

IPP

BEST PRACTICE

GUIDE

Tabel of content

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Offer information on cooperation possibilities.....	3
2.1 EU advisory service agencies.....	5
2.2 Create attractive environment and events	6
2.3 social networking	6
3. Build networks of EU advisory service agencies – No wrong door concept	6
4. Develop competences for interregional cooperation	7
5. Build on existing cooperations – twinning cities, famous faces.....	8
6. Offer low barrier entrance programmes to interregional cooperation	8

1. Introduction

The Interregional Partnership Platform (IPP) is an INTERREG IV C project aiming to improve the capacity of regions for innovation by increasing the performance of innovation intermediaries at local and regional level in the partner regions in European co-operation and EU innovation programmes. During the project the participating regions strived to identify and exchange successful access models to increase the outward orientation of innovation intermediaries and to develop a long-term framework of interregional know-how transfer among the local and regional actors.

The partners have identified main barriers to international cooperation, which include the access to information, limited experience, complicated application procedures, lack of co-financing and prefinancing, lack of management skills, the need for reliable partnerships and many others. During the project the partners have found several good practice examples, which aim to inform, motivate, develop skills and establish international relations and thus foster the outward orientation of local and regional actors, local and regional internationalisation strategies and the interregional cooperation for innovation and employment. These good practices have been described and compiled for an inventory according to the categories „Strategies”, „Target groups” and „Methods”.

As a conclusion of the work done by the IPP partners at the Inventory and at the Pilot Projects, five key action lines could be identified. These action lines could be used for any advanced interregional activity.

Each action line is illustrated by several of the good practices. By picking the best examples for the different policy objectives, this Good Practice Guide provides an integrated picture of different successful strategies carried out by the participating regions.

2. Offer information on cooperation possibilities

One key success of the IPP project is the development of the regional IPP-partnership approach. Therefore a wide range of information on cooperation possibilities is needed.

As far as there are many EU projects and initiatives running at the same time that involves the same regional and local actors, there is the need to coordinate all stakeholder under a common strategy to optimize the resources involved and to increase and multiply, the performance and results.

Valencia has been identified early on with its unique Fundacion Valenciana Region Europea as a best practice for the other IPP partners. The FCVRE has been developing a new flexible structure for their Regional Partnership Meetings. This Innovative Partnership Meeting Structure Platform intends to implement an effective and efficient strategy of involvement of a larger group of local/regional actors and intermediaries in EU Initiatives, to detect the areas of greatest interest for Interregional Cooperation to the Valencian society and to provide information and to motivate about the opportunities of the European Programs and Projects, interregional cooperation opportunities. The main objective is to bring the European reality closer to the intermediate bodies for innovation at regional and local level, in a coordinate way, bringing closer its policies and initiatives, as well as to make known the opportunities provided by the European Union. It is organized, as follows:

