Thematic Seminar

1st Feedback seminar "Community building"

Online conference notes

165 participants – MED P-SP-HP-JS Permanent Contact Group and registered participants.

Introduction :

An outlook was given on the 3 workshops: Community building, thematic analysis and mainstreaming – transfer - liaising .

It followed an information by the JS on the frame : where are we - where do we want to go - what has been done, what can be re-used ?

The Implementing Act has been finally approved. The submission of the programme to the EC is scheduled for beginning of February. When submitted, the first call will be published. The Terms of References of the first call have already been approved and are going to be published soon. It is recommended to check out the programme website regularly.
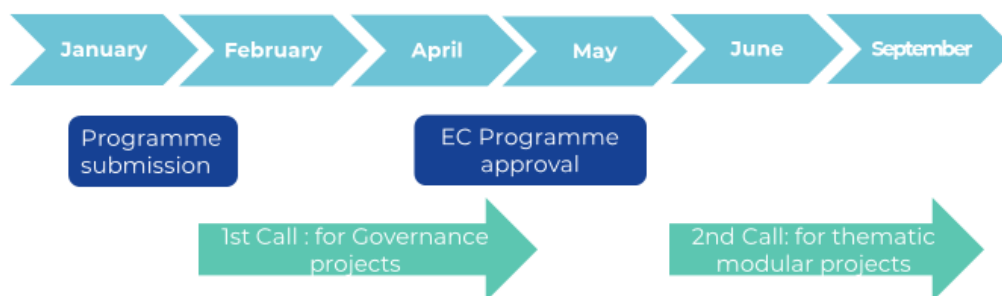
Before starting the opening of the call, it is important to have feedback on the projects of the period 2014-20, first on the aspect of community building engaged by the ongoing horizontal and governance projects. Applicant seminars for the submission of proposals for governance projects (two of those projects for each identified mission of the Programme, one Institutional Dialogue project and one Thematic Community project) will follow. The first one is planned for 10/02.

III. Calendar for the 1st call for governance projects

Between 24 Jan. & 10 Feb. 2022	10 February 2022	March/April 2022
Seminars on **return of experience from 2014/20** Horizontal projects, Panoramed, Strategic projects	**Applicant Seminar**	Seminars to **support drafting of applications:**
o **24/01:** Community building	o Programme presentation	o **03/03**: Partnership
o **27/01:** Thematic analysis	o Terms of References	o **17/03**: Intervention logic, work plan, indicators
o **03/02:** Transfert, Mainstreaming, Liaising	o Tools	o **31/03**: budget eligibility of expenditures, annexes
	o Procedures	o **28/4**: Q&A

Provisional dates of the Call:
from 17/02 to 24/05
(subject to change)

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III. Governance projects description

Thematic Community Projects

BETTER TERRITORIAL GOVERNANCE

Institutional dialogue

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1 per mission each to amplify results of thematic projects

The discussion was introduced by previously collected feedback examples from horizontal projects (HP), strategic projects (SP) or Panoramed, that want to share their experience with their peers.

Session on experience of HP : factor of success or difficulties

To start HP Sustainable Tourism pointed out that the first step had been trying to understand all projects (objectives and policy targets). Monitoring tools were applied. The second one was building thematic community groups, also by the help of workshops. Those groups are used to exchange information and find a common ground. A series of documents as guidelines, thematic and policy papers were produced. In some way the monitoring process assisted the creation of the community by building groups, and those groups supported the monitoring process.

Then Green Growth HP reported on the task to create a common identity. The topic of circular economy was chosen as it is as well transversal among the community of projects, as strategic at EU level. 2 physical meetings and online meetings to collect information had been organised. The feedback helped to produce papers and recommendations. The number of active projects has been identified as a limitation: As there was a lot of interaction when all projects were active, it was much more difficult with less active projects, and thus also more difficult to establish the sense to belong to a community. Low budget dedicated to this activity, sometimes a lack of motivation and, of course, Covid were more factors that did not help.

