

# Management Guide for Regional Co-operation



# Co-operative Regional Development

Evaluation of new procedures for the realization of ecological objectives at a regional level, based on the example of the Mecklenburg Lake District (R& D Project 298 82 203)

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## Management Guide for Regional Co-operation



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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Co-operative regional development

"Co-operation" is a topical theme. For many people in society, trade and industry as well as in public administration, co-operation, strategic networks and alliances are an important prerequisite for success and development. Voluntary co-operation is increasingly to be found in different areas of public life:

- between towns and communities (inter-communal co-operation),
- between societal groups in so-called "non-profit organizations",
- between business enterprises (corporate networks),
- between industry and public administration (private-public-partnership),
- between consumers and producers,
- as Local or Regional Agenda processes,
- as co-operative contact between different hierarchy levels, and also
- between different players in a region.

Co-operation between people, companies and public administration, directed towards a common goal, is of key importance for regional development. More and more regions see in partnerships, co-operation and networks the most important strategy for encouraging and implementing sustainable development processes on the basis of their own potentialities and strengths.

This management guide focuses on "**co-operation in the regions**"; that is, co-operation between different players and institutions of a region with the objective of developing the region for the purpose of sustainability.

Within Germany's federal structure, regions are administrative sub-areas, smaller than the *Länder* [federal states], but larger than municipalities. Sustainable regional development will not always be able to respect the artificial boundaries of administrative areas. The most varied regional demarcations can arise according to the respective task and co-operation process. Against this background, the term "co-operative regional development", as used here, is **not necessarily associated with formal regional boundaries**. Co-operative regional development is rather understood to be co-operation across the region with the objective of a sustainable development whose area of activity is deduced from objectives and problems, and which has to be adjusted to different spatial structures, potentials and problems.

Co-operative regional development stands for **innovation**. New programmes and strategies are pursued, new approaches and processes are put into practice and social innovations – in the figurative sense – are introduced through the involvement of new players in the regional dialogue.

But innovation also stands for risking what is new, for questioning behavioural routines, for overcoming obstacles, for new thinking and action. The result is differing degrees of uncertainty as well as the search for support and assignment of action. And it must not be forgotten, that besides necessary co-operation competition will remain and must continue to remain. Only in this field of tension, involving mutual support on the one side and competition and conflicts on the other side, can progress and development be achieved. Co-operation is necessary but also difficult, for it includes a number of stumbling blocks, which are often recognized much too late.

#### Factors influencing the success of co-operative regional development

A number of players decide the success or failure of co-operative regional development. Success factors include the capabilities and skills of individuals, as well as resources and behavioural patterns and rules. They also include general conditions that can be influenced by decisions and actions on the part of participants.



Three factors are of primary importance:

1. **The people**

who are active in regional development, either as individuals or as members of institutions, and who have the required skill to realize processes and projects.

2. **The concept,**

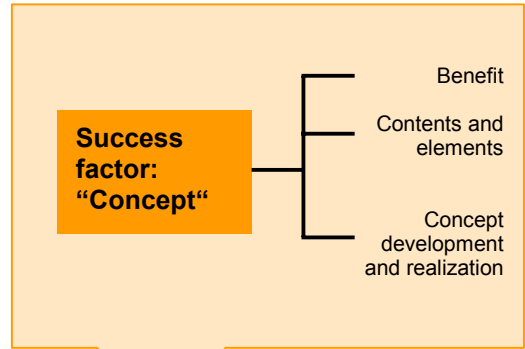
which is tailored to the regional situation and supported and realized by regional players.

3. **The process,**

that is, the structures and procedures developed within the scope of co-operation, including process and project management.

General **societal conditions and traditions** in the region must also not be forgotten. Factors that can contribute to the success of co-operative regional development encompass a "co-operative climate" in society or in a region, positive experience with co-operation, the absence of objective or supposed "competitive structures", legal and financial instruments orientated towards co-operation, monitoring and support by regional decision-makers as well as by superior authorities and ministries.

# 1. Introduction



## 1.2 Development, structure and use of the guide

The management guide is based on the results of the R & D project, "Evaluation of new procedures for the realization of ecological objectives at a regional level, based on the example of the Mecklenburg Lake District" ("*Auswertung neuer Vorgehensweisen für die regionale Umsetzung ökologischer Ziele am Beispiel Mecklenburgische Seenplatte*") (R & D Project 298 82 203). This project was funded by the Federal Environmental Agency and carried out in the period from 1999 to 2001 at Neubrandenburg Advanced Technical College in co-operation with the Mecklenburg Lake District Regional Planning Authority (*Regionalen Planungsverband Mecklenburgische Seenplatte*). Experiences gained from the "Regional Conference Mecklenburg Lake District" ("*Regionalkonferenz Mecklenburgische Seenplatte*") – as co-operative regional development in the Lake District is designated – provided the foundations for the project. At the same time, other co-operative regional development processes at a federal level and in other *Länder* were evaluated and consolidated for the guide.

The recommendations and advice contain in this management guide come from practical experience. They should provide the initiators of and partners in co-operation processes with an overall view of typical procedural issues, helping them to structure and process their own projects. But **there are no ready-made solutions**. No two projects are alike; conditions and experiences are not transferable on a one-to-one basis. On the contrary, situational and regional solutions have to be found. In the end, each region must itself discover the path to successful co-operative regional development.

There are general perceptions and experience, however, which can provide valuable support for the organization of sustainable projects and facilities. Typical problems and important pathbreaking decisions in the course of co-operative regional development are pointed out. Stumbling blocks should enhance awareness of problems and enable players to recognize them as early as possible and to take the required precautions or countermeasures.

This guide is not concerned to provide a scientific-theoretical description of the process of co-operative regional development; nor is it directed at the "layman", who has first of all to be convinced of the necessity and advantages of regional co-operative processes. This management guide is aimed at interested players in government, administration, communities, associations, job promotion and qualification agencies, as well as in similar organizations and institutions that are concerned with sustainable regional development. However, it is also addressed at people, for example, who want to set up Local or Regional Agenda 21 groups and who are grappling with the problem of how co-operative regional development processes can be initiated and successfully implemented.

Co-operation at a regional level is a complicated, multi-layered process. It demands complex presentation. Nevertheless, in order to keep this management guide to a reasonable size, restrictions have had to be accepted. The programmatic focus is on the description of the process of co-operative regional development and its important component parts. The subject and substance of a co-operation process have been consciously avoided; sufficient publications and handbooks are already available on individual topics such as direct marketing or co-operation between business enterprises.

This guide should accompany the user in the practical realization of sustainable regional development through co-operation and networks. It is deliberately not structured as an exemplar procedure for a co-operation process. Such co-operation seldom proceeds according to a uniform pattern. Co-operation is rather explained on the basis of three important success factors.


The chapter "**Success factor: People**" deals with the players and participants in co-operative regional development.


The chapter "**Success factor: Concept**" encompasses underlying concepts, strategies and objectives.


In the chapter "**Success factor: Process**", the structures of the co-operation process and important elements of procedure are described.







The subchapters are uniformly structured and contain the same elements, thus providing clarity and facilitating orientation:

**Stumbling blocks**  describe frequently occurring practical problems; they point out what can go wrong and what can adversely affect progress and outcomes. They thus offer departure points for the finding of solutions.

**Good examples**  from specific co-operative projects and processes are intended to illustrate possible solutions.

**Tips**  provide brief advice on dealing with problems and on process optimization.









The **checklists**  support users in the realization of their own processes. The questions refer to important aspects that the practitioner needs to bear in mind.

**References**,  **links**  and **addresses**  are useful for a more intensive analysis of individual topics. Among references, publications are to be found that relate to the text as well as to further sources. The links open up further sources of information on a particular topic. The addresses provide interesting contacts concerning a particular topic and "good examples".

An extended, comprehensive version of the guide is available on the Internet ([www.fh-nb.de/lu/leitfaden](http://www.fh-nb.de/lu/leitfaden)), where direct links to Websites relevant to the particular topic, additional material and documents concerning practical applications as well as further checklists can be found.

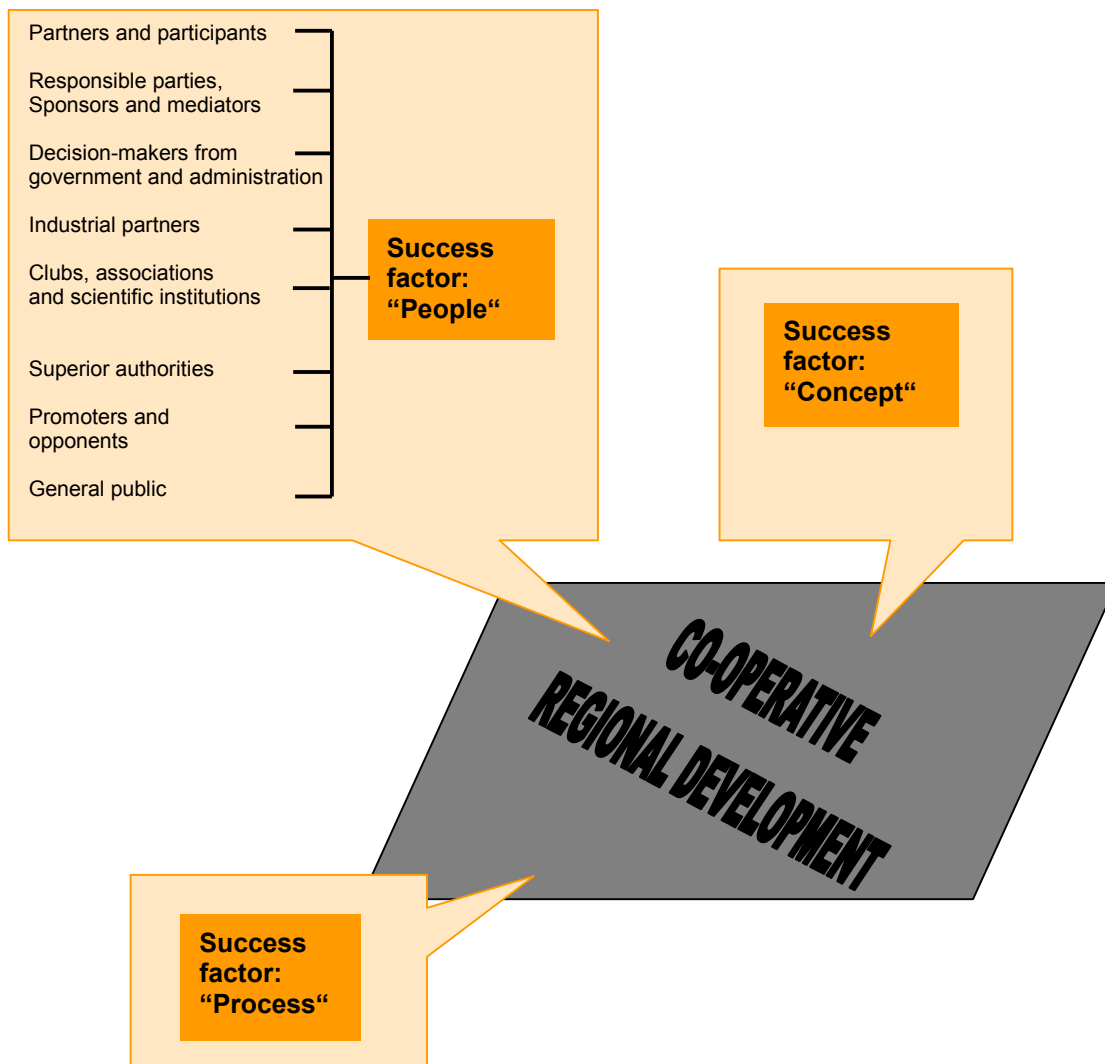
The technical background to the Guide is provided in the research report, "Auswertung neuer Vorgehensweisen für die regionale Umsetzung ökologischer Ziele am Beispiel der Mecklenburgischen Seenplatte", which can be obtained (Text 27/2002) from the Federal Environmental Agency ([www.umweltbundesamt.de](http://www.umweltbundesamt.de)).

#### Explanation of the symbols

	<b>Good example</b>
	<b>Tip</b>
	<b>Checklist</b>
	<b>References</b>
	<b>Information material</b>
	<b>Stumbling blocks</b>
	<b>Addresses</b>
	<b>Links</b>

The success or failure of co-operative regional development is decisively dependent on

- whether persons and institutions are to be found who take up the cause and **initiate the respective process**,
- whether persons and institutions at decision-making, working, co-ordinating and management levels actively support the process and are also up to the task (**responsible parties, sponsors, mediators**),
- whether decision-makers from government and administration can be involved,
- whether **companies or organizations associated with industry** get involved,
- whether organizations in the region – such as **clubs, associations, educational and research institutions** – get involved in the interest of regional development.
- whether "**promoters**" can be won over to the process and possible "**opponents**" restrained,
- whether **the general public** is positive about the project and willing to take an active role in it.



## 2. Success factor: people

## 2.1 Partners and participants in co-operative regional development

 **Stumbling blocks**

In practice, typical "stumbling blocks" lead time and again to obstruction and, not infrequently, to the failure of a project. The wrong "supporters", or an insufficient number of "supporters" are won over. This is the case, for instance, when

- important responsible parties and decision-makers – whether from communities, administrative authorities or industry, or from other important institutions – are not sufficiently involved, or do not feel involved.
- the general public does not identify or become involved with the project, and when people and organizations that can have a positive influence, as well as those responsible for particular problems, are not or cannot be involved.

The process lacks a broad basis; it is dependent to a large extent on individual people, which can lead to discouragement and excessive demands on "lone champions", or, when "achievers" quit, to the complete breakdown of the process. In every case realization is curtailed.

Co-operation projects live from the people who get involved as individuals or as members of institutions or organizations, and who jointly assume responsibility for the development of a region. Winning over a sufficient number of active supporters – and above all the right supporters – for the project, bringing them together in a network (-> development organization) and placing them in an operable context (-> process organization) requires a high degree of strategic skill. Of particular interest as potential partners are:

- persons who are important for the objectives targeted with regional development;
- persons who are predestined to participate, due to their personalities, reputations and appreciation, wealth of experience, motivation or capacity as multipliers;
- persons who can act as intermediaries between opposing interests;
- partners who show initiative and are prepared to take financial or social risks;
- partners who have already gained experience in the field of co-operation;
- sponsors who are involved with "related" problems or projects, or otherwise support change in the region; and
- people who can act as an interface between the region and the outside world (for example, politicians from the region).

**Skills are in demand**

There is a need, above all, for people with certain **key qualifications and skills**. This

applies particularly for people – such as project sponsors, mediators and promoters – who take responsibility for the process of co-operative regional development or who serve important functions.

Among these key qualifications are:

- **social skills**, such as the ability to communicate, to co-

operate, to engage in conflict and teamwork, the ability to motivate and impart knowledge to others, the ability to integrate and to lead people, as well as insight into human nature;

- **technical skills**, such as broad specialist knowledge, an overall view of work processes as a whole, conceptual and methodical abilities, as well as a background of experience;
- **process and problem solving skills**, such as problem analysis and solution, planning implementation and realization, as well as conceptual and interdisciplinary thought and action.

 **Stumbling blocks**

The absence of a co-operative spirit, inadequate capability for teamwork and group-dynamic problems are also typical stumbling blocks, which can result from

- differing capabilities, interests, expectancies and conceptions on the part of participants,
- affiliation to different institutions and the related identification,
- the absence of a common, problem-orientated language or direction (= varied problem perception and behavioural pattern),
- habits, vested interests and fears, or
- self-promotion on the part of individuals or groups

- **basic personal requirements**, such as a high degree of motivation, a positive attitude towards change, readiness for continual learning, ability to act on ones own initiative, creativity, flexibility and readiness to take risks, but also a distinct determination to succeed, belief in project realization, vigour and persistence.



### **Tips**

- Systematic screening schemes help to find co-operation partners and to develop a co-operation network.
- Develop the key qualifications of regional actors through specifically-designed qualification measures and further training programmes.
- Bear in mind the formation of "creative environments" in network development.



### **Checklist: Partners and participants**

- ✓ Which players have to be won over to co-operative regional development?
- ✓ Who will take on particular tasks and functions within the process?
- ✓ Which person(s) or institutions are qualified to sponsor and take responsibility for the process?
- ✓ Which other people or institutions should also be involved?
- ✓ Which role is played by government, administration, industry, other institutions and the general public?
- ✓ Do participants have skills appropriate to their respective functions?

## 2.2 Responsible parties, sponsors and mediators

"Goalgetters" and facilitators are required, who have a tight grip on things and who drive the process forward, also in difficult situations.

### Form a "core team".

A manageable, close circle of people has to take charge of co-operation:

- Strategic, specialized, financial or personnel decisions have to be taken at the decision –making level and responsibility assumed accordingly.
- Work has to be carried out programmatically; visions and concrete solutions must be developed and implemented.
- The process of co-operation must be organized (co-ordination and management level).

These tasks can, but need not be the responsibility of one person. With increasing complexity there generally follows a diversification of levels and functions.

**Personnel continuity** is important, for with the passage of time, accumulated knowledge, contacts and network relationships are difficult to pass on, and in many cases a change of personnel also involves a loss of information and knowledge.



### Stumbling blocks

Where regional development processes stagnate or fail, this has often to do with the fact that

- the wrong people are at the top;
- competent people have insufficient time at their disposal for co-operation;
- responsibilities are not clearly defined, or are inadequate;
- valuable information, experience and contacts are lost due to a change in personnel at the top.

The existence of a core group similarly applies to the management, operational, co-ordination and management levels, even when the redistribution of power at a political level, or other personnel changes lead time and again to a change in the core team.

### Parties responsible for co-operation - the decision level

Those responsible for co-operation point the way ahead and take decisions (-> development organization).

This function is generally performed by people at a senior hierarchy level, who have influence, resources and contacts. Political leaders, heads of administration and administrative authorities, company managers and directors, as well as important regional figures are therefore generally represented on decision-making committees.

