexts into account.

Partnership should be considered as a principle and a qualifying and necessary factor in Cohesion and Neighbourhood policies in which regions of the Mediterranean take part (including the Western Balkans). This means that partnership is not only an instrument for carrying out a project, but rather a “value” in itself, which the project must contribute to strengthening. This implies the adoption of democratic principles and values, in particular that of subsidiarity.

The benchmarking analysis has produced a comparison of different Interreg projects¹⁴ and decentralised cooperation projects which have created partnership relationships (social and institutional capital) between the European Union (EU) and external Mediterranean partners.

The analysis¹⁵ was carried out through surveys on the opinions of the project partners, using specific indicators in order to identify project best practices for the implementation of partnership principles.

In particular, on the basis of the existing international literature on partnerships and of the Concept Paper prepared under the Compart project, the following principles, on which partnership should be based, have been established: 1) the ongoing political commitment of the partners, 2) the implementation of measures to foster democracy, participation and decentralisation, 3) and project ownership.

Each principle is divided into several dimensions:

- Ongoing political commitment of partners: drawing up of framework cooperation agreements; implementation of political dialogue measures; long term/organized partnerships; compliance with the conditions of coherence, coordination, complementarity and concentration.
- Compliance with the principles of democracy, participation and decentralisation: institutional strengthening of partners; definition of expected results in terms of democratic governance, decentralisation and horizontal and vertical subsidiarity.

¹² The final report on the benchmarking analysis was drafted by Battistina Cugusi and coordinated by Andrea Stocchiero (CeSPI). It was based on the regional reports elaborated by experts in the various territories. The regional reports may be downloaded from the Compart website.

¹³ By the expression “external territorial cooperation” we refer to the present Neighbourhood programmes aimed at the external frontiers of the EU and to future cross-border cooperation envisaged by the IPA and ENPI instruments and territorial cooperation contemplated by the Third Objective of the Cohesion Policy.

¹⁴ The projects have been identified in Interreg IIIA – Western Macedonia/ Albania and/or FYROM programme; Interreg III A Adriatic Cross-border and Cadses programmes; Interreg III A Adriatic Cross-border and Cadses programmes; Interreg IIIB MEDOCC programme; Interreg IIIA Andalusia-Tangeri Tetouan Region (Spain-Morocco) programme, as well as in decentralised cooperation programmes.

¹⁵ See the “General approach to the benchmarking analysis” in the 8th chapter, downloadable from the website www.compartproject.org.

- Ownership: active partner participation and enhancement of partner territorial vocation.

These dimensions were analysed through the distribution of a questionnaire to the projects stakeholders: officers of local authorities and private actors. The questionnaire “measured” the perceptions of the stakeholders on the dimensions by qualitative indicators and with a scale of value. The scale of value goes from a level 1 – very low degree, to level 2 – low degree, level 3 – insufficient, level 4 – sufficient, level 5 – high degree and level 6 – very high degree.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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Finally, the benchmarking analysis identified 7 projects as best practices in building partnerships. These projects are commented on in the analysis and set out in annex 1, while in annex 2 all the projects considered in the benchmarking are listed.

5.2 Political commitment and partnership process

5.2.1 On the political framework

CONNECTION OF THE PROJECTS TO COOPERATION AGREEMENT

An overview of the benchmarking reports shows that various differences exist among Compart partners. Not all the projects are based on previous cooperation agreements. At first glance, the practices of the partners may be divided in two groups: regions which rely mostly on cooperation agreements to create partnership (Andalusia¹⁶, Tuscany¹⁷, Istria¹⁸ and Tanger Tetouan – T/T – regions¹⁹); and regions which do not (Calabria, Friuli-Venezia Giulia – FVG, Western Macedonia –WM – regions).

Concerning the partners of the first group, almost all the projects analysed were based on previous cooperation agreements between local authorities. Sometimes, the establishment of such agreements become a precondition for involvement as a partner. This was the case with the Seenet decentralised cooperation project, within which the Tuscany Region qualified participation of Istrian partners with a requirement for the establishment of a Twinning project with local authorities from Tuscany.

¹⁶ Agreement between the *Oficina de Cooperación Internacional* and the Municipality of Chefchaouen (Morocco) and its Local development agency; *Convenio de cooperación y de partenariado ente la Excma. Diputación de Cádiz, a través del Instituto de Empleo y Desarrollo Socioeconómico y Tecnológico (IEDT) y el Consejo Regional de Tánger-Tetuán (CRTT)*.

¹⁷ The Brioni agreement with South East Europe (SEE) local governments (SEENET); with Andalusia and the region of Tanger/Tetouan (Euromedsys). Moreover, as far as the MAEM project is concerned, the initiative arose within the network of Regions created in November 2004 among regional governments of France, Italy and Spain to support the MAEM /MEMA Network. In the specific case of the RURALMED II project, it was connected with the “experimentation and implementation of European convention of landscape in contemporary rural activities and public policies”.

¹⁸ All the projects analysed in the benchmarking analysis were based on cooperation agreements with Istria’s neighbouring regions. In fact, the latter took different forms: protocol of cooperation with the Autonomous region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia (1999); declaration of intention with the Veneto region (1995); letters of intention with the Region of Carinthia (1998 and 1999).

¹⁹ The “EUROMEDINCULTURE” project is linked to an agreement between the T/T region and various Italian regions and other French actors.

The strategy of Calabria, FVG, WM and of the Sarajevo canton is quite different from the regions of the first group. In their case, the majority of the projects analysed were not based on a previous cooperation agreement; even though there were a few exceptions. In the case of the Calabria region, for instance, those interviewed stressed that an informal cooperation agreement exists (in particular between the Calabria Region and other INTERREG MEDOCC regions), which aims to enhance the collaboration in European projects in the Mediterranean region. But it is only an informal agreement, even if very important for the partners.

Furthermore, in the case of the FVG the exception is represented by the ADRI.BLU project, based on a general agreement between the local bodies. Moreover, the ADRI.BLU project is linked to the CONNETCT and FISH.LOG projects. Together, they aim at creating a policy for managing fishing resources and products and at managing and developing the fishing sector through the creation of a district called “Northern Adriatic Fishing district”.

Finally, as regards the WM region, in some cases (Prefectural Self-Administration of Florina, IZ’Supervisory Board of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Municipality of Agia Triada²⁰), the projects were connected to previous cooperation agreement, even if not with external or other European partners, but with Greek ones.

THE ROLE OF COOPERATION AGREEMENTS IN THE IDENTIFICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF PARTNERSHIP

Generally, both groups considered cooperation agreements as highly relevant in the identification and implementation of projects. A particular role in this sense was played by the general agreement which forms the basis for the Adri.Blu project as well as that underlying the Ma’Arifa project (“Partnership Convention between the Diputación de Cádiz and the Regional Council of the region of Tanger Tetouan”). The former played an invaluable role in forging consensus among institutions and operators, which is an essential precondition for obtaining tangible results. The latter, on the other hand, made it possible to have direct contact with the Regional council of Tanger Tetouan and to orient the activities financed by the provincia de Cádiz directly to the local needs of the Moroccan region. Moreover, the choice as partner of the Instituto de Empleo y Desarrollo Socioeconómico y Tecnológico (IEDT) was quite strategic as it is an institution that has managed to involve all the neighbouring Moroccan municipalities in the cooperation initiative, on the border with Spain. It managed a more efficient finalization of a cooperation agreement and it assisted in the identification of cooperation initiatives which take into consideration local development needs of both partners. For example, within the framework of this Convention, in 2000 it was possible to start a cooperation initiative with the Regional Council which led to the creation of the Interreg IIIA Spain-Morocco programme in 2002.

Despite the positive perceptions, some exceptions have emerged. While some agreements were considered relevant in the initial identification of partners, their contribution to the projects’ implementation was not essential and even quite low (Euromedsys; agreement between the Oficina de Cooperación Internacional, the municipality of Chefchaouen and its Local development agency). Also, the benchmarking report of the Istria region demonstrated that, except for the regional authority, the Twinning projects were simply a precondition to entering into partnership and not an element that had an impact on project phases. The same goes for the T/T region. As far as the latter is concerned, the Convention in place between the Diputación de Cadiz and the T/T region has facilitated not only the involvement of the T/T region in the MA’ARIFA project but also in the identification of activities.

²⁰ IZ’Supervisory Board of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities / Municipality of Agia Triada / Prefectural Self-Administration of Florina: General Protocol of Collaboration between the Prefectural Authority of Florina and the Municipalities of Bitola and Resen

NEW AGREEMENTS

Projects led to new cooperation agreements quite rarely. The benchmarking analysis permitted the identification of only a few such cases, such as the Seenet and the Adri.Blu projects. The former led to new agreements of collaboration between local authorities both of Tuscany and SEE. In addition to this, it is worth noting that thanks to the project, a cooperation protocol has been activated between two project's partners. The latter led to a cooperation initiative with the Ministry of Tourism and Culture of Tirana, but without establishing a formal agreement between the two regions.

In addition to this, projects led to a cooperation agreement with regions and local authorities in the case of the Municipality of Centar and of SERDA (Sarajevo Economic Regional Development Agency) in BiH.

5.2.2 Policy dialogue

PARTICIPATION OF POLITICAL REPRESENTATIVES

The degree of participation of political representatives varied greatly among the COMPART partners.

Tuscany is the region with the highest level of impetus and participation of political representatives in project activities. This opinion was shared by all those interviewed. Projects directly involved politicians at different levels (regional councillors and mayors in the case of the Seenet projects) and, above all, regional public officials, in project committees and other bodies established for the project management as well as in project-related meetings and events.

As far as the Moroccan partner was concerned, the political impetus of the Region of T/T was decisive for the identification of projects and for the involvement of other Moroccan territorial actors in Interreg projects. Most of the time, the implementation phase saw the involvement of other actors which had the most technical knowledge, such as for instance the Fondation Abdellah Guennoun and Provincial Cultural Delegation (Euromedinculture). At the same time, the responsibility for the management of projects was given to other actors such as the Chamber of Commerce of Tetouan or to the Municipality of Chefchaouen due to the highly technical character of the projects (Euromedinculture and Restauronet respectively).

In the case of Andalusia, the political impetus was also considered generally sufficient. In particular, within the framework of the Ma'Arifa project, full political responsibility was undertaken by all the partners involved. The IEDT established a cooperation convention with each of them, in order to set out the rules to be followed in the joint management, coordination, planning and evaluation of each cooperation activity.

In WM and the Sarajevo Canton, in general, partners considered the political impetus given to the project quite high. Also considered globally high was the participation of political representatives in project activities, especially in meetings and working tables. For these reasons, the degree of political involvement was reported as high, with some exceptions both for WM (in the case of the Prefectural self-administration of Florina, the Regional health administration and the IZ' Supervisory Board of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities) and the Sarajevo Canton (SERDA, and insufficient for the IPSA institute and the LESPnet NGO).

In Calabria, FVG and Istria, the impetus given by politicians and their participation in projects was considered poor, or insufficient (in the case of Calabria territorial actors). In the specific case of Calabria, participation in project activities was mainly reserved for regional representatives at a technical level. This was explained by the very technical nature of the projects. For this reason, projects did not lead to the continuation of political contacts after

their completion. Where contacts were created, they concerned mainly representatives of the regions at a technical level, or other territorial actors, such as universities (Merope project).

However, although generally low, the political impetus and participation was high vis-à-vis those projects which had a strategic political interest. In the Adri.Blu project, for instance, the boost to the initiative given by institutional representatives was decisive, given that they were the very same local partner institutions (the Italians being lead partners) which participated in drawing up and carrying out parts of the project. With this in mind, the involvement of the political sphere was very high as was the impetus given by the political representatives to the project.

Moreover, political impetus and participation were also high where the creation of a more structured partnership among political representatives was a precondition of involvement as partners (Seenet).

CONTINUATION OF POLITICAL CONTACTS

Independently from the level of political impetus and involvement in projects, projects did not achieve significant results in terms of continuation of political contacts after their completion, neither in Tuscany nor in other regions. In the former case, the initial interest shown by politicians did not lead to the funding of any pilot projects. It shows that, in general, no direct relation exists between the degree of political impetus and the continuation of political contacts after a project's conclusion.

On the other hand, sometimes there was an indirect relationship (Istria, FVG) between the political impetus and the continuation of institutional contacts after the completion of the projects. As regards the Istria region, all the projects led to the continuation of contacts after their conclusion, especially contacts aimed at planning the second phase for each of them.

In the case of FVG, the contribution of the projects to the continuation of contacts after their conclusion was quite high, even if they have not necessarily concerned the regional authority. Within the framework of the "Go Network project", for example, only the technical bodies and financial institutions involved in the project managed to maintain these contacts. In practice, though, the partnership between the corresponding financial institutions rendered possible and stimulated institutional contacts. This was also demonstrated by the Euromedsys project, which notwithstanding the scarce political involvement, led to the creation of new relationships and networks, allowing the continuation of political contacts after its completion.

In addition, it is worth noting how the projects led to the creation of relationships between the regional authority and the actors from the relevant territory. With the Merope project, for example, a link was established between the University and the Calabria Region for other international projects.

5.2.3 Partnership system

THE BUILDING OF PERMANENT STRUCTURES

Within the projects analysed, partnership with external partners was developed through the creation of committees, such as steering committees at political and technical level, working groups, periodical meetings being limited to the implementation phase.

The Adri.Blu project represents a particular case in this sense, since the so-called "Permanent Blu working table for the Northern Adriatic" was set up as means of coordination of the activities developed within the project. Moreover, the involvement of external parties was high and developed both at institutional level and also through the setting up of individual initiatives, such as the organization of meetings, seminars and training courses.

The creation of partnership with external partners was also facilitated by the organisation of conferences, seminars and training courses; or in the benchmarking analysis of the Calabria region, where the creation of a website also proved to be a useful tool in this sense (Euromedsys).

PREVIOUS PROJECTS WITH EXTERNAL PARTNERS

In almost all cases, during the implementation of the projects there were other ongoing projects with external partners. For the majority of the Compart partners, they concerned other Interreg projects, but also (e.g. Tuscany) other decentralised cooperation as well as European programmes (LIFE Third Countries; Tradeonline Leonardo; Proaere Leonardo; and Sofar VI framework programme).

Particular mention should be made of the Adri.Blu project. It can be considered part of the Pilot Project Northern Adriatic, which is divided up into various sub-projects. In this case, though, the partnership within the ADRI.BLU has been even more fruitful thanks to the simultaneous management of further common projects (such as ADRI.FISH, CORIN, also financed under the Italian Cooperation Law 84/2001).

NEW PARTNERS AND PROJECTS

The benchmarking analysis of the Istria region highlighted the case of the Adri.Fish project. It was successful because of the innovative approach adopted: it supported the creation of a platform for the continuation of the transnational cooperation in the fisheries sector, that led the participating regions to enhance and expand the cooperation through three new projects, financed both under the Italian Cooperation Law 84/2001 (Fish.log and Connect projects) and the Interreg IIIA programme (Adri.Blu projects). The political influence of Italian regions (FVG, Emilia Romagna and Veneto) was of great importance in achieving the financing of these new projects²¹. These projects are very interesting because they go beyond a spot intervention. They are part of a more structured strategy developed by the Northern Adriatic Regions; a concrete expression of cross-border cooperation whose aims are to overcome borders to resolve common problems. In doing so, the regions involved combined EU instruments with those reserved to decentralised cooperation (L. 84/2001). The fisheries sector in the macro-region of the North Adriatic has in the last decade been the subject of many disputes between the three border states: Italy, Croatia and Slovenia. Before the projects were implemented, a common approach in the sector was seen as almost impossible and it was perceived by the Istrian public as a futile attempt to resolve the problems. However, it achieved the reaching of a common understanding and encouraged participation in resolving the problems.

Almost all the projects provided the opportunity to develop many new relationships²² with external partners, even if not always for the implementation of new projects. When new projects were identified, they were presented mainly within the framework of the Interreg programmes, both carrying out a second phase of the same project (Euromedsys II, Ruralmed II), or presenting new projects with the same partners, such as the Merope consortium and

²¹ The cooperation in these projects has resulted in the 1st International fish and fishing equipment fair in the Republic of Croatia with promoters from Croatia and from the three Italian regions Emilia Romagna, FVG and Veneto.

²² For example with in the framework of the SEENET project: the city of Rovinj/Rovigno has established contacts and has the intention of maintaining the partnership with a Public service firm from Pisa; whereas the Municipality of Brtonigla/Verteneglio has designed a project with the expert from the Tuscany Region for the development of educational itineraries on archaeological sites in the municipality's territory.

Ma'Arifa²³. In particular, the benchmarking analysis of the region of T/T indicated that the Euromedsys project was a good practice in this sense. EUROMEDSYS led to the participation of the T/T region in new INTERREG projects with Andalusia, such as the RETSE (Reseau Transfrontalier des Services aux Entreprises) financed under the INTERREG IIIA Spain Morocco programme, and to the second phase of EUROMEDSYS, as well as to new decentralised cooperation projects²⁴. Moreover, from the point of view of new cooperation opportunities, EUROMEDSYS has been very fruitful for other Moroccan territorial actors also. The Chamber of commerce (CCIS) of Tetouan, for instance, has established contacts with some Andalusian actors: the Development Institute of Andalusia (IFA), and the technical centres linked to IMPIVA (Instituto de la Mediana y Pequeña Industria Valenciana) of Valencia. Finally, it is worth stressing that EUROMEDSYS has given rise to new internal partnerships among Moroccan actors initially not involved in the project. The region of T/T has started a partnership with the Institut de Recherche Agronomique, which will probably be involved in studies and training initiatives aimed at the region's private operators (Directions Provinciales de Agriculture, Offices Regional de Mise en valeur Agricole, Associations des professionnels de la region, etc.), to be implemented within the INTERREG MEDOCC programme.

In addition to this, the new relationships created led to other projects ideas (Tuscany²⁵, Calabria²⁶, Greece²⁷) not linked to Interreg programmes. There are cases between SEE (South Eastern Europe) partners in which city projects of one local authority will be replicated in another project. The Seenet project has shown how the creation of new contacts may be facilitated by study visits and missions in SEE territories, for instance. In this context, a significant role was played in the creation and establishment of new common activities by the Tuscan experts that were in charge of individual SEE projects and those institutions or firms that were included in capacity-building activities for SEE partners.

