



**"Systemic Analysis of
Trans-national Co-operation"**

**Final Report
(Summary)
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***Impulse für
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Preface

Trans-national co-operation programmes are faced with a range of specific management problems. The partners involved come from different administrative cultures, and backgrounds with regard to experience, status, resources and working capacities. Implementation takes place in a multi-level system of responsibilities and task-sharing, and in the current period the INTERREG IIIB programmes will be implemented at trans-national level for the first time.

However, the partners involved have a limited margin of manoeuvre during implementation. On one hand, the federal state still constitutes a rigid boundary in many aspects, which is difficult to overcome (i.e. co-financing, legal framework for administration). On the other hand, the actors depend on framework conditions which are pre-defined or can only be agreed at trans-national or European level. In particular, criteria and implementing structures of programmes are important context elements which have an indirect influence on the activities and behaviour of a great number of actors ("context steering").

The objective of the present project was to analyse the experience of Austrian project promoters with EU-programmes for trans-national co-operation from a systemic perspective. Because this approach adequately meets the specific conditions of this type of co-operation (many actors with different logics, which are hard to influence - at least in the short-term).

The project examined experiences with programmes of the old (INTERREG IIc CADSES, Pilot-Action Programme Alpine Space) and the current programme period (INTERREG IIIB CADSES and Alpine Apace) .

The core of this study was a questionnaire survey of Austrian project promoters as well as some of their foreign partners. In addition, some promoters have been interviewed face to face. These assessments at project level have been contrasted with the points of view of programme administrators (interviews with selected actors involved in programme implementation). The list of all projects and actors which were contacted during the project is contained in the Annex.

The study has been carried out from May to September 2003 and therefore represents a snapshot, in which the current experiences of the actors and the start-up problems of both programmes are somewhat at the foreground.

This summary presents the main results of the project and is structured according to the main components of the study:

1. Analysis of the development process of trans-national projects
2. Analysis of "context steering" by the programmes (criteria, structures)
3. Analysis of spatial development effects by trans-national projects
4. Conclusion and recommendations for the future.

The full version of the Final Report including all detailed results of the analysis and quotes from the interviews will be finalised until mid-November 2003.

1. Analysis of the Development Process of Trans-national Projects

Background and motives for the preparation of trans-national projects

With regard to the interests that lead to project applications, the survey shows the following results:

- The organisational interests of the applying (mainly public) authorities or departments are dominating
- These interests are primarily thematic ones – to a lesser extent the establishment/strengthening of networks or the continuation of existing projects
- Regional respectively sectoral interest are at the foreground, national interests are – if at all – introduced at a relatively late stage (during the selection process).

The clear dominance of specific (public) interests is closely related to the project selection process via calls. In tender procedures the interests of the applying partnership are articulated first and only at a later stage will be examined if they meet higher level, strategic interests.

This dominance of specific interests is reinforced by the Austrian model of co-financing. Trans-national projects respectively their results have to be in the public interest and public funding for co-financing are located at the responsible departments of regional governments. They assess projects before submission – an important filter for the quality and implementability of projects. As an important consequence of this pre-assessment only projects that meet the interest of the respective funding authority can be submitted at trans-national level

This procedure also increases the need to bring up such interests during the trans-national selection process, and this can in turn affect the decisions at this level. That is one reason why the European Commission considers national interests as being counter-productive to the spirit of trans-national cooperation. Programme administrators outside Austria also emphasised the priority of trans-national strategies and interests (in relation to national ones).

The **formulation of projects** takes place in correlation between tender specifications and own intentions. Very often already existing project ideas are taken up, they are slightly modified to be compatible with tender requirements and are submitted in collaboration with trans-national partners. The **organisational forms** during project preparation are largely in line with the interests mentioned above:

- Most of the time the eventual lead-partner has the idea for the project, actively searches for partners and pushes the application procedure.
- External consultants generally play an important role during project preparation and implementation. 60% of all contacted projects make use of external consultants, due to a lack of resources (time, personnel, etc.) and know-how within the public administration. Trans-national co-operation projects can hardly be submitted – let alone implemented - any more without the support of specialised experts. These experts can usually not be found within the administration and have to be contracted externally.

- Most of the time the projects are developed in a dialogue process between the lead-partner and external consultants, in some cases external consultants even initiated the entire project.
- Concepts and background material are mostly elaborated by the lead-partner or external partners (sometimes within a core group of partners). Joint project development by all partners only takes place in exceptional cases.