They make a major contribution to the success of co-operation through their personal involvement (and where applicable through the provision of staff from their institutions) and through their financial involvement and commitment to co-operative action in the interest of the region. Those responsible for the process can, but need not be those who initiated co-operation.

### A close circle of active people also at the operating level

Resolutions at the decision level must be prepared and implemented. This is the task of the operating level (-> development organization)

Because decision-makers often do not have the required time, the processing and realization of co-operation are delegated to other people or institutions. This can involve staff or institutions associated with those responsible for co-operation, or other bodies and organizations that already exist or are newly-created especially for the facilitation and realization of the co-operation process (-> Regional development agency). "Decision-makers" can also involve themselves intensively with specialized or organizational solutions and take part in working groups or specific projects.

### Co-operation sponsors and responsible parties

- Mayors, administration heads,
- District administrator(s)
- Regional council(s)
- Companies
- technology institutions and transfer facilities
- Heads and members of administrative authorities
- Associations, development agencies
- Development companies
- Regional figures
- Others

The core team at the operating level **often includes members of the staff of decision-makers, specialists** or other **individuals with special qualifications**. Because certain strategic, programmatic and organizational tasks – such as discussing objectives and strategies, organizational and financing solutions, monitoring success – have to be dealt with throughout the whole process, continuity is also required at the operating

level. Moreover, the core group also provides technical support for permanent or temporary working or project groups.

This core group is normally supported by other people employed at the operating level for a limited period or on specific tasks.

#### Support through process facilitators and mediators

It is often very difficult, or even impossible for available personnel to perform the organizational tasks associated with complex regional development processes. In such cases, additional process facilitators or mediators are employed, who support and ease the burden on the decision and implementation level. Their sphere of activity and responsibility can be largely or exclusively restricted to organizational tasks; the range of activities can, however, also include programmatic tasks, such as the development of ideas, concept and project development as well as technical consultation (-> Regional development agency).

In setting up and staffing the co-ordination and implementation level, the following factors have to be taken into account:

- The **number of process facilitators**, their **qualification** and professional standing determine the importance and function of the co-ordination and advisory level within the co-operation process.
- In choosing process facilitators and deciding on their organizational integration, **internal or external solutions** can be favoured. With internal solutions, the tasks that arise are undertaken by administration members (staff/heads) in addition to their normal duties. New areas and positions of responsibility are created for these tasks within administration or incorporated into existing associations (such as special purpose municipal associations). In the case of external solutions, institutes, authorized representatives or institutions specially set up for this task outside public administration take on process facilitation (-> development organization).
- Process facilitation can be carried out by persons from within or outside the region (-> development organization). Neutrality and an "external perspective" on the part of the facilitator are generally argued in favour of employing persons from outside the region. The advantage of an internal solution is knowledge of regional players and structures. Suitable people with appropriate qualifications and the required experience might not, however, be available. Nevertheless, the co-operation project should be used to provide people from the region with the particular qualification needed to enable them to take on the role of facilitator (-> qualification).

#### Selecting the "core team"

In deciding which people or institutions should be members of the core group, the following points should be borne in mind:

- The basic requirements are interest and readiness to get actively involved in the development of the region, to assume **responsibility** for the process and to provide **time, money** and, where necessary, **personnel** from the corresponding institution.
- Potential members of the core group are people or institutions whose **areas of responsibility** are greatly affected by the co-operation project, and who are responsible, or important for, or affected by its realization.
- The resources, competence and contacts of future members are also decisive. These include:
  - informatory resources (that is, specialist knowledge, contacts),
  - personnel resources (who are needed for specific tasks),
  - political resources,
  - financial resources and
  - instrumental resources.
- Besides personal, material and specialist skills, which future members themselves contribute, the authority to decide and act, or responsibility for regionally relevant assignments and projects are also important.
- It should further be considered, that acceptance of the co-operation project is linked to a large extent to acceptance of the people who represent the project.



## 2. Success factor: people

### Clarify responsibilities

The responsibilities of individual members of the core group must be clearly laid down. For this purpose, co-operation agreements and job descriptions are helpful (-> process organization)

Where responsibility rests on several shoulders, the question must in any case be settled as to who takes responsibility for a particular task, and whether a "spokesperson" should be appointed. In the interest of better task sharing and greater effectiveness, certain material questions (special topics, financing, public relations etc.) can be entrusted to the attention of individual members.



### Tips

- Pay attention to hierarchy levels (the higher the responsible person in the hierarchy the greater his or her power of self-assertion).
- Have or develop a "good line" to important decision-makers and institutions.
- Guarantee, as far as possible, personnel continuity at the decision, operating, mediatory and co-ordination levels.
- Continuous feedback between decision-making, operating and co-ordination levels; as a result, consensual involvement and capacities flow into projects and actions, and the decision-making level provides the necessary support.



### Checklist: Parties responsible for the process, process sponsors, process facilitators

- ✓ Who takes responsibility for the process, and who takes care of its realization and facilitation?
- ✓ How much time is available to members of the core team for regional development?
- ✓ Do additional process mediators have to be employed?
- ✓ Will an internal or external facilitator be employed?
- ✓ Will the position of facilitator be filled from within or outside the region?
- ✓ Are responsibilities ideally and unambiguously regulated?
- ✓ Which skills and resources does the core group possess?
- ✓ What powers of decision and action are at the disposal of the core team?

## 2.3 Decision-makers from government and administration – important partners

Co-operative regional development without the participation of decision-makers from government and administration is, as a rule, doomed to failure. This explains why people from the political and administrative sphere are often the initiators or sponsors of regional co-operation processes. They are key figures and promoters of regional development

(-> Promoters and opponents).

### IMPORTANT DECISION-MAKERS FROM GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

#### Municipalities

Mayors, municipal parliaments  
Local administrative authorities, heads of administration

#### Districts

District administrators, district parliaments  
district offices

#### Regions

Regional assembly, regional associations, association chairmen,  
regional council presidents, district administrations

#### States

Prime minister, Members of the State Parliament (*Landtag*),  
State ministries, subordinate sectoral authorities, heads of sectoral authorities

#### Federal Republic

Federal President, Federal Chancellor, Member of the Bundestag.  
Federal ministries, subordinate sectoral authorities, heads of sectoral authorities

#### EU

Member of the European Parliament (MEP)  
Director Generals

#### Regional development co-ordinated with government and administration

Varying degrees of dependence exist between regional development and action on the part of government and administration. Successful regional development is characterized above all by the concerted involvement of different players with their available resources in the realization of regional development objectives. Because regional initiatives are normally not politically legitimized and, moreover, dispose of little or no responsibility and resources, they are particularly dependent on the approval of government, on mandatory legal instruments (for example, development planning) as well as on the financial support and participation of decision-makers from government and administration.



## 2. Success factor: people

Action in a regional context also proves increasingly advantageous for decision-makers in government and administration. For instance, classic promotion of economic development within the framework of the "Joint Programme: Improvement of Regional Economic Structure" ("*Gemeinschaftsaufgabe*")

*Verbesserung der Regionalen Wirtschaftsstruktur (GRW)* ") now proceeds from a co-operative approach; the drawing up of regional development concepts is supported.

### Participation of regional and municipal decision-makers

The interrelation between action by regional decision-makers and regional development must be pointed out, and the advantages and disadvantages of joint action frankly discussed. Consensus on the objectives, projects and priorities of future regional development has to be established, and the "sharing of assignments and work" between "traditional players" and co-operation authorities has to be regulated (who does what?). Political decision-making bodies should be regularly informed of the course and outcomes of co-operation and deliberate on the further process. On crucial issues, **decisions of principle by political bodies** should be brought about.

Of particular importance is the involvement of decision-makers from government and administration in the appropriate co-operation committees (control group, advisory board, management committee etc.) (-> Development organization).

Even when decision-makers are not firmly integrated into the co-operation process, a continual exchange of information has still to be ensured between those responsible for co-operation and decision-makers, in order to guarantee joint action in the interest of selective regional development (-> Communication)



### Stumbling blocks

The interplay between regional initiatives on the one hand and government and administration on the other hand is not always ideal. "Normal government and administrative routine" and "co-operative regional development" run side-by-side and follow different principles of action. The desired synergy often does not occur.



### Tips

- Involve all political parties. In this way, the chances are greater that required political backing is not lost with changes in the distribution of power, and that party-political considerations do not predominate.
- Political interests are hardly ever organized on a regional basis. Therefore, take joint meetings of political committees into consideration.
- Find a happy medium. Political support is important, but too much politicizing involves risks.
- A "power struggle" with decision-makers is hardly ever promising. Therefore, establish agreement, discuss and minimize conflicts of interest.
- The dual function of decision-makers as "representatives of their regional authorities or institutions" and "promoters of regional development" can lead to conflicts of interest. Considering the balancing of benefits and burdens helps to minimize this conflict.



### Checklist: Decision-makers from government and administration

- ✓ Which decision-makers from government and administration are important?
- ✓ Which function do they have within the regional development process?
- ✓ With which topics or decisions must decision-makers be involved without fail?
- ✓ On which committees must decision-makers from government and administration be represented?
- ✓ In which areas is agreement with decision-makers to be expected; in which areas are conflicts of interest to be expected?
- ✓ Which precautions should be taken, so that even with changes in the distribution of power continuity in regional development is guaranteed?

## 2.4 Industrial partners are welcome

The development of a region is largely determined by the business enterprises located there and their economic power. The economic development of a region is therefore one of the main concerns of co-operative regional development. This can be tackled together with industry.



### Stumbling blocks

Fear of becoming involved, differing approaches and decision criteria on the part of public institutions, the general public, interest groups and industry still obstruct and hinder the development and realization of common objectives and projects. But fears on the part of industry of possible competitive disadvantages in the region, resulting from greater transparency, also lead to the failure of industry to participate.

### Co-operation is of mutual interest

Business enterprises increasingly recognize the necessity and advantages of regional action and involve themselves in and on behalf of the region. In a number of regional development processes, business enterprises or their representatives (chambers of commerce and industry, associations, trade guilds etc.) are major participants. They promote co-operation and bear a substantial part of resulting costs.

The basis for successful regional development is provided by the removal of existing barriers, supporting the exchange of information and the alignment of interests between industry, public institutions, the general public and interest groups,

### Business enterprises and institutions closely associated with industry

- **Farming and forestry**, agricultural co-operatives
- **Processing and manufacturing industry** (craftsmen, traders, food producers, industry etc.)
- **Service companies, such as the hotel and catering trade**, retailing, banks and credit institutions, consulting centres ...
- **Technology companies and facilities**
- **Industry and employee representatives**, including chambers of industry and commerce, associations, trade guilds, trades unions ...

### There are many reasons for the participation of industry

Business enterprises exist in a regional context. Not only "**hard location factors**" (such as land, traffic infrastructure, technological facilities) are important for business development, but also "**soft location factors**" (such as environment, housing availability, leisure and recreational opportunities, educational and cultural facilities, shopping) are concerns shared by many regional initiatives.

Practice shows that it is above all through an integrated approach – that is, the **interlocking of different sectors** – that regional competitive advantages develop. And



### Good example

The founding of the Regional Development Agency for south-east Lower Saxony (**Regionalen Entwicklungsagentur für Südostniedersachsen e.V. (reson)**) took place within the scope of regional co-operation between companies. The founding members were Volkswagen AG, Salzgitter AG, trades unions, regional authorities, the State of Lower Saxony represented by the Braunschweig District Administration, (rural) districts as well as self-governing cities and universities in south-east Lower Saxony. The Agency has 43 members, of which the majority are companies (as at 1998).

The basic financing of *reson* is covered by the membership contributions of businesses (per employee/month 0.50 DM), regional authorities (0.01 DM per employee) and trades unions (0.01 DM per union member). In the main, *reson's* work is financed by companies. The aims of the Regional Development Agency are

- to mobilize regional potentials and location factors,
- to stabilize economic relations in the region,
- to strengthen the region's economic power,
- to maintain employment perspectives in the region and
- to improve regional living, working and environmental conditions.
- Attention is focused on traffic technology and environment, project co-ordination and technology transfer, labour market and qualification measures, participation in a regional start-up initiative and in regional innovation management, as well as on the drawing-up of a regional development concept.

in this respect, industry assumes a leading role. The combination of different measures – such as the development of new products and applications, the strengthening of regional economic cycles and related training and qualification strategies – leads to revenue effects both for companies and the region.

## 2. Success factor: people

**Inter-company co-operation and networks** between farms, small and medium-sized businesses and the tourism industry are also concerns and consequences of regional co-operation.

Without the active co-operation of industry, many ideas and projects could only be realized with great difficulty, if at all.

Be it, that projects or facilities can only be realized and operated under the joint responsibility of private enterprise and the authorities (PPP – private-public-partnership); be it, that evolved ideas can only be realized when private investors are found.

### **Practical co-operation of relevance to industry**

- Improvement in relations between regional producers and regional markets
- Co-operation between companies and other regional players
- Improvement of the economic culture through training and testing with pilot projects
- Better use of previously neglected opportunities provided by the local market
- Alliances for the distribution of typical regional products
- Creation of vocational training and qualification facilities
- Establishment of business service centres
- Creation of support structures for technological innovation

## 2.5 Clubs, associations, scientific institutions – regional development partners

Other local institutions that are active in the region – such as clubs, chambers of industry and trade, associations, churches, training and scientific facilities – can be useful for the process of regional development. They represent the interests of a multitude of individual players.

### Seek common ground with clubs, chambers and associations

The active life frequently found in clubs, for instance, can be put to good use for the process of regional development. It is often the active – and voluntary – members of clubs who can

decisively support the process of regional development. Activities initiated within the framework of regional development can also lead to the long-term involvement of people with a particular job or project, and to their banding together in a club.

Constructive co-operation should also be sought with other regional and local institutions, such as associations and chambers of industry and trade.

### Social and political involvement on the part of the established churches

The established churches can also be an important partner as well as a link to sections of the population that are normally difficult to reach. The academies closely associated with the churches are important providers of information and training, and by a variety of means they already make the question of sustainable regional development the subject of discussion.

### Educational and scientific institutions

A key task of regional development is the networking of skills and know-how in the region. Contacts to educational and scientific institutions as well as to technology transfer centres are therefore important, so that available know-how and working capacity can be utilized at a reasonable cost in the interest of the region. Co-operation with local and regional educational and scientific institutions is possible in many ways:

- **Universities and colleges of higher education** can work "on behalf of" the region on issues and problems of relevance to the region by tailoring project, dissertation and other work to regional issues. These institutions can be involved in the conceptual development of the region or in individual projects, and they can also take responsibility for certain projects. On the other hand, the process of regional development can also be of use in the beneficial application of the knowledge of the region that is concentrated in these institutions, which can thus be exploited as a "locational advantage" in terms of regional development.
- **Educational institutions** can be used to educate the general public and make it sensitive to regional development. Educational institutions of every complexion can be made use of. Adult education facilities are particularly worth mentioning. But general educational institutions for children and young people can also develop and impart tailor-made programmes of information, training and further qualification in the form of lessons, courses and information material (-> Qualification).



### Stumbling blocks

**Institutions, which are resident and active in the region, are often not specifically employed for regional development. Be it, that the objectives pursued by individual institutions, the positions they represent and their creative potentialities are too little known; be it, that conflict with other positions, views and interests is avoided.**

### Clubs, associations, chambers

- Nature conservation and environment protection associations
- Social organizations
- Industrial associations (such as, the Farmers' union, Chamber of Craft Trades, Chamber of Industry and Trade, Retail trade Association and local or regional trade associations)
- Trades unions,
- Job promotion organizations,
- Cultural centres, local history clubs
- Landscape conservation associations and clubs
- Sports associations and clubs



## 2. Success factor: people



### Good example

**Edelhof Agricultural College** plays a key role in the management of the *Waldviertel*. Not only is regional management based there, the Director of the Agricultural College has also been appointed regional manager in personal union. Furthermore, through its training and further qualification programmes, its regular publication of information and its contacts to former graduates as well as through research studies and practical experimentation in implementation, the College has made a major contribution to the fact, that normally rather traditionally-orientated farmers are now open for sustainable forms of management and diversified agricultural products (for example, the cultivation of medicinal plants) and additional activities (for example, energy production with biomass). This way, a sizeable number of farmers have been convinced of the advantages of putting their operations on an ecological basis (farming, energy), and there has been an increase in value added in the region.

### Their contribution to regional development

Co-operation with these institutions opens up opportunities for regional development in several respects:

- As recognized institutions, they are important partners and also important intermediaries so far as their staff and students are concerned.
- Moreover, the information, consultancy and other services provided by these institutions can be useful for regional development and possibly tailor-made to regional demands.
- Under certain circumstances, assignments or projects can arise, which can be jointly managed in the sense of a private-public-partnership (PPP) or transferred to the responsibility of these institutions.

These institutions should therefore be represented on regional decision-making and working committees, and involved in discussions on objectives and strategies as well as in appropriate projects.



### Tips

- Establish transparency concerning the objectives, activities, projects, experiences and resources of institutions based and active in the region, for example through "round tables", "open days" and information material.
- Approach regional institutions with questions, problems and requirements arising in connection with regional development.
- Convey information and know-how from regional institutions into the region.
- Develop consultancy and other services for the region.



### Checklist: Regional institutions

- ✓ Which of the institutions based and active in the region are of importance for regional development?
- ✓ Which information, programmes, services and experts do institutions offer and how can these be used?
- ✓ Should, or can these institutions develop proposals tailored to the interests of regional development?
- ✓ How can these institutions be integrated organizationally and programmatically?

## 2.6 Regional development – Initiatives from below with support from above

Successful regional development is largely based on the involvement of local players in the region. Regional initiatives and activities are especially successful when influential supporters at a high level are convinced of their substance and objectives and thereby won over to the process.



### Stumbling blocks

Superior authorities have an important initiatory and consulting function. However, problems still occur

- when, after an initial assisted start, the process has still not been successfully established in the region and transferred to the region's own responsibility, or
- when the demands and ideas of superior authorities excessively restrict the free development of regional ideas and strategies.