The HP working on social innovation and creative industries (SCI) presented its approach of an Innovation camp: 3 events on 3 different topics. These events increased the profile of engagement while involving all partners and were completed by policy briefs published before each event. Then during the parallel sessions in virtual rooms, the input was delivered by the thematic projects. Furthermore external experts were invited to contribute coaching sessions or success stories. The experience of innovation camp was confirmed by Panoramed, that carried out an Innovation Camp organised by the Generalitat de Catalunya in 2019, considered to be very effective and to build up long term relationships, even beyond the project.

More HP contributed with their experience, confirming some of the above-mentioned elements and adding more:

The HP on Urban Transports mentioned its mentoring programme, that engaged former modular (thematic) projects, together with various online community seminars with external guest speakers that could help raise interest. It focused on experiences that were easy to replicate. Project stakeholders were also encouraged to sign agreements to enhance collaboration with other actors. Here the online community was even more important, as just one modular project stayed active during the last period. It was also a point to share experience with other communities not necessarily based on a formal engagement.

Renewable Energy Community confirmed as well the importance of a close relation with each Modular Project and of an active role of Horizontal Projects by providing training, promotional events and communication material.

A question referred to methodological interactions of INTERREG governance projects with ENICBCMED capitalization projects. Since some countries are involved on both programmes, it was asked which synergies could there be. Here the JS confirmed preparations to enhance collaboration across different programmes in a wider MED context. It referred to ongoing activities from the programme side to enhance co-operation during the new period and the important role of future governance projects on that matter.

Blue Growth HP made a general comment: As "Community Building" builds literally the relations within a Community, the first step is to make the core members, as projects' "partners" (horizontal, modular, integrated, strategic) feel part of the Community itself. Therefore it is essential for all projects to have a dedicated budget for links/exchanges/participation to events within the Community. This point should be highlighted from the very beginning of future thematic projects. JS confirmed that this is planned and also highlighted in the Result Amplification Strategy that is part of the future compulsory project activities.

A contribution by the Mediterranean Biodiversity Protection Community (MBPC) was made on community building around a common topic of interest, vision, or territory. A multidisciplinary approach to address one common topic has the challenge of finding a common language, but in the case of this community it turned out to be the only way to ensure an ecosystem-based management approach, by trying to bring together environmental science, practice and policy support by civil society.

For the JS Curzio Cervelli emphasised the importance of the process of community building. Due to a technical problem in the 2014-20 horizontal and modular projects had to be chosen at the same time which caused some trouble during the first phase. This time this will not happen, and this is an important difference. Working in governance projects requires to work on the contents of your communities and to stimulate interactions with and among the future projects. If this first step is not set, it will be impossible to have a capitalization impulse.

Session on experience of Governance projects (SP, Panoramed) : factor of success or difficulties
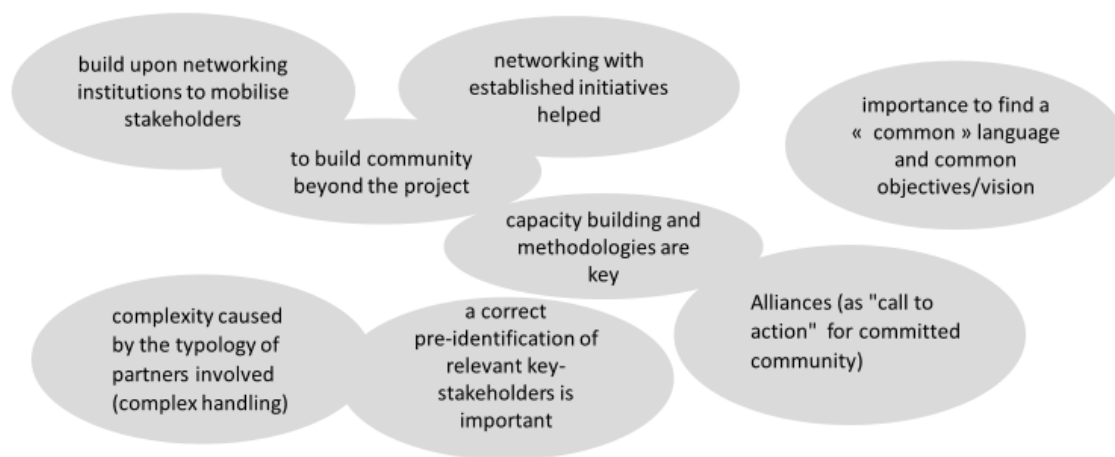
The second part of the meeting focusing particularly on the aspect of community building by ongoing governance projects (strategic and Panoramed) was opened by a testimonial from Blue Bio MED on the challenges to build community beyond the programme, which proved to be a key issue also to meet with stakeholders from other programmes. So, you need something more in the concept of alliance than networking and the creation of a community. In the case of Blue Innovation both strategic projects contributed together to community building, which until now has proved to be very effective. The fact of better results when opening the governance projects beyond internal handling was confirmed by PANORAMED partner GenCat.