IMPROVEMENT OF PARTNERSHIP DIALOGUE

The partnership dialogue with external partners has been considerably improved by the projects analysed. The Calabria region stressed how this improvement has been mainly due to the fact that projects represented a first opportunity to cooperate or simply to meet with external partners in order to exchange opinions, ideas and proposals on future initiatives. In relation to these proposals, the benchmarking analysis confirmed that the greater the number

²³ The IEDT has provided for and implemented new projects (e.g. ARRABT project within the framework of the Interreg III A Spain-Morocco programme).

²⁴ For example, projects for the training of local civil servants and political representatives (FAMSI) and for the building of the Congress.

²⁵ Within the framework of the MEROPE project, a new relationship was developed with the *Communauté Urbaine de Marrakech* for the improvement of the viability of private transport and goods transportation vehicles in the city centre. In particular, the study aimed at identifying short-term programmes to improve circulation and medium term solutions to parking-related problems. The studies were extended to include goods distribution transport and were carried out under the technical supervision of Siena Parcheggi (local partner of the Tuscany Region in the MEROPE project). Moreover, the RURALMED II project led to the establishment of 14 regional local programmes and 3 interregional programmes.

²⁶ For example, the University of Reggio Calabria organised a training course in Olive grove management in collaboration with the Universities of Algeria and the CRAED Centre. Furthermore, considering the interest demonstrated in the Euromedsys project, its format have been replicated in a new project, financed within the framework of the "Interregional cooperation programme" (Agrimedsys), financed by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

²⁷ In particular, the Educational Institute participated in a new collaboration programme with the East-West Institute; and the NGO ARKTOUROS received a proposal for financing networking actions by the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

of meetings and exchanges of information organised, the higher the contribution of the project to the improvement of partnership dialogue (Maem project).

In contrast with the other Compart partners, the benchmarking report of the Sarajevo Canton presented a situation which was quite fragmented. While the Municipality of Centar and the City Council considered that projects very much improved the partnership dialogue with external partners, other actors considered this contribution almost sufficient (LESPnet NGO) or insufficient (IPSA institute).

5.2.4 Coordination, coherence and complementarity

INVOLVEMENT OF DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTS

The coordination among the different departments of the institutions involved in the projects was quite satisfying (Tuscany; FVG; WM; Calabrian territorial actors such as CERERE (Centro Regionale per il Recupero dei centri Storici Calabresi) and the University of Reggio Calabria). Different departments were involved in all phases of the projects with particular regard to the implementation phase, except in more sector-specific projects (such as “Go Network”) or when very technical skills were required.

In the specific case of the Istria Region, the office for interregional and cross-border cooperation, responsible for the preliminary activities (project definition, establishment of partnership) was supported by a sectoral department (department of agriculture for Adri.Fish and the Institute for Physical Planning for CONSPACE) in charge of the implementation phase. Istrian partners were not involved in monitoring and evaluation activities (e.g. CONSPACE). On the other hand, when municipalities were involved (SEENET), the inclusion of one or more departments in the project’s implementation depended on the internal administrative organisation. For the cities of Rovinj and Pazin, two or more departments were involved (in Pazin, the Department for Local Self-government and the Department of Finance in Rovinj), while for Verteneglio, a small municipality with one general department, only one person was in charge of the implementation of the two projects.

As far as the Calabria region is concerned, notwithstanding the high level of coordination registered by territorial actors, the benchmarking analysis revealed a lack of coordination within the regional authority, since in all the projects analysed the department of international relations was the only one to be involved.

COHERENCE WITH THE LOCAL TERRITORIAL STRATEGY

All the projects were considered to perfectly reflect the interests of the Regions in relation to a particular sector or issue. Projects were considered as being highly coherent with the local development strategy (Tuscany, FVG, Istria, Calabria, WM, the Sarajevo Canton). In particular, in Calabria most of the projects (Euromedsys; Merope; Cimpa) were in line with the local development plans²⁸. In addition, it is worth noting that the Cimpa project was in line with the Leader Plus programme and with the Action Plan of the Local Action Group Valle del Crati, which is the area where the pilot projects are located. It is also worth noting that within the framework of the Ma’Arifa project, IEDT had to guarantee that all projects were in line with the provincial development strategy, in order to avoid overlaps between the

²⁸ Within the framework of the MEROPE project, the implementation of the pilot project in the Province of Cosenza was seen as being perfectly in line with the will of the provincial administration to improve the local transport system in an innovative and sustainable manner.

project proposals made by the different municipalities and to maximise the efficiency of the use of resources.

In the case of Tuscany, the projects were considered in line with the interests of the Region in supporting small to medium-sized enterprises (SME) (Euromedsys) and in responding to local needs such as the preservation of cultural heritage, territorial management and decentralisation (Maem). The Merope project is of particular interest in this sense. The idea of the Merope project grew from the experience of cities like Florence, Siena, Terni, Modena, Piacenza, Genoa, Seville, Naples and Rome, which contacted their regional administrations to ask them to propose an international project addressing problems of mobility and logistics in their areas. After initial contact, the consortium was enlarged and the project was developed. Therefore, it is reported that the project emerged directly as a response to real territorial needs and that the actions implemented throughout Merope have a real use and impact. The project was designed taking into account the indications of the Logistics Plan of the Tuscany Region and it is included in the Urban Traffic Plan of the Florence Municipality. Finally, it is worth noting that within the Seenet project, local initiatives have been agreed according to existing cooperative mechanism at local level.

INFLUENCE ON THE LOCAL TERRITORIAL STRATEGY

Due to the great level of coherence between the projects and the local development strategies, the projects' results have had a sufficient influence on the local territorial strategy (Tuscany, Calabria, WM, Istria, FVG). For instance, the benchmarking analysis of the Tuscany region reported the example of the Merope projects, whose results have led to further study or to inclusion in mobility plans of some local sites. Indeed, as a result of the transit analysis for electronic gates undertaken in Terni by the Region of Umbria, the public administration is currently working towards revising access and parking permits to the Limited Traffic Area, meanwhile in Piacenza, the results of the survey and the study carried out within Merope were taken into consideration by the Local Council, who in the summer of 2004 committed itself to updating the General Plan of Urban Traffic 1998. Furthermore, from the results of the Merope project, the Province and the Council of Piacenza have decided to undertake a further analysis and evaluation of a economic-financial nature regarding the introduction of a transit point for urban goods distribution.

By contrast, the benchmarking analysis of the Sarajevo canton and T/T region highlighted how project results have not influenced the local territorial strategy very much.

As far as the Istria region is concerned, those interviewed highlighted the presence of a multi-level problem. Although there is a high level of coherence between the projects and the local development strategy, the results cannot directly influence the regional strategy since the latter depends primarily on the national government. On the other hand, where municipalities were involved (SEENET), the project highly influenced the local territorial strategy, since local economic development is a high priority for all the SEE Partners. For the Municipality of Verteneglio one of the projects implemented has provided an opportunity to consider new approaches and new development sectors. Moreover, in the latter case, the project results were fully included in the local development strategy.

5.3 Democracy, participation and decentralisation

INSTITUTION AND CAPACITY-BUILDING

In general, projects gave sufficient importance to capacity-building activities towards all categories of stakeholders, especially regional and local authorities and universities and

research centres. Private and civil society actors benefited to a lesser extent from these kind of activities. However, projects such as the “GO NETWORK project” (FVG) were more directed towards private actors in order to improve the credit/guarantee system for SMEs, and the project of the NGO ARKTOUROS (“PROTECTION OF MOUNTAINS ON THE BASIS OF THE PROTECTION OF BEARS”) in WM involved civil society.

In practice, capacity-building activities concerned seminars, workshops, training, exchange of know-how and studies. Capacity-building activities assumed even more importance vis-à-vis external partners (Istria and T/T regions). The benchmarking analysis of Istria stressed the role played by the SEENET project, which provided the opportunity of organising workshops at SEE local level. This gave 21 SEE local governments the chance to include more representatives from local and regional public institutions (such as municipal firms, chambers of commerce, development offices, NGOs, etc.) in such activities. These kinds of activities were not limited to the project partners, but tried to include all the relevant stakeholders of the different territories according to a participatory approach.

However, it is worth noting that in most cases capacity-building was generated by the direct involvement of institutions in projects and by the discussion among the partners, through working tables, for example. It is possible to say, though, that the INTERREG projects generated capacity-building above all through a “learning by doing” effect (Calabria, FVG). The MEROPE project, for example, generated capacity-building through the direct involvement of the authorities in charge of the management of the transport system in public conferences and in pilot actions.

Also in this case, the learning by doing effect acquire more importance when considering third country partners. In this sense, in relation to the Euromedsys project, notwithstanding a lack of capacity-building activities, the regional authority of T/T considered the project as having a high impact on the institutional building of its human resources. This was mainly due to contact with their European counterparts and to their pace of work, as well as to the delays imposed by Interreg. All these factors stimulated the region to improve its practices and standards in order to be more competitive. Moreover, the project stimulated the region to establish contacts with other territorial actors and to develop relationships with other European regions of the Mediterranean.

PARTICIPATION OF STAKEHOLDERS IN DIFFERENT PROJECT PHASES

The benchmarking analysis shows that the participation of stakeholders in different project phases varied greatly among the COMPART partners. Globally, regional and local authorities were the most involved in all the project phases, even though in some cases (e.g. Calabria and FVG, Andalusia, T/T regions), a subdivision of tasks exists among stakeholders. In particular, private actors or universities and research centres were most likely to be involved in the implementation phase, during which most technical know-how is needed. As far as the Calabria region is concerned, research centres actors (CERERE) were designated as implementing authorities.

The results of the benchmarking analysis conducted in the WM region indicated a different situation. Among the different categories of stakeholders, the private sector and the university and research centre participated the most, especially in implementation and monitoring and evaluation phases.

Finally, as far as third countries are concerned, only Istria considered the global participation of stakeholders as sufficient. On the contrary, it was low for both the Sarajevo canton and the T/T region. In particular, the latter stressed how the participation of Moroccan stakeholders has mainly been limited to the implementation phase.

CREATION OF NETWORKS

In general, the projects analysed have not been very effective in the creation of networks as expected results. Only the WM represents an exception to this trend. In almost all the projects considered, cross-border and transnational networks among the various actors were created as an expected result. In particular, it is worth noting that there is an effort to create a Euro-region between Greece and FYROM in the crossborder area of Prespes. Moreover, in two cases INTERREG III A projects have stimulated the creation of networks after their completion. Specifically, the “Production of Multimedia Educational Material” project led to the creation of a Commercial and Educational Network. This is mostly a private initiative and it is based on the good interpersonal relations created between the actors involved in the initial project.

The benchmarking analysis of the Calabria region revealed that only the CASTRUM project led to the creation of networks after the conclusion of the project with public authorities, civil society organisation and Universities of Morocco. The network is a virtual network, the parties are in contact via the internet for the exchange of ideas and proposals on how to manage castles and medinas. The importance of website and new communication technology tools for the creation of networks was also stressed by the partners of the EUROMEDSYS project. In the latter case, however, the project has not led to the creation of new networks. It is worth noting that this was mainly due to the lack of knowledge from ARSSA (Agenzia Regionale per lo Sviluppo ed i Servizi in Agricoltura) of other funding opportunities outside INTERREG for the design sustainability of other projects.

In the case of external partners, networks have been created above all as unintended results of the projects. In Istria, for example, projects have not led to the creation of a specific network but in some particular cases (e.g. ADRI.FISH) have created a large and long-lasting network between the regions and institutions involved in the four projects and many stakeholders related to the fisheries sector

INVOLVEMENT OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

In general, central government was not seen as playing an active role in the projects. It was only rarely directly involved (CONSPACE). Despite this, the level to which central government was kept informed was higher, even if still not sufficient, although this has only led to a slight improvement of relationships with the central government. The Istrian benchmarking analysis considered the ADRI.BLU project as an exception to this, since, although the Italian national government was not involved in the project activities, the Regions informed the central government about the ongoing international activity. This constant information flow facilitated the signing (in September 2005) of a common intent protocol among the regions involved in the project and the relevant Fisheries Ministries.

However, the lack of involvement of the central government created some problems. For instance, the benchmarking analysis of the Calabria region revealed that since the field of action of CIMPA required a phase of implementation at the national level, it was difficult to provide the further development required by the project.

5.4 Ownership

The sense of ownership was quite high for almost all the partners (Tuscany, Calabria, FVG, Istria) in all phases of the project. Some of the Italian regions (Tuscany, FVG) indicated that the satisfactory sense of ownership was mainly due to their direct involvement in the strategic and operational phase of the projects. As regards Tuscany, this was also due to the commitment of the regional authority to the achievement of the project's objectives. In the

case of the MEROPE project, for instance, as lead partner and due to the large and diversified consortium, the institution was forced to dedicate a lot of time and energy to liaising with partners and encouraging them to complete project activities successfully and within the given deadlines. This constant monitoring and contact heightened the institution's sense of ownership of the project. Another respondent indicated that the sense of ownership was enhanced by the active involvement and responsibility of the institution in all the project's phases.

As far as the Sarajevo canton is concerned, it is worth stressing that while the sense of ownership was quite high for the local authorities, even if limited to the planning and implementation phases, civil society actors (IPSA institute and the LESPnet NGO) complained of very low ownership.

ENHANCEMENT OF CAPACITIES

The benchmarking analysis of Tuscany and FVG considered that projects contributed significantly to the enhancement of the capacities of local stakeholders for different reasons. The former pointed out that the institutions' personnel involved in the management and implementation of the project gained valuable experience in cooperation, management, evaluation in addition to technical knowledge. Concerning this last aspect, for example, the RURALMED II (Tuscany) project represented a best practice since it enhanced the capacity of the partners through experimental research and innovative planning. Furthermore, partners also gained benefits from the interaction with new geographically distant partners. In certain cases, this led to the partners coordinating their strategies at transnational level, as well as coordinating sectors at regional level (EUROMEDSYS). The latter, on the other hand, stressed that the improvement of capacities was mainly due to the direct involvement in phases of the projects and to the understanding of the way in which external partners' associations and foundations function.

By contrast, projects played a less important role in the enhancement of the capacities of other COMPART partners, such as Calabria, Sarajevo Canton and Istria. In fact the situation was quite fragmented. Projects contributed to the enhancement of local capacities only in a few cases. In Calabria and T/T, this was mainly due to the lack of direct participation of regional administrations. As mentioned above, these two regions tended to involve technical actors. As regards the T/T region, though in one sense this division of tasks extended participation to other actors, a lack of direct involvement has hindered the appropriation of results by political representatives. On the other hand, when the region was directly involved in project activities, the influence of project results on political representatives was higher (MA'ARIFA and EUROMEDSYS), as were the possibilities for the region to reinforce previous relationships while also establishing new partnerships and generating new projects.

In addition, as far as third country partners are concerned, the low impact on the enhancement of local capacities could be considered as being due to the lack of financial resources for non-EU partners and a lack of necessary expertise in the management of projects of this kind (Istria).

ENHANCEMENT OF TERRITORIAL RESOURCES

It is worth noting that projects only slightly contributed to the enhancement of territorial resources. In particular, while a few projects contributed to enhancing local resources in Tuscany (MAEM and RURALMED II projects) and the Sarajevo Canton ("THE UN HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAM UIG"; "TOURISM, AGRICULTURE"), their impact was very low in the other cases.

This result is quite surprising, above all compared to the high level of coherence of many of the projects analysed with the local territorial strategy. In this regard, it is worth noting that in

the majority of cases, the response registered in the questionnaires was not insufficient but scarce. The case of the MEROPE project is enlightening. The MEROPE project took into account environmental conditions and economic resources while aiming at rationalising the logistics chain in urban areas. Within this framework, partners experimented with the use of environmentally friendly vehicles and transit points outside historical centres. In this sense, the project was seen as having potential for enhancing territorial resources, as well as reducing the environmental impact of transportation vehicles through the implementation of the planned computerised platform. Despite this potential, the impact of the project was evaluated as scarce both by the Tuscany and Calabria regions. The latter stressed that the potential impact on the enhancement of local resources depended on the willingness of decision-makers to apply the results obtained and tested during the pilot project. Hence, it is possible to argue that there is a need to involve the responsible levels of government in projects and to keep them informed.

5.5 Conclusion

As a first point, the benchmarking analysis aimed to gauge the extent to which projects are connected to previous cooperation agreements and to what extent the existence of such agreements has been significant for the identification and implementation of the activities.

The analysis shows that the majority of the COMPART partners (Andalusia, Tuscany, Istria and Tanger Tetouan regions) rely on cooperation agreements to create partnerships. Thus it can firstly be said that the existence of cooperation agreement facilitates the creation of partnership. This is especially true for third country partners (Istria and T/T region), for whom the participation in the cooperation agreement facilitates, in turn, their involvement in other projects with the same European partners. Secondly, cooperation agreements imply a process of negotiation between the various partners involved. This dialogue leads to a better reciprocal understanding which helps to integrate the local needs of all the partners into the activities to be financed and to forging consensus and trust among the partners, which is fundamental to obtain tangible results.

Moreover, cooperation agreements help to reduce project fragmentation, by pursuing the global objective through a long or medium-term strategy whose realisation often envisages the use of different sources of funding and the implementation of different projects. The ADRI.FISH and ADRI.BLU projects should be considered best practices in this sense. These projects are very interesting because they go beyond a spot intervention. They are part of a more structured strategy developed by the Northern Adriatic regions, whose implementation was made possible by combining EE instruments with those aimed at decentralised cooperation (Italian Cooperation Law 84/2001).

In order to be effective, cooperation agreements should be accompanied by a concrete political will to cooperate. The benchmarking analysis shows that in many cases, the aim of cooperation agreements was limited to partnership identification.

Finally, the results of the benchmarking analysis have highlighted that only in very few cases did projects lead to the development of new cooperation agreements. From this result, it is possible to draw the conclusion that, while the identification of new projects is often facilitated by previous cooperation agreements, they have only rarely led to more structured and strengthened relationships among partners.

In order to understand the degree of political commitment towards external territorial cooperation projects, the benchmarking analysis attempted to investigate the extent to which political representatives gave impetus and participated in project activities and to what extent

their impetus/involvement led to the continuation of political contacts after the conclusion of projects.