In two cases the opportunities of INTERREG IIB are used in a systematic way for the implementation of regional government policies (Carinthia – Spatial Planning, Styria – Economic Policy). Besides additional funding the advantage lies in the gathering of experience and the use of synergies during implementation. On the other hand, these cases accumulate the requirements for lead-partners and the relating costs and risks.

The **search for partners** is mostly done through existing contacts and previous projects, open searches via calls or project markets are hardly used (any more). Direct continuation of projects from the former programme period is rather rare, which is mainly due to the big time gap and the fact that conditions have changed between programmes.

Networks from the previous programme period, which submit new projects, are rather tied to individuals than to organisations. They act very task-oriented, but normally an active partner is required for their mobilisation. Trust and a common understanding between actors is an essential advantage of existing contacts, which also makes it easier for Lead-Partners to take over their responsibilities. Thus networks and long-term contacts are an important instrument for reducing the risks of project implementation.

Costs and benefits of trans-national projects

According to the results of the survey, **costs for the preparation** of trans-national projects are very high, in the majority of cases 100 days and more:

- Most of the interviewees have already had experience with (trans-national) EU projects, thus previous experience does not really make a difference.
- It is noticeable that the costs of semi - public authorities are nearly twice as high as those of private project promoters or of public authorities (maybe these do not fully account for their own costs).
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- There are considerable cost differences between programmes and periods. The costs of the IIB Alpine-Space Programme are significantly above CADSES, and costs have generally increased by 50%, when compared to the previous period.
- The lead-partner principle has clear effects on the distribution of costs, since lead partners carry the main burden in the project preparation (50-70%). However, other partners are usually also involved in project preparation through meetings / workshops or other forms of communication (more than 90% of all projects have at least one partner meeting, 2/3 of projects have at least three).

- The time span for preparation is relatively long (more than 50% of projects need more than 6 months) and thus is significantly longer than the time frame of tenders. The preparation time of public authorities is approx. twice as long as those of private or other project promoters.

Many project promoters estimate that costs for project preparation and administration account for 40 – 50 % of total project costs. Therefore several projects have already considered to carry out their project without INTERREG IIIB funding. This means that the value-added of INTERREG IIIB is significantly reduced by the high costs of project management. This is a clear indication for excessive requirements, which also do not correspond with the principle of proportionality.

However, concerning these cost-estimates one has to consider that trans-national projects inevitably have high start-up costs and that benefits are likely to appear in the long-term only. They also bring about learning effects for all partners which might result in reduced costs of future co-operations. In addition these estimates are obviously dominated by current negative experience with the first calls of CADSES and Alpine Space.

The same applies for the feelings of **uncertainty and risk**, which also have strongly increased when compared to the previous period. During that time, risks have been relatively low, could be calculated in advance and limited with the help of national actors. Both programmes saw a big change in framework conditions and selection procedure, so that even for experienced project promoters the situation is completely new and can only be influenced marginally at national level (the survey was carried out mainly with approved projects, thus the real degree of insecurity is probably much higher).

The risks encountered during project implementation cannot really be estimated – not even at the start of the project. This is a major reason why a sound cost/ risk estimate cannot be carried out by project promoters. Therefore the decision for participation is based on a positive attitude towards trans national co-operation and the hope for future benefits. But uncertainty is an important cost-factor during application and implementation (i.e. costs for research, redrafting of applications, provision of additional material).

In view of this situation specific forms of co-operations have emerged, which are meant to reduce risks and assure benefits.

- Project structures with (often dominant) local and trans-national components. Pilot measures are defined and implemented quite autonomously by the individual partners, thus mutual dependence is minimised. Eventually project results are summarised at trans-national level (sometimes there is also a strategic trans-national component).
- Partner selection is mainly based on existing co-operation experience. New partners are integrated only in supplementary functions with little responsibility. Under the framework conditions mentioned above, trans-national projects can best be implemented with partners who are well-known and trusted.

Value-added of trans-national cooperation

The value-added of trans-national cooperation is considered to be very high. The elements which have been mentioned the most are „overcoming of national boundaries“ and „dealing with national questions in an international context“.

