Implementation of the cooperation measure

Main findings of the MA TNC survey

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Overview

A. OBJECTIVE & STATUS

B. MAIN ISSUES

C. HOW TO OVERCOME DIFFICULTIES: SUGGESTIONS MADE BY MAs

D. OPEN DISCUSSION SESSION

A. OBJECTIVE & STATUS

- **Objective**
  - Establish information by Member State about the rules governing TNC;
  - Ultimately: to become part of the Integrated European Guide for Cooperation.

- **Status**
  - Responses obtained to date from 29 regional or national administrations in 17 Member States;
  - Varying degree of completeness (depending on progress made);
  - Processing of information obtained: completion of draft MS fiches; gap-filling exploiting sources provided in questionnaire & on-the spot with NSUs).

- **Survey structure**
  - (a) Procedures put in place for promoting TNC;
  - (b) Needs Assessment;
  - (c) TNC projects: state of play.
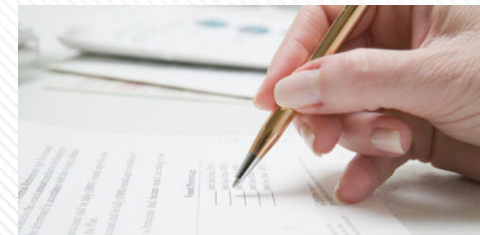
- Replies to the 'Needs Assessment' were helpful to produce a **preliminary list of main issues** that have been spotted (presented in the following).

B. MAIN ISSUES

1. Administrative rules and procedures

- Different timing of decision making and different administrative solutions.

Example

On-going application or call for project applications (=fixed periods). Possible impact on *completion of 'approval/notification cycle'* due to:

- Time-bound provisional approval;
- Varying time limit for the duration of the approval process.

- Differences as regards the format and detail of project applications.

Example

Degree of detail required for the application / the documentation to accompany the application. Possible impact on *preparedness and capacity of applicants* to undertake application effort:

- Signed cooperation/partnerships agreements (requiring different levels of detail concerning e.g. partner roles, budget shares, dispute procedures); or
- Varying sets comprising complementary documentation such as letter of intent and/or: project description, financial plan, activity schedule.

- Differences concerning financial support provided for the preparation of TNC projects.

Example

Separate 'award' of project preparation funds or allowance made for preparation cost retroactively. Possible impact on *flexibility to mobilise resources:*

- Both approaches refer to a limited time period, but retroactive allowance upon project approval may be 'past the event' if preparation took long.

2. Expectations and support provided towards / needs of beneficiaries

- Needs related to the identification of key areas and issues relevant to the achievement of strategic targets.

Example

Availability of best practice examples, practical tips and tools.

Possible impact on:

- Identifying *topics/themes* for TNC projects *relevant* to Local Development Strategy; and hence …
- Communicating TNC as an interesting method/concept for *common actions* (i.e. local development work that is jointly undertaken and that goes beyond the simple exchange of experience).

- Different technical support provided in this respect for the preparation of TNC projects.

Example

The way this is provided / communicated to Local Action Groups and the likely impact on their *awareness about / preparedness for TNC:*

- Manuals prepared and distributed to LAGs as a principle;
- Pro-active offer of individual advice;
- Reactive provision of information via internet/on request.

- … and some common practical needs / concerns of beneficiaries when it comes to project preparation or implementation:

Examples

- Partner search / emerging projects identification;
- Language barriers;
- How to 'enforce' agreed partner contributions;
- Differences in reporting requirements of project costs.

C. HOW TO OVERCOME DIFFICULTIES: SUGGESTIONS MADE BY MAs

- As a follow up to these findings, a coordination mechanism between MAs with the ambition to:

Examples

- *Align procedures* governing project preparation (preparation support, application; approval) to the extent possible;
- Establish a *national coordinator for TNC* or a 'TNC Management Advisory Team' for LAGs at MA level.

- … and in addition the expectation that - like in the past - the spirit of personal initiative and pioneering will remain a decisive 'ingredient' to the successful TNC project 'recipe':

Examples

- Language barriers and procedural issues in previous programming periods were mostly overcome by personal initiative and commitment of *LAG managers* – (survey responses though confirm that coordinating procedures would lighten that burden);
- Some replies suggest that project partner performance was less of an issue in case of *proximity* (geographical distance narrowed down to neighbouring countries).

D. OPEN DISCUSSION SESSION

1. Different timing in decision making and different administrative rules

- What are the preferred/possible common options for *application and approval periods* (call for projects or on-going application)?

- *Technical support* for project preparation: costs considered eligible if the other EU MS has not foreseen such provision? costs of partners from another EU MS eligible, if their procedures do not support project preparation cost?

2. Different expectations towards beneficiaries in different programmes

- Is the *common action defined* in programming documents?

- Is the *(lead partner) role* of the coordinating LAG / clearly defined?

- Is the *partner contribution* to the project budget defined/restricted?

3. Information needs

- Which means or methods do you consider most effective for the identification of emerging projects?

- If not yet available, when do you expect to release information about procedures and eligibility rules applied for TNC?

- In which way would you expect information on running TNC projects to be presented so that it can facilitate and promote cooperation?

4. What are the key areas in which cooperation is most needed?

- Can the TNC topics and themes referred to in Local Development Strategies (LDS) provide for a first trend?

- Where focus areas of common actions have not been identified in the LDS, how do you communicate TNC as an interesting method and concept?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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