The benchmarking analysis revealed that political impetus was quite low as was political involvement in the activities of the projects. Exceptions to this trend were mainly due to three factors. Firstly, the degree of political impetus is higher when a project is considered strategic in order to achieve political objectives. This is the case, for example, of the ADRI.FISH and ADRI.BLU projects, which have contributed to the creation of a policy for managing fishing resources and products and for managing and developing the fisheries sector among the partners involved. Secondly, the involvement of politicians is high if it is considered to be a precondition to participation as a partner (SEENET), or where, as the case of Tuscany showed, external territorial cooperation as well as decentralised cooperation are considered an essential tool in the development strategy of the regional authority.

However, the benchmarking analysis has shown that the stability of political relationships does not depend exclusively on the degree of political impetus and participation in projects. In general, no direct relation exists between the degree of political impetus and the continuation of contacts after a project's conclusion. On the basis of the results of the benchmarking analysis, it is possible to conclude that in most cases, the continuation of contact after the completion of a project is not necessarily due to the degree of involvement of political representatives. In fact, most of the time projects are developed and implemented by non-political actors. Undoubtedly, institutional contacts among the partners directly involved in a project are more important than contacts at a political level. In addition, the benchmarking analysis has also shown that the maintenance of contacts is mainly due to the strength of partnerships and to the possibility of reproducing them through available financial instruments. However, the question as to whether the projects support the continuation of political dialogue remains open. In the end, participation is more at a technical and bureaucratic level than at a political level, with poor interaction.

The benchmarking analysis also focused on the process which led to the creation of partnerships. In particular, the aim of the analysis was to understand the extent to which the development of partnerships is due to permanent institutions or regular meetings created within the projects and whether stakeholders have reproduced the partnership in other projects. In addition, this part also aimed to understand the extent to which projects have contributed to the identification of new projects, to the creation of new contacts and to the improvement of partnership dialogue.

Projects have contributed to the development of partnerships through the management system put in place, which encourages the implementation of the partnership principle through the creation of committees at a political and technical level, working groups and periodic meetings, as well as through participation in events and seminars organised by the projects.

The benchmarking analysis shows that partnership can be built and strengthened by working together. For this reason too, almost all the projects were characterised by consolidated partnerships, since during the implementation phase there were other ongoing projects with external partners.

Furthermore, the benchmarking analysis revealed that the projects analysed have successfully strengthened existing partnerships but also led to the creation of new contacts which in turn resulted, in some cases, to the identification and implementation of new projects, not only within the Interreg initiative. The Adri.Fish project represents a best practice in this regard, together with the Euromedsys and the Seenet projects. The Adri.Fish project led to the creation of a platform for the continuation of transnational cooperation in the fisheries sector. The participating regions enhanced and expanded the cooperation through three new projects, financed both by the Italian Cooperation Law 84/2001 (Fish.log; Connect) and through the Interreg IIIA programme (Adri.Blu). As far as the Euromedsys and Seenet projects are

concerned, they have greatly contributed to strengthening partnerships and the creation of new contacts with external partners from the T/T and Istria regions respectively.

The benchmarking analysis has also indicated the need to reduce the fragmentation of projects and improve their impact on local development. In order to do so, there is a need to ensure coordination among the different institutional departments, as well as to ensure coherence between projects and local development strategies. Concerning this last point, the Merope project represents a best practice, since it was generated directly by real local needs, and as such has considerably influenced the local territorial strategy.

The second part of the benchmarking analysis centred on analysing three main aspects: the degree of implementation of capacity-building activities within projects; the degree of participation of the various categories of stakeholders in different project phases; and the role of the central government in projects, that is, to what extent the central government was involved in projects or kept informed of their results.

Firstly, the benchmarking analysis demonstrates the high potential of projects for generating capacity-building of partners, through the implementation of specific activities but above all through a “learning by doing effect”. The direct involvement in project activities and interaction between partners is very effective in strengthening capacities. This is especially important in those countries where the decentralisation process still needs to be strengthened (e.g. Morocco and Croatia). In this sense, projects could also contribute to boosting the decentralisation process, or in making regional authorities more proactive, as the project (“Production of Multimedia Educational Material”) for the a Euro-region between Greece and FYROM in the crossborder area of Prespes has shown.

The positive impact on capacities does only not concern regional authorities, but also other territorial actors. The benchmarking analysis reveals that although regional authorities are the most involved in project phases, when more technical knowledge is needed the implementation phase is characterised by a division of tasks between public administrations and other actors, especially private, university and research centre actors. Notwithstanding this, the process still needs to be opened up, especially as regards the planning phase, where regional authorities have played a major role.

By contrast, central government has played a limited role, being uninvolved in project activities and only being kept scarcely informed of project results. While on the one hand this can be considered a positive aspect as it reveals an autonomy of actions on the part of the regions in external territorial cooperation, on the other it should be seen as a constraint. The benchmarking analysis highlights the need to establish a connection and to share strategy with central government, especially in those cases where the decentralisation process is not advanced. The case of the Istria region is emblematic in this sense, the results of projects not being integrated into the regional territorial strategy as that depends primarily on national competence.

Finally, the third part of the benchmarking analysis is dedicated to the ownership principle.

The benchmarking analysis revealed quite a high sense of ownership on the part of stakeholders, especially where they were directly involved in project phases. Direct involvement has generated, in turn, an enhancement in the capacities of partners (e.g. Ruralmed II). However, especially in the case of external partners, the achievement of this result has been hindered by other factors, such as the lack of sufficient financial resources and of necessary expertise.

In addition, the results of the benchmarking analysis show that there is no direct relationship between the sense of ownership and the impact of projects on the enhancement of local resources. Partners have stressed that in order to achieve this aim, there is a need to involve and inform the competent (national, regional or local, according to their own administrative organisational structure) political level in the project. This conclusion supports the thesis that the success of future cross-border projects under ENPI and IPA will basically depend on the

creation of real political partnerships among local authorities, with central governments and the involvement of the private sector. The benchmarking analysis has enabled the identification of best practices that are useful in indicating aspects and measures for building partnerships. The main results of the benchmarking analysis are summarised below.

Main findings of the benchmarking analysis: the hypothesis that the impact of projects depends on partnership efficacy is confirmed

1. The importance of cooperation agreements and of a strategy to reduce project fragmentation;
2. The importance of political and institutional mechanisms for creating a true and long-lasting partnership;
3. The need to improve political awareness of the necessity of establishing long-lasting partnership. Best practices sustain political involvement and the stability of relationships;
4. The need to improve the integration of CBC in regional and local development plans as well as interaction among departments;
5. The need to establish connections with and to share strategy with central government;
6. The strengths and weaknesses of local authorities and the private sector have been identified, depending on the context. Exchange of best practices and mutual learning and implementation of institution-building activities in projects are required. They can contribute to the decentralisation process;
7. The need to finance concrete actions: the real impact of pilot actions improves the credibility and stability of partnerships;
8. The need to increase financial resources for investment in concrete actions;
9. Ownership is increasing but there is a need to support the participation of stakeholders (especially of external partners) in identification, monitoring and evaluation.

ANNEX 1: BEST PRACTICES

ADRI.FISH Promotion of a sustainable FISHERY in Northern ADRIatic Sea	
Programme	Interreg IIIB CADSES -
Lead partner	Veneto Region (IT)
Other partners	Friuli Venezia Giulia Region (IT); Emilia Romagna Region (IT); Federcoopesca association (IT); Istrian Region (HR) – Directorate for agriculture, forest economy, hunting and water economy; Municipality of Izola (SI)
Duration	06/2003 – 05/2005
Financing	1.971.000,00 € (ERDF)
Objectives	The Adri.fish project intends to fill the lack of knowledge that trouble the fish sector in the Adriatic area so far by starting a qualifying process and increasing of the value added of the fish products on transnational level. In that way it will give a strong drive to the development of the whole fish sector of the Northern Adriatic area.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a social-economic observatory, located in the city of Chioggia, dedicated to the analysis and the study of fishing on economic themes and social themes • Realization of a study of practicability to identify the depressed zones which are subjects to specific structures and infrastructural lack for the logistic and the fish range trade • Constitution of new fishermen's associations of the Balkan Adriatic area which make known the principles for a practicable and rational fishing among the fish workers • Realization of coordinate and transnational initiatives for the qualifying, the promotion and the marketing of the fishing products. for the fish products of the Northern Adriatic area, • Creation of an exchange system of knowledge and experience
Results/outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Socio-Economic Observatory of Fishing in the Northern Adriatic Sea <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. Constitution of the Socio-Economic Observatory of Fishing in the Northern Adriatic Sea based in Chioggia (Veneto Region) 1.2. Analysis of the economic characteristics of the fish market in the Northern Adriatic Sea 1.3. Report on the characterisation of fish production in the Partner regions of the Project 1.4. Research on the consumption of fish products in the Northern Adriatic Sea 1.5. Analysis on the economy of coast fishing within three miles of Northern Adriatic Sea regions 1.6. Analysis on the employment in the fish market in the Partner regions 2. Realisation of a feasibility study aimed at identifying critical points in logistics and in services related to the fish market that characterise the area of the Northern Adriatic; 3. Active and successful exchange of knowledge between partners and operators in the fish market of the Northern Adriatic Sea through: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1. establishment of the Adri.fish information network 3.2. implementation of a training and management service for exchange activities of the personnel involved in the project 3.3. Realisation of a Newsletter for fishing in Northern Adriatic Sea 4. Promotion of associationism and cooperation in Slovenia and Croatia and the creation of a Fishery association in Croatia; 5. Qualification of fish products in the Northern Adriatic Sea: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5.1. Realisation of a product traceability pilot action 5.2. creation of a quality and traceability trademark for fish products in the Northern Adriatic Sea 5.3. Formulation of a guideline suitable for the creation of a common marketing strategy for the Northern Adriatic Sea

ADRI.BLU Project (Interreg IIIA – Northern Adriatic Countries)	
Programme	Interreg IIIA (Italy Adriatic)
Lead partner	Emilia Romagna
Other partners	Veneto Region (IT); Friuli Venezia Giulia Region (IT); Consorzio UNIPROM (IT); Izola municipality (Slovenia), Istria county and Coastal Mountain County (Croatia), NORFISH and the Chamber of Commerce of the Bosnian Federation (Bosnia-Herzegovina)
Duration	May 2004; October 2006
Financing	2.706.707 €
Objectives	The objective of the <i>ADRI.BLU</i> project is the promotion of the socio-economic development and trans-border cooperation among the countries in the Adriatic area. Specifically, the program aims at strengthening the cooperation among all Italian Adriatic regions (from Friuli-Venezia Giulia to Puglia) and Eastern Adriatic Countries (Croatia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and Albania) in order to create a homogeneous territorial and maritime area, including all the Adriatic countries.
Activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creation of a “Blue Table Working Group” aiming at improving coordination among fishing and territorial policies in the Northern Adriatic area; 2. Adriatic area; 3. Drafting of guidelines concerning the waters classification for fishing and aquiculture SMEs and drafting of technical regulations for a sustainable exploitation of the Adriatic natural and biological resources; 4. Implementation of an innovative tool for the planning and management of the economic fishing activities, based on a Geographic Information System (GIS); 5. Pilot action consisting on the construction of artificial barriers in order to increase sea biodiversity; 6. increase sea biodiversity; 7. Socio-economic animation for the realization of training activities and technical assistance to fishing operators concerning fishing-sustainable policies and management of fishing activities; 8. Information, dissemination and promotion activities.

EUROMEDSYS Systèmes économiques locaux de coopération transnationale	
Programme	III B MEDOCC (Measure 1.1)
Lead partner	Tuscany Region
Partners	Regione Calabria, Regione Campania, Regione Sardegna, Regione Emilia Romagna, Région Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur , Ministère de l'Aménagement du Territoire et de l'Environnement – Algérie, Instituto de Fomento de Andalucía - Junta de Andalucía, IMPIVA - Instituto de la Pequeña y Mediana Industria Valenciana, Gouvernorat de Sousse et Gouvernorat de Sfax – Tunisie, Conseil Régional de Tanger Tétouan – Maroc, BIC Toscana S.C.p.A – Italia
Duration	24 months
Approval	30/10/2002
Financing	Total: 2.566.288,00
Objectives	The project aims at contributing to the development of the local economic systems in the Mediterranean area in order to create platforms for institutional cooperation in the Mediterranean area. SMEs economic integration will be improved, in particular in three different sectors: Mediterranean Habitat, Traditional Food, Advanced services to the SMEs.
Activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Activities of preparation and study (questionnaire, workshops, seminars) 2. Pilot projects identification in the single region on the three different sectors (Habitat, Food, SMEs) , definition of certification labels 3. Identification and exchange of best practices, models for certification 4. Networking 5. Training and technical assistance in the third countries.
Results/outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Three pilot projects in the different sectors focalised in the sector and providing practical actions 2. Definition of high quality standards for each category and for the certification, in order to focalise the production sector in the Mediterranean following these standards, 3. Creation of a network between producers in the Mediterranean area 4. Improvement and diffusion of the certification systems 5. Diffusion of the products in the restaurants 6. Growth of the employment rate.

MA'ARIFA	
Programme	Interreg III A Spain – Morocco
Lead partner	Diputación de Cadiz through the Instituto De Empleo Y Desarrollo Tecnológico (IEDT)
Other partners	<p>Diputación de Cádiz: Instituto De Empleo Y Desarrollo Tecnológico (IEDT) Project Leader; Fundación Provincial De Cultura; Área De Políticas De Igualdad, Juventud, Solidaridad Internacional; Fondo Andaluz De Municipios Para La Solidaridad Internacional; Mancomunidad De Municipios De La Sierra De Cádiz; Mancomunidad De Municipios Del Bajo Guadalquivir; Mancomunidad De Municipios Del Campo De Gibraltar; Mancomunidad De Municipios De La Janda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conseil Regionale Tánger-Tetuán (Moroccan) ▪ Commune of Cádiz: Instituto De Fomento Empleo Y Formación De La Ciudad De Cádiz; ▪ Commune of San Fernando: Instituto Municipal De Promoción De La Ciudad De San Fernando; Instituto Municipal De Promoción De La Ciudad De San Fernando; Commune of Puerto Real; Instituto Municipal De Promoción Fomento Socioeconómico Y Formación. ▪ Commune of Sherry: Instituto De Promoción Y Desarrollo De La Ciudad De Jerez; Gerencia De Urbanismo ▪ Commune of El Puerto De Santa María ▪ Commune of Setenil De Las Bodegas: Centro De Recursos Del Olivo ▪ Commune of Olvera ▪ Commune of Algeciras ▪ Labour Unions: Unión Provincial De Comisiones Obreras De Cádiz; Unión General De Trabajadores Cádiz <p>Private:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Confederación De Empresarios De Cádiz; Cámara De Comercio, Industria Y Navegación De Cádiz ▪ Cámara Oficial De Comercio Industria Y Navegación Del Campo De Gibraltar; Cámara Oficial De Comercio E Industria De Jerez De La Frontera; Consejo Andaluz De Cámaras; Asociación Cardijn ▪ IFECA ▪ Universidad De Cádiz: Aula Universitaria Del Estrecho; Grupo De Investigación TAM (Tecnología Del Medio Ambiente)
Financing	<p>First Interreg IIIA call: 12.575.911,90 €</p> <p>Second Interreg IIIa call: 26.436.114,37 €</p>
Objectives	<p>MA'ARIFA is a comprehensive project for the improvement of competitiveness and development capacity for the Tanger-Tetouan region and the province of Cadiz. It is elaborated by the Diputación de Cadiz, through its Institute for Employment and Technological Development, which has taken on the task facilitation, coordination and integration of the different activities and partners. These activities have been structured along the following axes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Urban Development, 2. Andalusi* culture and crafts, 3. Cooperation between universities, 4. Tourism and Heritage, <p>New technologies and entrepreneurial development.</p>
Activities	<p>294 activities have been taken on within the Ma'arifa project, according to the following structure:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.2 Development of strategies for urban and territorial planning and coastal areas. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.2.1 Creation of an urban renewal programme in neighbourhoods with high immigrant population. 2.1 Development of strategies for sustainability and fostering of renewable energy. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1.2 Creation of centre for research, restoration and environmental education for the Cadiz coastline. 2.1.5 Renewable energies laboratory 2.2 Development of strategies for cultural sustainability, historical and ethnographical heritage and local identity. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.2.1 Andalusi music promotion centre.

	<p>2.2.3 Towns and ports in the Gibraltar Strait</p> <p>2.2.4 Restoration and rehabilitation of historical and archaeological heritage in both sides of the Strait</p> <p>3.1 Inception of strategies for socio-economic development and fostering access to labour market.</p> <p>3.1.1 Fostering Business and Tourism Resources</p> <p>3.1.2 Start-up of a Project for Awareness and Impulse for Microenterprises</p> <p>3.1.4 Industrial Areas Management</p> <p>3.1.5. Start-up of a Centre for Business Fostering</p> <p>3.2 Development of cooperation strategies on technological development, research and enhancement of the information society.</p> <p>3.2.3. Technical assistance to enterprises towards adaptation to the new economy</p> <p>3.3 Development of cooperation strategies on training, education and access to labour market.</p> <p>3.3.3. Creation of a multifunctional information centre</p> <p>4.1 Social and institutional cooperation programme between IEDT (Diputación de Cádiz) and the Conseil Regional de Tanger-Tetouan.</p> <p>4.1.1. Social and Institutional Cooperation Programme</p> <p>4.1.2. Institutional Cooperation for Valuation of Environmental</p> <p>4.1.3 Endogenous Resources.</p> <p>4.1.4. Management and Planning Under the Principle of Sustainability: Local Agents Development</p> <p>4.1.5. Training and Capacity Building of Local Administrations' Technicians: Technical</p>
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* The term *Andalusi* refers to those cultural features stemming from the Islamic tradition in Spain and therefore currently common to both Spanish and Moroccan cultures.