The value-added of INTERREG IIIB is mainly seen in “increasing intensity of international cooperation”, “higher flexibility in selecting partners” and the “emergence of common spatial identities”. Within the Alpine Space Programme this refers to the promotion of an “alpine identity”, whereas in the much bigger CADSES area there is a tendency towards the formation of smaller co-operation areas. Last but not least, trans-national co-operation also strengthens co-operation at national level (within Austria).

Weaknesses and success factors

When asked for factors for successful **project applications**, interviewees have primarily quoted those that are capable of limiting costs as well as aspects which can help to curb risks (realistic programme requirements, uniform interpretation of requirements and clear selection criteria).

The survey revealed the following factors as being **most important during the identification phase**:

- **Co-financing:** Securing national co-finance is vital for Austrian project promoters, because this secures funds for the project as well as support at national / trans-national committees. But co-financing also represents a problem for national funding authorities, because it could tie up funds for a long time at quite high risks.

The system of co-financing also highlights differences in national rules. Italy and Greece have installed a co-funding source at national level – here the co-finance for projects approved at trans-national level seems to be a mere formality. Whereas in Austria the co-financing only takes place if the project has been checked in detail by the funding authorities before the trans-national assessment – thus it is a quality test and a big hurdle for projects.

- **Co-ordination:** The preparation of an application already requires extensive co-ordination among the partners, the most important challenge in this respect is the establishment of practical and sustainable project structures.
- **Mobilisation of resources:** In order to prepare a project it is necessary to mobilize substantial resources, both within the organisation and for contracting external consultants. At the time of the survey it was not yet clear if and from which date preparatory costs can be covered by the CADSES Programme. This leads to a difficult situation, especially for private project promoters and partners (long preparatory periods and pre-financing, because no advance payments are foreseen in INTERREG IIIB).

Factors of lesser importance:

- *Trans-nationality*: was only sometimes mentioned as a problem, because normally use was made of existing contacts / networks.
- The *short tender period* has played a role only at the first call, since then it does not cause problems any more (due to long preparation periods the application has to be started long time before the tender).
- *Experience with EU projects*: Most of the interviewees had experiences with EU projects. But the requirements and framework conditions have changed so much, that these experiences are hardly relevant any more.

2. Analysis of “Context Steering” (Programme Criteria and Structures)**Influence of programme structures on project development**

The influence of the programme structures is related to their specific task – and varies during the entire development and decision process:

- The Steering Committee (SC) and the Management Authority (MA) are considered to be particularly important for (timely) information on the programme and tenders (although this is not their formal responsibility), but also for the assessment and selection of submitted projects.
- The National Committee (NC)¹ is seen to be very important for the development / coordination of strategic projects and the national pre-selection of projects.
- The National Contact Point (NCP) is most important for assistance with the interpretation of the programme requirements.

It is remarkable that Austrian project promoters consider the NCP – in spite of its short existence – to be the most important structure. Apparently the opportunity for on-site support is crucial for them. The work of the Austrian NCP is viewed very positively and promoters appreciate its engagement and efforts.

But the **importance of the NCP** should also be seen in relationship with the framework conditions. Existing uncertainties, unclear rules and the risks at the time of application have increased the need for a contact point, who is familiar with the local situation and can be contacted easily. But if the upper level (JTS, MA) cannot produce clarity, the support function of the NCP is also strongly affected.

Experience with the **installation of trans-national structures** (as required by the EU Commission) is viewed quite negative altogether:

- On one hand, neither the experiences nor the structures of the previous period were built upon, and people from this period have also been employed only in exceptional cases.

¹ Steuerungs-Unterausschuss (StUA) der ÖROK – Nationales Komitee für INTERREG III/ IIIIC

- On the other hand, standards and experiences for trans-national handling were not available in many areas (ie. contracts, forms, assessment process).
- These standards had to be developed by the partners concerned in a rather long process. They had to harmonize the (often contradictory) requirements of the programme and of national administrations, which led to considerable delays at the starting period.