The Social and Creative HPpointed out the useful experience of the permanent contact group – an exchange platform between HP, Panoramed, strategic projects (SP) and the JS.

B-Blue strategic project insisted on the importance of the preselection process and the layer of living labs, which is one of the objectives to keep alive after the project work. Coherent activities work also with a challenge based approach. Governance projects must go beyond feedback from thematic projects.

What factors contribute to facilitate or complicate the process of community building for Governance Projects?

build upon networking institutions to mobilise stakeholders

networking with established initiatives helped

importance to find a « common » language and common objectives/vision

to build community beyond the project

capacity building and methodologies are key

complexity caused by the typology of partners involved (complex handling)

a correct pre-identification of relevant key-stakeholders is important

Alliances (as "call to action" for committed community)

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Session on tools and methods for community building

The third and last part of the interaction focused on tools and methods for community building.

Blue growth community gave an outlook on the increase of the involvement of stakeholders by the process of community building, that went up from at the beginning, 600 stakeholders to more than 1000. The importance of physical presence was evoked as well: As an example one of the speed dating events helped to create a project partnership. Other pilots on team exercises have been carried out as well, as documents with testimonials from actors helped to feel that the community is working together. It is very important to participate in activities by horizontal projects. To conclude, the identification of needs and gaps are important: It turned out, that there is a lack of blue skills. It was also mentioned that the summer school experience lead to the work on the Med Academy.

SMARTMED highlighted the challenge to compensate distance and gaps with other partners' work. HP have been essential to involve all actors and to communicate among them. Platforms helped to launch chats, share posts, videoconferences. It contributed to fluidify communication between partners. SMARTMED referred to its e-learning platform to share best practices with partners and stakeholders. It is meant to provide a forum for discussion, reduces distances and improves communication. Thus, private public partnership can be enhanced and the training information compiled during the project can be accessed. It is open to all actors to give their feedback.

Here the Programme informed, that for the next period it will provide to all the projects - on top of the webpage - an access to basecamp. Urban Transport HP brought forward an immediate feedback that it is important that tools are also used by the community. Here the experience with basecamp was ambiguous: If it is not used by everybody it loses sense. It is perhaps more designed for larger communities.

MBPS referred to polls to facilitate communication and interaction. Follow up was highlighted as well. There was a general agreement that Covid had a great impact on interaction.

The option of a tool within the Interreg Euro MED platform was discussed. JS referred to a previous experience, that had not been used by the programme community. On the other hand, the argument of data ownership was brought forward: "if you put your data in other tools, they are lost. If you put them in the programme platform, they are yours." Here JS referred again to the option to use basecamp for the future. In the same line it was proposed to give access to a maximum of online events via the platform. This proposal will be further examined by JS. GenCat pointed out that MIRO is excellent to gather and share information or to stage events. It allows communication after workshop, is an open tool, so that everybody can have access. Now that we have many tools, it is not so important to create ad hoc tools.

GenCat furthermore referred to capacity building as a key to build community, which means more than sharing information and requires a strategy.

More direct feedback on tools for interaction was given: https://www.gather.town/conferences offers solutions on BREAKING THE ICE but also for other different ways of interaction. The experience of usability has been very positive.

With an invitation to participants that so far are not involved in ongoing HP, SP or Panoramed to give a feedback on their experience of the meeting, the workshop on community building was closed.