### Varied support

Superior sectoral authorities, the state government or individual state ministries increasingly see themselves as partners of the regions.

- They are initiators, promoters, mediators and co-ordinators of regional co-operation projects.
- Co-operation approaches can often be traced back to initiatives on the part of the state or other superior authorities.
- They offer **moral and personnel support**, in so much as authority staff provide advice and monitor the process, both in its individual phases and as a whole, and



### Good example

The State of **Schleswig-Holstein**, represented by the state planning authority, is of major importance for the development of the **Eider-Treene-Sorge** region. To start with, the state government approved the draft outline of a regional development concept and then approached regional players in order to jointly concretize and implement the draft concept. A state planner was appointed as the government's co-ordinator for the Eider-Treene-Sorge region. In the initial phase, in particular, the state planning authority provided required impetus. It co-ordinates interests across specialized and community boundaries and is particularly important for the development of implementation strategies in the area of agriculture/nature conservation/water resources management. The state planning authority accompanies and supports the region in the role of conciliator when new concepts for action have to be developed and innovative projects introduced (for example, the regional pilot projects "Work, Environment and Tourism" and "Energy"). Following a prolonged period of support, responsibility is increasingly shifted to the regional level.

also carry out project co-ordination.

- They support the **know-how and instrumental skills** of regional players through the exchange of information and experience, informatory publications and recommendations for action, and they promote co-operative regional development with pilot projects.
- Above all, through the creation of appropriate **political, legal and financial conditions** as well as the provision of **development aid**, the regions are encouraged towards co-operation and correspondingly supported. In this way, different states promote co-operative regional development through grants for development concepts, the prioritization of support for projects based on consensual concepts, or through financial aid support the region at the personnel level in the development and realization of concepts as well as in the equipping of offices.
- Through the **networking of sectoral departments** – for instance, through interdepartmental working groups – support programmes, which are important for regional development, can be better co-ordinated and bundled.

## 2. Success factor: people



### **Good example**

The Free State of Bavaria, in particular the State Ministry for Regional Development and Environmental Issues, supports regional co-operation processes in a variety of ways. Every two years it organizes a so-called "review (or balance) conference", at which new approaches to regional development are presented, experiences with implementation reported on and dialogue made possible between government and administration, researchers and practitioners. Apart from the documentation of "review conferences", the Ministry has also commissioned and published several studies on the topic of regional management (implementation, experiences from Germany and Europe, regional management in public-private-partnership).



### **Tips**

- **Make early contact with superior authorities. This makes the project more widely known and provides a large number of valuable pointers to programmes, procedures or comparable projects and to partners with relevant experience.**
- **Organize a continuous exchange of information in the form of printed material, progress reports, telephone contacts, personal discussions, local meetings etc.**
- **Develop a co-operative relationship; disclose difficulties and search for solutions together.**
- **Working discussions on specific problems and projects at a local level aid co-ordination and harmonization between different sectoral administrative authorities and departments.**



### **Checklist:**

- √ **Which superior authorities can provide support, and how?**
- √ **At which point in time must they be involved the process?**
- √ **Is it advisable to involve superior authorities in committees and decision-making processes?**

## 2.7 Promoters and opponents in the process of regional development

It is important to involve influential advocates (promoters) who, due to their reputation and authority, their knowledge, political power or available resources, can speak up for the project.

If critics (opponents) are put in their place at an early stage, an important step is taken in the direction of successful co-operative regional development.

### Support by promoters

Promoters can support regional development processes in a variety of ways. Individuals can fulfil several functions and also hold varying functions in different situations:

- **Expert promoters** support the process with their knowledge, experience and authority, which is in turn based on expert knowledge. They provide support through information, consultancy or through the performance of specific assignments that fall within their area of responsibility.
- **Power promoters** have at their disposal the means to provide resources and thus accelerate the process, and also to block opponents and stop competitive projects. Apart from that, they can ensure the necessary backing and political acceptance, and can contribute to the legitimization of the process. The co-operation of influential representatives bestows great political importance on the project. Withdrawal would be a political issue and can therefore not be employed as a threat or instrument of power. They also fulfil a door-opening function; experience shows that the readiness to co-operate increases when a superior authority appears as supporter and promoter. Furthermore, the chances of mobilizing further financial and personnel resources or legal instruments increase.
- **Process promoters** contribute above all to overcoming organizational and administrative obstacles. They have knowledge of organizational matters as well as diplomatic skills, and they act as intermediaries between different interests, different ways of thinking and expression. They can be of help in overcoming obstacles and resistance, and also in the (timely) identification of contacts with linked subsystems.
- **Relationship promoters** have close networks of contacts at their disposal, which they maintain on account of their personal attributes. They are important opinion-makers who fulfil a significant mediatory function for their clients. They can also influence the media by exploiting their means of access.

Promoters of regional development can include:

- **politicians** at a local, regional, state, federal or EU level, such as regional council presidents, district administrators, mayors, members of state parliaments and of the Bundestag, or members of the European Parliament;
- **heads of administrative authorities** who have great influence on account of their function or expert and instrumental competence;
- **representatives** of other organizations or institutions, such as associations, foundations, research and educational institutions.

A personal appeal to promoters is advisable. In order that promoters can perform the role selected for them, they must be informally, procedurally and strategically involved in the co-operation process. They must at least be involved in platforms of communication and interaction. Promoters should also participate in decision-making committees or be firmly involved through other bodies, such as a board of trustees (-> Process organization).



### Stumbling blocks

**In practice, the development of a promoter and support network fails time and again, because the promoters required for the project cannot be won over, or are not involved at an early stage, on a continuous basis or strategically.**

**Not infrequently, objectives, approaches or outcomes of co-operative regional development are continually called into question and the process thus impeded and perhaps even thwarted.**





## 2. Success factor: people

### Obstruction by opponents

Blockers or opponents can influence the process with the same intensity. It is important, therefore, to localize potential critics as early as possible and to question their motives, in order to be prepared for counter-arguments. It is essential to face criticism and to tackle the arguments of the opposing side. Dialogue should be sought, even when differences of opinion and conflicts cannot always be settled in this way. The mutual exchange of opinion on different positions can have the result that the relationship improves. Promoters can also contribute to the settling of conflicts (-> Conflicts)



#### **Tips**

- Talk with critics and face criticism.
- Call in an "intermediary".
- Develop "win-win" situations, where both sides benefit.
- Force opponents to assume responsibility.



#### **Checklist: Promoters and opponents of co-operative regional development**

- ✓ Where is support by promoters necessary/possible?
- ✓ How can promoters support the process?
- ✓ Who can act as promoters?
- ✓ How are promoters informed and convinced of the project?
- ✓ How are promoters involved organizationally?
- ✓ Who are (potential) opponents and what are their motives?
- ✓ What is the appropriate response to critics?

## 2.8 Regional development – not without the people

Regional development without the participation of the people of the region is generally not possible. "Making participants out of those affected", and using their knowledge in the interest of sustainable regional development, must be the aim of every regional development. The creativity, objective approach to problems and the experience and knowledge of the general public are important in achieving solutions that are shared by people. The time required to involve those affected in the setting of objectives is more than made good by the speedier realization of the project.



### Stumbling blocks

In practice, the participation of the region's inhabitants is often more difficult than at first expected. Regional development processes suffer time and again from

- limited interest and insufficient involvement on the part of the public,
- the inadequate ability to articulate needs and to get them accepted against the interests of others,
- rapidly decreasing motivation in working groups,
- inadequate perception and consideration of the desires and needs of people on the part of those responsible for the process.

### Timing, intensity and methods are decisive

The success of participation of those affected is decided above all by the timing, intensity and methods of participation (-> Participation)

These, in turn, are largely determined by the objectives, substance and projects of regional development.

The **role** that the **local population** is to play in future regional development has therefore to be established at a very early stage of the process. The realization of regional objectives is frequently impossible without the active co-operation of the public; for instance when living and consumer habits are to be changed in order to save resources and improve regional economic and substance-related cycles. Development processes for the purposes of Agenda 21, in particular, are based to a large degree on public involvement.

"Dialogue with the people" is in every case not an end in itself, but rather a means to further develop and realize project and process objectives. It helps to defuse conflicts and to increase the practical value of projects and measures that need to be implemented.



### Good example

Plenum is the name of a new, innovative nature conservation and environmental protection strategy in the state of Baden-Württemberg. The concept has been tested on a trial basis since 1995 in the towns of **Isny and Leutkirch** in the **Ravensburg District**. The project serves the long-term protection of habitats, their ecological functions and the sustainable use of all resources. In addition, the **PLENUM** project intends to ease the burden on the environment through the regionalization of economic, energy and capital cycles and to develop new, sustainable perspectives. The project does not pursue mandatory nature and environmental protection, but rather encourages players to support environmental protection and nature conservation in their region on a broad and voluntary basis. Against this background, the project appeals to the general public, as well as to political representatives, companies etc. All are called upon to participate in working groups, and regional knowledge is used to develop solutions to problems. Information is provided and exchanged on topical matters at regular meetings. The regional concept of involved citizens was developed within the framework of innovation groups.

Through the involvement and participation of widely differing target groups more than 100 projects have been initiated. The restaurant and catering trade, for instance, makes use of regional products, inclusive offers in connection with events and environmental standards. Women have increased farm revenues by developing party services and direct marketing activities, the local population as well as visitors and tourists are informed about the qualities and products of the region, and companies and communities are involved in eco-audits within the framework of the project.

### Determine target groups

Within the regional population there is a broad spectrum of interests and opinions. It has therefore to be determined at a very early stage, taking account of planned objectives and projects, whether the **public at large** is to be addressed or **certain groups** targeted.

In many regional development projects the effort is made to involve different **sections of the population** by means of appropriate activities and methods. Depending on the

## 2. Success factor: people

particular objectives and projects, the following people can be involved in working groups:

- Certain age- and social-groups, such as pensioners, youths, children, schoolchildren, women on farms.
- People in certain professions, such as entrepreneurs, traders, farmers, restaurateurs, landlords, hoteliers.
- People as (potential) buyers and consumers of regional products.
- Guests and holidaymakers who are in the region for only a short time.



### **Tips**

- In order to reach people, it is absolutely essential to speak the "language of the people".
- Appropriate methods and techniques have to be selected to create an open and creative culture of discussion.
- Experience shows that readiness to participate increases with the extent to which people are affected, and with the preciseness of the task or project. The more individuals are affected and the more precise the task or projects the more intensive the participation.
- If the direct benefit of the project is successfully communicated, involvement increases.
- Strategies of reward for voluntary involvement, in the form of public recognition, also on the part of government, have to be developed and applied.
- Proposals and projects developed by the general public have to be acknowledged by political decision-makers and, where possible, taken up and reported back on.
- Transparency and understanding between government, administration and the general public are important, as well as transparent procedural and decision-making processes.



### **Checklist: Public participation**

- √ Which role does the local population play in future regional development?
- √ Does the public already have to be involved in decision-making, that is, in the formulation of objectives and projects?
- √ Are objectives or projects involved that cannot be realized without the participation of the local population?
- √ Which point in time, which intensity and which methods are suitable?
- √ Which target groups should be reached within the local population?



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### 3. Success factor: concept

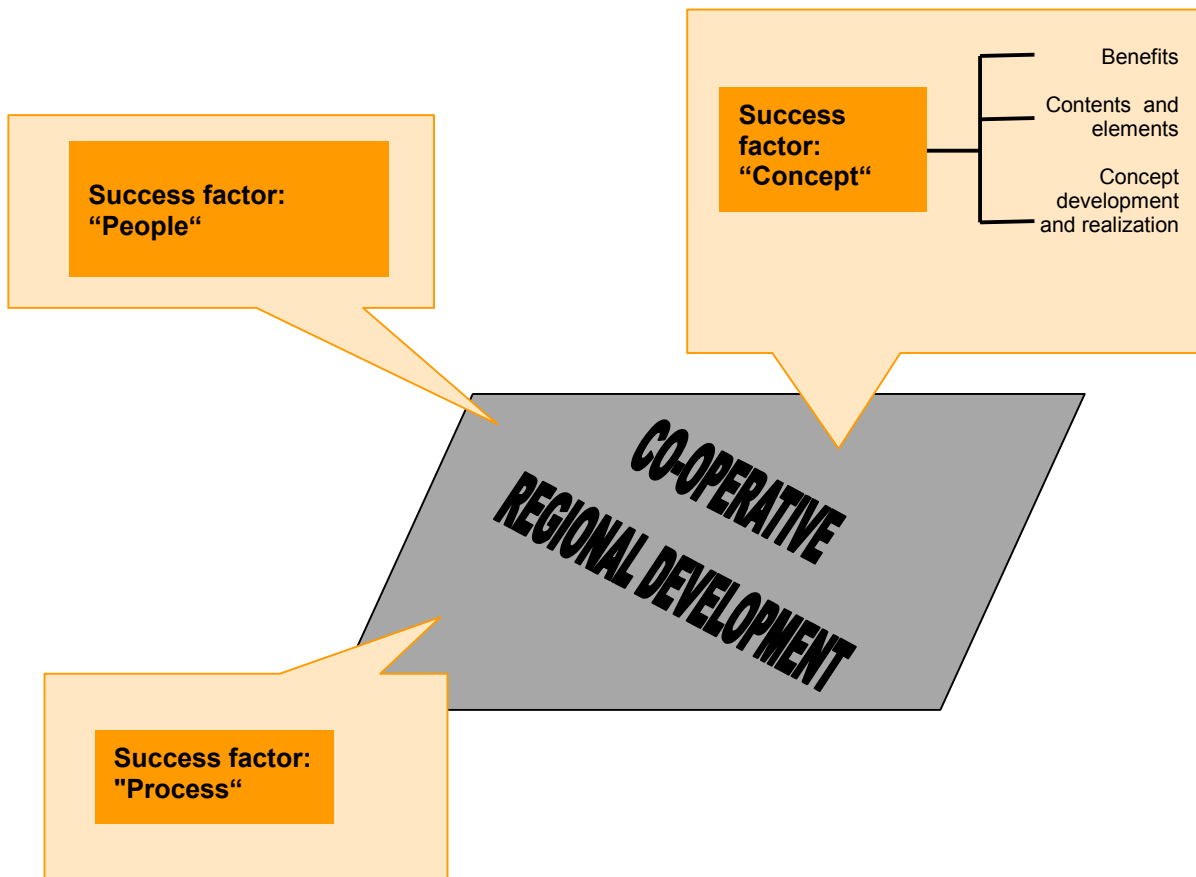


### 3. Success factor: concept

Successful regional development means arousing new dynamism in the region for the purpose of sustainable development. The success or failure of co-operative regional development is thus dependent on formulated objectives and strategies as well as on the projects that have been started.

For co-operative regional development this means

- not falling into frantic activity – without having an objective in mind or without losing sight of the objective;
- acting in an integrative way that is directed at the long-term perspective, and frequently reflecting on such action;
- formulating the "right" objectives, strategies and projects – that is, such as are tailored to the region, co-ordinated with regional players and, above all, realizable – and, when necessary, concentrating them in a regional development concept;
- actively involving regional players in the initial discussion on objectives, strategies and projects, as well as in the related decision-making process;
- Consistently pursuing and realizing formulated objectives, strategies and projects.



### 3.1 On the benefit of regional development concepts

Successful regional development stands for comprehensive action for the purpose of sustainability. An approach, which is exclusively or predominantly orientated towards individual projects, is not enough. Projects are mostly concerned with the short term; they are aimed at visible and presentable effects.

As a result, aspects that can only be developed in the long term, such as regional culture or an innovative environment, are inevitably neglected. Moreover, projects are concentrated - spatially and from the timing aspect – and achieve, at best, oasis effects. Systematic development of the area is required, and individual projects should be embedded in a regional strategy.

#### Where are we, where do we want to go and how do we reach our destination?

There has to be clarity and unity among participants on these issues. It is a matter of finding a common approach to problems that is accepted by all participants. In addition, consensus has to be achieved on objectives and strategies as well as on specific

measures for the realization of these objectives. Regional development concepts can be of help. These can, but need not necessarily be the basis of co-operative regional development. At least partial recourse can be made to existing concepts or studies. Where a manageable isolated action or individual project is concerned, one can perhaps even do without a concept.



#### Stumbling blocks

Where regional action is marked by activity for the sake of activity, the absence of a plan, inadequate programmatic structure and stringency as well as the stringing together of isolated actions and individual projects, the reason is often that regional development is not based on a regional development concept that is itself consistent. The necessity of a concept is perhaps not appreciated; the personnel and resources required for its preparation are possibly not available.

#### Regional development concepts - a model for the future of the region with concrete objectives and projects

Regional development concepts do not represent formal planning, but rather a model for the future of the region with specific objectives and projects. In practice, these concepts run under different terms and designations, such as partial appraisals, regional development concepts, regional concepts for action, integrated action concepts and regional development planning.

All these concepts share the following features:

- They are **informal, voluntary** instruments **without legal obligation**. They achieve their effect exclusively through the self-commitment of regional players.
- They are **flexible** and **open**. Neither form nor procedure nor area is predefined. Concepts begin with the precise circumstances, problems and potentials of the region.
- They have a distinct **orientation towards action and realization**, and they involve the players of a region and so-called endogenous potentials.
- They pursue an integrated approach and endeavour to further regional development through the **co-ordination** and **grouping** of different sectors and areas of responsibility.

#### Outcome and process count – the path is the goal!

The outcome, but also the path that leads there, decide on the acceptance and realization of regional development concepts.

##### • The outcome:

Concepts provide information on where the region stands, where it wants to go and how it will achieve its objectives. In order to achieve the highest possible degree of commitment, central-planning proposals should be laid down and documented.

##### • The path:

The creative process associated with concept elaboration is also important. Renewal begins in the mind. People must come together; they must reflect and think ahead; they can get annoyed about each other; they can be pleased with each other. Imagination develops. People who are intellectually active develop self-confidence. Imagination and self-confidence – this fuel mix develops unexpected dynamism. Concepts therefore also have an important motivation, mobilization and integration function.