The **distribution of tasks** between the various structures also had to be developed in a step-by-step learning process. In this respect considerable differences between the two programmes can be noted:

- After initial turbulence the Alpine-Space Programme managed to develop rules and proceedings which provide a stable frame for programme implementation (seen from the projects point of view). This might also be due to the fact that the co-operation area is more homogenous, the SC had a common understanding of the need for efficient implementation and the MA acts in a service- and client oriented manner. However, since the national legal framework of the MA is decisive in many ways, the relative satisfaction of (Austrian) project promoters can also be related to the fact that they are simply more familiar with this regulatory framework.
- In IIIB CADSES the activities of JTS and MA are still viewed in very negative terms. The main points of critique are bureaucratic attitude, incomprehension of the specific requirements of trans-national projects, unreliable and slow acting. In addition, poor co-operation between MA and JTS, obvious differences on important issues and the devolution of responsibility and decisions has been criticised. This combination is found to be extremely inefficient up to date.

In IIIB CADSES the work of the SC has been assessed critically as well. It does not sufficiently assume the role of strategic programme management, is overloaded with operational decisions at project level (this is also a consequence of the inefficiency of MA and JTS) and can hardly achieve common consensus.

Influence of the project selection criteria

The selection criteria, which have already been defined in the programme documents, vary in their influence on the development of trans-national projects. According to the project promoters, the following criteria are **the most difficult** ones:

- Securing national co-finance (in Austria)
- Description of quantifiable objectives and results
- Concentration on trans-national problems, and
- Appropriate use of funds/resources

However, it is **less the single criteria, but the entire project assessment process** which causes irritation and uncertainty. Once again, the assessment of CADSES is worse than of the Alpine-Space Programme, where obviously poor performance has been corrected faster. Emphasis is placed on formal criteria which are not very relevant for the quality assessment of applications - in addition, these criteria are handled

in a rather inflexible manner. The assessment of spatial impact is particularly unsatisfactory, because there are no clear, accepted criteria.

To assess projects in a technical sound manner requires suitable experts and a good knowledge of the situation. Both criteria were met under the INTERREG IIc Programme because the assessments were done by qualified national experts. The current JTS (of CADSES in particular) apparently do not have personnel which is sufficiently qualified and experienced, thus their assessments are based on formal criteria of doubtful relevance.

Moreover the **current project selection process** contains a **double contradiction**:

- Between the expert-based selection process of the JTS and its (ex-post) correction by programme administrators of the SC. Since the same actors are frequently also acting as project promoters, they have a double role which could lead to the discrimination of private project promoters. There are split views as to the SC's behaviour during project selection: On one hand, it is a corrective element which can introduce other opinions and national interests (which is considered positive by projects supported). But on the other hand, these decisions often overrule prior agreements and thus increase the uncertainty of project promoters.
- Between the objective of trans-national co-operation and a selection process that increases the competition between the actors. In this way a selection can be made between a number of competing proposals, but it is not possible to develop projects that include all actors respectively areas, which are relevant from a thematic point of view.

Supportive / hindering factors during project application

From the standpoint of project promoters' key factors which hinder successful project applications are:

- Programme requirements, that are not realistic enough and impracticable
- The lack of clear, transparent project selection criteria
- Huge administrative costs and the amount of time needed to prepare applications

The biggest problem is seen in the fact that at the stage of project application – and even at the project start – there are still **no clear rules for implementation** or they may be changed at a later point of time (this applies mainly for CADSES).

Concerning administrative burden (although it is very high, see pt. 1.2) it is less the costs for preparing applications per se, which are considered as a hindrance, but the provision of additional material or correction of petty details. Their necessity is often not understood and many project promoters consider them bureaucratic harassments.

3. Analysis of spatial development effects

Concepts on spatial development and spatial impact

The mixture of partners involved in trans-national projects is rather heterogeneous. Approximately 30% of interviewed project promoters come from the field of spatial planning, but the majority from various sectoral policy areas.

This heterogeneity is also reflected in the views on “spatial development” and “spatial relevance”. They range from a traditional understanding of “spatial planning” (ability to influence the use of space via plans) to an understanding of spatial development as a process (result of different influences and spatial demands which is difficult to steer). But not even during the interviews these different concepts could be clarified. Moreover it is significant that also during project preparation there is no common understanding on this issue (most of the time this is not even attempted).

Spatial impact therefore stays a **very diffuse concept** which is primarily be seen as a formal requirement for the project application. This is clearly mirrored in the problems that project promoters have in responding to criteria like “contribution to spatial development” and “value-added of integrative spatial development”. Since these concepts are not operational, they are mainly instrumentalised, which means they are interpreted according to the respective interests and projects. Thus they are also not suited as criteria for project selection.