MEROPE	
Programme	Interreg III B MEDOCC
Lead partner	Tuscany region
Other partners	Regions: Calabria, Emilia-Romagna, Umbria, Municipality of Genoa, Company Public Transports Spa, FEDERTRASPORTO, Association de Investigacion y Cooperacion Industrial de Andalucia, Universidad de Catalunya, Serveis Ferroviaris de Mallorca, ARMINES, C.E.T.E Méditerranée, Communauté Urbaine de Marrakech
Duration	24 months
Approval	18/12/2002
Financing	Total: 2.702.060,00
Objectives	MEROPE main objective is to study and develop evaluation models and telematic instruments for the management and control of the mobility and logistic in the urban and metropolitan areas. The goals is apply ICT applications in order to support the definition of integrated system for transport and provide and improve the economic competitiveness, the mobility and the general urban quality life.
Activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. General analysis of the state of the art 2. Definition of an ICT model for the logistic systems and the mobility in the urban and metropolitan areas 3. Feasibility studies in each target country 4. Pilot projects implementation 5. Evaluation of the impact on mobility, competitiveness, rules, sustainability, economic development, etc. 6. Definition of standards, guidelines and best practices for the local and regional authorities 7. Promotion of the MEROPE approach, dissemination of the results.
Results/outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A model for the application of ICT technologies to mobility sector has been defined 2. Guidelines and best practices has been identified in order to ensure a follow up and a future application of the project results 3. Improvement on the knowledge of the local system of mobility in the involved countries 4. Reduction of the environmental impacts of the mobility system

RURALMED II	
Forum permanent et réseau de centres pour le développement rural en Méditerranée	
Programme	III B MEDOCC (Axis 2 Measure 1)
Lead partner	Junta de Andalucia - Espana
Partners	ARSIA –TOSCANA, Associação Odiana – Portugal, Atelier dei Paesaggi Mediterranei- Toscana, Centre de Recherche en Economie Appliquée pour le Développement - Unité de Recherche sur le Développement Rural – Algerie, DISTAFA - Dipartimento di Scienze e Tecnologia Agroforestali ed Ambientali – Calabria, ERSAT – Ente Regionale di Sviluppo e Assistenza Tecnica in Agricoltura, Società consortile Langhe Monferrato, Roero, Ministère de l’Agriculture, du Développement Rural et des Eaux et Forêts - Maroc , Région-Provence-Alpes-Côte-d’Azur, Regione Calabria, Université de Florence, Faculté d’Architecture - Département Urbanisme et Planification
Duration	01/05/2004 - 30/06/2006
Financing	Total € 2510667
Objectives & Activities	<p>«Rural Med II» aims at the implementation of the «Rural Med project, network for exchange of experiences and for coordination among rural development initiatives on the Northern and Southern shores of the Mediterranean.</p> <p>This second phase of the project aims specifically at enlarging the existing network and the implementation of common projects which have already been identified.</p> <p>The network aims at reinforcing and promoting the process of rural participatory development in Western Mediterranean through the exchange of experiences and best practices and the implementation of joint training programmes and projects through the use of the instruments specifically created by "Rural Med I".</p> <p>The project is implemented through studies and pilot activities into five thematic areas: Gender perspectives, Rural Tourism, Rural Landscape, Participatory Development, Technological Innovation in Agriculture.</p>

SEENET South East Europe Net	
Programme	Decentralised cooperation programme that has been supported by the Tuscany Region and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with the NGOs Ucodep and Cospe.
Project partners	<p>Italian Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tuscany Region, NGOs Ucodep and Cospe ▪ Tuscan local authorities involved: Florence Municipality, Arezzo Municipality, Carrara Municipality, Montale Municipality, Quarrata Municipality, Pistoia Municipality, Prato Municipality, Pontedera Municipality, Mugello Mountainous District, Empolese Val d'Elsa District, Arezzo Province, Livorno Province, Pisa Province <p>SEE Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Region of Istria <p>Pazin Municipality, Rovigno Municipality, Varaždin Municipality, Verteneglio Municipality, Scutari Municipality, Herzegovina-Neretva Canton, Sarajevo Canton, Sarajevo Municipality, Mostar Municipality, Nevesinje Municipality, Prjedor Municipality, Sanski Most Municipality, Livno Municipality, Trebinje Municipality, Tuzla Municipality, Skopje Municipality, Kraguievac Municipality, Nis Municipality, Vozdovac Municipality, Pec/Peja Municipality</p>
Duration	07/2003 – 07/2006
Financing	<p>The project promoted by the NGOs is financed by the Italian Law no.49 from 1987 on international cooperation for development with a total amount of approximately 1.878.593 EUR allocated as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) DGCS – MAE: 1.032.758 EUR; 2) NGOs: 148.533 euro <i>in cash</i> and 146.158 euro as valorisation of the personnel work; 3) Local counterparts: 552.144 EUR.
Objectives	<p>The main objective of the programme SEENET is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to improve, in the full realization of the guidelines on the decentralized cooperation, the capacities of the Local institutions in South-East European countries in the definition of policies and programmes for the citizen, with particular reference to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the actions of harmonization and management adjustment of the local public services in conformity with the European standards; ▪ the identification of the support role to local actions of development and the carrying out of an active policy and use of the support of the international community.
Activities	<p>1. Improvement of the local public services. Improvement of the local public services. The actions in this framework integrate the development of the management of the public services with actions of technical support with the objective to strengthen the analysis and planning abilities in the same services. Such actions followed common methodologies allowing the comparison and the exchange among the participants both of the results and of the elements of the process;</p> <p>Support to the local economic development. The actions proposed in this sector aim to define the role and to strengthen the action abilities of the LAs, particularly in the aspects of aggregation and coordination of the dawning economic strengths, favouring its development through actions of capacity building and support to the planning, with particular reference to the opportunities offered by the international community;</p> <p>2. Coordination of the network and creation of new partnerships. In this part there are managed the actions of general coordination of the project, the updating of the site, tool of transversal communication to the two projects of intervention.</p>

	Besides, through the structure of coordination the activities of widening of the net were promoted.
Results/outcomes	<p>At regional level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Activates cooperation network between the Tuscan and SEE LAs; ▪ Realisation of the Web site as an information and communication instrument ▪ Exchanges of Best Practices at regional level analysed and shared between the network stakeholders ▪ Capacity building experiences of working methodologies evaluated and shared <p>At local level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Methodologies of participative sharing in each LA ▪ Long and medium term Programmes in the two intervention sectors defined for each SEE Partner ▪ Priority Project proposals identified and realised for each SEE Partner

ANNEX 2: LIST OF THE PROJECTS ANALYSED

Projects	Programme	Analysed by
ADRI.FISH	Interreg III B CADSES	LDA Verteneglio (CR)
ADRI.BLU	Interreg III A – ITALY ADRIATIC	FVG (IT)
ACUERDOS DIPUTACIÓN DE CÓRDOBA CON EL MUNICIPIO DE CHEFCHAOUEN (MA)		FAMSI (ES)
BALKAN CULTURE AGENCY, PROMOTION OF A MUTUAL CULTURAL IDENTITY AND TOURIST DEVELOPMENT	Interreg III A/CARDS GREECE ALBANIA	Western Macedonia region (GR)
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER OF PODRINJE	CARDS (2005-2006)	SERDA (BH)
CASTRUM	Interreg III B MEDOCC	Calabria region (IT)
CIMPA	Interreg III B MEDOCC	Calabria region (IT)
COOPERACIÓN TRANSFRONTERIZA EN EL ÁMBITO DEL DESARROLLO TECNOLÓGICO RED DE COOPERACIÓN	Interreg III A SPAIN-MOROCCO	FAMSI (ES)
CONSPACE	Interreg III B CADSES	LDA Verteneglio (CR)
CREATION OF A PICTURE GALLERY IN FLORINA WITH CULTURAL ACTIVITIES	Interreg III A GREECE-FYROM	Western Macedonia region (GR)
CROSS-BORDER ACTIONS FOR THE CONTROL OF ANIMAL ORIGIN FOOD	Interreg III A GREECE-ALBANIA	Western Macedonia region (GR)
EUROMEDINCULTURE	Interreg III B MEDOCC	T/T region (MA)
EUROMEDSYS	Interreg III B MEDOCC	T/T region (MA); Tuscany region (IT); Calabria (IT)
GO NETWORK	Interreg III B CADSES	FVG (IT)
ITALIAN PARTICIPATION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EASTERN SLAVONIA	Decentralised cooperation project financed by the Italian Ministry of foreign affairs and FVG region (Law no. 49/87)	FVG (IT)
MA'ARIFA	Interreg III A SPAIN-MOROCCO	T/T region (MA) ; FAMSI (ES)
MAEM - Master en affaires euro-méditerranéennes	Interreg III B MEDOCC	Tuscany region (IT)
MEROPE	Interreg III B MEDOCC	Calabria region (IT)
NEI SUONI DEI LUOGHI	Interreg III A – ITALY ADRIATIC	FVG (IT)
PRODUCTION OF MULTIMEDIA EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL	Interreg III A GREECE-ALBANIA	Western Macedonia region (GR)
PROTECTION OF MOUNTAINS ON THE BASIS OF THE PROTECTION OF BEARS	Interreg III A GREECE- FYROM	Western Macedonia region (GR)

PROTECTION & PROMOTION OF THE NEOLITHIC SETTLEMENT IN AVGI - KASTORIA	Interreg III A/CARDS GREECE-ALBANIA	Western Macedonia region (GR)
RURALMED I	Interreg III B MEDOCC	Calabria region (IT)
RURALMED II	Interreg III B MEDOCC	Tuscany region (IT)
RESTAURONET	Interreg III B MEDOCC	T/T region (MA)
ROAD AND MOTORWAY MANAGEMENT IN THE PHARE COUNTRIES	CARDS (1998)	SERDA (BH)
SAFETY SAUSAGE	Interreg EURED (2003-2005)	SERDA (BH)
SEENET	Decentralised cooperation supported by the Tuscany Region and Italian Cooperation	LDA Verteneglio (CR); Tuscany region (IT)
THE UN HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAM UIG	Interreg III A (2004-2006)	SERDA (BH)
TOURISM, AGRICULTURE	CARDS (2004-2006)	SERDA (BH)

6. THE PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLE IN MEDITERRANEAN CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION. THE CONCEPT PAPER

*Battistina Cugusi and Andrea Stocchiero (CeSPI - Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale).
January 2006*

6.1 Regional and local authorities partnerships for the multi-level governance of glocalization in the Mediterranean basin

The traditional analysis on the Mediterranean area focuses on political, economic, social and cultural issues at macro level in the globalization scenario²⁹. But crisis phenomena and development opportunities have real territorial roots and effects. Terrorism hits people living in towns, migrants flow from origin areas through transit territories towards destination local labour markets, biodiversity and cultural inheritance have natural and historical territorial dimensions, the international division of labour, distributes production in specific geographic spaces, the control of financial flows concentrates in global and regional cities.

The territorial approach adds important knowledge and policy inputs to the macro economic and political analysis. Territories are strictly interdependent with the globalization scenario. Flows and territories interact between them. Glocalization is the new concept that defines the interconnection between the global and the local levels.

Migration flows overcome national frontiers and challenge the traditional central State role. New multilateral institutions are created to regulate the flows (WTO) and to construct new development models (EU). Borders are ever and ever porous. Territories are connected by flows that originate also from distant areas. Natural and political borders are accompanied by new virtual borders that are more and more important for the development of territories. The digital divide is a clear example of this new type of border between people and territories. Glocalization leads to the new concept of virtual border.

Another important phenomenon that is interweaved with glocalization, is the fiscal and welfare crisis of the central State. In order to strengthen the regulation of flows, to spur the competition capacity and to protect the social welfare of territories, the powers and competences of the central State are shared upwards with multilateral institutions and downwards with deconcentrated and decentralised authorities according to the subsidiarity principle.

In this new framework, local authorities are engaging in new transnational activities. They operate within the State, but also within transnational regimes and global economy³⁰. Another new concept used in international literature is *paradiplomacy*. It studies and defines the transnational activities of local authorities.

Paradiplomacy emphasizes a new regionalism: glocalization and decentralization are legitimizing the new activism of local authorities, and particularly of regions, in external policy. This decentralised institutional activism accompanies social, economic and cultural transnational relations that are emerging among local actors (civil society organizations, small and medium enterprises, universities and research centres) as well as interacting with the incoming flows of multinationals, global media and transmigrants. Diverse economic,

²⁹ See, for example, the analysis carried out by the Euromesco (www.euromesco.net) and Femise (www.femise.org) networks supported by the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

³⁰ Aldecoa F., Keating M. (Editors), (1999), *Paradiplomacy in Action: The Foreign Relations of Subnational Governments*, London, Frank Cass.

political and institutional factors have underpinned the rise of regions and inter-regional co-operation, as detailed in Box 1 below.

BOX 1. Inter-Regional Co-operation in Europe

Michael Keating, Professor and Head of Department of Political and Social Sciences, European University Institute Florence

The Rise of Regions

Across Europe in recent years we have seen a strengthening of the regional level of government and administration. The forms are different from one state to another, but there are common factors:

- *The need for planning.* Planning of infrastructures and public services needs to be done at a higher level than the purely local in order to take into account new economic, geographical and demographic realities. It needs to be done at a level below the state in order to account for the specific requirements of different areas.
- *Economic development.* There is a growing appreciation of the region as a key level for the understanding and mastering of economic change. Regions have emerged as economic areas or even production systems, with their own internal logic, and competing in national, European and global markets. There is a strong advantage to those regions that are institutionally equipped to manage the new challenges, and to balance co-operation (internal and external) with competition.
- *State modernization.* States are modernizing their administrative apparatus, moving away from top-down bureaucratic structures and adopting more flexible, differentiated forms of public management. This applies in a number of policy fields, including the welfare state.
- *Political pluralism and democratization.* There is a stronger emphasis on the democratic benefits of decentralization, even in traditionally centralist countries.

Inter-Regional Co-operation

There has also been an increase in inter-regional co-operation in Europe. This has taken a variety of forms: Cross-border co-operation by adjacent regions; Co-operation by regions that are non-contiguous; Co-operation by regions with common sectoral concerns or common ambitions for modernization; Broad-based regional associations, which are long-standing and are not our principal concern here.

The reasons for this new interest in co-operation are several.

Economic factors include:

- *European economic integration,* especially the single-market programme. This has not abolished national borders but has undermined their economic rationale. Economic activity has adapted to the new European space, producing new patterns of economic geography or, in some cases, re-establishing old ones that were suppressed with the creation of national markets in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. New forms of planning, infrastructure development and economic organization are needed to cope with these trends, which spill across state borders.
- *Inter-regional competition.* Market changes and the end of old-style national regional policies means that regions are no longer complementary elements in nationally-bounded economies. Instead, they compete in European economic space to gain inward investment, technology and markets. This new protagonism has also led to alliances and new forms of co-operation.
- *Regional production systems.* Regions as production systems are successful to the extent to which they contain clusters of economic activities, a complementary range of firms and activities, and a degree of organization in state and civil society. Small firms depend on what are sometimes called 'untraded interdependencies', that is patterns of co-operation, diffuse knowledge and cultural norms of reciprocity. This are not always available within a political or administrative region, hence the search for partners elsewhere, whether in an adjacent region or in another part of Europe.

Political factors are also important, notably:

- *Stabilizing borders.* There is a need to secure and stabilize borders in areas of divided nationality or where there are minorities. Cross-border co-operation permits cultural activities to develop and groups on either side to share common pursuits and identities, without threatening the state itself.
- *Political prestige.* Local and regional politicians desire to appear as good Europeans and engage in external activities to enhance their prestige.

- *Autonomy*. Co-operation may accommodate autonomist movements by extending autonomy beyond the state to the European sphere.
- *Policy learning*. Regions can learn from policy innovation in other regions. This is not a matter of just imitating what others are doing, but of learning from both successes and failures, and applying the lessons appropriately.

Institutional factors include:

- *EU policy*. The European Union encourages co-operation through the Structural Funds and the Interreg programme.
- *National Law*. Changes in national laws permit regions to operate beyond state borders.
- *European Law*. Legal arrangements such as the Council of Europe's Madrid Convention providing means for regions to co-operate. There are proposals for a new EU legal framework to complement this.

Document presented at the EuroMed Regional Conference, Barcelona 25-26 November 2005.

The opportunity structures generated by the interplay between multilateral, national and local institutions, shape the access and the capacity of local authorities to participate in the glocalization process. In the late twenty years European integration has changed the opportunity structure. It has furthered the transnational activities of regions through the regional and cohesion policies, within the European internal policy. The adoption of the partnership principle in programming and management of Structural Funds established the right of regions to participate in the multi-level governance of the European development.

In the framework of Structural Funds, the Community Initiative Programme called Interreg has promoted cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation among regions to manage common spaces and flows, and to foster a territorial balanced and polycentric development. Also regions of Third Countries sharing borders with the EU, could participate in Interreg, but to a lesser extent. The EC proposal on the new Cohesion Policy (2007-2013) enhances the Interreg experience at objective level: the Third objective will be dedicated to furthering the harmonious and balanced integration of the Union by supporting territorial cooperation that will also involve regions of Neighbour and candidate countries.

After the EU enlargement, the EC proposals on the regulations of the new external assistance instruments (2007-2013), the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) and the European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument (ENPI), represent a great turning point for the role of regions in external policy. IPA and ENPI will support cross-border cooperation between the EU and Neighbour and candidate countries. They translate the partnership principle of internal policy into external policy. For the first time, regions are allowed to participate in the multi-level governance of the European external policy. The partnership principle will apply at multilateral, national and regional/local level.

Regions of the Mediterranean will be supported in promoting their common territorial development through cross-border cooperation. They could shape political partnerships for governing glocalization in the Mediterranean through joint programmes.

This relevant political and institutional innovation opens new opportunities. It gives regions access to IPA and ENPI. But access and capacity questions remain at national and local level. The opportunity structures for region/local participation differ from country to country. Constitutional and institutional systems in the diverse Mediterranean countries determine the partnership possibilities between regions as well as the participation of civil societies (horizontal subsidiarity and democratic principle).

Deconcentration and decentralization processes have different characteristics and implementation rates in different countries. Thus, local capacities also differ meaningfully from country to country. EU is negotiating Action Plans with Neighbour countries that

include commitment and support to decentralization processes³¹. Institution building activities are put forward with the Med Pact and Twinning programmes.

