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DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
REGIONAL POLICY
Policy Coordination
Thematic coordination, innovation

ERIK ACTION 2nd Fast Track Committee

19th February 2009

Flemish Agency for Economy, 35 Boulevard Albert II, 1030 Brussels

Participants

Partner Region	Organisation	Surname	Name
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Alentejo	ADRAL	Marquez	Paula Paulino
Alentejo	Évora University	Sarkar	Soumodip
Andalusia	IDEA	Arroyo	Manuel
Andalusia	IDEA	Ruiz Beneyeto	Carlos
Andalusia	IDEA	Sernandez	Francisco
Andalusia	IDEA	Vazquez	Simón
Andalusia		Ramos	Adoración
Banska Bystrica	Banska Bystrica Self Governing Region	Jacekova	Veronika
Banska Bystrica	Banska Bystrica Self Governing Region	Lassak	Vladimir
Banska Bystrica		Bodi	Ladislav
Banska Bystrica		Hanesova	Livia
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Bretagne		Clermont	Julien
Bretagne		Vincensini	Thomas
Emilia Romagna	Regione Emilia Romagna	Laterza	Angelica
Emilia Romagna	Regione Emilia Romagna	Maini	Elisabetta
Emilia Romagna	Regione Emilia Romagna	Moretti	Giorgio
Flanders	AE	De Dobbeleer	Machteld
Flanders	AEO	Meyers	André
Flanders	AEO	Van Herck	Johan
Flanders	EEN	De Smet	Leen
Flanders	Enterprise Agency	De Potter	Bernard
Flanders	Enterprise Agency	Desiere	Piet
Flanders	Enterprise Agency	Grzegorzewski	David
Flanders	Enterprise Agency	Mortier	Femke
Flanders	Enterprise Agency	Rousseau	Philippe
Flanders	Enterprise Agency	Van Haver	André
Flanders	EWI	Vermeulen	Hilde
Flanders	IWT	Sleeckx	Eric
Flanders	VVSG	Thomas	Stefaan
Flanders	WSE	De Leeuw	Els
Lower Austria	IDEUM	Jager	Hans-Christian
Lower Austria	Lower Austrian Government	Ebner	Martina
Lower Austria	Lower Austrian Government	Priedl	Irma
Lower Austria	TIP	Strodl	Thomas
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N/A		European Commission	Ktenas	Angelos
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N/A		SGS Belgium NV	Joossens	Eddy
N/A		South West England / RAPIDE project	Kuscher	Benjamin
potential observer region		GRUPO SODERCAN: Regional Development Agency of Cantabria	Rama	Mar Martín
Småland öarna	med	LTC	Bunis	Erik
Småland öarna	med	LTC	Lind	Stefan
Småland öarna	med	Regional Council in Kalmar County	Nylander	Mattias
Småland öarna	med	Regional Council of Jönköping County	Gustafsson	Mikael
South Romania	East	Ministry of Regional Development and Housing	Vasilica Radoi	Valentina
South Romania	East	SE RDA	Craciun	Joita Jenica
South Romania	East	SE RDA	Juganaru	Ion Danut
South Romania	East	SE RDA	Mihailov	Luminita
South Romania	East	SE RDA	Vaida	Adriana
Tuscany		Regione Toscana	Brogi	Serena
Tuscany		Regione Toscana	Crivelli	Nadia
Tuscany		Regione Toscana	De Lorenzo	Giuseppina
Tuscany		Regione Toscana	Frosini	Paolo
Tuscany		Regione Toscana	Huntingford	Jessica
Tuscany		Regione Toscana	Righi	Laura
Western Macedonia		Regional Government Western Macedonia	Kouras	Dimitris
Western Macedonia		Regional Government Western Macedonia	Zioga	Despina
Western Macedonia		University of Western	Bakouros	Yiannis

	Macedonia		
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Next meetings

The following dates and locations are confirmed for the next meetings.

- **26 / 27 March 2009**, Livorno, Tuscany - The agenda / list of hotels will be sent to partners. Partners are requested to send information on needs regarding meeting rooms for bilateral meetings.
- **4 – 6 May 2009**, Lower Austria - start: 13:00 Monday, end 13.00 Wednesday. Wednesday afternoon: optional meetings of transfer groups.
- **21 – 23 September 2009** – Småland.
- **18 – 20 January 2010** – Andalusia.

The next Fast Track meeting will be in May (Lower Austria). The proposal is to hold a Fast Track Committee meeting in September and January meetings. This will be confirmed at a later date according to necessity.

