

Experiences with cross-border co-operation projects in Slovenia and presentation of tourist development project Mura-Drava Bike on the borders area between Austria, Slovenia and Croatia

Beograd, 5 Maj 2011

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Experiences with cross-border co-operation

❖ **Start-up challenges**

- cross-border co-operation is NOT performing always automatically without any external support (such are the EU funds)
- absence of administration capacity and strong “leader ship” at local level
- development activities often fragmented – almost zero synergy between activities on each sides of borders
- lack of concrete and feasible development priorities and what should be regional specialisations
- only a few economic and social links existed between inhabitant on the border area – latent isolation
- presence of minorities have been seen as potentials for CBC – Minorities are “bridge” between inhabitants
- lack of concrete visible results in short term “from idea to results on the ground ” – therefore is important ongoing information the public on the all achievements in projects

❖ **Short term benefits**

- increasing experiences/knowledge on EU funded projects
- growing self-confidence and improving strategic thinking at local level
- extended list of possible local development actions and partners ready to co-operate
- increase mutual trust and understanding between partners at the border area due to differences in languages, culture, mentalities, administration arrangement... – they have to work together for a common interest of improving the quality of life at the border area
- border area started to understand its position now it will need to move

❖ **Long term benefits**

- integration in different areas in a common development plan of border area
- focusing LIMITED fund on LIMITED numbers of selected priorities (for example: business cooperation, environment and culture) with the main objective that border area become attractive place for business
- building up visibility and capacity of the keys partners (NGO, Municipalities, Development agencies, companies)
- Establishing long-term networks between cross-border institutions (schools, faculties, research institutions...)
- facilitating co-existence by promoting trust and mutual understanding between inhabitants live at the border – these contributes to the stability of the wider region
- ability to absorb of EU funds which will be fully available in near future - experiences of municipalities participating in EU CBC programmers gives these municipalities competitive advantages in absorbing fund in the other international assistance programmers

Role of Municipalities and Regional Development Agencies in the decision process (selections of priorities and projects) should be respected since they have practical knowledge of potentials and needs of the border area – Decision should be made close to the citizens

Key to success lies in education of experts who stay and work in the region

Mura-Drava Bike



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Lack of Visible Results in Short Term “Stakeholders Need a Lot of Patience”

Onome, ko umije da strpi, vremenom sve dolazi ■



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