Other multilateral organizations share the political objective of decentralization and democratization at local level. They sustain decentralised cooperation programmes between Mediterranean regions and local authorities in order to create opportunities and capacities for common human development. The United Nation Development Programme is implementing the Art, Gold Maghreb and City to City Programmes. Also at bilateral-national level, some European central governments are collaborating with regions and local authorities to support decentralization processes, particularly through institution and capacity building projects. Finally the same regions and local authorities, alone and in networks, implement decentralised cooperation projects with Mediterranean partners, trying to create partnerships between territorial systems.

In this framework, the new opportunity structure offered by ENPI, IPA and the new Third Objective of the Cohesion Policy represents a big push for the political role and cross-border, transnational and territorial cooperation of Mediterranean regions and local authorities. The exploitation of this opportunity depends fundamentally on the active participation of regions and local authorities in creating effective partnerships. The new opportunity structure paves the way. Now, it rests on regions and local authorities to improve their capacity to gain access. But this capacity also depends on several factors determined by the behaviour of central governments: the resources they can apply for, the competences on which they can act, the mechanisms of partnerships, the strategic approach, the geographical scope of cooperation, and , in particular, the role they have in the decision making process.

³¹For further details see: European Commission, (2004) *Plan Proposé d'Action UE/Morocco*. Available at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/world/enp/pdf/action_plans/Proposed_Action_Plan_EU-Moroco_FR.pdf

Glocalization in the Mediterranean:
the interplay between flows and territories

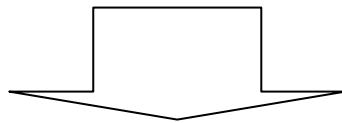
Overcoming of the traditional borders
and creation of new virtual borders

Redefinition of the Central State Power

Emergence of new transnational actors



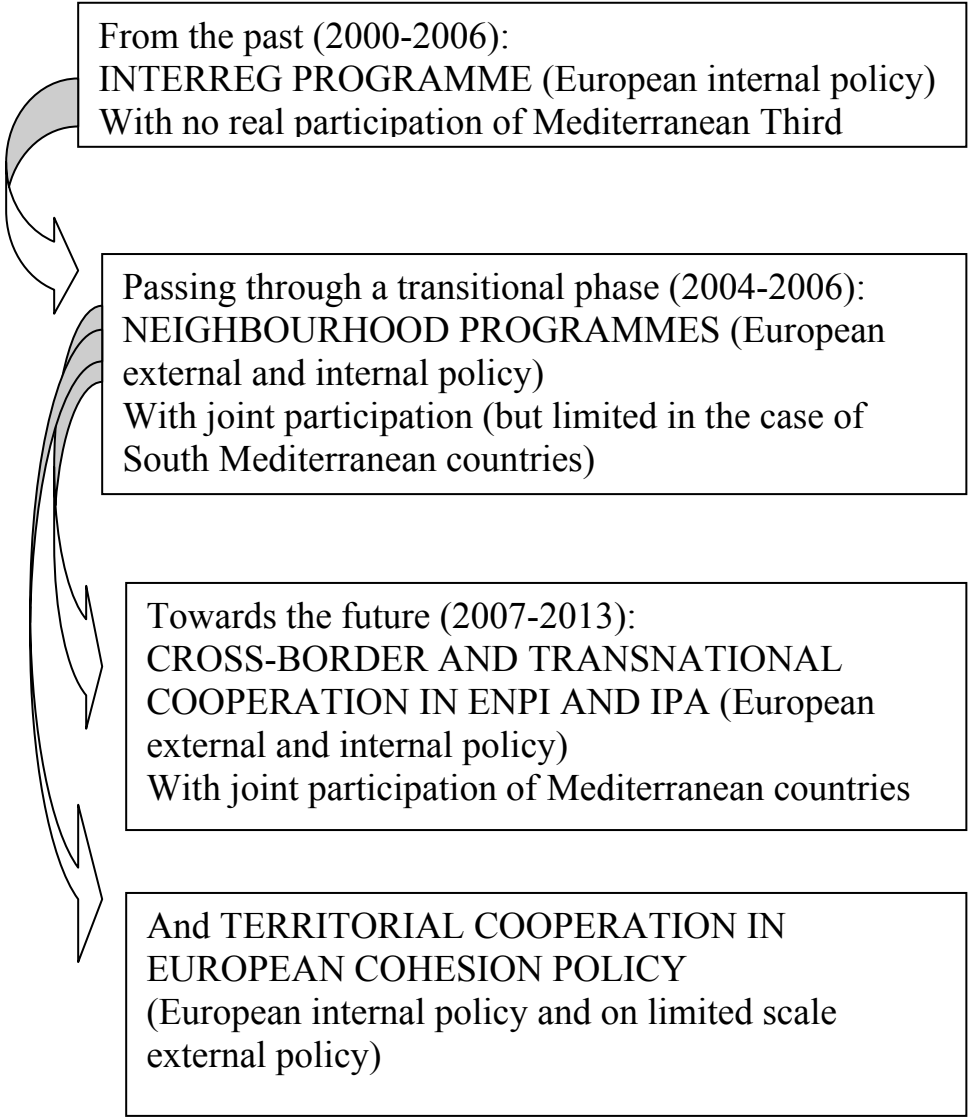
New Regionalism:
the new role of regions and local authorities in the glocal
development



The big push of the cross-border cooperation component
in IPA, ENPI and Cohesion Policy:
a new opportunity structure for the participation of regions
and local authorities in the multi-level governance of the
Mediterranean common development

6.2 The Local authorities partnerships in the decision making process of cross-border cooperation

This chapter presents and clarifies who the actors of partnerships are and how the regional and local authorities are involved in the decision making process, in the new cross-border cooperation of ENPI and IPA, and in the territorial cooperation (Third Objective) of the Cohesion Policy.



6.2.1 The Cross-border cooperation under ENPI

Launched by the European Commission in 2003³², the Neighbourhood policy has inaugurated a new set of relations between the EU and its neighbours, based on an innovative strategy: a reinforced cooperation, a progressive integration in the EU internal market, a differentiated approach instead of a “one-size-fits-all” policy, that would lead to the creation of “a zone of peace and friendly neighbourhood” (“a ring of friends”) around the EU. In order to reach these aims, the Commission has recognised a strategic and innovative role to cross-border cooperation towards its neighbours.

This represents an important turning point from a political point of view. For the first time, the partnership principle that involves the application of the vertical subsidiarity is applied in an EU external policy. The cross-border cooperation between European and neighbouring countries’ regional and local authorities is considered a key tool in EU external policy. As explicitly stated by the Commission proposal on ENPI regulation, ENPI assistance on cross-border cooperation “[...] may be used for the benefit³³ of Member States and partner countries [...]”³⁴.

Definitively, ENPI cross-border cooperation will contribute to the overall objective of developing an area of good “neighbourhood” through promoting cohesion and polycentric development in a common space between EU and its neighbours: “Cross-border cooperation should also contribute to integrated and sustainable regional development between neighbouring border regions and harmonious territorial integration across the Community and with neighbouring countries”³⁵.

Cross-border cooperation will be a specific component of the ENPI under which “the ENPI will finance ‘joint programmes’ bringing together regions of Member States and partner countries sharing a common border”³⁶.

The ENPI cross-border component will be based on the approach used for the management of territorial cooperation under Structural Funds (multi-annual programming; partnership; co-financing) and on the experience acquired from the transitional period.

According to the partnership principle³⁷ a participatory approach will characterise all the programming cycle, assuring the ownership of all partners involved. Consequently, cross-border programmes must be prepared, managed and implemented jointly by the beneficiary countries on both sides of the borders. Indeed, “Joint programmes shall be established by the

³² European Commission (2003), *Communication on Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with Our Eastern and Southern Neighbours*, COM (2003) 104 final. Available at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/world/enp/pdf/com03_104_en.pdf

³³ However a safeguard clause has been introduced, according to which: “In exceptional circumstances, where a joint programme cannot be established owing to problems arising in relations between participating countries, the Commission may adopt a programme which is not a joint programme [...] but which allows the Member State border region or regions concerned to benefit from the assistance provided in [...]”. See European Commission (2004), *Proposal for a Regulation Laying Down General Provisions Establishing a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)*, COM (2004) 628 final, art. 9.8. Available at: http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/pdf/2004/com2004_0628en01.pdf

³⁴ European Council of Ministers (2005) *Council Proposals for Amendments on Commission Proposal for a Regulation Laying Down General Provisions Establishing a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)*. Informal Working Document, art.1.2

³⁵ European Commission (2004), *Proposal for a Regulation Laying Down General Provisions Establishing a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)*, op.cit., pp.12.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 2.

³⁷ The beneficiary countries “shall involve, as appropriate, national, regional and local authorities, economic and social partners, civil society and other relevant bodies [...] in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects”. See European Commission (2004), *Proposal for a Regulation Laying Down General Provisions Establishing a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)*, op.cit. art. 4.2, 4.3.

concerned Member States and partner countries at the appropriate territorial level, in accordance with their institutional system taking into account the principle of partnership³⁸”.

One or more strategy papers, adopted by the European Commission, will establish the implementing³⁹ rules of the joint programmes.

With regard to the strategic priorities of the ENPI cross-border component, they should focus on promoting “sustainable economic, social and environmental development in border regions and integrated territorial development across the Community external border”⁴⁰.

On the contrary of the transitional period, cross-border and transnational cooperation will be managed under the same procedures for each side of the border; even if the ERDF will still contribute to the financing of the participation of the European part of the borders. A Joint management authority⁴¹ - normally located in a Member State - will be responsible for the implementation of each cross-border programme. “This provision takes into account the fact that Member States have more experience than partner countries in managing EU funds”⁴², also considering that the procurement rules will be those applied to by the management body (Management authority)⁴³.

This represents a real step forward compared to Neighbourhood programmes. In the latter case the coexistence of various legal instruments have required the complementation of different methods of implementation³⁷: the shared management of the European Structural Funds and the centralised or decentralised management of the external aid programmes. The main difference between them consists in the role played by the Commission and by Member States. While in the case of external cooperation programmes, the Commission performs the implementation tasks or delegates some of these tasks to Third countries, in the shared management mode, implementation is entirely delegated to Member States. Indeed adopting the shared management mode, the ENPI cross-border cooperation component will “maximise Member States flexibility [and] minimise Commission involvement”⁴⁴.

At geographical level, there will be three different kinds of cross-border programmes⁴⁵:

Cross-border programmes along land borders corresponding to NUTS III⁴⁶-level, or equivalent, territorial units belonging to one or more Member States and one or more partner countries;

Cross-border programmes along sea crossings of significant importance corresponding to NUTS III-level, or equivalent, territorial units belonging to one or more Member States and one or more partner countries;

³⁸European Council of Ministers (2005), *Council Proposals for Amendments on Commission Proposal for ENPI*. Informal Working Document, op. cit. art. 9.2 bis.

³⁹ “Matters covered by the implementing rules shall include issues such as rate of co-financing, preparation of joint programmes, designation and functions of the joint authorities, eligibility of expenditure, joint project selection, technical and financial management of the assistance, financial control and audit, monitoring and evaluation, visibility and publicity”. Ibidem art 11.(2)

⁴⁰ Ibidem art.2.2 (u)

⁴¹ The management authority will be “designated jointly by the Member State or States and the partner country or countries covered by a joint programme”. Ibidem, art.10.3.

⁴² Ibidem, pp.6.

⁴³ Ibidem, art.21.8.

⁴⁴ Canciani E. (2005), *Power Point Presentation on “Cross-border cooperation at the EU external borders”*, presented in the Seminar on Territorial Cooperation, Brussels.

⁴⁵ Possibility for *adjoining regions* to participate in co-operation: “[...] regions eligible for cooperation, for Community assistance under the Pre- accession instrument or the financing instrument for development and economic cooperation and the overseas countries and territories associated with the Community” (in particular Turkey).

⁴⁶ NUTS III: "Départements" in France; "Nomoi" in Greece; "Province" in Italy; "Provincias" in Spain.

Multilateral Cross-border programmes facing a common sea basin corresponding to NUTS II-level⁴⁷ or equivalent, coastal territorial units belonging to several participating countries, including at least one Member State and one partner country.

Cross-border programmes along sea crossing and coastal NUTS II-level will represent an innovation in comparison with the Structural Funds approach mainly focused on cross-border cooperation along land borders. Within ENPI, maritime borders have obtained a first important recognition, mainly due to the lobbying of European Mediterranean regions and associations of regions organised at EU level (such as the Conference of Maritime and Peripheral Regions – CMPR).

The multilateral cross-border programmes facing a common sea basin will be based on the experience of transnational cooperation programmes under Interreg IIIB, such as Medocc, Archimed or Cadces. In this case, a link should be established with the trans-national cooperation component of the new Third objective of Structural Funds⁴⁸.

From a financial point of view, up till now it is not yet clear how many resources will be allocated to the cross-border component. It depends on the ongoing negotiations on the EU Financial perspective, and above all on the negotiation outcome on the new Third objective of Structural Funds. However the regulation proposal of the European Commission on ENPI indicates that the financial resources for cross-border cooperation should come from two sources. The participation of regions from Member States should be covered by the ERDF (12,1% of the resources dedicated to cross-border cooperation) whereas the participation of external regions from ENPI, whose resources should be at least equal to the amount of the ERDF.

In addition ENPI presents another innovative aspect compared to traditional external cooperation. The operations to be financed within its framework should receive a co-financing also from beneficiary third countries.

6.2.2 The Cross-border component under IPA

IPA represents a unified instrument for pre-accession assistance; i.e. it will replace the Phare regulation as well as SAPARD, ISPA, and Phare CBC.

Although ENPI and IPA respond to the same objective of promoting security and stabilising the EU's neighbourhood area through the integration of beneficiary countries, they are based on two different strategies. While ENPI would lead to integration covering "everything but institutions"; IPA will be addressed to those neighbouring countries recognised as potential⁴⁹ or official candidates to accession to the EU⁵⁰.

IPA will differentiate the scope of the assistance towards the two statuses of the countries. In particular, assistance to candidate countries will be especially focused on the adoption and implementation of the full *acquis communautaire*⁵¹. At the same time IPA assistance will concern also some common target areas such as support for democracy, rule of law, public administration reform, economic reform, respect for human and minority rights, civil society etc.

⁴⁷ NUTS II: "Régions" in France; "Periferies" in Greece; "Regioni" in Italy; "Comunidades y ciudades autónomas" in Spain.

⁴⁸ Canciani E. (2005), *op. cit.*

⁴⁹ As stressed by the European Council at its meeting at Santa Feira on 20 June 2000 and in Thessaloniki on June 2003, Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina; Serbia and Montenegro; the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) are potential candidates for membership of the European Union.

⁵⁰ Croatia and Turkey.

⁵¹ European Commission (2004), *Proposal For a Regulation Establishing an Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)*. Available at: http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/pdf/2004/com2004_0627en01.pdf.

Moreover, for both kinds of countries, a cross-border cooperation component will be part of the assistance provided under IPA. “Cross-border cooperation shall have the objective of fostering stability, security and prosperity in the mutual interest of all countries concerned, and of encouraging their harmonious, balanced and sustainable development”. Under this component⁵², assistance should be provided on the basis of a multi-annual framework per country, which will be adopted by the European Commission. As in the case of the ENPI strategy papers, the IPA multi-annual framework will establish the implementation rules for cross-border cooperation.

The EC proposal on the IPA regulation does not specify the thematic priorities of cross-border cooperation. However, considering that it is an instrument of assistance to accession of candidate countries to the EU, it is possible to presume that the priorities will be similar to those established in the territorial cooperation of the Cohesion Policy.

At geographical level, on the contrary of ENPI where cross-border cooperation should concern only “regions of Member States and partner countries sharing a common border”, cross-border cooperation under IPA could take place both among beneficiary countries and between them and EU border regions⁵³.

Different management modes could be applied. The implementation of cross-border cooperation between beneficiary countries will take place according to the rules of external aid, while the implementation tasks of cooperation involving EU Member States shall, in principle, be delegated to them, through the shared management mechanism⁵⁴. It is possible, though, to presume that in the latter case cross-border cooperation will be managed and implemented jointly by the partners, following the same mechanisms as ENPI.

As far as the financial aspects are concerned, information is lacking about how many resources will be allocated to the cross-border component of IPA. Also in this case, it is necessary to wait for the outcome of the ongoing negotiation on EU financial perspective. However it is certain that contrary to ENPI, “the funds allocated to cross-border programmes with Member States shall be at least equal to the corresponding financing from⁵⁵” the ERFD. Moreover, the co-financing rule does not apply within IPA.

6.2.3 The Territorial cooperation in the new economic and social cohesion policy

In the new programming period 2007-2013, territorial cooperation will be one of the three priority objectives of the EU Structural Funds. Inspired by the experience of the Interreg Community initiative, the new Third objective covers the territorial dimension of the cohesion policy. It will support the balanced and sustainable development of the European territory improving integration and encouraging cooperation between and within European regions.

Cooperation under the new Third objective will follow up the Interreg approach. It will take place at three levels: cross-border cooperation through joint programmes; cooperation between trans-national zones; networks for cooperation and exchange of experiences throughout the Union.

⁵² IPA assistance shall be programmed and implemented according to 5 components: Transitional Assistance and Institutional Building; Regional and Cross-border cooperation; Regional development; Human resources development and Rural development.

⁵³ European Commission (2004), *Proposal for a Regulation Establishing an Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)*, op. cit. art.6.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, art. 10.2.

⁵⁵ European Council of Ministers (2005), *Draft Regulation Establishing an Instrument for pre-accession Assistance (IPA)*. Informal document. Art. 4.3

As in the case of the other operations to be financed under the economic and social cohesion policy, the partnership principle⁵⁶ will apply in the Third objective. Consequently, as in the case of Interreg, territorial cooperation will see the joint participation⁵⁷ of all the actors (bottom-up approach) in the development; implementation; financing, monitoring and evaluation of the operational programmes⁵⁸.

Concerning the thematic priorities, they are linked to the Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas (promoting growth, job creation, increased competitiveness and sustainable development), and they will differ from one strand of cooperation to another according to the diverse geographic dimensions. So, while cross-border cooperation actions should focus on joint solutions to common problems (such as urban, rural or coastal development; development of economic relations and networking of SMEs⁵⁹), trans-national cooperation actions will be mainly addressed to priorities with a trans-national character (R&D, environment, risk prevention, maritime safety and integrated border management).