#### The inward effect

In a variety of ways, regional development concepts have an inward effect, an effect on the region:

- They activate internal forces and initiate activities.
- They create transparency concerning current regional planning, projects and initiatives, and they better co-ordinate the activities of regional players.
- They help to develop a regional awareness, a regional identity.
- They create a common objective; they highlight and avoid conflicts concerning objectives.
- They formulate priorities for regional action.
- They network and bundle important development projects of a region; they identify synergy effects and utilize them.
- They demonstrate the potentialities and opportunities of regional co-operation, and they promote regional co-operation.
- They develop proposals orientated towards actions and projects.
- They serve to steer and control the co-operation process.

#### The outward effect

Regional development concepts also have an outward effect:

- They document for other people the direction in which the region intends to develop.
- They assist government and administration in decisions on the granting of development aid.
- By the precise use of their own funds and support programmes through the identification of prioritized projects, they can contribute to the preferential and accelerated treatment of applications for support.
- With certain institutions and programmes (such as the LEADER and INTERREG funding programmes of the EU, or the "Joint Programme: Improvement of Regional Economic Structure" (GRW)) they are a prerequisite for acceptance in support programmes and the granting of funding for investive projects.

#### Flexible treatment

There is no general rule as to when regional development concepts should be drawn up or made available. The preparation of the regional development concept – that is, intensive involvement with the regional situation, regional problems and development options – is frequently also the **start** of regional co-operation.

Development concepts can also be prepared, however, during the course of co-operation. The required funds might not at first be available. The decision might be taken to wait until a certain cohesion is created in the region through early projects, before work is started on extensive conceptual considerations. Key problems can perhaps only be identified after prolonged discussions.



### **Good example**

In the **Mecklenburg Lake District**, the regional development concept was only prepared after activities were already running and projects had been realized within the framework of the co-operative regional development process. With the regional development concept, the previous process was to be evaluated, experiences reviewed and necessary changes and supplementary action summarized in a strategy. The aim of the concept was therefore reflection and a strategic reorientation of the process.

Regional development concepts are not rigid, but rather dynamic instruments. Changed general conditions or prioritization, as well as the evaluation of previous processes and programmes, can and must lead to the updating and reworking of processes. In the interest of process continuity, it is important not to undertake a complete change of course, or to wholly reject the concept, but rather to achieve necessary course corrections through modifications.

### **Costs and financing**

The costs of drawing up a regional development concept are dependent on the following factors:

- the subject range,
- the degree of detail,
- the approach (methods) and
- the scope of internal activities or the commissioning of concepts from external institutes or experts.
- A further cost factor is the print run.



### **Good example**

The **Müritz National Park Plan** is procedurally and programmatically innovative. The draft plan was subject to a broad participation process. So far as its content is concerned, the plan goes beyond the conservation and development plans that are normally drawn up. Apart from natural environmental questions, this plan, which has an analytic character, deals also with the socio-economic significance of the National Park for the communities of the National Park area and the surrounding region. Besides concepts and objectives of future development, the National Park Plan contains, in an additional volume, an extended package of specific measures and projects of regional development. These were agreed with the parties affected and with those bearing responsibility.

Financial support is available for the preparation and realization of regional development concepts through different funding institutions and programmes (GRW, LEADER+, Interreg). Concepts of other departments (agricultural structure development planning, development plans for sub-areas such as National Parks etc.) can also be drawn on.



### 3. Success factor: concept



#### Tips

- Making use of regional know-how saves costs and provides important ideas for future planning.
- Allow enough time for the preparation of the concept; the path is also the goal.
- Consideration of plans, studies or expert opinions that have already been presented.
- Regular examination of the concept on the basis of previous results and experiences.



#### Checklist: Necessity of regional development concepts

- ✓ Where are we, where do we want to go and how do we get there?
- ✓ Does co-operative regional development require a concept?
- ✓ Is the drawing-up of a regional development concept necessary for the promotion of regional development both within and outside the region?
- ✓ Can recourse be made in some cases to material/expert opinions/concepts that are already available?
- ✓ When will the drawing-up of a regional development concept commence?
- ✓ When is an update necessary?
- ✓ How can the regional development concept be financed?



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### 3.2 Substance and elements of co-operative regional development

The regional development concept has the function of providing necessary information on the region, its problems and its development perspectives, and of deducing from it objectives, strategies and specific measures for future regional development.

#### Finding the "right" solution for the region

In order to point the "right" way ahead for the future of the region, the solutions formulated in the development concept must

- be tailored to general regional conditions and core problems,
- be innovative, but also realizable by and with regional players,
- be broadly supported in the region,
- be within realistic financial limits and
- be realizable within a reasonable period of time.

Individual selective measures or regional pilot projects (for instance, regional marketing) can be involved, or a package of related or complementary projects and measures.

Planning should be as detailed as possible, but also as condensed and specifically targeted as possible. Because it concerns a dynamic planning method, the concept can and should be concretized and qualified during the course of co-operation.

In drawing up regional development concepts, certain procedural steps and methods should be observed. In planning, one should deal with the following five elements:

#### Element 1: Regional diagnosis or problem analysis

Problem analysis is the starting point of every planning process. It identifies "concernment" and forms groups; it balances interests, develops a collective call for action and identifies common interests. With problem analysis, not only does a regional analysis have to be considered, but also external conditions.

- **The regional analysis** is concerned with the conditions and structural problems of the region:
  - natural and environmental resources;
  - culture and identity;
  - infrastructure;
  - human resources, know-how and qualification structure;
  - economic activities and companies, markets and external relations, image and perception of the region, financial resources;
  - self-control, self-organization etc.

Recourse can frequently be made in this connection to available data and knowledge derived from experience.

Links between different areas have to be clarified and interrelations shown. Expert opinions, concepts and plans must be evaluated. Current and planned projects are also

of interest. The reasons for the failure of important projects should be scrutinized; this



#### Stumbling blocks

**Not always are the objectives, substance and recommendations for action of a regional development concept congruent with key regional development issues. There can be different reasons for this:**

- **No internal innovative way was found, but merely solutions of other regions adopted without due consideration.**
- **The regional actors of most importance for future regional development – and their resources – were not (sufficiently) involved.**
- **The wrong development priorities were set.**
- **Measures and projects were arbitrarily strung together without an overall concept being recognizable.**

#### Elements of a regional development concept and a plan of action

REGIONAL DIAGNOSIS  
"ACTUAL" SITUATION

REGIONAL VISION  
AND  
OBJECTIVES OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
"ANTICIPATED" SITUATION

STRATEGIES  
SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

FIELDS OF ACTION, PROJECTS  
ACTION CORRIDOR  
PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

PROGRESS CONTROL  
RESULT MONITORING AND CONCEPT RENEWAL

### 3. Success factor: concept

could provide important insights concerning the region and future regional development strategy.

- **The analysis of general external conditions** assists the identification of possible opportunities and risks. Within the scope of this analysis, those factors should be determined and analysed that are particularly significant for the future development of the region, such as current trends for instance.
- Special characteristics, key strategic factors and important departure points for future development can be deduced from the **comparison of the regional analysis and the analysis of general conditions**.

Different methods and techniques can be used for regional diagnosis:

SWOT Analysis	
Strengths?	Weaknesses?
Opportunities?	Threats?

- An **analysis of strengths and weaknesses** of the region also provides the most important departure points for development strategy. That can be particular strengths of the region. It could, however, also be key limitations, whose redressing unfolds new development possibilities.
- **SWOT Analysis** (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) is the extended form, with which, besides strengths and weaknesses, the opportunities and risks of regional development are considered.
- With benchmarking, a region's products, services and business processes are measured systematically against the strongest competitors, or against those regions that are regarded, so far as certain segments are concerned, as "leading" or "exemplary".
- With the help of **scenarios**, possible pictures of the future and their expected interdependence are deduced argumentatively from recognizable trends. In order to highlight different development options, contrasting scenarios are drawn up and discussed.

#### Element 2: Regional vision and objectives of regional development

##### Important objective and subjective sources of information

- One-to-one conversations and/or moderated discussions with committed people from the region.
- One-to-one conversations with people outside the region to ascertain the external view.
- Statistics and other records.
- Available expert opinions or plans, and the data and information contained therein.
- History/historical background.

Regional awareness is an important prerequisite for regional co-operation, the formation of all-embracing network structures and the direction of a regional development strategy. Many regions lack this common regional identity.

A regional vision is helpful in this respect. Beginning with strengths and weaknesses, the vision is developed of a worthwhile future. In this connection, a high-profile vision in the form of a **charter** or "**contract for the future**" has proven successful.

In formulating the vision, the following questions are helpful: "Where do we come from? Who are we? Where are we going? Out of the "3i"-strategy: identity, initiative and innovation, the outline of a concept emerges. A

vision of the future is required that suits the region and appears to be attainable, that opens up new opportunities and spurs people on.



##### "Adirondack ethics"

The **Adirondack Economic Development Corporation (AEDC)** pursues with the concept of "Adirondack Ethics" a vision of an integrated development of Adirondack Park. The healthy development of the National Park is intended to be linked with the long-term economic development of the affected communities in such a way, that the uniqueness of Adirondack is preserved. The AEDC's perspective is regional and consensus-orientated; reliance is made on a private-public-partnership in which all players have a part in a long-term economic vision for Adirondack Park, which is authentic, attainable, successful and ecologically sustainable.

This motto should run like a "central thread" through fields of action and projects. A compact guiding principle, a slogan that is both catchy and stimulating, is ideal, even if it is not always realizable.

Besides the general regional concept, **sector concepts** and regional development principles have also to be formulated for individual sectors. These concepts have to be free of contradiction.

To be able to achieve tangible success, besides a concept, **specific objectives** are also needed. Unambiguous objectives are understood by everybody, they provide orientation and help participants – also in confused situations – to determine the right measures. Objectives are specific when they are plainly measurable with the help of indicators and relate to a clear target.

In bringing and grouping together the varied and, in part, contrary ideas of different players, conflicts on objectives are generally unavoidable. Such conflicts should be discussed, and ways of resolving them demonstrated in the form of win-win strategies. In this way, **prioritized actions** for the region can be developed.

### Element 3: Strategies

Based on the vision and objectives, strategies are formulated for the long-term development of the region. Strategically important areas are established. It is more promising to concentrate on ones strengths, than to compensate for existing weaknesses at the cost of a great deal of energy and resources.

Different paths can be taken, depending on the departure point, participating players as well as on regional identity and potential. Creativity and resourcefulness are decisive. Innovative approaches to solutions are required that come about, above all, through links between sectors that have previously been separated from each other.

Strategic pillars for regional development can be

- **diversification strategies**, by means of which new product lines in the predominant economic sector (agriculture, manufacturing industry, tourism) are promoted and the range of products extended;
- strategies for joint action, by which companies or suppliers form networks or other types of co-operation and carry out integrative projects;
- strategies for the revival of traditions and historical heritage;
- **win-win strategies**, with which fields of action that were previously ridden with conflict are brought together and mutually-beneficial solutions developed;
- **qualification strategies; and**
- **marketing strategies.**

### Element 4: Fields of action and projects

These predetermined strategies must be operationalized and concretized in fields of action. Regional development concepts can cover a broad spectrum of co-operation spheres; they can also concentrate on individual topics and key responsibilities. Certain programmatic demands have to be borne in mind, however, that depend on support programmes (for example, GRW), through which such concepts are possible supported.

A **package of measures and actions** has to be tied up, whereby the following has to be taken into account:

- **short-term, but also complex actions and improvements** that are decisive for the **region**;
- **integrated** approaches; that is, co-operation and the grouping together of measures from different fields of action that are the responsibility of different decision-makers and project sponsors;



#### Fields of action of regional development concepts

- Nature and landscape
- Climate, energy and environment
- Agriculture and forestry
- Industry
- Tourism and culture
- Infrastructure and telematics
- Settlements and traffic
- Citizens and social culture
- Qualification and training
- Local and Regional Agenda

### 3. Success factor: concept

- individual projects integrated into "**central projects**". Central projects are clusters of projects that are connected with each other in such a way, that they are interrelated;
- **general topics** of sustainable development that should be included in development concepts include: material flow and closed cycle substance management, renewable energy sources and regenerative resources, environmentally- and socially-compatible settlement development and sustainable mobility;
- actions and **projects with leveraging or multiplying effects**, with which new aspects and ways of thinking and proceeding are developed and tested on a specific example, which also manifest themselves as a whole in regional thinking and action;
- projects and ideas that are (often) not considered in everyday conditions. Innovation of all kinds is needed, be it product innovation, process innovation or social innovation. Regional innovation can develop new products and services on the basis of special features of the region, for instance, or set up novel forms of participation and co-operation (company networks). **Creativity techniques** are helpful in evolving ideas.

Such a catalogue of projects should be understood as a renewable registry. A regional development concept can include not only projects, but also statements on process structure and organization.

Individual actions, projects and measures should be described in detail and **concretized**.

This includes:

- grounds for selection and realization priority;
- description of the project (location, objectives and intended measures);
- financing of the project (estimated costs, financing model, follow-up costs and their financing, expected proceeds etc.);
- parties responsible for the project;
- project organization and realization,
- Target and scheduling, milestones.

#### Element 5: Progress control

As with all plans, regional development concepts involve a certain risk, since unknown quantities are employed in part. Monitoring and regular progress controls are therefore important, so that decisions on the continuation or new orientation of regional action can be taken. In this respect it is useful to formulate and monitor indicators and milestones. (-> Evaluation)

**Tips**

- Take up and further develop what already exists.
- Set priorities and concentrate on core responsibilities.
- Plan in a result-orientated way; designate specific measures together with dates and deadlines as well as responsibilities.
- Leave time and space for creative problem solutions. Give utopia a chance, without losing sight of reality.
- Pursue ambitious and at the same time realistic objectives.
- Rationalize and, if possible, quantify indicators.

**Checklist: Strategies and projects**

- ✓ With which key structural problems is the region confronted?
- ✓ Are core problems addressed and relevant development strategies and measures formulated?
- ✓ Are the objectives, visions and projects formulated in the concept realistic?
- ✓ Do the stated objectives, projects and actions reflect cross-sector thinking and action?
- ✓ Are the resources and potentials of the region utilized?
- ✓ Are innovative products, services or procedures for increasing the competitiveness of the region being developed?
- ✓ Are there links with regional, national and European policies?

### 3.3 Concept elaboration and realization

The way in which regional development concepts are elaborated also influences their acceptance and realization. Successful regional development means activating and utilizing the expertise that is available in the region. It is a question of making use of expert knowledge and the understanding of problems, but also of utilizing the "everyday professionalism" of the region's inhabitants.



#### Stumbling blocks

There is no lack of fully elaborated development concepts. They do not always display the self-commitment of regional players that is necessary for realization, however, so that regional action, irrespective of the development strategies and projects formulated in the concept, takes the "usual course".

The reason for this may be, that those people and institutions who are important for the realization and financing of elements of regional development have not been involved, or not sufficiently involved in concept elaboration, that there is a lack of acceptance in the region, possibly a total lack of awareness of the concept in the region, or that incentives to participate are insufficient, because they do not include promises of funding.

The objectives of actions and measures may not be imposed on the addressees from outside, but must rather be worked for together with them and the responsibility shared by them. Furthermore, the realization of measures and objectives is dependent on whether regional players have committed themselves to the process, and on the extent to which regional management take the measures

necessary for realization.

#### Elaboration of the concept: top down or down up

The way in which discussion and the search for consensus takes place in the region, and the societal groups that are involved in the process, decide on the acceptance and realization of regional development concepts. The following procedures can be differentiated:

##### - • "top down"

Objectives, visions, strategies and projects are developed and laid down at the management level (administration, political decision-makers etc.).

With this procedure, the danger arises, that the concept will be regarded as imposed and, in the worst case, not accepted. It requires, in any case, a great deal of effort to convince regional players of the project and to gain their active co-operation.

##### - • "bottom up"

In this case, the concept is jointly elaborated by those affected, namely regional players. This enhances identification and therefore facilitates realization. It requires, however, a more intensive search for consensus as well as prolonged discussion, since the respective interests, needs and ideas have first to be formulated and must then be harmonized.

##### - • "down up"

In practice, both procedures are frequently combined. A more or less broad group of people, determined by their respective interests, is involved in the formulation of individual concept elements (regional diagnosis, elaboration of an overall concept, strategy and project development), and a more or less broad regional discussion is conducted.

#### Concept elaboration rests on many shoulders

People, societal groups and regional institutions take part in the formulation and realization of regional development concepts in different functions, to a varying extent and at different points in time. In this connection, the following issues need to be resolved:

- Who will be **responsible** for the development, realization and control of the regional development concept? The order to act must be clearly formulated and carried by as many regional decision-makers as possible.
- Which **people and institutions** should participate in concept elaboration? The aim must be to involve people with innovative ideas and resources who are rarely considered, so that a variety of points of view can be taken into account, without disrupting the ability to act and take decisions. Decision-makers, key figures from different areas of public life, experts, the general public or individual target groups can all participate in the planning process. Sectoral planning departments and



superior authorities, who might also be responsible for the approval and financing of projects, are also potential partners (-> Success factor: "People")

- In which **concept elements** is participation desired? Is participation sought in defining problems, in establishing the overall concept and objectives, in the discussion on strategy, in the elaboration of fields of action and projects, and in the evaluation and renewal of concepts?
- Which **degree of participation** is desired? Will planning participants be regarded merely as contributors of ideas, or will they also be given the right to be heard and the authority to take decisions?
- At which **point in time** is **participation** envisaged? Will one be involved throughout elaboration, or just with important decisions, such as the setting of priorities, decision-making and important process milestones?
- Which form should the **search for ideas, opinions and consensus** take? Will one or more working groups or committees be concerned with elements of the development concept? Will other forms of participation be used, such as regional conferences, regional forums, "future workshops" and conferences on the shaping of the future? Can creativity techniques inspire the flow of ideas, increase creativity and break through thinking blocks?  
(-> Information and communication)



### Good example

In the **Mecklenburg Lake District**, the elaboration of the regional development concept is orientated towards participation and takes place in five steps:

#### 1. Examination of existing concepts

Analysis of available expert opinions, concepts and plans; preparation of the initial draft of a profile of strengths and weaknesses that encompasses all fields of action.