2nd Fast Track Committee: 19th February -14:00-16:30H

The European Commission is supporting the ERIK Action project as a fast track network. This is the second Fast Track Committee meeting.

Luisa Sanches from DG Regio opens the meeting. She is pleased to see the active participation of all project partners. The ERIK ACTION project is getting more visible and there is external interest in the project.

Paolo Frosini presents the following changes that have been made to the original project time plan:

- Component 1 – 1 extra meeting has been organised;
- Component 2 – newsletter delayed (described below);
- Component 3 – training sessions postponed to provide more time for transfer session, on partner request; study visit for the whole partnership has been postponed but bilateral study visits are already starting (e.g. Flanders 16-17 Feb 2009); staff exchanges have been officially delayed, bilateral exchanges are already going on; help desks have started before foreseen; first chapter of regional action plans delayed as partners needed more time to understand how to develop them. The template has been developed and will be discussed at the next meeting.

Stakeholder Capacity Monitoring and Evaluation

All partners should have carried out initial interviews with key stakeholders in order to determine their expectations of the ERIK ACTION project. These interviews will be repeated at the end of the project in order to evaluate the level of capacity building achieved by the project.

7 partners have sent their capacity interviews. Stakeholders seem to have high expectations about the project. In some cases it was too early as stakeholders did not have a clear idea of the project. In Sweden, on the other hand, they were very keen and it was just the right time to stir up interest. They feel that it is important to start early, and encourage them to speed up.

Remaining partners will complete the interviews by the end of March. It would then be interesting to adapt the survey to have an idea of a quantitative impact of the project. This would make the results more significant for the Commission. Therefore, there could be an intermediate phase of evaluation with a modified survey. This could be used in parallel with the meeting self evaluations, which are completed at every meeting.

Stakeholder Involvement Plan

Stakeholder Involvement Plans have been prepared by all partners and received by Fast Track members.

The following comments are provided by the European Commission:

- Such documents can provide external readers with an accurate view both on project content, and on the complexity of these activities. They will be disseminated within the Commission where possible;
- Each partner should have an input into the other partners' plans and make suggestions for improvements. Comments by the ERIK ACTION partners: This happens to a certain extent in the good practice documentation. Review is carried out within the transfer groups, and is thus linked to a specific good practice. Active discussion during the session is ERIK ACTION's way of undertaking peer review;
- It is important to avoid insisting on homogeneity in the content of the stakeholder plans (e.g. type of stakeholders involved), as different regions will have different needs in terms of stakeholder participation;
- There are notable variations in quality and level of detail. Vagueness is particularly noticeable in expectations and list of activities, and this requires more work. Comments by the ERIK ACTION partners: It is stressed that these are living documents that will be updated and more detail included as more is learnt about good practices;
- In some cases the work proposed seems very ambitious, particularly concerning number of good practices to be transferred and amount of stakeholders to be involved. Some good practices require more stakeholder involvement than others. Comments by the ERIK ACTION partners: It is stressed that partners are all currently finding out information about good practices and will focus more once they have all the necessary information;
- Some good practices are obviously more popular than others. It would be interesting to know the reasons why. Comments by the ERIK ACTION partners: during the former 4 years within the ERIK network almost all ERIK ACTION partners were already informed about existing GPs (ERIK database, study visits, workshops on indicators and decision on case studies). Thus sufficient information was available to assess which GPs would match the own requirements and can be transferred/adapted to the own regional particularities;
- The origin of the good practices should be highlighted in the web site, i.e. that so many of the good practices came out of the Regional Programmes of Innovative Actions;
- Regional stakeholder plans should be available for all visitors of the ERIK ACTION website. Comments by the ERIK ACTION partners: external dissemination of the regional stakeholder plans will not be undertaken at this stage because these plans are working documents with continuous changes. When the plans are finalised the decision can be made to publish them on the web site.

Collaboration with Managing Authorities

At project outset, a network of informed contacts in DG Regio was formed. They are informed and updated on the project. If any partners have problems in relations with the Managing

Authority they can contact the relevant person. Some partners state that Managing Authorities are not always well informed about what the Fast Track is and what their role is supposed to be. . The list of the national contact persons of the ERIK ACTION partners is available in the folder "Communication_European_and_Regional" in the ERIK ACTION intranet.

Project Open tool and Internal Project Communication

ERIK ACTION is using an intranet tool named Project Open for daily project management. The lead partner provides an overview of the experience of using this tool so far, including proposed improvements.