Depending on the professional background, “spatial impact” is also **assessed quite differently** during implementation. Representatives of spatial planning want the programmes to focus clearly on their profession and corresponding priorities set for project selection. Others prefer a more open interpretation and criticise that sectors with great influence on spatial development (e.g. economic and location development, infrastructure planning) have too little importance and funds in the programmes.

Influence on the project design

During the design phase the aspect “influence on the spatial development” gets high attention and is considered to be important. But this should be seen in light of the unclear definitions mentioned above: A large influence is generally hoped for, but what this really means is rather variable. By the way, project promoters which come from the area of spatial planning expect much higher influence than all the others.

But the actual effects clearly stay behind these expectations – this might also be due to too much optimism at the application stage. The majority of already finished projects (from the previous period) in the end only had small or moderate effects on spatial development. The result which has been mentioned most is the use of findings from trans-national projects (studies, analysis) in national or regional concepts.

An important reason for modest spatial impact until now is the long period for effects to really become visible and the short duration of the projects. The differences between expected and actual effects are largest with spatial planners.

Since there is little reflection about spatial impact within the projects, this concept remains diffuse and does not become clearer during implementation. There are hardly any discussions about the deficiencies of trans-national projects with regard to spatial impact - nor does this have any consequences.

Used tools and observed effects

In order to achieve spatial impact, primarily **soft tools** are applied which serve to influence social systems respectively "soft realities" (exchange of experience, implementation of pilot-projects, creation of development structures).

The instruments used in spatial planning (maps, development concepts) are clearly applied less often, even by spatial planners.

Trans-national projects are considered to have most influence on the protection of environment and landscape, but also on the management of resources and of nature/cultural heritages, followed by infrastructure planning and development of locations. Land use or securing of space only play a minor role, if at all this aspect is relevant for spatial planners.

At present there are **no appropriate indicators** for the assessment of spatial impact. But there is large consensus that the quantitative indicators, which are currently dominating in the assessment process, are not suitable to capture complex, long-term development processes. But the indicators which have been proposed during the survey are rather (project) specific and not very suited to assess project effects ex-ante or to detect them at an early stage of implementation.

Value-added with regard to spatial development

The value-added of trans-national co-operation is seen to be "work on common topics or problems" and the "realisation of pilot-projects". Curiously enough, this value-added has generally been rated less favourable by spatial planners than by other actors.

Furthermore it has been emphasized that regions are seen to be the most suitable level for co-operation in the field of spatial development. But due to the current selection-mechanism there is a threat that the projects are focused too narrow, ie. at the local level or on co-operation areas defined at random. Therefore these areas do not represent territorial units which would be required to achieve spatial impact.

Many spatial development issues can only be dealt with meaningfully in larger territorial units, thus the importance of trans-national co-operation – including the IIIB programmes – will increase rather than decrease in the future. The current problems in implementation should be a stimulus for improving operations, but should not lead to a reduction even a stop of this type of programmes.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations:

With regard to **context steering** by the programmes the following conclusions can be drawn:

The formal requirement by the EU Commission for one responsible trans-national structure per programme underestimates the legislative problems and the complexity of the co-operation of partners from several member states. The implementation of trans-national programmes requires to bring in line different legal systems and rules at national level (i.e. co-financing, control regulations, tender rules). In some areas the MA has to use its respective national law (i.e. contracts with Lead Partner), which again is hard to administrate for project partners from different member countries.

Different national rules and regulations can also massively influence decision making at trans-national level. For example, in the Austrian system of co-finance projects are assessed in advance and co-funding authorities lobby later on for the approval of "their" projects at trans-national level. With other types of co-finance (i.e. national funding instrument in Italy) assessment and decision-making at national level only takes place after trans-national approval. Thus there is far less motivation to bring up vested national interests during the latter.

The steering function of the SC primarily takes place ex-post and therefore becomes rather inefficient. Instead of providing strategic orientation for the setting of priorities and the interpretation of programme criteria for project selection, this process is influenced and corrected afterwards. Moreover, the supervisory function of the MC (which is largely identical with the SC) in relation the MA is limited, if this authority is – as in the case of the CADSES Programme - at the same time the national authority for INTERREG III B and therefore is represented in MC and SC (potential role conflict).