#### 2. Interviews with experts

Interviews with 26 specially selected players in different fields of activity, with the objective of balancing knowledge with the experiences and strategies of practitioners.

#### 3. Inspiration workshops on areas of focus

In three fields of action (regional processing and marketing of agricultural products, integrated community development, integrated public transport system), workshops were conducted with players from these fields to provide initial impetus in the direction of project development and to identify concept results.

#### 4. Small regional conference with moderated working groups

On the basis of a preliminary draft, development strategies and starting points for projects were discussed by around 80 regional players in moderated working groups and priorities formulated for the development process.

#### 5. Agreement on the determination of priorities

together with the concept's sponsor, the Mecklenburg Lake District Regional Planning Authority.

- Methodical and/or programmatic-conceptual **support through outside experts**. This can involve relevant experts and institutes as well as sectoral authorities, state authorities or ministries. Where external experts assume a central role in the development process, permanent feedback to regional players is necessary. Only in this way will the use of regional knowledge be optimized and active involvement with problems, development objectives and strategies achieved in the region.

### From planning to realization

Regional development concepts should be seen as an opportunity for the region. They must be the basis of regional action, in so much as activities of regional relevance are orientated towards its objectives. Under no circumstance should concepts be merely a "necessary evil", designed to satisfy the demands of funding institutions.

Because no financial or legal consequences whatsoever are involved with concepts, it is a question of pointing the way ahead so far as concept realization is concerned. The chances of realizing regional development concepts increase, when the following points are observed:

- The concept is the result of a **wide-ranging regional process of discussion and participation**.



### 3. Success factor: concept

- A high degree of **familiarity with and dissemination of** the concept in the region: Objectives and substance must be continuously communicated to specific target groups. The general public, as well as decision-makers and institutions in the region, must be informed of the concept's necessity, background and approach, as well as of the state and results of planning, and also be encouraged to participate (-> Communication). The print run and distribution list for interim reports and fully developed concepts are important in this context.
- Good **readability and intelligibility**. This means, for instance, concentrating on that, which is important, and avoiding "data cemeteries", as well as distributing summaries of the main substance of the concept in the form of attractively-designed brochures and leaflets.
- Clear **responsibilities**: On the one hand, the institution or person that takes responsibility for the regional development concept must also be authorized to do so. This "legitimation" is essential for acceptance of the concept and its content. On the other hand, people and institutions must take responsibility for the realization of the concept and individual projects. These responsibilities should be regulated at the time of concept and project formulation.
- **Adapt organizational structures and processes where necessary**: New committees and responsibilities might have to be created that deal with particular regional issues and projects. New partners might also have to be won over, or other decision paths and procedures introduced (-> Process organization).
- Constant **feedback to municipal and regional decision-makers and officials as well as with investment decisions of significance to the region**. This includes discussions with responsible parties and decision-makers in the region on the likely consequences of the regional development concept for their future planning and activities. It has to be clarified, in particular, to what extent the incorporation and realization of important elements of the development concept in the mandatory planning of communities, the region or sectoral authorities is necessary and realistic. Permanent monitoring of whether the plans and activities of communities and regional institutions, as well as private investment decisions of regional importance, conform with the objectives and projects formulated in the development concept. Possible deviations and conflicts of interest should be discussed and solutions sought in the interest of the region.
- The **voluntary commitment of regional players** to orientate their future action towards the objectives and results of the regional development concept: In order to obtain the required political backing, it is advisable to involve political bodies at an early stage and on a continual basis. Before drawing up the concept, its necessity, target course and possible content should be discussed. Important partial and interim results as well as the end results should be taken note of and discussed. Visions and development objectives, fields of action and projects must all be supported across all political boundaries. Resolutions of an advisory nature and the laying down of the contents of the regional development concept in co-operation agreements are helpful (-> Process organization). A certain financial participation in the regional development conceptual process increases the effect of self-commitment.
- The laying down of "**process or result milestones**", by which, for instance, important objectives should be attained and key projects realized.

#### Concurrence of planning and acting, of concept and project

As little time as possible should pass by between the development of objectives and their realization. Experience shows that a long planning phase, during which the advantages and results of co-operation are not perceptible, leads to tiredness and frustration on the part of participants. Concept realization should therefore already be thought over during its development.

Especially when a broad and long-term process of determining objectives and establishing consensus is concerned, concept development and realization should run parallel. An important function in this respect is fulfilled by so-called **gateway or pilot projects**, which, already at a very early stage, can provide important impetus and strengthen and speed up co-operation, by demonstrating how success can be achieved in the region through co-operative action (-> Process organization)

### Interaction between regional development concepts and planning at different levels

Existing dependencies between regional development concepts and other plans and planning instruments at a regional and municipal level should be scrutinized as a matter of principle. It has particularly to be examined to what extent the central statements of the regional development concept are congruent with the targets and contents of other plans, and how possible deviations should be dealt with.

It might also be necessary to embody and secure the objectives, strategies and projects formulated in the regional development concept in other planning instruments that are **legally more binding** (for instance, regional plans, land use plans, sector plans).



#### Tips

- Tap people's minds for knowledge and experience
- Participants in planning processes can only be motivated in the long term when they are involved not only sporadically and selectively, but also continually, and when, at the very least, they are kept informed of the current state of planning and realization.
- Make an early start on specific projects in order to increase motivation.
- Pay attention to networking and exchange, also in the realization of subprojects.
- Establish a monitoring process, for instance in the form of regular reports on status and results as well as deliberations, with a view to achieving improvements.
- Secure results, where applicable, through plans that are legally more binding.



#### Checklist: Concept development and realization

- ✓ Who is responsible for developing and co-ordinating the development process?
- ✓ How does concept development proceed? (drawing-up process?)
- ✓ How is the concept put across in the region during its development and when results are available?
- ✓ Which precautionary measures must be taken concerning the realization of the concept?
- ✓ Which partners have to be won over for the realization of the concept?
- ✓ How can the voluntary commitment of regional players to the regional development concept be achieved?
- ✓ Which organizational units take responsibility for which tasks and projects?
- ✓ Do new organizational units have to be created or existing organizational structures adapted for the realization of the concept?



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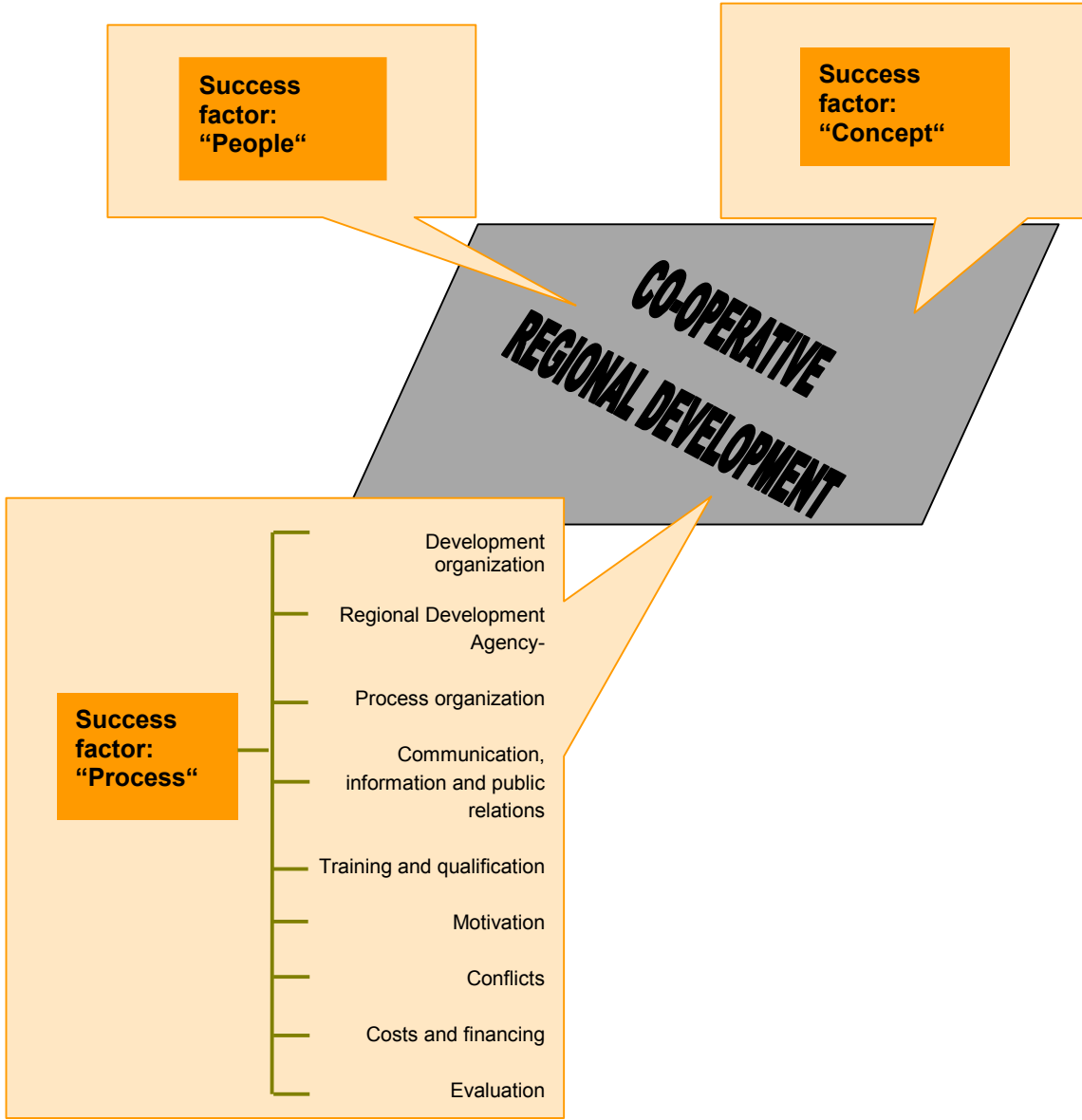
**4. Success factor: process**

The structures, processes and procedures developed within the framework of a co-operation project, as well as process and project management, are further important factors influencing co-operative regional development.

The prerequisites for success are above all, that

- the required organizational structures and committees are installed and the process actively supported (-> Development organization, regional development agency);
- the chronological process is properly planned, and the necessary strategic decisions taken for a smooth course of events (->Process organization),
- the participants communicate with each other, that knowledge and information are bundled and passed on, and that a sufficient amount of public relations work is undertaken;
- regional players and promoters from outside the region are successfully motivated and won over to the project;
- conflicts are settled as early as possible;
- funding required for planning, realization and support personnel is made available;
- the co-operation process is regularly reflected upon and evaluated, and that the resulting consequences are drawn.





### 4.1 Development organization

Co-operative regional development processes live above all from people and their networks. However, the greater the number of people involved, the more varied the tasks and functions become, the greater the number of decisions and the more complex they are, the broader the substance and the more innumerable the projects become the



#### Stumbling blocks

- Important regional players and institutions – for example, from government or industry – do very little for the co-operative process. This is because, among other things, they bear no responsibility and are inadequately represented at the decision-making level.
- Participators at the operating and co-ordination level cannot cope (chronic pressure of time), which can result in lack of interest or resignation.
- There is a danger of project dependence on individual people. It can happen, for instance, that at the co-ordination and management level too much is dependent on the regional manager, through whom all information is channelled and who alone knows what's going on.
- The conflict between largest possible representativeness (= large group) and working efficiency (= small group).
- The organizational structure of regional co-operation is unclear; uncertainty exists on respective areas of responsibility and the decision-making competence of various committees. Only a few insiders know what's going on. This contributes little to acceptance or to the readiness to participate.
- Co-ordination and information problems result from the large number and parallelism of working groups.
- Representatives on different committees experience a double-sided dependence in the co-operation process on their institutions of origin and the respective committee. Due to committee pressure to achieve agreement and find solutions, the goals of institutions of origin must inevitably be diminished or given up, which again weakens a person's position in his or her institution.
- Institutions often change their representatives in committees, or are not regularly represented. This impedes and delays decision-making, because participants are not always aware of the current state of discussion, or are not authorized to take decisions.

more difficult the self-organization and the more confusing the process. Whereas at the beginning of co-operative processes, or with processes involving few people, the work that crops up is dealt with more or less spontaneously by the small number of active people or initiators within the framework of self-organization, in the case of larger networks this is no longer possible. The **question of the organization** of co-operation and the co-operative process has therefore to be faced.

The setting up of a clear organizational structure is advisable, in which the region's institutional and human network is represented.

#### Distribute and co-ordinate functions in a sensible way

Organizational structure is the backbone of co-operation. It must deal with project orientation and the realization of regional co-operation.

This implies:

- an outwardly transparent structure with clear contacts and responsibilities,
- efficiency and professionalism,
- guaranteeing decision-making and realization competence and structures,
- guaranteeing personnel, financial and instrumental resources,
- guaranteeing co-ordination and management functions.

In setting up an organizational structure the following points have to be borne in mind:

- The required size of the organizational structure.
- The functions and tasks that have to be undertaken and dealt with.
- The committees and organizational units that will be needed.
- The tasks, functions and responsibilities of different committees.
- The composition of committees.
- The operation of committees.

### Modify development organization during the course of the process

Deliberations on organizational structure are not only sensible at the commencement of the regional development process. It is also important to regularly review and, where necessary, to modify or further develop the effectiveness of organizational structures.

**Flexibility** is therefore very important.

In this connection, the following questions should be answered:

- Do existing committees fulfil their actual functions?
- Are committees still suitable composed, or do new conditions require a change or broadening in the composition of committees?
- Does co-operation between different committees properly function?

During the course of the process, **modification of the development organization** therefore takes place. If, at the beginning, a relatively simple structure with decision-making and operating levels was sufficient, as the number and complexity of tasks increases the organizational structure also becomes more sophisticated. Co-ordination and management become more varied and time-consuming; an internal organizational unit becomes necessary. To resolve the contradiction between largest possible **representativeness** and more efficient operations, besides the steering group another organizational level, a participation level (plenum, regional conference etc.), is often established.

### Find the right degree of organization

The question of a good organizational form for regional co-operation and the regional network generally moves between centralized co-ordination and decentralized self-organization.

Where there is too much formalization through a structure that is too firm and far-reaching centralization of co-ordination activities, flexibility and creativity can be lost. On the other hand, a strong structure can enhance the feeling of belonging and thus identification (corporate identity) with regional co-operation.

If an organizational structure is to be set up or further developed, it has to be considered which committees and organizational levels are necessary for the regional development process. This has a lot to do with the work that comes up within the framework of co-operative regional development.

- Who should decide on fundamental matters, strategies, concepts and projects?
- Who should be involved?
- Who realizes projects?
- Who co-ordinates, conducts networks and manages?
- Who provides finance?
- Who advises and evaluates?

### Integration in existing structures or the setting up of new structures

Necessary tasks and functions can generally not be integrated into the organizational structure existing in the region. New structures have to be developed, which can then be closely tied to existing structures (for example, a broadly-orientated regional development agency within the regional planning authority, or as a new organizational unit in district administration. See below).

### Different organizational levels and committees

Five different organizational levels can basically be distinguished:

Decision-making level, Co-ordination and management level, realization and operating level, consulting and monitoring level as well as participation level. On the other hand, various committees can be set up at these levels. Just which committees these are, which responsibilities they have and who is to be represented on them, depends on the specific regional situation. Not all levels need to have their own committees. A **streamlined organizational structure** should be aimed for. The setting up of committees, such as an advisory board, or a change in the decision-making process, can be a useful means of extending the player base or the circle of participants.

The most important, of course, are the decision-making level, the operating level and, above all, the co-ordination and management level, which lies between and links the other two (-> Regional development agency). Without committees, which exercise the functions of these levels, a co-operative regional development process will not succeed. Committees must work closely together and complement each other. In order to function, a clear allocation of responsibilities and an ongoing exchange of information among them are important. In the case of "smaller" co-operation processes, one person can be responsible for the functions of these levels.



#### ▪ **Decision-making level**

Co-operation processes require clear, functioning decision-making structures and responsibilities, which ensure that decision-makers and responsible politicians actively support and promote objectives, activities and projects once they have been decided upon. The people **comprising the decision-making level** have an important function in securing legitimation and gaining acceptance. Members of committees at the decision-making level should accordingly be as representative as possible. It is above all political decision-makers and influential figures from the region, so-called promoters, who sit on such committees. Steering groups or management committees take the key decisions on the direction the process should take. They are responsible for the policy, visions and objectives of the co-operation process, as well as for the development and realization of strategy and for strategic control. They bear financial responsibility. They represent the process externally

(-> Responsible parties)

#### ▪ **Operating level**

The operating level is where decisions are prepared or alternative decisions developed. The guidelines laid down by the decision-making level are put into concrete terms and realized. At this level, specific topics and projects are tackled and problem solutions developed. It is the level of experts, specialists and achievers. They are greatly involved in the development and realization of strategy, concepts and projects. At this level, it is generally working groups and project groups who get together on special subjects (such as renewable energy sources, regional marketing etc.) or projects. The project groups, in particular, are not permanently established; after projects have been successfully realized, or measures implemented, they disband or change their composition.

#### ▪ **Co-ordination and management level**

Co-operative regional development processes have to be handled technically, meetings organized, results documented, decision-making and operating levels interconnected, activities co-ordinated and the network managed. These tasks are taken over by liaison offices, such as regional offices or regional development agencies. They can be located in a member organization of the co-operation project or in a separate organization. It is at this level that regional managers and facilitators have their effect (-> Regional development agency).