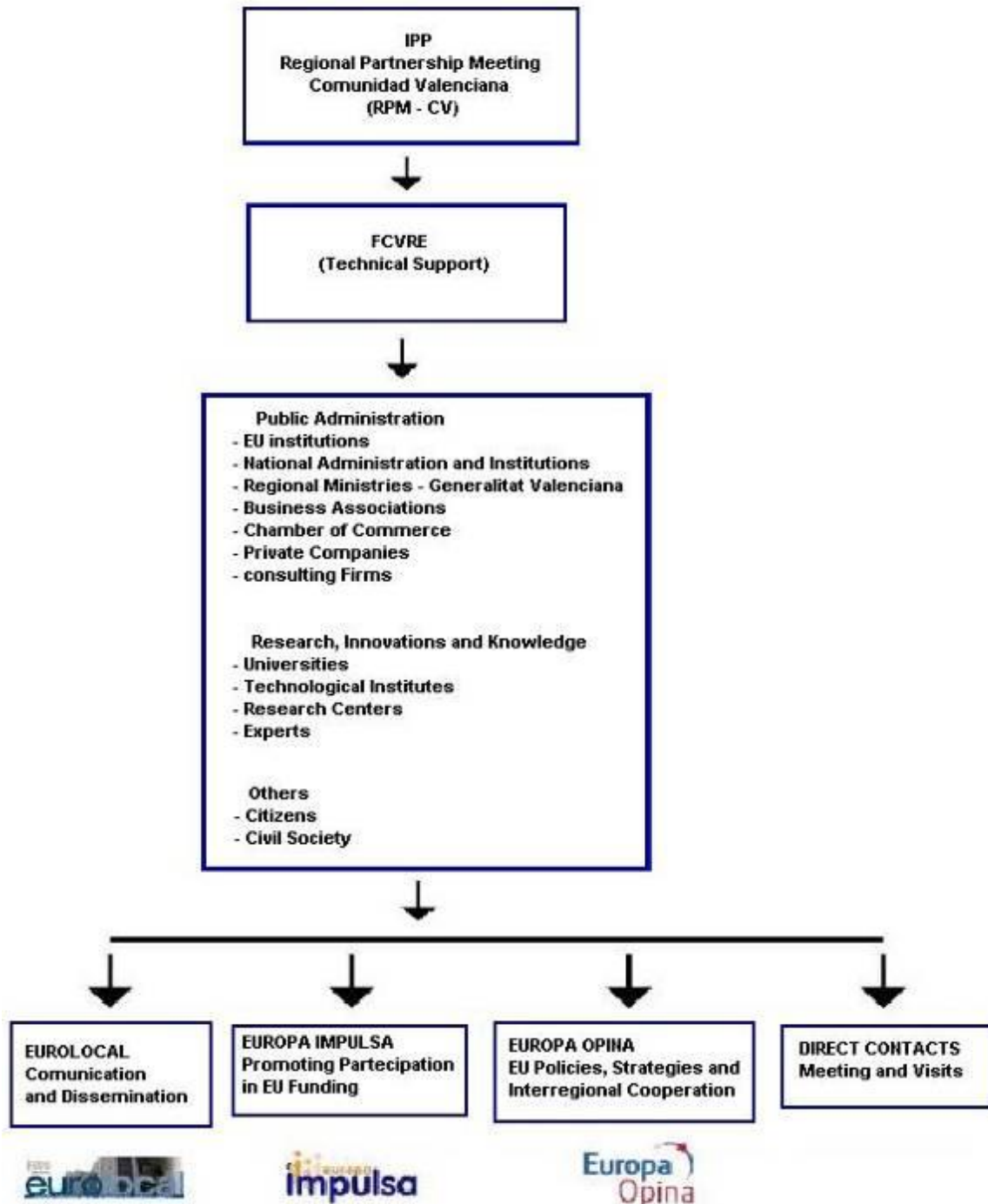
Europa IMPULSA. – Focus on the promotion of the participation in EU Programmes & Funding opportunities. Based in Conferences & Seminars, and designed to communicate new opportunities for international cooperation (from 50 to 500 participants). Each event is focused on thematic areas of regional & local interest, such as innovation, internationalisation, environment, energy, water, education & employment, social issues, etc... EU funding opportunities and actual project examples are presented, in collaboration with other regional & local innovation intermediate bodies. At the end of the event new ideas for cooperation & projects are written by participants on Project Sheets or directly in the IPP Tool.

Europa OPINA. – Focus on EU Policies, Strategies and Interregional Cooperation. Based in Workshops & Working Lunch (up to 15-20 High level & Executive participants) designed to create a

debate among main public and private entities of the Valencian Region with the European entities involved in the development of policies dealing with innovation, economical, environmental, social issues at local, regional & national levels. Each Europa Opina has a thematic focus, and a High level representative from the EU is invited.

Direct Contacts and Visits. – Identification of possibilities for EU cooperation or EU Project pro-posal for a specific idea, and give technical support on the strategy, best structure and possible EU partners. The participants are mainly entities, institutions and enterprises with specific interest in EU interregional cooperation and EU project participation. Some of these contacts & visits take place after the events mentioned before (Europa Impulsa & Europa Opina). This is a B2B initiative with the FCVRE to build the first structure of a strategic project proposal with possibilities of successful in EU financing program.

Articles in Eurolocal and other Newsletters. – Focus on communication & dissemination about EU info of interest at regional & local level. In each edition, IPP activities & information, results and opportunities for cooperation, in the framework of the IPP Project, are included.



2.1 EU advisory service agencies

Beside the strategie of Valencia to offer general information in a coordinated way to attract as much stakeholder as possible for European projects, the EU Academic Networking in Saxony-Anhalt is offering a more préciséd system to a predefined stakeholder group with the commen interest to finance research projects.