The geographical scope of operations to be implemented under the Third objective will continue to concern each (internal and certain external) land border or group of borders at NUTS III level regions and “certain NUTS III level regions of the Community along maritime borders separated, as a general rule, by a maximum of 150 km”; NUTS II trans-national cooperation areas; whereas networks for cooperation and exchange of experiences will concern the whole territory of the Community.

Furthermore as in the case of Interreg, also the new Third objective will support cross-border and trans-national cooperation at the external borders of the EU, “where this is necessary to ensure that the regions of Member States which border third-countries can be effectively assisted in their development”⁶⁰. In contrast to Interreg, the Third objective will represent a partial improvement from this point of view, allowing the partial financing of projects located on the territory of eligible Third countries. Notwithstanding this, several limits continue to apply, since the possibility to authorise these kinds of expenditures must be on an exceptional basis, up to a limit of 10% of the amount of ERDF contribution to the operational programme and “where they are for the benefit of the regions of the Community”.

According to the Commission’s initial proposal for the financial perspective, territorial cooperation should have seen a considerable increase in financial resources compared to the 2000-2006 programming period (from €5.8 billion to €14.2 billion). It is worth noting that

⁵⁶ European Commission (2004), *Proposal For A Council Regulation Laying Down General Provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund*, COM(2004)492 final, art.10. Available at: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/regulation/pdf/2007/general/com\(2004\)492final_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/regulation/pdf/2007/general/com(2004)492final_en.pdf).

⁵⁷ The joint participation in the decision-making will be assured by the setting up of common authorities: “Member States participating in an operational programme shall appoint a single managing authority, a single certification authority and a single audit authority situated in the Member State of the managing authority. [...] Member States shall set up a joint technical secretariat, which shall be located within the managing authority [...]”. See: European Commission (2004), *Proposal for a Regulation on the European Regional Development Fund*, COM(2004) 495 final, art.14. Available at: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/regulation/pdf/2007/general/com\(2004\)492final_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/regulation/pdf/2007/general/com(2004)492final_en.pdf).

⁵⁸ Operational programmes (OP) set up the territorial development strategy and are submitted by the Member States to the Commission. Contrary to the current programming period (2000-2006), they will not be followed by complement programmes. The multi-level programming comprises: 1) the Community strategic guidelines on cohesion established by the Commission in order to define a framework for the intervention of funds; 2) on this basis Member States present a National framework document on its development strategy (to be approved by the EU Commission); 3) which, in its turn, constitutes the framework to prepare the operational programmes.

⁵⁹ For further details see European Commission (2004), *Proposal for a Regulation on the European Regional Development Fund*, op. cit.

⁶⁰ Ibidem, whereas n.13

transnational cooperation, in particular, would have benefited the most from the initial financial proposal of the Commission. However, during Council negotiations on the EU's financial perspective, the resources for territorial cooperation have been considerably reduced (from €14.25 billion to €7.5 billion) and, among the various strands of cooperation, transnational cooperation has been penalised the most (reduced from €6.8 billion to €1.4 billion). As far as resources for cross-border cooperation are concerned, these have been cut by €1.1 billion (from €6.8 billion to €5.7 billion). A percentage equal to 12.1% of these latter resources should contribute to EU regions' participation in cross-border cooperation projects to be implemented under ENPI and IPA.

Tab. 1: Breakdown of resources among the different strands of cooperation

	Interreg (2000-2006)	New Objective 3 Commission Proposal (2007-2013)	New Objective 3 Council agreement on financial perspective (2007-2013)
<i>Cross-border co-operation</i>	4.0 bn	6.8 bn	5.7 bn
<i>Contribution to the cross-border strand of ENPI and IPA</i>		12,1%	12,1%
<i>Trans-national co-operation</i>	1.4 bn	6.8 bn	1,4 bn
<i>Interregional co-operation + networks</i>	380 mio	650 mio	300 mio
<i>Total</i>	5.8 bn	14.25 bn	7.5 bn

6.3 Defining an operative concept of the partnership principle

Since 2003, the Communication from the Commission on "Paving the way" has opened new scenarios for territorial partnerships at the external borders. Territorial cooperation has been included among the European modes of cooperation towards Neighbour countries. From 2007, both IPA and ENPI should contain a cross-border component, to be implemented on the basis of the experience of Interreg, PHARE and TACIS CBC.

This new scenario represents a real turning point from a political point of view, since it provides a formal recognition of the added value provided by regional and local authorities. For the first time regions and local authorities participate in the decision-making of external cooperation. They are new actors in the multi-level governance of common development with Neighbour countries.

According to the principles of territorial cooperation under Interreg and in the new Third objective of the Cohesion Policy, also cross-border components under IPA and ENPI will incorporate the partnership, multi-annual programming and co-financing principles.

The implementation of the partnership principle in the cross-border components under IPA and ENPI foresees an equal role for Neighbour partners. They will actively participate, alongside EU partners, in the different programming phases, including the planning of the multi annual cross-border programmes (ENPI), and of the multi-annual framework (IPA).

Nevertheless, in the framework of the new Third objective of Structural Funds, territorial cooperation will continue to exist as an instrument of internal cohesion. It does not foresee a real participation of external partners.

However, in the European Commission proposals and in the negotiation phase some questions have arisen concerning: the real participation of regions and local authorities of Neighbour countries in the decision-making; the efficacy of the methodology and the need to concentrate scarce resources on strategic actions; the thematic priorities and the border concept; the geographical dimension; the reduction of financial resources; the coordination mechanisms between the cross-border components of IPA and ENPI, and the territorial cooperation of the Third Objective of the Cohesion Policy.

Answers to the questions raised in the negotiation process of the European policy reforms, basically on the role of regions in the common development of the Mediterranean, depend on the sharing of the partnership principle among institutions at different levels and among the diverse countries of the basin.

The partnership principle established by the EU in the regional and cohesion policy (Art.8 Reg. 1260/99) establishes that “Community actions [...] shall be drawn up in close consultation [...] between the Commission and the Member State, together with the authorities and bodies designated by the Member State within the framework of its national rules and current practices, namely: the regional and local authorities and other competent public authorities, the economic and social partners, any other relevant competent bodies within this framework. [...] Partnership shall cover the preparation, financing, monitoring and evaluation of assistance. Member States shall ensure the association of the relevant partners at the different stages of programming, taking account of the time limit for each stage. In application of the principle of subsidiarity, the implementation of assistance shall be the responsibility of the Member States, at the appropriate territorial level according to the arrangements specific to each Member State, and without prejudice to the powers vested in the Commission, notably for implementing the general budget of the European Communities”.

As previously noted, the European Commission recently observed that “partnership can contribute to the effectiveness, efficiency, legitimacy and transparency of Structural Funds operations, and to the commitment to, and ownership of, programme outputs ... Where it is well implemented, partnership has also generated further benefits such as the improvement of institutional capacities at different levels, better inter-institutional coordination and communication at the national level, or a better involvement of civil society”⁶¹.

This implies the adoption of the vertical and horizontal subsidiarity principle, of decentralization and democratization processes, of participative development and of the bottom-up approach. On a political level, this is very demanding and it can have important effects in the diverse Mediterranean countries. The Action Plans of ENPI and the pre-accession process are supporting these processes.

The partnership principle is very demanding also at implementation level, particularly if the different political, social and economical situations of Mediterranean countries are taken into account. It is necessary to operationalize and contextualize the partnership concept in the relationships between regions and local authorities. It is necessary to disaggregate the concept considering not only who and in which phases they are involved.

In the last ten years, international literature has put forward a series of elements which disaggregate the partnership concept, as well as the necessary pre-conditions for successful

⁶¹ European Commission, Directorate-General Regional Policy, *Partnership in the 2000-2006 programming period, Analysis of the implementation of the partnership principle*, Discussion Paper of DG Regio, November 2005.

inter-regional cooperation (see Box 2), that may represent guidelines and criteria of evaluation.

BOX 2. Conditions for Success of Inter-Regional Co-operation

Michael Keating

Inter-regional co-operation initiatives have proliferated across Europe in recent years. Every border has a cross-border co-operation programme of some sort. Most regions have partnership agreements with other regions elsewhere in the continent. Sectoral initiatives for regions embrace a large number of policy areas. It is less clear just what it all amounts to in practice. From the experience and the literature, there appear to be a number of conditions for co-operation to be successful.

- *Agreed borders.* Cross-border co-operation is not a way of dealing with borders that are challenged by the respective states or where there are secessionist or irredentist challenges. On the contrary, it works where the border has been agreed by parties on both sides. Only then can the border be penetrated and crossed with economic, cultural and political initiatives that are not seen as a threat to the state.
- *Complementarity of resources and needs.* Where regions are doing more of less the same thing on either side of the border there is little need for formal co-operation. Where regions are competing ferociously for investments or in the production of infrastructures like airports there is no motive for co-operation. It comes into its own where regions have complementary needs and assets so that both can gain from common action. The failure to appreciate this has undermined many efforts at co-operation.
- *The competences of regions.* European states have very different structures of local and regional government so that, even where there is a will to co-operate, they may be unable to do so since they do not have the powers. Where one region lacks the relevant competence, it has to go back to the central state, bringing in another level of government and politics and complicating matters.
- *Legal structures.* States differ in their permissiveness towards the external activities of regions. In some cases, there are tight restrictions or the need for a central presence. Generally states in recent years have become more permissive, especially in the context of European co-operation programmes.
- *Commitment of politicians.* Politicians may welcome cross-border and inter-regional initiatives as an occasion for press-releases, media exposure, and the opportunity to play the international statesman. In the longer term, their attention often drifts because there are no votes in the other region and domestic preoccupations are more pressing. This is why it is important to put into place structures to take co-operation forward.
- *Commitment of state governments.* Even where regions have the legal competences to engage in co-operation, national governments may be obstructive or co-operative. This depends largely on political relationships between the two levels, which may be confrontational or co-operative.
- *EU Policy.* While the EU has promoted co-operation in its regional policy programmes in western Europe, the design of Structural Fund programmes for the New Member States has been highly centralist. This has not empowered local and regional governments. Cross-border co-operation has consequently often involved entire national borders rather than cross-border regions.
- *Design of programmes.* Often programmes have large but vague ambitions. There is a need for specific aims and for selectivity in both aims and partners in order to avoid overload. Commitments, including financial commitments, need to be long-term. This is particularly important where infrastructure provision is part of the programme.
- *Involvement of non-governmental actors.* Regional development is not just a matter for governments and the new regionalism places much emphasis on the engagement of civil society. Inter-regional co-operation needs to involve these other actors, including business, educational and cultural interests, and the voluntary sector.
- *Identification of needs.* It is necessary to identify who needs co-operation programmes and who benefits. Generally large firms have their own international networks and do not rely on the public goods provided by local and regional governments (apart from infrastructure). Small and medium sized firms, operating at the regional level, may need the synergies and complementarities provided by co-operation and be unable to provide them on their own. Inter-firm networks are not easily created, since firms are inherently competitive, but they are critical in diffusing knowledge of good practice and innovation.

First of all, the partnership principle is based on a political dialogue between peers. A partner may not be superior to the other.

In operative terms it signifies that joint programmes on cross-border cooperation should be established considering the political objectives of the diverse partners equally. Joint programmes should identify complementarity of resources and needs, synergy effects, common development interests, common positions to overcome conflicts and regulate competition, within the political framework established by EU policies, with Mediterranean partners. Negotiations and compromises should safeguard the interest of all the partners.

But even if the partners are equal in principle, they are not equal in terms of resources, capacities and access. The equity principle establishes that priority should be given to the needs of the partner who is more demanding. In this sense the partnership also implies the reciprocity principle: each partner should take reciprocal responsibilities and commitments and conditionality should be reciprocal too, in order to overcome the unilateral (Eurocentric) version. In turn, this principle is linked to the coherence criterion: for example, industrial, agricultural, trade and migration policies should not be in conflict with the assistance to development. In this regard conflicts are evident for example on agricultural and migration issues among Mediterranean countries and territories. Cross-border cooperation has to face a great challenge in identifying new coherence spaces through political and strategic dialogue.

Another operative implication is that the partnership should foresee the creation of common political forums and institutions, at regulative-legislative, government-administrative and judicial level. The comitology of Structural Funds, which will be partially translated into ENPI and IPA, establishes the creation of Joint Monitoring and Selection Committees. But they are not real political forums. In this regard, the Euroregion experience may be interesting to consider. Boxes 3 and 4 below describe two good practice experiences which illustrate the importance of adopting a solid institutional architecture at a political and operational level.

Forum and institutions should be transparent and open to participation mechanisms involving the different local stakeholders. Democratic legitimization is a necessary condition to obtain consensus, to articulate a participative joint programming and to allow an effective implementation.

This way the ownership principle is recognised: each partner with its different stakeholders should feel the joint programme as its own. Each partner should be in the drivers' seat of its local development. The ownership principle is also based on the co-financing criterion. In order to overcome an assistance attitude that can generate passive behaviours, the partners should participate actively, thus enhancing their local resources.

BOX 3. The Working Community between the North Portugal and Galicia regions

Rui Azevedo (CRPM)

The working community (WC) between the North of Portugal and Galicia (NP/G) represents a significant example of cooperation from a geographical, economic and demographic point of view. Covering a surface area of 50,700 km² and with 6.35 million inhabitants, the NP/G WC presents a population density (125 inhab/km²) above the European average. In geographic and economic terms, this is a peripheral territory. Indeed, both the North of Portugal and Galicia are classified as Objective 1 regions by the European Regional Policy. North Portugal and Galicia are characterised by strong development disparities, concentrated above all in the coastal axis between Coruña/Ferrol and the Porto metropolitan area. Moreover, from a demographic point of view, Galicia presents a situation marked by population ageing and depopulation, in contrast to a growing and relatively young population in the North of Portugal.

The creation of the WC between the North of Portugal and Galicia regions took root from historical cross-border relations between the communities living on both sides of the Minho river, reinforced by the EU integration process. In 1985, the accession of Spain and Portugal to the CEE and the later creation of a single currency enabled political and economic integration between the two countries and reinforcement of existing - and the creation of new - cross-border dynamics between the two regions. On 31 October 1991, the presidents of the Junta de Galicia and the Comissão de Coordenação e Desenvolvimento Regional do Norte (CCDRN) signed the Constituent Agreement of the NP/G Working Community. This agreement is not legally binding but, rather, is political in nature, being based on the Convention on Transfrontier Cooperation of the Council of Europe and on the Bilateral Cooperation Treaty between Spain and Portugal.

The Constituent Agreement states that NP/G regions should work together to solve common problems, exchange information, and coordinate and create more dynamic cross-border relations among the regional partners. To achieve these aims, the Agreement provided for the creation of “sectoral commissions”, organised on the basis of the regions’ common interests, of a specific commission grouping together the regions’ cities (known as Eixo Atlântico), and of four territorial commissions (Valley of Lima, Minho, Cávado and Tâmega), which are of particular importance in the implementation of Interreg III A programmes.

The organisational structure of the NP/G WC also comprises a **Council**, which has the responsibility of approving the work plan and budget and establishing the internal functioning rules of the WC. The Council is composed of representatives of the two regions and chaired by the president of the WC, represented by one of the presidents of the two regions (on a 2-year rotating basis). In addition, a **Coordination Committee**, composed of two General Coordinators and a Secretariat, ensures the coordination of activities implemented and planned under an apposite multi-annual Action Programme (2000-2006).

The main results achieved by the NP/G WC are as follows:

- Internal accessibility to the regions has been improved through the building of several transport infrastructure works (bridges, roads, motorways). Recently the WC has also developed lobbying initiatives and promoted the undertaking of feasibility studies on the possibility of connecting Porto and Vigo by TGV;
- The enhancement of natural resources, such as the cross-border Gerês- Xurés National Park;
- The development of entrepreneurial cooperation through the creation of a risk capital fund to support investments of Galician and North Portuguese enterprises;
- The enrichment of cultural heritage through the implementation of projects involving actors from both sides of the border;
- The promotion of tourism; and
- More recently, the implementation of a cooperation programme in the maritime sector, based on three priority axes: maritime research and innovation, the environment and sustainable development.

It is worth noting that notwithstanding the different political and institutional status of the two regions involved – namely, strong autonomy in the case of Galicia compared to the political dependence of the CCDRN on the Portuguese national government – the WC has proven to be a good organisational model on which to develop and deepen cross-border cooperation.

BOX 4. Euroregion Baltic

Pietro Paolo Proto (CeSPI)

Euroregion Baltic (ERB) was established in February 1998 through a **joint agreement** signed by 9 regions of Denmark, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Sweden. ERB embraces an area of around 6 million inhabitants, in which one of the most distinctive disparities between the regions in the old and new EU member states resides in the level of urbanisation and the depopulation of rural areas. The Polish, Latvian and Lithuanian regions, like the Kaliningrad Region, are facing extremely high unemployment rates and considerable social problems in a countryside dominated by farming and related sources of income. Rural areas in the Swedish and Danish regions are sparsely populated compared to a few decades ago, with a small and ever-decreasing proportion of people deriving an income from farming and forestry but also a growing proportion commuting to neighbouring cities. The unemployment rate, slightly higher than that in the cities, is reasonably low. The future of numerous rural areas is increasingly functionally interlinked with urban development. This is obvious in densely-populated areas but also relevant for more sparsely-populated areas.

Given some of the structural and socio-economic disparities between the regions, ERB has aimed, from the outset, at enhancing cooperation between its member states and at fostering a common sustainable development pattern in the area. The general cooperation framework may be encapsulated in the following set of goals: i) improving the conditions of life of inhabitants of the region; ii) promoting mutual contacts in the region; iii) strengthening bonds between local communities; iv) eliminating historical prejudices; v) supporting activities geared to sustainable economic development in the member regions; and vi) promoting cooperation between local and regional authorities.