#### ▪ **Advice and monitoring**

Both advice and monitoring are in demand at the decision-making and operating levels. Through special advisory boards, additional knowledge and know-how are fed into realization and project work; the process can be advised and evaluated. Advisory boards and boards of trustees include representatives of regional institutions (chambers of industry and trade, associations, clubs, administrative authorities, banks), of federal and state institutions and ministries, as well as public figures (from politics, industry, trades unions, science, cultural life, the churches, media etc.) (-> Success factor: "People"). They are multipliers; they maintain contact to state and federal government; they advise the decision-making level and they provide idealistic and material support for the co-operation process.

Level	Designation	Task	Composition
Decision-making level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promoter group</li> <li>▪ Steering group</li> <li>▪ Management committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Decisions on strategy, objectives, overall concept, projects</li> <li>▪ Control over access to implementation for the realization of decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Political players</li> <li>▪ The most representative composition possible</li> <li>▪ Influential figures from the region</li> </ul>
Operating level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Group of experts</li> <li>▪ Working groups (thematic, sub-groups)</li> <li>▪ Project groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preparation of decisions</li> <li>▪ Mobilization of expert knowledge</li> <li>▪ Should be able to contribute towards the processing of problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Technical and administrative players</li> <li>▪ "hand-picked" depending on qualifications and capabilities</li> <li>▪ regional experts from institutions in the region</li> </ul>
Co-ordination and management level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Regional office</li> <li>▪ Regional development agency</li> <li>▪ Regional secretariat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Technical management</li> <li>▪ Secretariat</li> <li>▪ Management unit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attached to a member of the co-operation project</li> <li>▪ Supplementary institution</li> <li>▪ Regional manager</li> <li>▪ Facilitators</li> </ul>
Advice and monitoring level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Special advisory board</li> <li>▪ Board of trustees</li> <li>▪ Advisory board</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Advisory functions in the preparation of decisions</li> <li>▪ External multipliers (support institutions, regional institutions)</li> <li>▪ Support for the co-operation project</li> <li>▪ Evaluation of the total process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Network of supporting institutions</li> <li>▪ Representatives of regional institutions</li> <li>▪ Representatives of federal and state institutions</li> <li>▪ Public figures (from politics, industry, trades unions, cultural life, the churches, media etc.)</li> </ul>
Participation level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Regional forum</li> <li>▪ Regional conference</li> <li>▪ Regional assembly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Platform, plenum</li> <li>▪ Information, exchange, discussion</li> <li>▪ Non-binding control and co-determination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All participating players</li> <li>▪ Interested parties from the region</li> </ul>

#### ▪ Participation level

Committees at this level, such as regional forums or conferences, are open to all participating players and institutions as well as to other interested parties. They serve as a regional platform and plenum of the co-operative approach. Interest is focused on information, exchange and the discussion of strategies, project successes or development progress. Their function comprises non-binding co-determination and control of the development process.

#### Organizational chart creates an overall view

A multitude of levels can easily lead to a confusing picture of the structure and interplay. It is important that the decision-making and co-ordination levels have an overall view. It is advisable to draw up an organizational chart that will create transparency and demonstrate how clear – or confusing – and understandable the organizational structure is.

#### Clarify the tasks and responsibilities of committees

It has to be clear, at best before setting up committees, which tasks they will have and who will be responsible for what. This includes questions of the desired form of the respective function.





### Good example

With the "Regional Conference Mecklenburg Lake District" different organizational levels can be identified. The regional decision-making level is occupied by the regional planning authority, a group comprising three (rural) districts and one self-governing town. Its executive bodies are the assembly and the management committee. The management committee, on which the three (rural) district administrators and the town's mayor are represented as ex officio members, together with four elected members, is the regional decision-making body. At the operating level are found the management committee, the regional and state planning office and, concurrently, the regional planning authority as well as working and project groups in co-operation spheres or for areas of action. The regional and state planning office also presently occupies functions at the co-ordination and management level, which will soon be undertaken by a regional development agency. At the advice and mediation level there is a group of experts in which, among others, the Neubrandenburg Technical College is represented. A board of trustees is also planned, in which regional institutions, associations and chambers will be represented. At the participatory level, the regional conference is organized every two years as a large regional forum.

- How should decisions be taken? Should there be equal rights of decision-making, and should all participants be involved (for instance, also small communities, or just district administrations and mayoral representatives)?
- Should the co-ordination and management office have a strong position, undertake a variety of tasks and be run professionally or in an honorary capacity in addition to normal activities?

A clear assignment of tasks and responsibilities is also necessary. What is important in this connection is a **clear demarcation of existing organizational units**, to avoid unnecessary duplication and competition. The respective interface to other committees – relating, for instance, to information flow, targets etc. – must likewise be clarified.

Of particular importance is the question of which **responsibilities** the different committees have. Are they, for instance, subject to directives or authorized to issue directives to other committees? How great is their room for manoeuvre, for example in the selection of subjects? Or can they only carry out tasks determined from outside?

### The right people and institutions at the right positions

The right size and composition of groups is important for success. It is a question of ensuring that the right people and institutions are members of groups. The size of the groups varies according to the tasks and the arrangement of meetings. The more specific tasks there are, and the more frequently the group meets the smaller the optimum group size, whereby they should not be too small, to avoid losing their integrative and representative character. This way they maintain their operability and efficiency. The larger the group the more limited the opportunities for individuals to participate and introduce ideas and suggestions. The co-operation experienced in the group, the feeling of responsibility for the success of joint work and the readiness to identify with achieved results sinks.

It is quite possible for groups, in particular at the operating level, to start out with a large number of participants and unspecified tasks. In the course of the process, however, the tasks or projects and matters that have to be undertaken become clearer, and those who are less interested in a particular task drop out. Or the original group splits up on a subject-related basis.

### Openness of participation

One question, which has to be clarified, concerns the openness of participation. Can any one take part? Again it has to be distinguished between the different levels. Committees at the operating and participation levels tend to be open to all who want to take part. The decision-making level is made up of a limited circle of people and institutions. These are, first of all, the initiators and sponsors of the co-operative process. They can then decide whether further institutions and people should be involved. The decision-making level also determines the composition of advisory and monitoring committees, which are therefore also not open to everyone. Organizational units at the co-ordination and management level are necessarily of a small size in order to remain flexible and operable. Composition is dependent on the organizational form (-> Regional development agency)

In the composition of groups the right mixture should be found. A balanced average between homogeneity and heterogeneity should be found. The advantage of more homogenous groups is that teamwork is facilitated, which can again increase operability and efficiency. A more heterogeneous composition can offer the advantage that different ideas find acceptance and work is thus more creative and innovative.

#### Success factors for the work of committees

It is conducive to success when members are largely from the same hierarchy level, because work under equals is then facilitated. It is, of course, decisive whether committee members can work in a team, to what extent they can get involved in joint work in the group, and whether they are prepared to follow corresponding rules.

#### Clarify work organization

Apart from the composition of committees, co-operation within the committee and between different committees must be regulated. Within committees this begins with the early distribution of jobs, such as chairmanship, spokesperson and minute taking. These should be laid down to guarantee reasonable operation. Working rules – that is, rules on co-operation – should be agreed, and effective working routines developed (-> Process organization)

The committees at different levels should

- work as effectively as possible,
- have a result-oriented and efficient effect,
- develop an inner coherence, which maintains the functioning of groups over a prolonged period,
- mobilize self-help capacities (self-commitment capacities),
- maintain close contact to each other; that is, inform each other on a continual basis.



#### Tips

- The dialogue between different committees must be more than merely informative; that is, more than the exchange of protocols or reporting by those responsible for co-ordination. The groups must maintain mutual dialogue.
- The organizational structure of the co-operative regional development process should be regularly reviewed and, where necessary, modified or further developed. In this connection, the following questions should be answered:  
Do existing committees fulfil their real functions?  
Are they suitably made up, or do changed circumstances require a change in or broadening of the composition of committees?  
Does co-operation between different committees function?
- Care has to be taken in the composition of committees that the right institutions and people are selected.
- The varied fields of operation of different committees and their interplay with existing organizational units should be regulated. Here, contractual regulations are suggested.



#### Checklist: Development organization

- ✓ Which functions should the organizational structures exercise?
- ✓ In which form should functions be perceived?
- ✓ Who should be entrusted with this? Which committees are needed?
- ✓ Which tasks and responsibilities are the different groups assigned?
- ✓ What is the relationship between them, and also with other regional organizational units?
- ✓ Who should/must be represented in the different committees?

#### 4.2 Regional development agency

The co-ordination and management level performs a key function in co-operative regional development processes.

These processes should be managed by largely independent and flexible, cross-sector liaison offices, which have been furnished with corresponding responsibilities.

##### Institutions and structures that are only of limited suitability



##### Stumbling blocks

- The regional development agency will be regarded as a competitor by other similar institutions – for instance, in the promotion of economic development – and will be hindered in its work, or co-operation will be blocked.
- The tasks and responsibilities of the regional development agency are vaguely formulated.
- There is an absence of personnel continuity, because regional development agency staff are financed through development funds provided for a fixed period of time.
- There is a lack of finance and staff, so that the work of the regional development agency must be restricted to pure co-ordination and networking, and, for this reason, "tangible" success in the form of realized projects remain the exception.

There are often no established institutions in the regions, which dispose of the required capacities to undertake management functions.

Co-ordination and management tasks are then undertaken, parallel to their regular duties, by existing administrative authorities, such as the offices of the regional planning authorities, for instance. These have limited personnel and financial resources available, as a result of which the danger arises that the required continuity is not

ensured and that necessary tasks cannot be undertaken to the desired extent, because people do not have sufficient time at their disposal. It is therefore to be recommended that an office be set up at a regional level, namely, a regional development agency (regional office, regional agency, project office, regional secretariat etc.), which can undertake these tasks more or less on a full-time basis.

##### Manageable and flexible structures are necessary

A regional development agency should be small and manageable. In order to guarantee

##### Strengths of a regional development agency.

- Regional perspective
- Intermediate, conciliatory position between different groups of players (public, private, regional bodies, local and regional sector players)
- Cross-sectoral orientation

a **flexible and unbureaucratic manner of operation** (no official channels, no – or merely superficial – hierarchies, flexible working hours). The organizational form should be open for public-private-partnership; that is, it should allow the possibility of involving widely differing partners in the organization, both permanently or just for the duration of a

project. A prerequisite for the success of a regional development agency independence from existing regional structures. When several districts are involved, the agency should not be established in one of the districts, in order to guarantee the neutrality that is necessary for the conduct of negotiations, communication, planning and realization.

##### Regional perspective and cross-sector orientation

The strength and specific feature of a regional development agency compared with other institutions is the perspective of the region, its intermediate position between different groups of players (public, private, regional bodies, local and regional sector players).

It incorporates the regional level into project development as an important dimension, which is otherwise hardly represented. It can guarantee integration in regional concepts and objectives as well as in regional activities (the wheel need not be rediscovered!). Through its cross-sector orientation, it succeeds in introducing sustainability aspects and in networking existing institutions. As a result, it distinguishes itself from other similar institutions, such as classic institutions for the promotion of economic development.

### Secretariat, agency services, co-ordination, driving force – varied functions

A regional development agency generally plays a key role in co-operative regional development processes. It can exercise various functions.

The function of the secretariat comprises administrative and other services.

In its function as agency, it offers advice, support with project development and realization as well as taking care of implementation of the regional development concept and network development. It is both facilitator and realizer.

In its co-ordinative function it undertakes tasks concerned, among other things, with mediation and network development.

As the "driving force", it provides ideas and impetus for the region; it develops and formulates visions within the framework of regional development.

#### Functions of a regional development agency

- Secretariat
- Agency services
- Co-ordination
- Driving force

### Broad range of tasks

A regional development agency can undertake varied tasks. The package of tasks depends on the regional situation and the capacity available in each case. Regional development agencies are concerned programmatically with the full range of topics associated with regional development (-> Concept)

It has to be seriously considered, whether the regional development agency itself acts as **project sponsor**. In this function, on the one hand, it can achieve a clear profile and implement high quality standards in an exemplary manner in the interest of sustainability. On the other hand, its neutrality is endangered, and it will likely be too dependent on its own projects. The pros and cons should be carefully weighed up.

### Finding the right model for the region

The right regional development agency model depends on general conditions and departure points in the region as well as on the criteria that the regional development agency is intended to fulfil. The question arises, for instance, as to the extent of possible political control. Further criteria might be long-term security, flexibility in taking action, independence, orientation towards the common weal and identification with the region. Based on the weighting of these criteria a suitable model should be developed in the region.

### Single sponsor or broad sponsorship

The party or parties responsible for regional development agencies can be a single existing institution or several regional institutions acting together. The advantage of reliance on a single institution is that decision-making processes are simpler and more direct. Broader sponsorship has the advantage, that such a solution better reflects the integrative approach and the demand for concentration, and that institutions and people can be involved, which have a critical attitude towards the process. Financial manoeuvrability thereby becomes greater and more secure.

In principle, all potential participants in the co-operative regional planning process can assume responsibility for a regional development agency, including regional planning authorities, (rural) districts, towns and communities, chambers of industry and trade, clubs, savings banks, existing special-purpose municipal associations etc. (-> Clubs, associations, industry)

### Undertake tasks directly or delegate them to others

The question also arises, whether parties responsible for the regional development process themselves undertake tasks or instruct others to do so.

This could be an association or a limited-liability company, or a company with which players involved in the process are connected, or an external provider of services (for example a private consulting firm).

The **advantage** here is that organization is accomplished relatively quickly through delegating the job to an external party, and there is flexibility at the operating level through latitude in the design of the contract (involvement of personnel, working hours etc.).

**Disadvantageous** are possible restrictions on control. The job is perhaps only one of several assignments of the outside party, which can have a negative effect on commitment.



## 4. Success factor: process

<b>Possible tasks of a regional development agency</b>	
<b>Co-ordination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Presentation of the process as a whole and, where applicable, of individual working and project groups</li> <li>▪ Communication / Co-ordination between               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- decision-making and operating levels</li> <li>- regional and sub-regional levels</li> <li>- Projects (contact and information pool; "meeting of projects")</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Involvement of local activity levels and objectives in regional action</li> </ul>
<b>Information / Public Relations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contact centre (inquiries, brief and initial information)</li> <li>▪ Event management (e.g. regional conferences / workshops)</li> <li>▪ Ongoing public relations</li> <li>▪ Internal marketing</li> <li>▪ External marketing</li> <li>▪ Publishing activities / publications (e.g. regional magazine)</li> </ul>
<b>Network development and support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Development and cultivation of the (player-) network</li> <li>▪ Development and support of thematic networks</li> <li>▪ Communication with and between sponsors and regional players, partners and working groups including networking</li> <li>▪ Cultivation of relations with the state (<i>Land</i>) and its different "systems"</li> </ul>
<b>Costing and financial management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Co-ordination in the area of support</li> <li>▪ Acquisition of funding</li> <li>▪ Acquisition of sponsors</li> <li>▪ Accomplishment of tasks with internal funding</li> </ul>
<b>Advice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Initial advice</li> <li>▪ Specialist advice / Arrangement of specialist advice</li> <li>▪ Co-operation with a pool of experts</li> <li>▪ Support for spheres of co-operation</li> <li>▪ Process consulting</li> </ul>
<b>Project development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Initiation of projects</li> <li>▪ Activation and bringing together of players and partners</li> <li>▪ Development of project ideas and concepts</li> <li>▪ Presentation and organization of project development processes</li> <li>▪ Support for projects</li> <li>▪ Securing resources / securing continuity</li> </ul>
<b>Project realization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Undertaking the direction and management and sponsorship of regionally significant projects (direct marketing, regional road systems etc.)</li> <li>▪ Support in the search for partners</li> </ul>
<b>Conceptual tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Development and formulation of visions, development models and strategies</li> <li>▪ Development of regional development concepts</li> <li>▪ Supporting regional development concepts with operating programmes</li> </ul>
<b>Controlling and evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ of the total process</li> <li>▪ of individual projects</li> <li>▪ Co-operation and project agreements</li> <li>▪ Development and application of indicators</li> </ul>

### An independent legal entity?

The basic forms of organization and sponsorship of regional development agencies can be differentiated. Different organizational structures have their advantages and disadvantages. The question that has to be answered is, basically, whether the agency should be an independent legal entity. If the answer is affirmative, the agency can be set up under public or under private law. A legal form of management organization is necessary to obtain funding from the EU, the federal government or from the state

government. However, the effort required to set up such a firm structure is greater than in the case of informal organizational forms.

### Sponsorship under public law

If the regional development agency is sponsored under public law, it will be directly borne by regional planning authorities, special-purpose municipal associations, towns and communities, (rural) districts or the *Land* (state).



#### **Good example**

**Adirondack Economic Development Corporation (AEDC)** is a non-profit, public-private regional development agency. AEDC wants to support and strengthen the further development of "Adirondack ethics"; that means linking the healthy environment of the National Park with the long-term economic development of local communities. Out of needs (development) possibilities are identified and converted into specific projects. AEDC sees itself as a facilitator and realizer. Its services include financing and help in the search for appropriate sources, further training, support in the realization of projects and technical services for communities and entrepreneurs as well as start-ups. In financing the project, funds were obtained from federal, state and also private sources. In 1999, AEDC staff numbered 12 people. Examples of AEDC's work include the Adirondack Initiative Round-table, in which all those affected, including representatives of the state, industry, communities and the nature protection administration, were represented, a regional Internet-supported network of economic "aid" and the Adirondack Venture Fund, a fund focused on the financing of social projects.

### Sponsorship under private law

With sponsorship under private law, regional development companies can be set up as registered non-profit-making associations, as non-profit-making limited-liability companies or as foundations. Each of these organizational structures has its advantages and disadvantages.

Regional development companies sponsored under private law can be closely tied to administration, such as district administration, and are then part of a regional management operated in public-private-partnership. Another possibility is setting up without the administration link.

### Association

Among the advantages of an association are its uncomplicated founding, its open organization yet nevertheless clear legal basis as well as the simple involvement of further players.

Possible disadvantages of associations are the danger of a lack of professionalism, the protracted search for consensus in some cases, potential instability as well as relatively insignificant pressure to succeed through the lack of financial involvement on the part of members.