Researchers do not necessarily know about the existing funding sources and the requirements of project management. Through the EU academic network they are provided with information about programmes, receive support in the application process and the project management, while they can concentrate on the research. The provided services support researchers in taking part in interregional

and European cooperation projects by lowering the entry barriers.

As to lower the entry barriers is not a guarantee for a successful and accepted service the EU Academic Networking defined the following success factors:

- Consulting services and training offers need to be publicised.
- Consulting should be offered proactively and close cooperation with the administration is favourable.
- The activities of the network can only produce sustainable results if the network is running in the long-term.
- Through the connection of services for all universities there is a critical mass of projects. That is a precondition to offer the support in a good quality and quantity and to collect experiences.

In Saxony-Anhalt the network has set a signal of Europeanisation at the institutions of higher education and has developed expert knowledge for the development EU-project proposals and the management of projects.

At the universities awareness on EU research funding has been raised and it is expected that the participation in FP7 projects will be increased until the end of the programme duration.

2.2 Create attractive environment and events

Café Scientifique (as one of the tools)

- where the leading researchers from ViA faculties and Scientific Institute discuss and demonstrate significant research in social sciences and engineering. Programme of activities includes introduction with researchers' studies, researchers' dating, discussions between researchers and audience. In the result an interdisciplinary approach is enabled, audience (local governments, entrepreneurs and enterprises) is informed about cooperation possibilities (knowledge transfer) and calls for proposals for implementing this cooperation

2.3 social networking

The university of Latvia (as one of the tools) organizes conferences to specific topics and research fields, innovation and study process or implementation of research projects supported by the EU. Participants are usually local and foreign experts and lecturers (e.g. the annual conference of University of Latvia during several months with many sessions devoted to different science fields and topics).

Exhibitions about achieved and planned results focused on partner search and establishment of new contacts are main instruments as well as seminars and courses about new topics and possibilities to participate in projects financed by EU.

Popularization events like scientists nights at University of Latvia, science cafe, popular-science articles in magazines, information sharing in mass media, social networks, LU web page, LU information system and database, distribution of actual information to project leaders, scientists and faculties are good examples.

3. Build networks of EU advisory service agencies – No wrong door concept

All partners used the initial stages of the IPP project to establish a viable partnership of innovation and

internationalization intermediaries in the regions. In some cases various regional intermediaries came together for the first time to discuss and to develop synergies in their internationalisation activities and in developing European cooperation projects. It takes often more time from engaging new partners at the local level to include them in interregional cooperation projects whereby in principle it is much easier to include partners in on-going co-operations rather starting completely new ones. With the involvement of Paterna as a new co-operation partner the local dimension of the IPP approach was definitely strengthened.

Examples:

EU academic network (Saxony Anhalt)

Coordinated Information Tools (Valencia)

Information and Brainstorming on municipality level (Latvia)

4. Develop competences for interregional cooperation

The Internationalization Methodology – one of the most important outcomes of the IPP project - defined “institutional capacity building” as a threat and a prominent objective on the way of improving internationalization abilities. What is an institution’s readiness and capacity?

- Human resources, competences and capacity (how to improve it?); team work – knowledge of the field, experience in project management and finance administration
- Clear division of responsibility
- Financial opportunities and planning: in budget planning, participation in projects, pre-financing and co-financing should be anticipated
- Motivation of the employees (at all levels)
- Cooperation among different departments
- Involvement of decision makers
- Decision making process and team

The example “Staff mobility programme” in Észak-Alföld (Leonardo Mobility for internationalization of civil servants) gives answers to several threats.

The overall objective of Leonardo Mobility projects of Észak-Alföld Regional Development Agency is to encourage the establishment of a European network of regional organizations by means of experts’ mobility projects with including as diversified types of organizations as possible. The ÉARDA would like to make the host organizations from different countries give their experiences, and consequently to increase the expertise of trainees sent from Észak-Alföld Region. County governments, mayor’s offices, chambers of commerce and industry, county development agencies, micro-regional partnerships, public service delivery companies, the regional innovation agency or regional energy agency are all such kind of organizations, where the view of the employee can be widened after the work done in international environment. Having seen the external good practices the trainees can improve their own organization’s operation and they encourage their organization to take part in international projects.