ERB's **Statute**, signed in 1998 and subsequently amended and revised in 2004, defines the Euroregion's structure and its functioning:

- The **Council** is its highest decision-making and coordinating body. Its main tasks include the approval of i) action plans and other long-term programmes, ii) financial plans for common projects, iii) the President's annual report, and iv) annual reports by working groups.
- The **Executive Board**, elected from the members of the Council, consists of one representative from each party to the Agreement establishing ERB. Its main tasks include preparing and submitting resolutions to the Council for approval and implementing them once they are approved. It also establishes the working groups.
- **Working groups** carry out research, feasibility studies, needs analyses and project identification and design.
- **ERB Secretariats** form the administrative network of the Euroregion. Each region has its own national secretariat that functions as a contact point and liaison office. In addition, the International Permanent Secretariat (IPS) acts as a coordinator of each of the national secretariats.

The ERB governing and decision-making bodies (the Executive Board and the Council) are mainly composed of elected representatives of the regional executive bodies (councils) of ERB's member regions. ERB cooperation is based on joint political will rather than any legally binding force on its members - its competence rests entirely on the acceptance of ERB proposals by the regional executive bodies in the member regions.

ERB relies on two different sources of funding: fees paid by its members and EU contributions provided through the Interreg IIIB, PHARE and TACIS Programmes. The Seagull project (2002-2005) is the main intervention carried out so far and has been allocated 3.2 million euro, with components co-financed under the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) Interreg III B (€1.3 million), PHARE and TACIS programmes. A Seagull II project, which was financed in 2005 (to the tune of €683,900), will run until the end of 2007. The general objective of this project is to develop and politically decide on a Joint Development Programme (JDP) for the region that will facilitate pre-feasibility studies and implementation activities concerning important investments for sustainable development, economic growth and cohesion.

Although ERB could be considered as a relatively young Euroregion, it encompasses a number of positive features that would allow it to be considered **as a best practice**. In this regard, reference can be made to the 3 dimensions proposed by Markus Perkmann⁶²:

- **Political mobilization.** ERB brings together a number of regions with similar socio-economic backgrounds. This was the starting point for the creation of an external body that eventually fostered cooperation between regions by transforming common shared policy objectives into concrete projects.
- **Governance building.** ERB has developed a solid governance structure: i) the Statute helps clarify the roles and priorities; ii) members must pay a fee which feeds concrete project activities; and iii) there is a clear distinction between the different roles of the Council and the Executive Board (vertical coordination) on the one hand and the International Permanent Secretariat (horizontal coordination) on the other.
- **Strategic unification.** ERB has been able to channel its objectives and priorities into concrete projects, financed under different EU budget headings.

⁶² Markus Perkmann, "The construction of the new scales: a framework and case study of the Euregio Cross border region", May 2005.

In the second place, partnership is time consuming and a process phenomenon at diverse level.

The political dialogue is a process. A common vision of the Mediterranean regional and local development through transnational and cross-border cooperation takes time to be accomplished. The common political forums and institutions of regions and local authorities which participate in joint programmes should commit themselves to regular high level meetings in order to advance in the continuous revision of ideas on common development and to manage conflicts that inevitably arise. A political commitment should guarantee the continuity of relations, thus overcoming the changes of majorities and governments.

At the same time, regions should strengthen structures dedicated to cross-border and international cooperation activities, in order to support the sustainability of partnerships. The structures should be able to coordinate and animate different administrative sectors, given that external cooperation should be conceived as inextricably-linked to territorial development.

At implementation level, partnership should not be reduced to the implementation of a set of fragmented projects. Joint programming is multi-annual but it should not be considered, according to a project approach, as a simple catalogue of actions. It should be based on a strategic approach: a medium-long term and result oriented process. Projects should fit into a flexible sequence of integrated actions that are demand driven by beneficiaries. There is a need for selectivity and clear identification of targets. In this regard, the European Commission is pushing towards a concentration of resources in strategic projects. But, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, a clear methodology is still lacking.

The joint programming of cross-border cooperation should not be considered separately or simply as a complementation of the budgeting of regions and local authorities, but it should be integrated in the local development plans. Territorial cooperation should be incorporated into regional development strategies. Internal and external actions should be closely integrated. This will, in turn, increase the recognition of the legitimacy of cross-border cooperation (see Box 5).

Partnership is a learning and confidence process. The partners should diffuse, intensify and deepen their relations across time. During the initial stages of their relationship, partners are able to implement small and simple actions. They learn to understand each other's conditions, constraints and opportunities. They should create communication devices and implement confidence and capacity building actions. In the process, actors achieve reciprocal trust and reduce transaction costs. Joint programming and implementation improve and partners increase their capacity to more selectively identify actions of greater relevance and complexity. Joint secretariats may support these functions but they are not sufficient. A relationship and learning network should be set up which performs assessment, monitoring and evaluation functions (Box 5). This relationship process and its intangible results should be appreciated.

On the other hand, in order to support confidence and credibility in joint programming, it is important to reach some real and visible results in a short time. Partners should identify quick impact actions.

Third, partnership in cross-border cooperation has a territorial approach. Joint programming should be based on the enhancement of local resources and capacities of the diverse stakeholders according to the endogenous development principle. This does not mean localism or autarchy. In the glocalization scenario, local development can be nurtured by external knowledge, labour and capital flows. The interplay between local and global forces should be a win-win process and it should not be based only on the exploitation of low cost local resources. Regions and local authorities have the difficult task of participating in the regulation of these forces and in the promotion of positive results.

They should define joint programming, which promotes the involvement of civil society, enhances territorial diversities and a sustainable and polycentric development. As far as the involvement of civil society is concerned, the EC's analysis⁶³ notes the limited participation of anti-poverty groups and women's groups, and the difficulty stakeholders face in attending Monitoring Committee sessions that are time-consuming because of the level of technical details discussed. These problems raise issues regarding the selection and democratic criteria for the involvement of representatives of civil society. The EC stresses that the efficacy of implementation of the partnership principle rests on clarification in national institutional regulations, however it recommends improving the circulation - at the start and during negotiations on the content of operational programmes - of information regarding how the principle will be implemented, and that Managing Authorities could appoint a representative as a one-stop shop responsible for relations with the partners.

Finally, partnerships between Mediterranean regions and local authorities are included in multi-level governance, which involves central State governments and multilateral institutions. Joint programming should structure different types of actions according to the pertinent geographic scale: for instance, infrastructure projects should involve the supra-national, national and local scales; economic cooperation among industrial clusters may have a trans-regional scale, and people-to-people actions may be implemented on a trans-local scale at NUTS III level. Thus, cross-border cooperation has a variable-geometry that calls for multi-level governance (see Box 5).

In the case of cross-border cooperation in ENPI, IPA and the Third Objective of the Cohesion Policy, regions and local authorities participate with national governments and the European Commission in the elaboration of joint programmes, according to the different decentralised or deconcentrated institutional framework. But the different competences of regions, legal structures and commitments of state governments, as well as the design of EU external policy in relation to Neighbourhood countries, may create obstacles to effective partnership (see Box 2). Different institutional situations create asymmetric relations in multi-level governance: regions of a country may participate in a higher number than regions of another country. The asymmetry could be partly compensated by a stricter direct partnership between regions and local authorities. Decentralization processes should be strengthened directly through institution and capacity building, and politically with the implementation of the reforms established in the Action Plans of the Neighbourhood Policy.

However, different answers should be identified in diverse institutional contexts. The partnership concept should be contextualized in order to find solutions that can improve the efficacy and efficiency of joint programming, enhancing the role of regional and local authorities. This is the objective of the COMPART project.

⁶³ European Commission, Directorate-General Regional Policy, *Partnership in the 2000-2006 programming period, Analysis of the implementation of the partnership principle*, Discussion Paper of DG Regio, November 2005.

BOX 5. Observations on how to render the partnership concept effective

Rui Azevedo (CRPM)

1. The relationship between inter-regional cooperation and regional development strategies. In order to add value to inter-regional cooperation strategies, it is necessary to align them with those of regional development. The coherence between regional development and external cooperation strategies make it possible to enhance regional competences in a specific sector and use them to exchange experiences with external counterparts as well as acquire new methodologies and approaches.

2. The documents of the COMPART project stress the importance of partnership. However, in order to be effective, **a partnership should develop synergies**. In practice, partnerships are often merely tactical and do not produce any added value. To render partnerships effective, the conditions for the participation of partners in projects should be clearly-established from the outset. The following questions need to be posed and answered: *How can each partner benefit from the project? In which way could each partner contribute to the project?*

3. The relevance of the level/scale of territorial cooperation. Experience shows that the most pertinent level/scale of cooperation (municipalities, NUTS II or III regions or central state) can vary according to the given objectives, to the division of competences between different administrative levels (on both sides of borders) and to the features of the project in question. Projects should leave room to manoeuvre in deciding what is the most pertinent “variable geometry” to be adopted for implementation. In this case, the question is: *Who are the appropriate interlocutors, taking into account the different administrative structures characterising the Mediterranean?*

4. Selectivity. In a context of limited resources, it is necessary to be selective in the choice of projects. The most pertinent priorities and subject areas for cooperation should be selected. Experience shows that cooperation activities are often dispersed over several thematic priorities and projects, which limits the impact and added value of cooperation. It thus becomes necessary to be more selective and concentrate resources on a limited number of priorities and “structural” projects. It is also necessary to take into account the specific features and maturation process of cooperation in a given context. In the inception phase, partners get to know each other and exchange experiences, and cooperation will probably concern mainly small projects and simple activities. When cooperation evolves into its more mature phase, it becomes increasingly targeted, selective and structural.

5. The weakness of regional cooperation tools and competences

Often there is a gap between the intended goals of cooperation and the actual tools and competences available, which has a negative impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of cooperation. As in the majority of cases cooperation concerns different areas and partners, the implementation of activities requires specific competences over and above coordination and planning efforts. The existence of appropriate cooperation tools represents a necessary pre-condition in order to achieve effective results.

6. The importance of monitoring and evaluation functions. The effectiveness and efficiency of cooperation depend on the monitoring of the activities implemented. The monitoring of cooperation should be open to the participation of all stakeholders. To this end, internal mechanisms which enable the participation of stakeholders in the monitoring process should be envisaged from the start-up phase of the project. At the same time, ex-ante, in-itinere and ex-post evaluations are indispensable steps for an effective inter-regional cooperation strategy.

7. The importance of financial and administrative aspects. Excessive bureaucracy constitutes a limiting factor on cooperation, especially when several cooperation instruments are available. In this latter case, it is necessary to strengthen coordination among the various instruments.

7. GENERAL APPROACH TO STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

By *CeSPI* - January 2006

7.1 Objectives

The stakeholder analysis is one of the first work phases in the COMPART project. It falls within the present framework of the reform process of the territorial cooperation policies of the EU – see the concept paper – and it has the objective of analysing the different involvement modes of partners in the programming/planning⁶⁴ of external territorial cooperation⁶⁵ (partnership programming) taking the different political and institutional contexts into account.

Through the identification of priorities and interests at stake for the different actors on different levels, stakeholder analysis will make it possible to focus on the strengths and weaknesses of programming/planning and to propose new partnership models. It will also provide useful elements for the definition of partnership indicators and the benchmarking exercise which is the next phase of the COMPART project.

As far as the decision making process within the programming/planning of Interreg initiatives, Neighbourhood programmes and external territorial cooperation within IPA and ENPI is concerned, stakeholder analysis aims at understanding:

Who is taking part or wishes to take part in the territory and among territories (multi-level decision making process, vertical and horizontal subsidiarity, active partnerships with external territories), [In this regard the EC discussion paper on the implementation of the partnership principle⁶⁶ stresses the question of the criteria and procedures for the selection of partners: specific competences, political importance, contribution to the programme, ...]

How they take part to the process (to what extent modes are participation oriented, quantity and quality of relationships, existence of coalitions, presence of leadership, existence of organizations promoting participation and coordination, difficulties in handling relationships, degree of ownership). The EC discussion paper tries to measure the “intensity of partnership involvement” in the conception (fixing targets, indicators, preparing the programme complement), management (elaborating project selection criteria, project selection) and evaluation (drawing up specifications for mid-term evaluation) of the programmes.

What areas decisions concentrate on (strategic priorities of territorial cooperation and of local development, multiplier effect/dissemination). The EC survey points out that the stakeholder participation could be improved at the strategic level. Some European countries have

⁶⁴ With the expression “programming” we are referring to the first phase of the programming cycle of the Structural Funds that comprises the elaboration of Development Plan/Community Support Framework, Single Programming Document, Operational Programme and Programme Complement (see page 7 of European Commission, Directorate-General Regional Policy, “Partnership in the 2000-2006 programming period. Analysis of the implementation of the partnership principle”, Discussion paper of DG Regio, November 2005). In the case of the Compарт project the programming (or planning) phase concerns the drawing of the Operational Programmes of the different strands of Interreg.

⁶⁵ With the expression “external territorial cooperation” we are referring to the present Neighbourhood programmes aimed at the external frontiers of the EU and, for the future, to cross-border cooperation foreseen in IPA and ENPI instruments and territorial cooperation foreseen in the Third Objective of the Cohesion Policy.

⁶⁶ European Commission, Directorate-General Regional Policy, “Partnership in the 2000-2006 programming period. Analysis of the implementation of the partnership principle”, Discussion paper of DG Regio, November 2005.

consultative bodies and core planning groups to identify ideas and indicators on strategic objectives.

With which resources partners participate or intend to participate,

With which external partners programming has been or is going to be carried out (potential territories).

Steps to be taken:

- Plotting the map of actors involved and to be involved
- Understanding the vertical and horizontal subsidiarity relationships as well as relationships with external partners
- Defining a clear picture of the different points of view and interests at stake, of the visions of local and trans-local development and, thus
- Identifying contents and, in particular, the different perceptions of the strategic priorities of cooperation
- Identifying the problems that different actors encounter in the sphere of relationships and programming methods (which may have a variable degree of participation)
- Emphasizing problems in terms of resources to be mobilized
- Gathering suggestions for the improvement of partnership relationships within external territorial cooperation programmes, on the different interaction levels (in particular, with concern to local, regional and national levels and in relation to the European Commission)
- Gathering possible proposals for the evolution towards external territorial cooperation (cross-border cooperation within IPA and ENPI), on strategically relevant priorities and projects.

The analysis of the above mentioned points will have to take into account the strong differences in the political and institutional contexts of the different countries involved in the COMPART project (Italy, Spain, Greece, Tunisia, Morocco, Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia). Researchers will have to highlight which aspects emerging from their survey are due to the specific institutional and administrative characteristics of the country the interviewee belongs to and, in particular, to the different degree of decentralization and deconcentration; which are due to the programming and project-building procedures of external territorial cooperation intervention and, lastly, which are caused by problems in the organizational process (or other areas).

7.2. Expected results

After completion of the stakeholder analysis, the COMPART team will have first hand up to date information concerning the strengths and weaknesses of partnership processes in the planning phase within external territorial cooperation programmes, and it will be able to better define the set of indicators for the evaluation of partnerships and thus propose a meaningful and realistic (feasible) benchmarking of project in the next phase of COMPART. All this will be described in the final report of the stakeholder analysis, which will include observations and proposals for new partnership models in planning external territorial cooperation programmes (cross-border cooperation in IPA and ENPI) and also with regard to strategically relevant priorities and projects. The final report will be produced on the basis of the reports presented by the experts appointed by the different partners of the COMPART project, and it will be presented in the course of the first policy dialogue workshop.

7.3. Reference grid and stakeholder categories

Stakeholder analysis aims at tracing the map of actors, of their interests and points of view, in relation to partnership programming/planning within external territorial cooperation. For this purpose, a reference grid which illustrates the elements for the analysis follows.

- Nature of subjects
- Interests of subjects (institutional aims, competencies and functions)
- Role within local and international development process of their territory, thus
- Perception of strategic priorities of external territorial cooperation, also in terms of multiplier effect
- Participation modes and prevailing role in the different international cooperation programmes⁶⁷ (or, in the case in which they do not take part, the reasons for which they don't)
- Position in the decision making process in relation to the possibility of taking part to it and to the required procedures to access this process
- Relationships with possible "interest coalitions", local leaderships, organizations promoting participation and coordination
- Capacity to take part in initiatives and to contribute to their orientation with particular reference to the programming process
- Map of relationships at local and national level (horizontal and vertical subsidiarity) and with external partners, identification of privileged relationships with external partners (actual and potential)
- Degree of cooperation or conflict with the various stakeholders
- Perception of resources which have been mobilized and of those that should be
- Problems raised in relation to access to the decision making process, to the adopted methodology, to vertical and horizontal subsidiarity within the territory and with external partners, to the sharing of the same strategic priorities, to subject's capacity to influence decisions and to mobilize resources
- Proposals for overcoming the above mentioned problems within the framework of external territorial cooperation.

The grid will be translated into a working tool, questionnaires, which will be used to carry out semi-structured interviews. The questionnaires must be adapted to the different categories of subjects which are the object of the analysis. We have identified three macro-categories of stakeholders. We also indicate, in square brackets, the approximative number of interviews per each category.

- a) The European Commission, EU delegations
- b) Public institutions at national, sub-national/local level [10]; particularly criteria for selecting sub-national/ local level are: municipalities of different dimension (for example one great city and two small towns; their significance for Interreg and decentralised cooperation; their geographic location (nearby and far from the border); aggregation of municipalities and/or of rural communities that are participating in transnational and cross-border cooperation.
- c) Subjects belonging to the territory (private sector – profit making, third sector – non profit, Universities etc.) [20].

⁶⁷ Programmes to be taken into account vary according to the different partners' commitment to international cooperation: these include Interreg, the present Neighbourhood Programmes, MEDA or CARDS programmes, programmes financed by other cooperation instruments which involve EU countries on one hand and Neighbour countries on the other.

In turn, the great variety of subjects that falls within this third category can be broken down into four fundamental sub-categories:

- c1. Local entrepreneurship (which, in turn, includes entrepreneur associations, cooperative organizations, Chambers of Commerce) [5]
- c2. Finance (banks, non banking financial institutions) [3]
- c3. Civil society (solidarity organizations, cooperatives in favour of social inclusion, issue-related associations, pro-environment movements, cultural organizations) [7]
- c4. Education and research (Universities, research and study institutions, centres for technical and profession training). [5]

The involvement of these subjects in the stakeholder analysis is due to the fact that external territorial cooperation programmes foresee the participation of different bodies according to the issues which are handled. The interviewer will have to adapt the questionnaire to the specific nature of the interviewed actor.