### Limited-liability Company

The advantages of a limited-liability company are a high degree of latitude in decision-making and action, short decision-paths, flexibility, efficient organizational structure and insignificant bureaucracy as well as a high-degree of acceptance on the part of private industry.

Possible disadvantages of a limited-liability company are the minimum capital required for its setting up and the spin-off risk. Expanding the group of partners is complicated.

### Adequate availability of personnel and finance

The personnel and finance required for a regional development agency depend primarily on the work that has to be done. At the management level, people should be employed who have appropriate qualifications in the area of regional management. Apart from specialized skills, these regional managers should above all have social skills (-> Partners and participants)



### Good example

An example of a regional development agency from the nature conservation and landscape development area is the **PRO REGIO Oberschwaben Gesellschaft zur Landschaftsentwicklung mbH**. It was founded in 1999 to tread new paths in securing and preserving nature and landscape in the District of Ravensburg and the region of Oberschwaben. Its main task is the planning and conduct of projects that contribute to the environmentally sound development and protection of the economically and culturally important region of Oberschwaben, to the promotion and preservation of the respect enjoyed by the man-made landscape as well as to the development and preservation of a sustainable, strong and varied man-made and natural landscape.

PRO REGIO is supported by a broad circle of partners. The sponsors are the District Farmers Union in Ravensburg and Wangen, 29 communities with around 85% of the inhabitants and 85% of the district area, the Ravensburg District Administration as well as the nature conservation associations BUND and NABU. Representatives of the partners, the forestry administration, the district chamber of craft trades and the regional planning authority sit on the advisory board.

Work is focused, for example, on the co-ordination of the state's lakes programme, sustainable regional development, Local Agenda 21 and PLENUM as well as on participation in economic promotion.

PRO REGIO provides project management for the realization of measures and projects concerning the landscape and regional development as well as services, especially for (rural) districts and communities, for example in the drawing up of applications for funding or advice on questions of landscape management, tree conservation and water body development as well as environmental training and communication. It is also involved with the formation of networks.

About 10 people are employed at PRO REGIO. They are responsible for various specialized areas, certain projects and particular sub-areas.

Besides a director, at least one office worker and one or two scientifically trained advisors should be employed. Greater efficiency is achieved, of course, when the regional development agency has further staff available. However, the number of staff should not be so large as to endanger its integrative character. Experiences in Bavaria show, that one full-time manager, 3 to 5 staff members and two office workers encourage a high degree of efficiency. Permanent staff and other employees can be differentiated by means of limited project contracts. The regional development agency can employ additional staff for a limited period of time for the realization of a specific project.

### Solution based on the principle of delegation

Apart from the cost of personnel, a capital base is necessary for material costs, travel expenses as well as project funds that enable the sponsorship of selected projects to be undertaken.

An internal solution based on the principle of delegation is feasible. The regional development agency would be staffed by a team of people drawn from different institutions, including towns and communities, the regional planning authority and the management of large conservation areas, who would be delegated by their respective employers to the agency.

The **advantage** is that decisions and measures of the co-operative regional development process are possibly more effective when fed back to the institutions where they are then realized. This model represents a cost-effective arrangement, because existing capacity can be used with little additional funding being required. It appears useful to directly link staff to the decision-making level – to the chairperson of the regional planning authority, for instance, or to the district administrator – so that decision-making processes are efficient.

The **disadvantages** can be that the staff is subject to several authorities issuing directives (institution of origin, agency management), with the result that decision-making processes are slow. Being located at administrative authorities, the required flexibility can be restricted. The professionalism of operations can also be affected, since tasks are undertaken within the regional development agency alongside the usual tasks of delegated administrative staff.

### Financing

The financing of the regional development agency depends on the form of organization and the sponsorship structure. The regional development agency is generally financed to a very great extent, especially in the initial development stage, through aid; for instance, from EU funding programmes such as LEADER, or from the "Joint Programme: Improvement of Regional Economic Structure" (GRW). Long-term support of the work of the regional development agency should also be secured at an early

stage. In this connection, not only public sources of finance should be exploited. A combination of long-term basic financial security and the ongoing acquisition of funds is necessary. Because regional management is a public good, it should be basically secured by public financing (-> Financing).



### **Tips**

- Highlight the regional perspective as well as cross-sector orientation as strengths of the regional development agency.
- Regard existing institutions as partners. Explore synergy and additional potentials.
- Seek support from key regional figures, powerful people and institutions as well as multipliers who can exercise an active proprietary function.
- Seek financing other than development aid at an early stage.
- Staff – in particular management staff – should possess the required qualifications (technical and, above all, social skills).
- So far as the region is concerned, avoid too close an association with a single district in order to safeguard neutrality.
- Ensure flexible and unbureaucratic working methods (no official channels, no – or a merely superficial – hierarchy, flexible regulation of working hours).
- Utilize all available creative latitude and freedom of action so far as regulations and labour law are concerned, as well as room to manoeuvre.



### **Checklist: Regional development agency**

- ✓ Which tasks should the regional development agency handle, and to what extent and level of intensity? What are the specific regional tasks?
- ✓ Where does demand come from in the region? Who are the customers?
- ✓ Who are the potential players and providers of such services? What are their interests?
- ✓ Who are the potential sponsors or owners of a regional development agency?
- ✓ Who are the potential partners and competitors (public, private)? Is co-operation with partners successful? How is work shared?
- ✓ Which responsibilities should the regional development agency have? Should it act as project sponsor?
- ✓ Which forms of organization and sponsorship are suitable for the region, and what are their advantages and disadvantages?
- ✓ What are the basic requirements (personnel, financial, functional)?
- ✓ What are the financing possibilities so far as long-term security is concerned?





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 **Links**

Further examples of regional development agencies

Euregio e.V.

<http://www.euregio.de/d/?lc=de>

Regionale Innovationsagentur Regina GmbH

<http://www.regina-nm.de/>

reson - Regionale Entwicklungsagentur für Südniedersachsen e.V.

<http://www.reson-online.de/haupt.htm>

Twist (Büro für Tourismus, Wirtschaft und Struktur)

[http://www.rottal-inn.de/twist/reg\\_management/index.htm](http://www.rottal-inn.de/twist/reg_management/index.htm)

Waldviertelmanagement

<http://www.waldviertel-management.at/management/index.htm>

### 4.3 Process organization



Co-operative regional development is a process of great complexity. Process organization is therefore of considerable significance for its success. By definition, process organization lays down the order of individual steps and the manner in which problems of co-ordination can be resolved. This way, problems of co-ordination can be broken down into time-related, horizontal and vertical elements.

Applied to the process of co-operative regional development, this means

- grammatical structuring of the complex process in single interdependent steps;
- timed co-ordination of the individual steps; that is, when particular problems are tackled and resolved (time line);
- the internal organizational course of the co-operation process;
- co-ordination and interlocking of co-operative regional development and other regional activities.

#### Draw up a "co-operation timetable" or "script"



#### Stumbling blocks

Many regional co-operation projects start with enthusiasm, yet lose much of their dynamism in the course of the process or even "fizzle out". There can be different organizational reasons for such disillusionment and frustration:

- The co-operation process lacks a clear grammatical and organizational structure. The large number of individual activities do not demonstrate, at least for outsiders, a well-rounded overall concept; the impression arises of doing things for the sake of doing things. There appears to be no continuity in the process.
- Progress is not being made; possibly, however, progress is perceivable only by participants and not by outsiders.
- Despite intense regional discussion, necessary decisions are not taken over a prolonged period of time, yet demand a considerable amount of time and energy. Discussion goes round in circles; other important milestones cannot be tackled.
- The right timing is lacking, in part, because the tightrope walk between great pressure of time and excessive demands on the one hand, and negligible progress as well as the feeling of not making headway on the other hand, is not going well.

The whole process must first of all be programmatically structured; that is, subdivided into clear and realizable steps measured by **milestones**. This helps in the planning and realization of complex projects or systems. For the process of co-operative regional development this means: People must come together; a network must be developed. Ideas must be developed, objectives determined and consensus established on strategy and substance. Working and implementation structures must be created and kept going. Projects must be realized.

These steps must, moreover, be brought into an optimum **sequence**, whereby activities can still run parallel. It has to be clarified, for instance, at which point in time a central development process takes place, or a regional development concept is drawn up (-> Success factor: Concept); whether the realization of specific projects and activities will be permitted before, parallel to or after elaboration of the model and the development concept; which institutions and people will be involved, and when; which organizational structures and work processes will be guaranteed or have to be modified, and when.

It is helpful, in this connection, to have a "timetable". This **process plan** or **diagram** lays down the sequence in which individual jobs are to be tackled, which elements are to be dealt with, and when, and how much time is envisaged for realization. In addition, a rough calculation must be made of the time required. Technical aids, such as **step-by-step plans**, **bar charts** or **network diagrams** (network planning techniques) can be useful, in so much as they graphically visualize the process.

This scheduling also forms the basis for establishing personnel and finance requirements

(-> Financing).

#### Bear in mind co-operation process phases

Co-operation has to develop and grow. Even if this implementation process does not run strictly chronologically, it does in fact follow a largely typical sequence. In these individual stages, widely varying demands are made on realization ability, and different "tests" have to be passed:

#### ▪ Initialization (initiative phase), or the gateway to co-operation

At this point in time, there is generally no clear conception regarding the questions "what", "how" and "with whom". There is merely a desire, and also a reason, to change something in the region.

At this stage it is primarily a question of promoting the idea and convincing others.

#### ▪ Programmatical and personnel development of co-operation

At this stage of co-operation, a core team of co-operation partners is formed. Co-operation objectives and strategy become increasingly clear; specific initial measures and projects emerge.

The task is now the expansion of the co-operation network and the winning over of mediators in the region as well as in sectoral departments. Beyond that, basic organizational structures have to be created. Ponderous discussion on organization and structures as well as an intensive planning process can act as a deterrent. According to the motto, "nothing succeeds like success", it is now a question of highlighting the advantages and opportunities of co-operative action through successful gateway or pilot projects and appropriate media activities.

#### Criteria for the choice of gateway projects

- A regionally relevant topic or problem
- Broad regional consensus on the objectives, substance and approach
- Speedy realizability
- Financability
- Communicability and visualizability of results etc.

#### ▪ Realization and implementation

The consistent realization of co-operation now begins. Capital is required for the realization of projects and activities. Results and successes must be visible. The power to convince and enthuse is now in demand, for it is a matter of gaining the support of (further) partners for realization. Care has to be taken not to lose sight of the overall strategy and not to be sidetracked by a multitude of individual projects.

#### ▪ Stabilization or discontinuation of regional co-operation

Co-operation is not designed for the long-term. It has, for the most part, a temporary character. Once the initially formulated objectives and tasks have been successfully processed, and if it appears that the objectives are not to be achieved, or start-up financing expires, it then has to be decided whether co-operation can be continued or whether the matter has to be considered closed.

With many projects, a time limit is set in any case. Publicly supported projects, in particular, tend to be destined to provide a mere impetus, to touch off a pioneering role or an initial effect.

The decision on the continuation or discontinuation of co-operation largely depends on whether regional problems should still be resolved co-operatively, and whether regional co-operation is regarded as sound in the long term. If the decision falls in favour of stabilizing co-operation, the task will be to create stable organizational and sponsoring structures, for example through the founding of a promotional initiative, or a regional development agency or company. In this case, co-operation becomes normality and proceeds to everyday action.

#### Take early strategic decisions for the period after the ending of support:

Strategic decisions on a possible continuation of co-operation after start-up financing has come to an end must be taken in good time.

Because a higher share of self-financing is necessary in the region – perhaps even 100% – the pros and cons of continuation, appropriate organizational forms and structures, sponsorship and financing proposals have to be discussed in detail on a broad regional basis. Only far-sighted action enables continuity of support periods and programmes as well as continuity that is not dependent on personnel and programme. The discussion on organization and structures may not, however, lead to the obstruction of technical work.

**It's a question of the right timing**

Good timing of co-operative regional development means:

- appreciating co-operative regional development as a slow and complex process, and putting this point across in the region;
- dividing the total process into clear and realizable steps and putting these steps and measures necessary for regional development on a firm time line;
- undertaking the right steps at the right time; that means, for instance, tackling potentially explosive topics when the time is ripe;
- setting a pace that stretches participants without asking too much or too little of them;
- making continuity of action – in the thematic and strategic sense – the basis of regional action, and not short-term or short-sighted activity.

**Co-operation needs time**

Enormous expectancy and pressure to succeed frequently burden regional co-operation. Changes have always to take place immediately. Regional change, however, requires calculated handling of the time factor. On the one hand, change needs "rapid success". This demonstrates determination, and doubters see that progress is being made. On the other hand, if the pace is too high, the "team" can easily be left behind. If there is a lack of time for communication and the exchange of information, the sustainability of the process of change can be endangered.

Scheduling must therefore be based on the realistic timing of both the total process and individual phases. For participants – but also for potential financiers and development aid providers – this means that patience and perseverance have to be summoned up, and that they have to be prepared for a prolonged process of setting objectives, decision-making and realization. Time specifications are not possible for successful co-operative regional development. Experience shows that at least 3-5 years are required for sustainable solutions. The time required depends on different factors, such as:

- the degree of complexity of development problems, objectives and strategy; that is, the effort required to achieve development objectives;
- the personnel and financial resources that are available or can be secured; as well as
- regional consensus and readiness to participate.

With scheduling, it has to be considered that setting objectives, taking decisions as well as realizing concepts and projects generally takes longer with co-operative solutions than with isolated processes. The measure of timing is not those who are quick to take decisions, but rather those who hold back, those who have still to be brought on board. The strategy can also be to "march ahead", to convince through results.

**Annual planning**

Continuity of co-operative regional development has to be secured and the process made visible in the region. In this respect, annual planning is helpful, with which important events in the region and in the regional development process are compiled and spread over the year. This annual planning also has an important steering, co-ordination and control function. Of particular importance are

- programmatical **milestones**, that mark out process steps or results of particular significance during the course of a process, for which decisions are needed to be able to proceed;
- high-profile **presentation** of projects and (interim) results (official openings, parties etc.);
- **regional highlights**, such as high-profile events and official functions (regional conferences, fairs, festivals, visits by important regional figures, ceremonious signing of co-operation agreements etc.);

- **meetings** of high-level co-operation committees (steering group, advisory board etc.);
- ongoing **public relations**; for example, in the form of a media plan (-> Communication);
- **external timing**, such as application deadlines and support periods.

### Structure internal organizational processes effectively

The effective and efficient structuring of the course of a process is a further element of process organization. This is all the more important because the effort of co-operation greatly exceeds available problem-processing capacities in government and administration. Co-operation leads to more work and, possibly, to great strains on co-operation partners as a result of additional appointments, their preparation and going over, as well as involvement with new tasks.



#### **Stumbling blocks**

**Less effective and efficient operating processes involving widely-differing working groups and committees – which also partly overlap programmatically – as well as a vast number of appointments and negligible results can all lead to the demotivation of partners.**

**Problems of co-ordination and information also run the risk of parallel activities in committees and projects, and synergy effects are not made use of.**

This requires, among other things, the effective conduct of meetings and appointments, intensive communication within the network, good co-ordination and an optimum exchange and flow of information between different subprojects (-> Communication).

### Timing of events influences perception and the intensity of communication

Frequent and regular interaction stabilizes co-operation. Regular **meetings of co-operation committees** are therefore important (-> Development organization). Meetings at the operating level, in particular, must become routine and a regular date in diaries.

Also important are regular regional conferences (which should take place at least every two years), "future workshops" and other **events of regional encounter** and exchange, which at the same time present and publicize the co-operation process. These big events, which take place at long intervals, should be supplemented with discussion



#### **Good example**

In the District of **Neumarkt in Oberpfalz**, annual "**Energy Weeks**" have been taking place since 1999. The aim of this event is to encourage broad discussion of "the future of energy in the district". With information material, excursions and tours, in discussions and talks, but also with the help of art and cultural events, interested parties and sceptics, house-owners and potential house-owners are informed of the opportunities of renewable energy production and energy saving.

The programme of the third "Energy Week" in 2001 included a phone-in with energy experts, a series of articles in the regional press, workshop discussions with operators of biomass heating plants, wind power plants, photovoltaic plants, as well as lectures, a symposium, information stands, exhibitions and an information tour. This wide range of information was embedded in a cultural programme: a revue and the world première of "Rhapsody Regional, Opus Agenda 21 in Oil Minor" examined, in an artistic manner, the topic of energy and regional resources (such as raps). Annually increasing attendance figures evidence the level of public awareness and the effectiveness of "Energy Weeks".

groups and project forums or workshops (for example, direct marketing, regional marketing).

### Tension, perceptibility and staging ("script")

To preclude signs of tiredness and frustration, co-operative regional development must maintain sufficient tension during its course. That means, **development dynamism** must be perceivable, results and progress must occur time and again and be recognizable in the region. The ability to perceive the co-operation process and also its staging are important. This requires ongoing public relations, visits by important regional figures, visible and tangible projects and results as well as varied programmes and events tailored to different regional target groups. These regular regional events not only draw the attention of the general public to the project, they also back up and motivate direct players.

### Secure committed and continuous co-operation

A prerequisite for effective work in co-operation committees is the continuous presence and participation of individual members. This applies to all co-operation committees. If presence and participation are not ensured, valuable information will be lost, and time and again topics will have to be dealt with anew. Appointment bottlenecks, an already high work load with routine tasks, a large number of committee meetings in connection with the co-operation project, a low level of interest etc., all lead not infrequently to irregular attendance at meetings. Although a change of behaviour on the part of participants is difficult to achieve, precautions can be taken in so much as

- responsibility for certain tasks is transferred to individual members, thus reminding them of their commitment;
- different committees meet at **regular intervals**. Fixed working arrangements – such as a certain number of days per month and prescribed working hours – and the long-term planning of appointments facilitate the arrangement of meetings;
- the **number of co-operation committees and meetings** is kept to a minimum to preclude a "meeting overload";
- **regulations on representation** ensure, at least, that one and the same "deputy" represents the formal member when required;
- "Penalties" are agreed, for example in the form of a fine that "defaulters" pay into the kitty.