To increase knowledge and gain experiences, the participation in the internship program is opened to all employees. The main aim of the internships is the delivery of the host institutions’ experiences by involving the trainees in their daily work. The duration of the internships is four or eight weeks.

5. Build on existing cooperations – twinning cities, famous faces

The international relations of the different local authorities and municipalities are based on the twin relations and they try to use these connections when they submit any project applications. However these international project applications are mainly characteristic for bigger towns (county towns) and for county governments. The relationships are principally based on cultural issues, but counties are increasingly trying to involve their schools, chambers, settlements and institutions operated by the municipalities. The most common cooperation fields are the followings: sport, youth and culture.

Since 2009, the Paterna municipality has chosen to implement an internationalization strategy that has shaped and continues to shape the development of the region. A series of actions towards has been designed to achieve the following objectives:

The first objective is to achieve the international promotion of the municipality within a territorial marketing strategy, secondly to achieve external promotion of our businesses globally in order to facilitate sales abroad and its internationalization and as a third to locate Paterna in a position as a preferred destination for foreign investment and the creation of activity.

In order to achieve all that Paterna has been developing the following actions as means of internationalisation:

- *The creation of the European Union Relations Office in order to facilitate and promote the participation in European programmes to both the City Council as well as to business providing information, advice and where appropriate managing on the various calls, initiatives and programmes of the EU and also establishing institutional relations.*
- *Creation of the Economic Interest Grouping "Paterna Innova 5, IAE" which brings together all business areas of the municipality and enables the implementation of joint strategies and coordinated promotion and internationalization (consortia, missions), and its presence in regional, national and European in coordination with the City Council.*
- *Development of the book "Paterna, City of Business" with the incorporation of a multimedia CD, in a bilingual edition for the dissemination of the municipality in its business side, technological and research.*
- *Creation of the association "Paterna, City of Business" which includes the City Council and all economic agents of the municipality, not just industrial companies but also trade, catering and hospitality for the implementation of a business development within what is called "city marketing", in a context of increasing interurban competition, in order to publicize the attractions of Paterna as a city with a strong entrepreneurial tradition through the creation of the brand "Paterna City of Business" as a sign of identity and marketing tool.*
- *Participation in the IPP project and leading the pilot project 2: "local strategy for internationalization" and the parallel performances derived: for example, the proposed Joint Declaration for the Development of Competitive Territories.*

Further examples: Magdeburg – City of Otto, Extensive development of the twin-city cooperation between Nyíregyháza and Satu Mare

6. Offer low barrier entrance programmes to interregional cooperation

A complicated application procedure of EU programmes was identified as one of the major obstacles to interregional cooperation. To fight this obstacle by lowering the entry barriers to allow local actors to participate in interregional cooperation and to gain experience the programme "Saxony-Anhalt International" became a good practice within the IPP project.

The programme "Sachsen-Anhalt interregional" aims to support interregional projects with financing from the European Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF). Projects must answer either the objective of the ERDF or ESF and the following measures can be financed:

- *exchange of experience on good practices (ERDF /ESF)*
- *conferences / seminars (ERDF /ESF)*

- qualification measures (ESF)
- pilot projects (ERDF /ESF)
- studies / building networks (ERDF)

Precondition for funding:

ERDF: Cooperation with at least one local or regional administrative authority from another EU member state

ESF: Cooperation with at least one local, regional or national public authority from another EU member state

Application available to: municipalities, other public bodies or associations

Costs that can be financed: Expenditures directly related to the project

Staff costs for personnel newly employed for the project Non-personnel costs, but no furniture, vehicles, real estate and property

The programme offers funding only for the activities of partners from Saxony-Anhalt, who also need to contribute to the overall funding of the project. Consulting is offered to interested parties and a decision on the project proposal is made within a shorter amount of time.

The program is defined by guidelines, opening it to a large variety of topics and allowing for flexibility with regard to the rate of co-financing. It requires a contribution of the applicant, whose share is defined by the granting authority. Furthermore contributions might consist of capital resources, but might also be covered by staff costs or donations.

In general the program offers direct contact to the granting authority, applications can be submitted independently of calls for proposals and the assessment procedure is carried out in a timely manner.

There are no language barriers as proposals can be submitted in German. The proposal also does only require the support of at least one interregional partner.