

Integrated Planning along Transport Corridors

Position Paper: Summary

Work Package 2 | Activity 2

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Responsible Project Partner: Kvarken Council

Author: Malla Paajanen

Key questions

This position paper summarises the work in the activity 'Integrated planning along transport corridors' in the BSR Access Project Platform carried out in an intensive collaboration between the project partners, associated organisations and other stakeholders. The work has focused on the following questions:

1. What are the key challenges in cross-border and transnational transport planning that stakeholders have engaged themselves with, what instruments and methods have they used and what results have they reached?
2. Based on our findings what recommendations and transferable solutions could be offered to better integrate spatial and transport planning?

Benefits to target groups

The purpose is to create new knowledge about the status of the transnational stakeholder cooperation and to compile the key findings into a useful tool that reaches out to our target groups: decision-makers, transport practitioners, researchers and politicians in the EU, Member States, cities and regions, and other stakeholders. The position paper highlights the efficiency of stakeholder cooperation producing the following benefits to its target groups:

- The strategic work carried out in stakeholder processes in cross-border and transnational transport development can yield benefits to the interaction between policy-makers and grass-root level transport developers.
- Any type of stakeholder when establishing new cooperation networks can use information about efficient stakeholder communication processes and models.
- Practical guidelines can assist in finding the best suitable structures and formats for stakeholder cooperation.

Key messages on the stakeholder cooperation networks

1. Stakeholder cooperation networks have proven their strong voice underlying the importance of transport development in cross-border regions and on the transnational scale. When politicians and decision-makers typically have the responsibility to represent the viewpoint of either local, national or EU (emphasis on 'or'), stakeholder networks have the power to represent all of them. Those stakeholder networks, which have succeeded in building close ties with elected politicians in positions with professional or lobby organisations, have demonstrated an additional efficiency.

2. Stakeholder cooperation networks have proven their ability to step aside from competing against each other and cooperate. In the field of transnational transport development the list of dozens of projects is exceptionally strong and covers several of the EU's Programme Periods since their launch. The long commitment of the 'network champions' has been well received by their collaborators in decision-making authorities.
3. The continuity of stakeholder cooperation in cross-border and transnational matters has become increasingly important. Permanent structures such as European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) are gaining interest especially when transport development and policy-making are closely connected to each other. Short-term project funding is becoming less attractive to project initiators unless there is a more permanent collaboration structure involved in the project work. The idea 'from projects to process' is gaining momentum. However, in order to secure the benefits of dynamism and speed, which are advantages of a project-like structure, the importance of a bottom-up approach deserves to be underlined. Those stakeholder communication and cooperation networks which are best functioning seldom resemble any fixed structure given top-down.
4. The diversity of the European strategies means that every strategy has its own element of innovation. In transnational cooperation, multi-level governance between stakeholders is the tool to look for these innovations and apply them to new circumstances. Multi-level governance, in its most powerful format, is able to scan for innovations through several parallel strategies and lend best practices from one field to another. The strategic edge provided by multi-level governance is its ability to recognise innovations and apply them.
5. Multi-level governance benefits from data-driven governance. Eventually, knowledge serves decision-making for the good of citizens. The more we investigate and learn about the corridors, their internal dynamism and about what benefit they can bring to localities, regions and countries the more powerful message we are able to create for decision-making.
6. The first cases and evidence are already in place proving that a long-term commitment of partners in transnational and cross-border cooperation can build series of projects into a permanent process and above all develop into new permanent organisations. The influence of a permanent stakeholder organisation is vastly greater when negotiating local questions in the national and/or EU context compared to a more temporary and loose organisation structure.

Contacts

Kvarken Council EGTC www.kvarken.org

Malla Paajanen, malla@mallapaajanen.com, Mob. +358 50 3667391