

Top tips for a successful application
Webinar, 18 October 2022

INTERREG NORTH SEA

Interreg



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North Sea

Welcome and introduction

Top tips for a successful application

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Welcome and introduction

Today's objective

To address pitfalls we observed in the applications for Call 1

and

To provide the participants with hands-on solutions for how to avoid these pitfalls in their applications



Welcome and introduction

This is how we work together

- The session will be recorded
- Please switch off your microphones
- We will make use of Slido for the Q&A
- We cannot address questions specific to your application

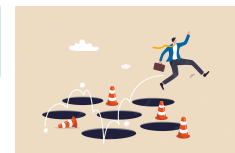


Welcome and introduction

Put your questions in Slido



Project Relevance: Need for the project



Pitfall

Challenges and gaps are not clearly defined and evidenced → need and urgency for the project is not clear

Example

Project aim: turning green strategies into business opportunities and drivers of innovation to sustain the region's position as a frontrunner in clean tech

Project relevance: lacks any reference to what current impediments to the region being a frontrunner are, focus is generally on the relevance of the green transition



Project Relevance: Need for the project



Pitfall

Territorial relevance is not considered → justification for why this should be a North Sea Programme project is lacking

Example

Project aim: develop and support the take-up of digital technologies to decrease the occurrence of fish deaths in rivers due to chemical pollution

Project relevance: shared challenge/rationale to have this project in the NSP is missing. There is no reference to the size, the development and the importance of the issue in the North Sea area.



Project Relevance: Synergies



Pitfall

Name dropping of other relevant initiatives → added value of the project and how it is building on previous work is not clear

Example

- The PROJECT aimed at ensuring the availability, continued and increased use of the waterfronts in city areas. It focused on city planning and the possibilities and challenges in the planning process for waterfronts and waterfronts shared by many different groups.

vs.

- The PROJECT worked on topics of climate adaptation via blue-green infrastructure & social innovation. APPLICATION will capitalize on the knowledge created and take it to the next level, specializing on the quality of green and acceleration of biodiversity in city agendas. 3 PROJECT partners are in APPLICATION and will ensure knowledge transfer.



Project Relevance: Synergies



Pitfall

- Novelty and innovativeness of the project and its approach are not sufficiently explained
- There is no evolution of ideas, but the project includes overlaps and replication



Project Relevance: Tips & Tricks



- Be clear on gaps and challenges, provide numbers where possible, and consider the territorial relevance, i.e. why North Sea Region?
- Be clear on synergies, how you are building on previous work and what you are adding to it
- Provide considerations of the novelty and innovativeness, and avoid overlaps and replications



Transnationality

Pitfall



Focusing only on the need to exchange information between partners to explain transnationality → weak justification for the need for transnational cooperation

Example

- challenges are common in the NSR, and initiatives have been done only separately. A shared approach will enable the partners to pool experience and share knowledge.

vs.

- challenges are common to the NSR, but healthcare systems as well as the availability of relevant technologies vary among the regions. This hinders innovation potential as well as the (international) up-scaling of solutions. The project will address these gaps and support the transnational upscaling of technologies.



Transnationality

Pitfall



Project does not propose a transnational way of working

Example

- local pilots, no joint development of strategies, roadmaps or other reports, no joint evaluation

vs.

- local, but "tandem-pilots", joint development of transferrable handbooks, development of a transnational (digital) ecosystem for connecting solutions providers with users



Transnationality



Pitfall

Project does not consider the transnational benefits to the wider North Sea Region - beyond the partnership

Example

- the project focuses on developing strategies and quadruple-helix networks to retain entrepreneurial skills in rural areas. Limited considerations are provided how this will benefit their target groups, the project area and the programme area, and how its proposed solutions can be used outside of the partnership

vs.

- the project proposes to develop a transnational home care innovation eco-system. Its proposed solutions are relevant for the rest of the North Sea Region, and can be upscaled, and target group members have already expressed interest in take-up



Transnationality: Tips & Tricks



- Clearly demonstrate the importance of transnational cooperation for the topic addressed
- Propose a transnational way of working, and consider why the results cannot (or only to some extent) be achieved without cooperation
- Clearly explain the benefits from cooperating, not only for the project partners, but also for the target groups, the project area and the wider programme area



Project Relevance and Transnationality: Q&A



Intervention Logic: Indicators



Pitfall

Red thread from activities to outputs and results to work package objectives to project overall objective is missing

Example

Project objective: Strengthen the competitiveness of the regional economy and innovation capacity of regional SMES in the blue sector by ensuring access to a strong and adaptable workforce with the necessary skills to support future growth

WP objective: Bridge the skills gap by developing and testing new educational programmes

WP outputs: 2 "Strategies and action plans jointly developed": Action plans for increasing regional innovation capacity through policy and knowledge sharing

WP results: 1 "Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations": Service commercialization Strategy



Intervention Logic: Indicators



Pitfall

Deliverables, outputs and results are mixed up and/or double-counted

Example

Activity: Piloting wind-propulsion techniques on 3 ships based on transnational experience to assess efficiency & impact (deliverable indicator: data collection activity)

Output: 3 experimental pilot and prototyping activities of wind-propulsion techniques (output indicator: Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects)



Intervention Logic: Indicators



Pitfall

Output and result indicators are not in line with the programme definitions

Example

Output indicator "Strategies and action plans jointly developed"

Output: Anchoring methods and results. Regional authorities share experience in implementing their strategies for reaching climate neutrality

Result indicator "Organisations with increased institutional capacity due to their participation in cooperation activities across borders"

Result: Contribution at long term in reducing the number of fish death trough river in the North Sea region by 15%.