- Strong points: all documents can be found in 1 place; tasks can be managed on line.
- Weak points: some technical problems have been experienced; the forum tool is unusable; there has been limited use from some partners.

Some technical improvements are currently being undertaken. Folder structure will be simplified in order to improve ease of access and facility of finding information.

Project Communication

The web site is on line and is continuously updated. It includes: Home page, Partners, Key documents, Events (workshops, training session, study visits, conferences, external events), Action plans, Links.

The new fast track logo should be included onto the website.

The first project newsletter will be ready for March 2009. It will be on a USB stick to avoid printing and to be more innovative. The content includes: summary of actions so far, focus on transfer and fast track, description of good practices. If any partners wish to include specific information on the USB stick, they should send it to the Regione Toscana before 26th February. 500 USB sticks will be produced. The Commission will be provided with some copies of the newsletter.

The ERIK ACTION brochure (30 copies) should be provided to colleagues at DG RTD, IFSO and ENT.

Observer Regions

ERIK ACTION is committed to involving other regions in project activities, particularly related to the transfer of good practices. A procedure has been developed to involve these Observer regions and some interest has already been shown. The procedure is as follows:

- Region joins ERIK NETWORK
- Region is provided with document describing good practices
- Region sends official participation request (indicate transfer groups)
- Transfer group coordinator / SG approves participation
- Official communication and Agreement sent to region by project leader;

- User created on project open;
- Region involved in transfer group activities at their own cost.

Currently 2 regions are undertaking the procedure and a further 2 are interested and are receiving more information.

Some fine tuning is needed to ensure that:

- observers are not all in the same, overcrowded groups, thus ensuring balanced workload for GP providers and transfer group coordinators;;
- they are really committed (just 1 good practice? Encourage them to visit GP providing region?);

This procedure could be extended to third countries. ERIK ACTION would welcome external participation.

The Commission warns against being over ambitious in this case. The priority must be to concentrate on successfully completing work already undertaken within the current consortium.

Overview of Transfer Groups and Training Session

Hans-Christian Jaeger presents the overview of the previous two days.

Reporting on the project

Partners provided some comments on how the project is going so far and next steps:

- Flanders – is happy with the way that the project is going and will follow up on this meeting with bilateral meetings with stakeholders to define future necessities;
- Western Macedonia – stakeholders found the meeting very interesting. There is close cooperation at regional level and this will continue. They already have a clear idea of the projects they are interested in and the next steps are to define how to transfer;
- Andalusia – initially had difficulties explaining the project to the stakeholders, but this meeting has helped to clarify it to those present. They do not expect too many problems with adapting the ROP according to the chosen good practice. The use of a project management software could be useful for task management and scheduling of single transfer activities.
- Banska Bystrica – Brussels meeting has offered a very good opportunity to get the stakeholder more deeply involved in transfer activities;
- Småland – looking forward to regional participation and bilateral meetings. This has been a good opportunity to bring stakeholders and show them how the project really works;
- Lower Austria – next steps depends on individual importing regions. The next 2 meetings provide vital opportunities to focus on any unclear targets;

- Emilia Romagna – research into scientific innovation and triple helix being carried out on exported good practice. This will help transfer by clarifying key points. They will re-contact stakeholders following this meeting.
- South East Romania – good promotion has been carried out in the region so far and a presentation of strengths and opportunities of the project has been made at national level. They intend to carry on in this way, and contact will become more intense. They want to start to implement some GPs before the end of the project, within the framework of existing regional policies, initiatives and instruments.
- Tuscany – wants to show others in the regional administration that concrete activities are being undertaken, so are particularly interested in study visit and staff exchange. They are happy with the way the project is going and feel that relationships between partners are becoming more solid, trusting and honest. Partners are starting to feel comfortable saying what went wrong, as well as what went right, in the Good practises. It would be interested in having a meeting with other fast track networks.

Next steps and input from Commission

- DG RTD – has published a practical guide to research which could be interesting. They are also looking for good practice on synergies within different research funding programmes. More information will be sent to the Regione Toscana who will circulate it around partners;
- DG REGIO - 18/19 May 2009 a conference on innovation will be held in Seville, organised by French and Spanish authorities.

An interesting study has been produced by FP6 on the Policy Mix. It may be useful for authorities on how to invest in R&D. More information will be sent to the Regione Toscana who will circulate it around partners.

The meeting ended at 1630 on Thursday 19th February.