

Good Practice Guide – Top Ten Tips

If	Top Tip	'Good Practice Guide' Findings Incorporated
1.	<p><i>Strategic fit:</i></p> <p>Have a clear and integrated sub-regional strategy in place, and use it as a guide for structural fund interventions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an integrated sub-regional strategy to make the best use of all available regeneration budgets. • Where the sub-regional organisation has a role in selecting and monitoring projects, establishing procedures to ensure that projects are in line with both EU and local policy objectives, including the application of assessment tools that check for correspondence with Lisbon & Gothenburg Agenda priorities. • Use the sub-regional strategy to influence what is available in future EU Operational Programmes • Involve appropriate external stakeholders in the strategy formulation process in order to establish a common vision and key strategic goals before looking at the funding possibilities; and, once a strategy is in place,
2.	<p><i>Subsidiarity:</i></p> <p>Functions should be devolved to a sub-regional level where this increases efficiency and effectiveness of the programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that local authorities and other sub-regional organisations have adequate opportunities to shape the programmes and that their views are taken into account. • Establish a clear and appropriate split of responsibilities between regional and sub-regional levels and a suitable mechanism for partnership. • Use the sub-regional strategy to influence what is available in future EU programmes
3.	<p><i>Vertical partnership:</i></p> <p>Effective delivery requires the engagement of local, regional and national actors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horizontal working is most likely to be effective where there is also good vertical partnership. • Intermediary organisations taking a leading role in horizontal partnership need to be recognised as legitimate by the region above and municipalities/stakeholders below. • Mechanisms are in place to enable sub-regional organisations to give their opinions on project proposals from their localities. They will have an understanding of whether a particular proposal is appropriate and, if a Local Action Plan or sub-regional strategy is in place, can verify whether or not a proposal is in line with this. • Effective horizontal and vertical working needs commitment (political will).

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4.	<p><i>Horizontal partnership:</i> Use local expertise and knowledge to build a strong and effective multi-sector partnership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that there is democratic accountability within the partnership arrangements. • Ensure participation of staff from the sub-regional organisation in project steering groups / project development. • Involve appropriate external stakeholders in the strategy formulation process in order to establish a common vision and key strategic goals • Mechanisms are in place to enable sub-regional organisations to give their opinions on project proposals from their localities. They will have an understanding of whether a particular proposal is appropriate and, if a Local Action Plan or sub-regional strategy is in place, can verify whether or not a proposal is in line with this. • Identify relevant partners and involve them in management and delivery from the start of funding programmes, in line with EU regulations and guidelines. • Political and technical roles are well defined, with a focus on democratic accountability
5.	<p><i>Stakeholder engagement:</i> Use a variety of techniques to ensure that the widest possible range of stakeholders from all sectors are engaged in the programme in a way that is appropriate for them</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to consider when (at what point in a programme or project) and by what method to involve stakeholders. Early involvement is generally recommended. • Special support, such as mentoring or training, may be needed to improve the participation of particular groups such as young people • Tailoring support to, and communication with, community and interest groups on the opportunities for project work. • Setting up a support resource for community organisations (using technical assistance funds where available) so as to broaden participation. • Establish arrangements to support community groups, citizens and enterprises in the development and implementation of good quality relevant projects.

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6.	<p><i>Communication:</i></p> <p>Communication at horizontal and vertical levels is essential to programme success. This includes stakeholder relationships, PR and reporting arrangements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise the value of good communication and informal networking. • Make a clear distinction between political and technical roles, with proper decision-making processes for both political and technical levels and good working relationships between politicians and officials. • When acting as a potential lead partner, develop a 'marketing strategy' for the new project idea in order to interest potential partners. • When participating in cooperation projects, establish effective project management structures within the sub-regional organisation. These should preferably include a single point of contact for external partners, and staff with appropriate technical and financial expertise. • Developing a strategy for communication with stakeholders and citizens is useful to organise and improve cooperation. • Participation of staff from the sub-regional organisation in project steering groups/ project development. • Follow up the results of projects and report regularly to decision makers
7.	<p><i>Project Development:</i></p> <p>Good Programme Management facilitates the development of good projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailoring support to, and communication with, community and interest groups on the opportunities for project work. • Establish arrangements to support community groups, citizens and enterprises in the development and implementation of good quality relevant projects. • When undertaking projects :invest in comprehensive project planning, especially specifying precise objectives;consider team-building activities at the start of the project; andprovide for the effective dissemination of the project results. • In particular ensure clarity on the auditing, reporting and dissemination requirements placed on projects. • When developing EU-funded projects, have a clear view of aims and requirements at the outset.
8.	<p><i>Capacity:</i></p> <p>Build delivery capacity by investing in staff, ensuring that training is available, and that there is a clear understanding when external expertise is useful</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing when to use expert services to support high quality implementation of projects, especially in communication, financial matters, follow-up and benchmarking. • Ensure that they have in-house capacity to :understand the eligibility requirements for different budgets etc • Demonstrate the capacity to manage finances and ensure that good projects come forward. <p>Recognise that the effectiveness of the Managing Authority (and Accountable Body) is a key factor in determining success in projects. Consistency is needed in the performance of Managing Authorities and in national requirements for monitoring, auditing and reporting.</p>

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9.	<p><i>Understanding the impact – know what works:</i></p> <p>Know what impact the funds are having at a local and regional level. Use a variety of indicators and assessment techniques.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate measurable results from projects against local and regional strategies • Follow up the results of projects and report regularly to decision makers • Using good practice from other projects and areas, such as the evaluation of measurable results from earlier projects, and ensuring that good approaches developed through EU-funded projects are incorporated into the main activities of the local authority • Secure the necessary provision for interregional working in Operational Programmes for Convergence and Competitiveness so that lessons learned through collaboration can be mainstreamed and new partnerships developed. • Using different funds 'in sequence', for example, to support first research, then demonstration, then general implementation of a policy solution etc
10.	<p><i>Learning:</i></p> <p>Take all opportunities to learn from within the region and from beyond the region. use EU regional co-operation programmes to provide new ideas and knowledge for the region</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be more aware of the scope of the EU Territorial Cooperation objective as a resource for both capacity building and financing for local investments and activities. • Be aware that politicians at all levels of government are key actors who sometimes need to be persuaded that Territorial Cooperation is essential to the 'European project' and worth supporting. It will not happen on a large-scale without clear economic incentives linked to political priorities. • Establish mechanisms to ensure that good practice approaches developed through European project work is well integrated into the main activities of the local authority (or other sub-regional body). • Make the most of the cooperation opportunities that are available and enjoy the experience of working in an international team. In designing and implementing mainstream Operational Programmes, recognise and make use of the experience of sub-regional organisations in interregional, transnational and cross-border cooperation • Recognise that sub-regional organisations are key players in the delivery of territorial cooperation. They should be fully engaged in the development, review and management of the programmes. • When working with partners from new EU Member States, make sure that all partners have an equal incentive for participation and equitable access to funding. The use of local experts is recommended, rather than excessive reliance on foreign consultants.