Intervention Logic: Indicators



Pitfall

Target setting is arbitrary (especially arbitrarily high)



Intervention Logic (Indicators): Tips & Tricks



- Consider the red thread in the intervention logic, from activities to outputs and results to work package objectives to project overall objective
- Pay attention to the definitions of the indicators provided in Fact Sheet 22
- Avoid mixing outputs and deliverables and double-counting



Intervention Logic: Work plan



Pitfalls

- Work packages do not follow a logical sequence
- The proposed activities do not appear to be able to deliver the work package outputs and/or the work package objective
- Overlaps between work packages, including counting the same activity in two work packages



Intervention Logic (Work plan): Tips & Tricks



- Work packages and the proposed activities should follow a logical sequence
- Proposed activities will deliver the work package objective, & the work packages objectives will lead to achieving the project overall objective
- Make sure to include the necessary activities that are needed to achieve the work package objective, and that they are quantified through deliverables



Intervention logic: Communication



Pitfall

Communication objective(s) and/or targeted audiences are too vague: the communication activities are too generic and it remains unclear how target groups will be reached.

Pitfall example	Good example
Disseminate project outcomes widely.	Support mobility and policy makers to adopt existing mobility concepts ; shifting mindset ; providing materials to partner cities and beyond.



Intervention logic: Communication



Pitfall

Target groups are not well-defined under section C.3.4. As a consequence, a clear link between the communication activities defined in the work packages are missing.

Pitfall example	Good example
Communicate/integrate hubs to different groups .	Engage citizens and local communities to join project activities and create working groups for after the project.



Intervention logic: Communication



Pitfall

The communication objectives are defined, but the project did not include relating work package activities (communication initiatives) and hence, it is not clear how the communication objectives will be achieved.



Intervention logic: Communication

Good example (communication objective(s) and targeted audience)	WP1 activities
<p>WP1</p> <p>Engage rural managers, decision makers, cities across NSR by actively sharing progress and stimulating dialogue in order to structurally improve the framework for mainstreaming solutions.</p>	<p>Activity 7 Share progress on framework development. Develop and execute a plan to share updates with targets on framework development by distributing key findings through e.g. LinkedIn posts, articles in specialized magazines, infographics and presentations.</p> <p>Activity 8 Stimulate dialogue Create dialogue by organising special project sessions and workshops, by participating in site visits and attending conferences.</p>



Intervention logic (Communication): Tips & Tricks



- Think thoroughly about your target groups as specified under section C.3.4
- Clearly describe the work package communication objective and the related target groups
- Include activities linked to communication in the work package (communication initiative)
- An Interreg project cannot stand without well-defined communication strategies. Promotion of your activities is crucial.



Project budget and partnership



Pitfall

The project budget is not a clear reflection of the project overall objective and the activities implemented to achieve this

Examples

- High budgets for investments on equipments without clear explanation why the equipment is needed;
- External expertise is hired but it remains unclear what the external expert delivers is a necessary condition to implement the project.



Project budget and partnership



Pitfall

Partners with a relatively small budget will be questioned upon their contribution and added value for the project

Examples

- A partner requests for a budget of 25,000 EUR. What would be the contribution of this partner if you consider a project lifetime of 3-4 years?
- Partners with small budgets are sometimes included with the idea to strengthen transnationality aspects or geographical spread.



Project budget and partnership



Pitfall

Imbalanced budget allocation within the partnership

Examples

- High budgets allocated to small private organisations, in some cases SMEs (please take care of performing a capacity check with your NCP);
- Insufficient explanation why few partners from the same country absorb a high share of the total budget.



Project budget and partnership



Pitfall

A share of the budget will be spent outside of the eligible North Sea area

Examples

- The partnership includes a partner situated in one of the North Sea Member States outside of the eligible area, but the justification for having this partner is insufficient;
- A partner is included as being inside the North Sea area, however the head quarters' postal code appears to be outside the eligible area.



Project budget and partnership: Tips & tricks



- A project budget should be a clear reflection of the projects' objectives and activities
- We typically see project budgets ranging between 3-5 Million EUR
- Partner budgets vary typically between 0.2-1.0 Million EUR
- Provide clear explanations for significant budget imbalances, e.g. why a specific partner requires a considerably higher budget
- Justify why you included a partner outside of the eligible North Sea area



Project budget and partnership: Q&A



Closing

Thank you for your participation!

Dates

21 October: Deadline for consultations with the JS

14 November: Call closes (17.00 CET)

Resources

<https://www.interregnorthsea.eu/calls-applications/call2>

<https://www.interregnorthsea.eu/resources#project-guidance-by-stage>

Contact

Joint Secretariat: <https://www.interregnorthsea.eu/get-in-touch#joint-secretariat>

National Contact Points: <https://www.interregnorthsea.eu/get-in-touch#national-contact-points>