In this framework, the experts of the COMPART project partners have to make about 30 interviews to actors who have and have not participated in the planning of Interreg programmes or in other decentralised cooperation programmes:

- 2/3 of the interviews to stakeholders that have been involved in the planning of Interreg ;
- 1/3 of the interviews has to concern stakeholders that have participated in other decentralised cooperation programmes.

This differentiation allows to collect information for comparing different experiences on planning and potential interests in participating in.

7.4. Instruments

In order to carry out the stakeholder analysis, the questionnaire prepared by CeSPI and to be discussed among participating experts, will be used. It will serve as a guideline for semi-structured interviews, both semi-closed to be used for single interviews (Section A) and open to be used with focus groups (Section B).

The questionnaire has to concern:

- 1) Preferably an Interreg at the EU external borders or a Neighbourhood programme;
- 2) Other decentralised cooperation programmes, which imply international partnership.

As far as the point 1 is concerned, the different partners have to focus preferably on external territorial cooperation concerning the following programmes:

- Western Macedonia: Interreg IIIA – Western Macedonia/ Albania/ FYROM
- SERDA: CBC future perspectives and international decentralised cooperation programmes;
- ALDA Verteneglio: Interreg III A Adriatic Cross-border
- Calabria and Tuscany: Interreg IIIB MEDOCC
- FAMSI: Interreg IIIA Andalusia-Tangeri Teotuan Region (Spain-Morocco)
- FVG: Interreg III A Adriatic Cross-border and Cadses
- Morocco: Interreg IIIA Andalusia-Tangeri Teotuan Region (Spain-Morocco)

A presentation letter explaining motivations of the interviews and further development of the project will be drawn up by CESPI to accompany the interviews and sent to each expert to be personalized .

In order to motivate the interviewees, the expert should explain the objective of the research and of the COMPART project (see the brochure), its importance for lobbying and identifying new modes of participation in programming, improving its efficacy and efficiency, and the possible participation in the policy dialogue workshops.

It is important for each expert to advise CeSPI about possible problems arisen in the use of the questionnaire or to propose suggestions for improving the interviews in order for such observations to be shared with all experts. In this perspective, the use of the website as well as of e-mail will be useful.

As mentioned previously, the semi-structured questionnaire is a common base for carrying out interviews – starting from the presentation of the COMPART project through the brochure – and may be adapted by the experts according to the characteristics of actors and to the elements that emerge as the work progresses.

It is possible to attach documents which clarify specific aspects to the interviews, but we recommend that the essential elements all be covered in the text of the interviews themselves. (That is to say that phrases such as “as far as vertical subsidiarity relationships are concerned, see attached document” should be avoided. In this case the fundamental aspects of subsidiarity must be included in the text of the interview and attachments should be intended for the sole purpose of in-depth information).

Each expert may use the questionnaire in a flexible way, for example by carrying out the interviews in different phases, with the option of consulting more than one person from the same institution according to individual competencies, or even organizing meetings among participants according to the focus group technique (especially for discussing the Section B of the questionnaire).

The focus groups should be organised according to the following criteria.

they should involve no more than 5 people;

they can involve also actors that have never participated in programming

different focus groups for different categories of stakeholders (ex. one focus group for the NGOs; one focus group for the actors of the private sectors; etc.).

For each country, the experts will produce:

- a. A brief overview on the decentralization/deconcentration process in the country, explaining the competences of the different administrative levels
- b. An intermediate report on the progress of interviews
- c. A final report which synthesizes the results emerged from the interviews
- d. The collected interviews.

As well as preparing this methodology paper and the questionnaires, CeSPI will prepare a final report, which will be presented in the course of the first policy dialogue workshop. Obviously the final version of the document will be the joint effort of all experts involved in the analysis and of the COMPART project partners.

On the basis of the material gathered in the course of the interviews, experts can propose texts to be included in the newsletters or to be posted on the website.

8. GENERAL APPROACH TO BENCHMARKING ANALYSIS

By CeSPI - March 2006

8.1. Objective

The benchmarking analysis is the second work phase of the COMPART project. It has the objective of analysing and comparing (through a benchmark approach) the different implementations of the partnership concept in external territorial cooperation⁶⁸ projects (partnership in project) taking the different political and institutional contexts into account.

Through the elaboration of indicators and the collection of criticisms and suggestions by the different actors involved in the implementation of the projects, the analysis will make it possible to identify benchmarks, strength and weakness elements, and to propose new partnership models at project level.

8.2. Clarifying the mainstreaming of the partnership principle at project level

Partnership should be considered as a principle and a qualifying and necessary factor in Cohesion and Neighbourhood policies in which regions of the Mediterranean take apart (including the Western Balkans) – see the COMPART Concept paper. This means that partnership is not only an instrument for carrying out a project, it is rather a “value” in itself, which the project must contribute to strengthening. This implies the adoption of democratic principles and values, in particular that of subsidiarity, in Cohesion policy as well as in Pre-Accession and Neighbourhood policies.

These principles translate into the logic of mainstreaming, for which a series of areas of development, the so called transversal factors (gender equity, human rights, safeguard of the environment, social inclusion) must always be taken into consideration in each project initiative through indicators measuring the results achieved in each of these spheres.

Our proposal is to consider partnership as a transversal factor on the same level of the ones mentioned above: it will therefore be necessary that all initiatives for external territorial cooperation include a series of indicators – linked to activities, expected results and objectives – which can highlight the contribution given by each project to the creation or the strengthening of partnerships.

The timing and modes of partnership are linked to political and institutional characteristics which are “historically and geographically situated” making each process a unique phenomenon which is difficult to compare. However, before the benchmarking phase, within the COMPART framework, a stakeholder analysis and overviews on the decentralization processes in Partner countries were carried out. These will be useful in order to contextualize the opportunities and constraints in implementing the partnership principle. It will, therefore, be possible to proceed towards a “contextualized” benchmarking.

⁶⁸ With the expression “external territorial cooperation” we are referring to the present Neighbourhood programmes aimed at the external frontiers of the EU and, for the future, to cross-border cooperation foreseen in IPA and ENPI instruments and territorial cooperation foreseen in the Third Objective of the Cohesion Policy.

8.3. Translating the partnership principle into social/institution capital indicators

A concept which can be useful in the study of the application of the partnership principle at project level is that of social capital. There is a vast literature which has studied the various aspects, ranging from the strictly economic ones to the sociological and psychological ones, even if social capital represents a reality which is only identifiable through a multidisciplinary approach⁶⁹.

There are various definitions of social capital ranging from an analysis based mainly on the individual amount of social capital to a definition which refers to the community-relational and institutional aspects (shared laws, participation to social life, presence of relationship networks). Generally, with the expression social capital we mean a stock of resources, owned both at individual and group level, originating from a system of stable relationships, more or less institutionalised, and characterized by trust and reciprocity. Within this stock, social norms, shared values, informal interpersonal relationship networks, various kinds of volunteer organizations, formal institutions, civic participation, etc. are included. According to this definition, social capital represents a resource in terms of economic growth, social development, cooperation on different levels. In this sense the construction of a partnership (in our case a project partnership but not only) through external territorial cooperation, implies the creation of social capital.

As far as measurement is concerned, 4 dimension of social capital are taken into account: interpersonal trust, trust in institutions, civil society participation, (both through formal channels and informal networks), and reciprocity in cooperation⁷⁰. The dimensions of social capital which are most relevant in view of identifying partnership indicators are participation of civil society and reciprocity in cooperation, the creation of political relationships among partners and, consequently, the existence and consistency of social and institutional networks created thanks to Interreg programmes and projects and to decentralized cooperation. The development of well structured social relationship networks, which take form in many different ways of participation in civil society (various kinds of organizations, charities, etc.) alongside an institutional structure based (especially on a local level) on the criteria of efficiency, efficacy, transparency and responsibility (accountability) are a necessary condition for a balanced and constant growth of a partnership relationship system.

⁶⁹ OECD, the World Bank (through the Social Capital Initiative which has the aim of researching the role of social capital in economic development) the UK National Statistics Social Capital Project but also the Eurobarometer, the World Values Survey, the European Household Community Panel (EHCP) carry out wide and in depth researches in the field. For further research the following websites may be consulted:
<http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/sdvext.nsf/09ByDocName/SocialCapital>
<http://www1.worldbank.org/prem/poverty/scapital/home.htm>
http://www.oecd.org/department/0,2688,en_2649_34543_1_1_1_1_1,00.html
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/socialcapital/default.asp>
<http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/>
http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/portal/page?_pageid=1913,33391106,1913_35728736&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL
http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/index_en.htm
<http://w3.uniroma1.it/soccap/index.html>

Further indications can be obtained also through social evaluation and participation analysis carried out by the World Bank within the framework of programmes for the fight against poverty and social exclusion (Methods and Tools for Social Assessment and Participation and also Poverty and Social Impact Analysis). See the World Bank's website on poverty:

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTPOVERTY/0,,menuPK:336998~pagePK:149018~piPK:149093~theSitePK:336992,00.html>

⁷⁰ F. Sabatini – *Il concetto di capitale sociale. Una rassegna della letteratura economica, sociologica e politica* – 2004. Also see the research referred to in this publication at the following website:
<http://w3.uniroma1.it/soccap/ita-readinglist.htm>

Therefore, in view of researching partnership relations, it is useful to analyse the institutional and social networks which compose the social capital on the level of Interreg projects and of decentralized cooperation.

8.4 Expected results

The benchmarking analysis will produce a comparison of different Interreg projects and decentralised cooperation projects which have created partnership relationships (social and institutional capital) between the UE and external Mediterranean partners. The indicators will allow the construction of the set of benchmarks that will indicate project best practices for the implementation of partnership principles (see the COMPART concept paper). However the identification of the best practices should be considered in relative terms. They must be contextualised according to the different political environment. In this sense the Final report on the benchmarking analysis will illustrate the main results of the research, strength and weakness elements in the partnership implementation, in the framework of the different contexts, with focussed suggestions on new partnership models at project level. The final report will be produced on the basis of the reports presented by the experts appointed by the different partners of the COMPART project, and it will be presented in the course of the second policy dialogue workshop.

8.5. Reference grid

A more in depth research on partnership relationships lays its roots in the identification and articulation of principles, dimensions, variable/aspects and indicators.

On the basis of the existing international literature on partnerships and of the Concept Paper prepared in the COMPART project, the following principles have been set. A partnership has to be based on 1) the ongoing political commitment of partners, 2) the embracing of the principles of democracy, participation and decentralisation, 3) and the principle of ownership.

Each principle is structured on more than one dimension:

- Ongoing political commitment of partners: definition of framework cooperation agreements; implementation of political dialogue measures; long term/organized partnerships; compliance to the conditions of coherence, coordination, complementarity, and concentration.
- Compliance to the principles of democracy, participation and decentralisation: institutional strengthening of partners; definition of expected results in terms of democratic governance, decentralization and horizontal and vertical subsidiarity.
- Ownership: active partner participation and enhancement of partner territorial vocation.

In turn, these dimensions may be translated into aspects/variables which describe the existing partnership relationship system and can be “measured” by qualitative indicators (in our case, with reference, in particular, to stakeholder perception) but, where possible, also by quantitative ones. The attached grid (see the table) illustrates the articulation of what has been described so far. This reference grid has to be applied to the analysis.

8.6. Instruments

The analysis can be carried out in two ways: surveys on the opinions and actions of members of the network in the project, through specific indicators, that is to say with the questionnaire, and the study of project documentation. The analysis of the behaviour and actions of actors involved in partnership activities is fundamental and can be carried out in different ways: interviews, preparation of questionnaires, etc. which can return a qualitative description of the state of partnership and cooperation relationships following the completion of projects. At the same time, it is important to research and examine all the existing documentation connected to projects (protocols, agreements, programme documents, etc.) on various levels and with the different actors involved for various reasons in the partnership relationships. The gathering of information and data will make it possible to define indicators and assign a “value” to variables.

The questionnaire proposed by CeSPI is for use in interviews with identified project stakeholders. In this respect, the interviews should involve at least 3 significant projects per each of the following Interreg Programmes:

- Western Macedonia: Interreg IIIA – Western Macedonia/ Albania and/or FYROM
- SERDA: Interreg III A Adriatic Cross-border and Cadses
- ALDA Verteneglio: Interreg III A Adriatic Cross-border and Cadses
- Calabria and Tuscany: Intereg IIIB MEDOCC
- FAMSI: Interreg IIIA Andalusia-Tangeri Teotuan Region (Spain-Morocco)
- FVG: Interreg III A Adriatic Cross-border and Cadses
- Morocco: Interreg IIIA Andalusia-Tangeri Teotuan Region (Spain-Morocco) and MEDOCC

as well as, per each partner, 2 decentralised cooperation projects for comparison reasons. In sum, 5 projects for each partner. For the selection of the projects, see annex 2.

The expert should collect the connected project documents (the project format, minutes of steering committee and other project’s commissions and working groups, other documents produced by the project, ...) and she/he should interview at least 5 different stakeholders per each project for a total of at least 25 interviews.

A presentation letter will be drawn up by CeSPI to accompany the interviews and to be sent to each expert to be personalized. The presentation of the COMPART brochure is also useful for involving the interviewee. Exchange of suggestions on the use of the questionnaire and on problems that will arise could be put in place by e-mail and through the COMPART project website.

Table on partnership principles, dimensions, aspects/variables and indicators

<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Variables</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Source</i>
PRINCIPLE: POLITICAL COMMITMENT AND PARTNERSHIP PROCESS			
1. Framing within an inter-institutional agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bilateral protocols 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence, and where possible, number of bilateral protocols Scale of value on the Observance of protocols Set up of new agreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text of protocols Interviews to partners
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of commitments or reciprocal conditionality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scale of value on the Observance of commitments and conditionality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text of commitment documents Interviews to partners
2. Political dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exchange missions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence and set up of mission plans Scale of value on the Efficiency of missions (comparison between mission objectives and results actually achieved) Number of institutional missions in Third countries Number of institutional missions in the country (carried out/foreseen) Number of technical missions in Third country (carried out/foreseen) Number of technical missions in the country (carried out/foreseen) Number and type of partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mission documents Interviews to partners
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixed commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of mixed commission Number of meetings carried out/foreseen Reporting of decisions made and pilot projects started up Qualitative comparison with best commission found Number and type of partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixed commission documents, session transcripts Interviews to partners Project documents
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thematic Tables and events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of Thematic Tables/working groups Number of meetings carried out/foreseen Number of events Reporting of decisions made/carrying out of projects Qualitative comparison among Thematic Tables with best functioning in terms of efficiency and efficacy Number and type of partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Table documents, session transcripts Interviews to partners Project documents
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other forms of shared decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of other forms of shared decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing documents Interviews

<p>3. Systematic nature of partnership (method)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous reporting system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of a system which is continuous over time (and comparison with the best relation system found) • Permanent dialogue structures created and, possibly, type and quantity (and qualitative comparison with the most efficient dialogue structures found) • Presence/absence of antennae on the field • Presence/absence of other Interreg projects carried out with same partner • Presence/absence of other NON Interreg projects carried out with same partner • Presence/absence of foreseen projects • Scale of value on the Degree of innovation of projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews to partners • Documentation
<p>4. Co-financing commitment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of co-financing for project from each partner (compared with the most “equitable” distribution among partners – concentration index) • % of the total of budget for cross-border and trans-national cooperation for each partner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing documents • Cooperation programming documents
<p>5. Undertaking of the “4Cs conditions” within the partnership commitment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coherence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coherence of project content with each partner’s internal policies (existence of references to internal policies, ...) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing documents • Interviews
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of structures and instruments for coordination with other regional bodies • Involvement of other regional directorates in the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing documents • Interviews
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complementarity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of other programmes and projects alongside the project in question 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing documents
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focusing of project on shared priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Regional priority documents

Principles: Democracy, Participation and Decentralization			
6. Institutional building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Importance given to institutional strengthening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion of institutional strengthening among expected results Existence of actions specifically aimed at institutional strengthening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing documents
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actual institutional strengthening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (specific institutional strengthening indicators to be defined in relation of each project) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing documents Interviews
7. Democratic governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Importance given to the democratization process and to <i>governance</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion of democratization and <i>governance</i> among expected results Existence of actions specifically aimed at democratization and <i>governance</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing documents
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actual democratization and increase of governance capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (specific democratization and governance indicators to be defined in relation of each project) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing documents Interviews
8. Horizontal subsidiarity - mobilization of territory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Importance given to the participation of different actors/ subjects on the territory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and type of participating subjects in the two (or more) territories involved Scale of value on the Participation to various project phases Scale of value on the Role played by different actors in the management of project Existence and quality of regional/local associations oriented towards cross-border (or transnational) cooperation involved in the project Setting up of cross-border (or transnational) entrepreneurial/commercial associations/networks Involvement in the project of technological research institutes involved in cross-border cooperation actions Presence of researchers involved in joint projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Table documents, session transcripts Interviews to the partners Project documentation
9. Decentralization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Importance given to decentralization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion of decentralization among expected results Existence of actions specifically aimed at decentralization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing documents
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actual decentralization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (specific decentralization indicators to be defined in relation of each project) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing documents Interviews
10. Vertical subsidiarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organization of project on the different levels of vertical subsidiarity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation of superior (central) level Participation of inferior level (local authorities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing documents

Ownership			
11. Active Participation of partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiative agreed upon with partner (degree of partner participation in definition of issues, methodology and activities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner's perception (use of scale of value) /best perception encountered • Presence/absence of analysis of needs • Presence/absence of partner participation in definition of priorities • Scale of value on the Degree of partner involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview with local partner
12. Enhancement of partner territorial vocations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest within territory in relation to issue faced by project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence/absence of analysis of territorial vocations in relation to the project framework • Presence/absence of territorial inclination towards the project issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview with promoting actor
13. Partnership in evaluation phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and evaluation process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of evaluation entities with particular reference to joint ones (qualitative comparison with best one encountered) • Existence of defined operating modes and deadlines with particular reference to joint ones (qualitative comparison with the best mode and deadline definition encountered) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing documents • Interviews to the partners