

## **Recommendations for action concerning quality development and strengthening of cross-border cooperation**

### **1. Recommendations for project actors**

#### **1.1) Determine the need for and effectiveness of the project**

- Spend enough time on the project preparation phase
- If there is no valid knowledge about the need for the project, carry out a systematic analysis of needs before the project will start;
- If stakeholders do not experience a problem or need, do not start a project
- If possible, determine and provide evidence for the effectiveness and efficiency of the project with the help of studies, expertises etc.

#### **1.2) Ensure the availability of sufficient staff and financial resources**

- Provide for sufficient staff and financial resources
- Before starting the project, clarify which partners will provide which type of resources, to which extent and ensure the necessary resources (e.g. grants)

#### **1.3) Ensure the cross-border added value for the region**

- Before starting the project, identify the cross-border added value for the region
- Consider existing activities in the region (programmes, projects) and integrate them, if possible

#### **1.4) Ensure early and continuous cooperation based on partnership**

- Before starting the project, identify the relevant project partners from, if possible, all Member States involved and include them in the planning process
- Include and involve the target group(s) at an early point in time
- Organize meetings with all partners at regular intervals

#### **1.5) Create a sense of commitment and define responsibilities**

- Conclude cooperation agreements between all parties involved in the project prior to its start
- Offer existing cooperation agreements to others as a model (in the sense of tool-sharing)

#### **1.6) Pay more attention to public relations and project documentation**

- Invest time into public relations
- Draw up a plan on activities and measures in the field of information and publicity at an early point in time
- Ensure sufficient project documentation and make the documents available to the public

#### **1.7) Ensure good political and senior management support**

- Inform and actively involve political decision makers at an early point in time
- Actively approach politicians and make them aware of problems (e.g. through events)
- Ensure senior management support before starting and in the course of the project

#### **1.8) Evaluate projects adequately**

- Develop activities and instruments for project evaluation at an early point in time
- Provide for a realistic calculation of costs for project evaluation and include them in the project costs.

#### **1.9) Initiate steps to ensure sustainability of the activities at an early stage**

- Ensure sustainability in the project planning phase (consider e.g. how will the partners provide for sustainability and clarify which party/parties will be willing to pay for the continuation of the project after the funding phase)
- If possible, start activities before project completion to ensure sustainability; make an early request for the corresponding resources, if necessary

#### **1.10) Use the experiences of other projects**

- Build partnerships and networks for an exchange of information and experiences
- Make your own experiences and products available to other projects (also report about failures and the reasons for them) (in the sense of tool-sharing)

#### **1.11) Reduce bureaucratic hindrances for Interreg**

- Contact the INTERREG/EUREGIO secretariats before project application
- Make a clear distinction within the projects between operative (contents-related) and strategic (management) tasks

## **2. Recommendations to European, national and/or regional actors in order to provide suitable framework conditions**

### **2.1) Create a legal basis**

- Conclusion of agreements and contracts between individual service providers and insurance companies
- Conclusion of intergovernmental contracts and agreements
- National and international authorities should be prepared to allow innovative parties to make experiences (in a pilot environment) with new forms of cross-border care. So-called “experimental clauses” could provide the legal basis here.

### **2.2) Ensure partnership-based cooperation**

- Set up or extend databases and networks to facilitate the search for partners
- Structural Funds Regulation 2007-2013: Make the intended requirements for partnership more rigorous, i.e. the joint planning and implementation of the project should be binding and at least one further criterion (joint staff, joint funding) be fulfilled; the joint use of outcomes/products could be regarded as a further criterion.
- Important to new EU Member States: Facilitate their integration with respect to partnership projects into the already established Member States.
- Provide recommendations and best-practice suggestions and examples

### **2.3) Promote the exchange of experiences and information**

- Organise events on health issues and on specialised topics (e.g. rescue services, prevention); central announcement of these events
- Set up an EU-wide project information pool on “cross-border activities in health” (including projects that go beyond physical borders, e.g. UK-Malta)
- More marketing measures on the part of the EU, Interreg

### **2.4) Facilitate access to grants / funding**

- More transparency with regard to existing funding programmes, application procedures and decisions
- Increased inclusion of experts who will counsel the project applicants and lead through the application procedure
- Financial support for writing proposals for grant/funding

### **2.5) Reduce bureaucratic hindrances for Interreg**

- Simplification of the Interreg procedure
- Delegate administrative work to a person who is responsible for several projects
- Set up focal points between Interreg secretariats and project actors (person/institution)
- Allow the projects more options for action or decision, for example when it comes to the redistribution of approved funds.

### **2.6) Strengthen the role of the Euregios and similar cross-border structures**

- Raise the awareness of the Euregios for the health issue (conferences etc.)
- More transparency about the services and activities in the Euregios
- Clarify the demands of the projects towards the Euregios
- Centralize information about Euregional activities in the Euregios (focal point)
- Intensified exchange between and mutual support of the Euregios in health issues (e.g. project patronages, setting up of networks)
- Development of joint systematic analyses of needs and programmes by the Euregios and similar cross-border structures in cooperation with regional / local health care organizations on both sides of the border

### **2.7) Ensure the quality of the projects**

- Support the projects in the evaluation procedure, e.g. through the development of guidelines, methodological advice and – if possible – through the provision of suitable indicators