The big importance of the NCP for project promoters diminishes the central role of the JTS as trans-national service provider foreseen by the Commission. If the JTS (like in CADSES) does not carry out the programme application process in a satisfactory manner, it is seen by project promoters as an institution without supporting function. The current combination of JTS and NCP is in the end more costly and less efficient than the system used with INTERREG IIc, where the function of JTS was carried out by a network of national structures.

Besides, each programme defines its own rules and there are neither joint minimum standards nor a structured exchange of experience among programmes. The rules of the CADSES and the Alpine Space Programme – but also of the North-West and Baltic Sea area - obviously differ from each on important matters. Project promoters regard the latter as being far more useful and flexible (i.e. on partnership agreements, conditions for private partners).

Since there is no legal basis for trans-national co-operation the various actors essentially tend to minimise their own risks – in line with the logic of administrations: The EU Commission introduced the lead-partner principle and requests one responsible authority per programme. MA and JTS try to limit (inevitable) uncertainties through exact planning of projects and detailed set of rules for their own protection (i.e. in project contracts).

Thus at the application stage a high degree of detail is demanded, which causes enormous preparatory costs and substantial advance commitment by the partners (faced with continuing uncertainties). However, this type of accuracy is in contradic-

tion with the character of most projects as open-ended development processes. And it reduces flexibility when conditions change.

Many administrative details were only specified after substantial efforts in work and time - MA and JTS develop them in a step-by-step learning process. This leads to considerable uncertainties at the application stage, long delays for clarifications or decisions and enormous costs for correct implementation of projects.

The project contracts in fact pass on the risks of implementation to the Lead-Partner. The lead-partner principle is seen as a relief for the other partners during the preparatory phase but there is a lack of framework conditions to exercise this responsibility afterwards. The lead-partners often do not have the possibilities to sufficiently influence the actions of their partners, who have to follow different national rules and administrative requirements.

Thus the Lead-Partner is committed to the approved project and duties agreed among partners. But they can neither demand nor effectively control whether these obligations are actually fulfilled. Since there is no trans-national legal basis, partnership-agreements cannot constitute legal security, either. But also the other partners are (too) tightly connected to the performance of the lead-partner, and problems of the lead-partner can easily become problems for the entire project and are hard to be influenced by the other partners.

That is why the lead-partner principle requires above all a considerable portion of trust in advance from the other partners, which in turn has important consequences for the selection of project partners. Co-operation does not take place with partners who would be required from a thematic perspective, but with those offering a sufficient base of mutual trust.

The framework conditions affect partner selection also in other ways. High preparatory costs and the required (financial) commitment at an early stage have turned into insuperable hurdles for many private partners. And some additional requirements for private actors (i.e. long-term bank guarantee in CADSES) have resulted in private actors only assuming subordinate roles in projects and rarely acting as Lead-Partner.

Recommendations

- **Basic principles:**

The implementation of trans-national projects is a difficult and complex management task. Thus it should be based on principles, which have been developed in other domains for the steering of complex social systems:

- From fixed to loose coupling: Social systems (administrations, project partners, and others) which necessarily follow different logics should not be bound with each other too tightly, otherwise mutual dependence becomes too strong and can lead to blockades and paralysing.
- From direct to indirect forms of steering: The sub - systems have to be empowered to organise themselves autonomously within a joint framework (subsidiarity). This requires clear rules from the start, and responsibilities should be limited to those areas where they can actually be assumed.
- From top-down control to joint-learning: Trans-national co-operation is a relatively new field and lacks experience in many ways. Practical solutions can not be ordered top-down, but have to be developed and tested by all concerned partners. This requires a high degree of flexibility and the sharing of implementation risks by all partners.

- **Development of joint standards:**

- Exchange of experience between INTERREG IIIB Programmes: The administrators of the various programmes should start a structured process of exchanging experience as soon as possible. The INTERACT programme could well be used to compare experiences and procedures.
- Uniform / harmonized programme rules: The exchange of experience should lead to the identification of "good practises" in different areas (i.e. procedures, criteria, forms) which allow to meet EU requirements in a practical way and at reasonable costs for project promoters.
- Revision of programme requirements: Based on these findings the requirements of existing programmes should be reviewed with regard to their practicability and be modified, if applicable.
- In a future INTERREG IVB programme common rules should be defined in advance by the EU Commission. Experience from present programme implementation (see above) should be fed rather quickly into the preparation of new rules.

- **Project selection process:**

- Abandon calls: In areas where only public authorities can be project promoters, the principle of competition for project selection should be abandoned. Instead "key projects" should be defined by the SC and developed at trans-national level right from the beginning (with the collaboration of all relevant partners).
- 2-tier application process: In areas where tenders will stake place, a 2-tier application process should be introduced. After an expression of interest (with mini-

mum information on the project) selected proposals should be asked to further develop their project ideas. Thus not only the amount of work can be minimized but also the direction of projects can be influenced by i.e. joining similar projects or recommending additional partners.

- If the above requirements can not be realized in the short term, at least the application process should become easier (i.e. less detailed planning and quantification requirements).

- **Project assessment:**
 - The SC should have a „pre-steering” function for future tenders, i.e. to define rules for project assessment on setting priorities or the interpretation of programme criteria.
 - The assessment carried out by the JTS should be based on these rules and concentrate on the fulfilment of formal criteria only. A technical examination should only be done if suitably qualified experts are available.
 - Spatial development should be left out of the assessment process for the time being, until practical and accepted criteria exist. The development of such criteria should be done across IIIB Programmes and in cooperation with ESPON, where work is already carried out in this direction.

- **Structure and procedures:**
 - Emphasis of the strategic role of the SC: This committee should primarily exercise the function of strategic management, define corresponding rules and supervise their implementation by the other programme structures (MA, JTS). Currently observed role conflicts of the rules should be solved at least until the start of the next programme period.
 - Priority for the principle of efficiency: Following the principle of subsidiarity the trans-national bureaucracy should be minimized in programme procedures. Trans-national structures should build as much as possible on achievements and experience gained so far (and at great costs). However, structures and procedures which are found to be inefficient by the partners should be reviewed – if possible without strict prescriptions by the EU Commission.
 - Realistic handling of the lead-partner principle: It should be reduced to those areas, where responsibilities can be assumed also across borders. In addition, partnership agreements should foresee regulations for the substitution of lead-partners (i.e. introducing co-lead partners).

APPENDIX:**Projects included in the survey:**

Name of project	Programme	Questionnaire project partner		Inter-views
		A	Non-A	
Alpen Corridor South	III B Alpenraum	X		
Alps Mobility I & II	III B Alpenraum	X	X	X
BRIDGE LIFELINE DANUBE	CADSES IIc + IIIB*)	X	X	X
CEEC-LOGON	IIc CADSES	X		
CITYREGIO	III B CADSES	X	X	
Cohesion	III B CADSES	X	X	X
CONSPACE	III B CADSES	X	X	X
CRAFTS	III B Alpenraum		X	
D4D ("Data for Danube")	III B CADSES	X		
Drava River Basin	III B CADSES	X		X
FOCUS	IIc CADSES	X		
GILDA-IMOMET	IIc CADSES	X		X
ILUP	III B CADSES	X		
IPAM-Toolbox	III B CADSES	X	X	X
ISA-Map	III B CADSES	X		X
KATER I & II	CADSES IIc + IIIB	X	X	X
L.O.T.O.	III B CADSES		X	
Netbridge	III B Alpenraum*)	X		
Next Europe	III B CADSES*)	X		
PLANET CENSE	IIc CADSES	X		X
Projekt C2 (Planungsinstrumente)	P.A. Alpenraum	X		
Projekt D2 (Siedlungstypologie)	P.A. Alpenraum	X		
RDA-net CEDA	CADSES IIc +IIIB	X		X
REGIONALP	P.A. Alpenraum	X		
SIC!	III B CADSES		X	
Tecnoman	IIc CADSES	X		X
Tecnoman perspectives	III B CADSES	X		X
TEC PARK NET	III B CADSES	X		X
Via Alpina	III B Alpenraum	X	X	
Via Claudia Augusta	III B Alpenraum	X	X	

*) projects applied for in IIIB, but not (yet) approved

Actors involved in programme implementation interviewed during the survey:

Interview partner	Organisation	Function
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Jutta Moll	BKA IV/4	Nat. Coord. - INTERREG III B Alpine Space
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Peter Fercher	Amt der Ktn. Landesregierung, Abt. 20	Member StUA-National Committee
Welf Selke	BM für Verkehr, Bau- und Wohnungswesen	INTERREG IIIB CADSES – Chairman SC for 2003
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