### Regulate the formulation of demands and decision-making processes in good time

The manner in which demands are formulated and the decision-making process takes place in co-operative regional development provides information on co-operative self-image as well as on the approaches and methods of the co-operation process.

The formulation of demands can occur

- from above, in the sense of a "**top-down**" procedure;
- "**bottom up**", that is, starting from the base; or
- "**down up**", that is, in the sense of a counterflow procedure, by which overall objectives are laid down at the top, but decision-makers in lower levels have a certain latitude regarding their form.

Also important is the question of the majority required for taking decisions.

Isolated decisions are quickly taken at hierarchy levels, but more easily meet resistance, which can, in turn, increase the time and energy required for realization.

For important decisions the two-thirds majority (qualified majority decisions) has proven worthwhile. In this case, almost all decision-makers and opponents are forced to argue intensively and to qualify their points of view.

Consensus – that is, unanimity – produces the best results. The disadvantages of group or consensual decisions are, of course, the relatively great amount of energy and time expended. This is normally compensated, however, by a noticeable saving of time in realization. It has also to be clarified, whether projects are started that are not judged by all partners to be relevant or important.

### Co-operation agreements or the rules of co-operation

Unambiguous rules, committed to paper, facilitate co-operation. This applies, independent of whether a formal or informal procedure is involved. The closer the involvement is, or should be, the more urgent the rules and the more detailed they must be.

It is advantageous to lay down rules as early as possible. This way, there is a good probability that everyone is objective and interested in a fair agreement. agreements are essential. Agreements are essential, at the latest, when financial or other commitments evolve from the co-operation process for one or several of the partners.

#### Rules for a new political culture

- Successes are shared.
- More considerate and tolerant relations are cultivated towards each other.
- Information is equally accessible to everyone.
- Each participant does his or her best to achieve objectives.
- The protection of intellectual rights is guaranteed.
- Diversity and dissimilarity of political forces is respected and guaranteed.

From: "Der Steinbacher Weg. Motivation und Orientierungshilfe zur nachhaltigen Gemeindeentwicklung".

Rules create **clarity** and **commitment**. They serve the forming and **stabilization** of the co-operation process, in so much as a course is laid down that is the basis of understanding between the different partners and can also be disseminated among the general public in the region. Rules can also regulate such fundamental issues as

- basic philosophy and strategic objectives (vision);
- membership, membership status and resignation formalities;
- modalities on decision-making and the adoption of resolutions, such as a regulation on representatives, voting rights as well as on principles of co-ordination and decision-making;
- administrative and management bodies and committees:
- dealing with conflicts of interest as well as balancing benefits and burdens between co-operation partners.

Co-operation rules can be laid down in a variety of ways; for instance, in voluntary agreements between participants, such as in a charter or "contract for the future", in a co-operation agreement or in statutes.

#### Feedback to the institutions of origin

Co-operative regional development is effective especially when this process is embedded in regional action and decision-making; that is, when connections between both strands are identified and established. This relatedness between "co-operation delegates" and their organizations, especially in large institutions with a diversified structure of responsibility and functions, is no easy task and is therefore not always successful.

There are certain limited possibilities of influence through

- the choice of **people** who represent the institution in co-operation committees (with particular consideration of their hierarchy level, ability to communicate, personal commitment etc.);
- providing all **institutions** of origin with timely and ongoing **information** on objectives, strategies and projects of regional co-operation;
- well-structured **protocols** and an explanation of all resolutions;
- clarification of the **relationship between both strands of action**, in order to preclude possible fears regarding the loss of responsibility that might occur, and to demonstrate existing interaction;
- provision of **mediation** to support relatedness.

#### Realization of objectives and resolutions by regional decision-makers

It has to be ensured, within the scope of process organization, that laid-down objectives, strategies and projects are also realized. This is particularly difficult to achieve when the areas of competence and responsibility of regional players are affected by government, administration and industry (for example, by land use planning), or when objectives, strategies and projects can only be realized with the active involvement of people and institutions outside the process, or by the general public. Even when co-operative



#### Stumbling blocks

Regional co-operation brings about little on the whole when the objectives, strategies, concepts and projects thus developed do not manifest themselves in regional action. There can be different reasons for this. A typical problem of co-operative planning processes, for instance, is often inadequate feedback of operating results to the institutions of origin. This relatedness can fail for a number of reasons, including lack of time, lofty discussions on objectives, insufficient reference to current problems in these institutions, or limited interest on the part of such institutions in the work of co-operation committees.

The relevant decision-makers might also not be involved in the process, or they might be of the opinion that their attitudes and interests are not taken into account to the extent due.

Feedback problems can also be explained by the fact that internal administrative procedures do not match, timewise or in substance, the demands that arise from co-operation with players outside administration.



## 4. Success factor: process

regional development generally has no authority to issue directives or permits, influence can be exercised, at least to a certain extent, through the following supportive measures:

- The most important players charged with realization should actively participate in decision-making in different co-operation committees, and **links** thereby established between **personnel at both levels of action**.
- The partners commit themselves, within the framework of the **co-operation agreement**, to realize objectives and resolutions, which have been decided upon consensually, within their own areas of responsibility and decision-making.
- "Control mechanisms" – or at least **verification criteria** – are established to examine whether, and how objectives and resolutions are taken into account and realized by regional decision-makers and players.
- Co-operative decisions are backed up in the long-term – if possible – **by incorporation in legally binding plans** (for instance, through zoning and the laying down of sites in regional plans) or contracts.
- Even if co-operative regional development cannot act, in the formal sense, as a "public body", it is helpful if it is at least given a hearing appropriate to a public body as a **mouthpiece for regional development**.



### Tips

- A "co-operation schedule", which divides the whole process into clear, realistic and chronologically co-ordinated steps measured by milestones, helps in coping with complex processes such as co-operative regional development.
- A time plan helps not only to structure, but also to control the co-operation process.
- Ensure continuity with respect to participants, in the process itself and also in public relations.
- Select gateway projects in a calculated manner.
- Bring the co-operation project to public attention through special events at regular, but not prolonged intervals.
- Have the courage to consider a matter closed and to cut short a process, when nothing more is happening, or when, despite adaptation or modification, objectives are no longer to be achieved.
- Ensure binding and continuous participation in co-operation committees through appropriate measures.
- Establish co-operation rules, and keep an eye on their observance.



### Checklist: Process organization

- ✓ Is the whole process subdivided into manageable tasks?
- ✓ Is the timing of co-operative regional development correct?
- ✓ Does our action correspond to the particular phase of co-operation?
- ✓ Which gateway project is appropriate?
- ✓ Is the procedure regulated and transparent for process participants and others?
- ✓ How is it ensured that members of the co-operation project participate continually?
- ✓ Which rules or co-operation agreements are helpful or necessary?
- ✓ Does a systematic feedback of co-operation results to institutions of origin and other regional institutions take place?
- ✓ How does co-ordination and interlocking between co-operative regional development and other regional activities occur?



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#### 4.4 Communication, information and public relations

Investigating, informing, presenting, discussing, moderating, co-ordinating, promoting acceptance, participating, struggling for consensus, jointly seeking solutions, encouraging action: all these activities are communicative functions that occur in regional development. The whole process – from the definition of problems to the realization of solutions – is a task for communication. This applies, to an exceptional extent, to co-operative regional development.



**Public relations** are the cultivation and promotion of an organization's relationship with the general public. Public relations are practised in order to establish the presence, identifiability and distinguishability of an organization or of a regional development approach. Public relations (PR) are a part of regional marketing.

#### Of great and varied importance

Communication, information and public relations are closely linked and are important in many respects for co-operative regional development:

- They **provide information** to partners, participants and the general public, in so much as concepts and projects are presented, important events are reported on to mark special occasions, and the information, experience and knowledge of process participants is shared among themselves.
- They **motivate**, in so much as participants get to know and appreciate each other, create a foundation of trust and a common understand, and a feeling of community is developed.
- They **lead and guide**, in so much as objectives and subject matter are put across that formulate the function and tasks of the individual.
- They **promote and qualify** both the process and the participants, in so much as a common approach to problems, tasks and basis of action develops between participants, individual experience and knowledge is disclosed for the benefit of all participants and the process as a whole, and solutions are provided for the purpose of sustainable development.
- They **legitimize** personal action with regard to decision-makers and promoters, and they attract idealistic, personnel and financial support in as much as transparency is established and successes and results presented.



### The fundamentally new must be communicated as well as details

Co-operative regional development is an abstract, complex and, moreover, new task.

That, which is new, namely the necessity and advantages of co-operative regional action, the philosophy, guidelines and objectives of regional co-operation as well as a changed manner of approach and treatment must be strongly communicated.

In many regions, communication is also important in jointly developing a regional identity and, furthermore, in winning support within and outside the region both for and with this identity. The people and institutions involved, their objectives, functions and tasks in co-operative regional development, must be made known.

The same applies to the programmatical concept, prior results and successes as well as current and planned projects and activities (what has happened up to now, what's going on at the moment and what's planned?). But failures and setbacks have also to be frankly communicated, in order that lessons can be learned and trust restored. Communication should not restrict itself, however, to organizational or technical aspects. Interpersonal and private exchange is also important.



#### Stumbling blocks

Communication shortcomings are often partly responsible for problems and also for the failure of co-operative processes. They also have different facets: First of all, "classic disturbances in communication" between transmitter and recipient have to be mentioned. These arise when different languages are spoken (technical jargon, a high degree of abstraction, lack of intelligibility). They can also be due, however, to the failing separation of technical and personal levels, to the personal conflicts of co-operation partners, or to the personal behaviour of individuals.

Because co-operative regional development is a complex task with a high degree of abstraction and many participants, the demands on communication increase.

Finding the right measure of communication is not always easy. On the one hand, the time and effort required for communication, information and public relations is underestimated. On the other hand, as a result of the large number of discussions and meetings, the subjective or objective impression is made by participants themselves, or by their superiors, that there is too much talking around a subject and too little action.

### Participants in communication and their target groups

Co-operative regional development means a great deal of communication with a large number of participants. Communication and exchange must take place between and beyond process participators. Communication is many-faceted and occurs at different levels. It can therefore be distinguished between **internal communication** – that is, communication between participants as well as publicizing the project in the region (so-called inward marketing) – and **external communication** – that is, the external presentation of the project (outward marketing) to make the project known; for instance, to potential providers of development aid, or to draw the attention of potential investors or visitors to the region.

Important **partners** and **target groups** of regional communication, information and public relations are:

- Process participators as well as individual co-operation committees;
- the institutions of origin of process participants;
- decision-makers and responsible parties in the region who are not part of the co-operative network, but who are nonetheless important for realization (officials, public and private providers of finance, sponsors etc.);
- Critics and opponents;
- regional and local media;
- regional companies;
- action groups, clubs and associations;
- people in the region/the general public.

In order to achieve the greatest efficiency of measures of communication and to reach the general public, and also to avoid unnecessary effort and financial expenditure, the

## 4. Success factor: process

content and means of communication have to be tailored to different target groups. Talks and also printed texts should therefore be prepared with target groups in mind. And special events can be organized for particular target groups; for instance, "activity days" for children.

### Motivating participants through information

Co-operative regional development is only effective when its philosophy, its objectives and its projects also flow into administrative routine. Besides process participants, their institutions of origin have also to be involved at an informational and strategic level. In their role as informants and multipliers, superiors (decision-making level) and staff (realization level) in institutions of origin have to be kept continually informed about the process and results achieved in committees.

### Models of co-operative and communicative participation

Model	Objectives	Means/ Methods	Application possibilities
<b>Moderated working groups</b>	Factual discussion, concentration of responsibilities and abilities		In complex problematical situations with fragmented responsibilities; informal supplementation to formal methods; realization of plans ➤ municipal and regional levels
<b>Technical forums</b>	Local market place Ideas, initiatives and interests that are come across	Bringing about consensus through dialogue, obligatory participation, procedural agreements	Different topics; situations of conflict such as contentious traffic development plans (traffic forum); development of interdisciplinary solution strategies for technical problems ➤ at all spatial levels
<b>Co-operative discourse</b>	Dialogue between individuals and groups involved in planning measures	Combination of different discursive methods	Waste management, search for sites ➤ regional level
<b>Mediation procedure</b>	Mediation of conflicts by impartial third-parties	Rational discourse with groups of interested and affected parties on the preparation of decisions	In especially emotionalized conflicts; search for sites for negative institutions and large-scale infrastructure ➤ at all spatial levels
<b>Open space conference</b>	Self-controlled group process for dealing with topical matters concerning upheaval	No agenda, no prepared talks, all proposed topics are accepted; key principle is self-organization	Letting a number of people work on complex topics and problem definition; in the strategic reorientation of organizations ➤ at the institutional or company level as well as at the regional and municipal level
<b>Planning cell</b>	Linking specialized knowledge of experts with that of citizens	Group work, basic information through experts; results in civil reports and appraisals	Representative support of decisions, development of suggestions for solving a given planning problem ➤ municipal and regional level
<b>Round-tables</b>	Factual discussion in situations that are difficult to justify	Broad spectrum of societal groups; procedural rules for the avoidance of self-promotion	In dead-end situations with particular pressure for action; search for sites; broad programmatical spectrum ➤ at all spatial levels
<b>Conferences on the shaping of the future</b>	Achievement of consensus on the cornerstones of a desirable future; creative visions	Structured large-group process; representative selection; predetermined work pattern; different phases; plenum	Work with large heterogeneous groups; peaceful, forward-looking problem definitions ➤ at all spatial levels as well as in companies
<b>Future workshop</b>	Encouraging people to participate in shaping the future	3 phases: criticism, imagination, realization; Group and small-group work; rules of communication	Production of innovative, unorthodox ideas; outline of specific visions; scenarios for the future ➤ municipal and regional level

Sources: Renn und Oppermann 1995; Feindt 1997; Kuhnt und Muellert 1997; Apel, Dernbach et al. 1998; Bundesumweltministerium und Umweltbundesamt 1998; Beckmann und Keck 1999; Neugebauer 1999)

Appropriate methods for achieving this are, for instance:

- **routine treatment** (regular topic: "Co-operative regional development" at meetings with administrative heads and other officials);
- **Spontaneous reports**;
- **Circulation method:** written/printed information (circulars, E-mail distribution list, newsletters etc.);
- Articles in **staff magazines**, regional and district **news sheets** etc.;
- **Notice and bulletin boards**;
- **Information events**,
- **Qualification and training** of staff.

#### Models of co-operative and communicative participation

Model	Direction	Participants	Time-frame
<b>Moderated working groups</b>	Moderator	Pressure groups	Several months
<b>Technical forums</b>	Professional Moderators	Experts and/or representatives of affected players 20 – 25 participants	6-12 months, meetings every 4 weeks
<b>Co-operative discourse</b>	Moderators with mediatory qualities	Pressure groups, experts, randomly-selected members of the public, research team	Several months
<b>Mediation procedure</b>	Methodically qualified mediators	Participants in the conflict	6 months and longer
<b>Open space conference</b>	Professional moderation	Everyone who is interested 10-750 participants	1-3 days
<b>Planning cell</b>	Professional moderation + experts	Randomly-selected people (time off from work, compensation) About 25 participants per planning cell	About 1 week
<b>Round-tables</b>	Accepted figures; professional moderation	Experts and/or representatives of affected players 20-25 participants	6-9 months, regular meetings
<b>Conferences on the shaping of the future</b>	Moderators and a planning team	Selected representatives of all societal groups 30-72 participants (64 recommended) over 18 years of age	3 days
<b>Future workshop</b>	Experienced professional moderators	Representatives of all societal groups and/or people affected 12-15 participants	1-3 days

Sources: Renn und Oppermann 1995; Feindt 1997; Kuhnt und Muellert 1997; Apel, Dernbach et al. 1998; Bundesumweltministerium und Umweltbundesamt 1998; Beckmann und Keck 1999; Neugebauer 1999)

#### Lay down responsibilities for communication

For particular communicative tasks, such as public relations, clear **responsibilities** must be created and personnel continuity ensured. The same person, or office, should therefore always be responsible for media contacts and public relations and act as point of contact. Associations, institutions and companies mostly have their own public relations department. Smaller associations or projects generally do not have the required resources. In such cases, one person has to take responsibility for public relations. In co-operative regional development processes the particular difficulty arises, that public relations has to be conducted for a network of different partners.

There are various solutions:

- The regional **liaison office** – for example, a regional development agency – is responsible for public relations, the function being fulfilled by existing staff or by a newly employed PR advisor.
- Public relations can, however, also be carried out on a work-sharing and voluntary basis by one or more people from the sponsoring institution or the network.
- It is conceivable, that an **existing press office** (for example, that of a district administration) undertakes public relations for the whole co-operation project.
- Support could possibly also be obtained from a professional **agency**.

#### Communication management

Communication, information and public relations are an important group of tasks, which not only demand a considerable amount of time and material on the part of participants, but also give rise to costs. It is therefore important to create tools, opportunities and channels for vertical and horizontal communication. A systematic approach, in the sense of a "communication concept", is useful in this respect, whereby different aspects have to be borne in mind:

- Communication technology and communication medium.
- Communication infrastructure.
- Communication capabilities.
- Room for creativity.
- Financing.
- Uniform outward appearance.

A public relations concept (see below) is especially useful.

#### Continuity and topicality

The time aspect is important in communication for many reasons. The time required for communication, information and public relations is frequently underestimated. Experience shows, that it is better to communicate less extensively, but much more frequently.

The most difficult, yet most important task is to set up a **long-term internal communication process**. Continuity and topicality of information is decisive. It has to be borne in mind, however, that communication, information and public relations in certain stages of co-operation – in the commencement phase and at the beginning of realization, for instance – are of particular importance (-> Development organization)

A **media plan** is useful; an annual plan for public relations, in which the date and time of activities planned for the coming year (press conferences and interviews, events and functions, technical conferences, exhibitions etc.) are set, and the allocation of tasks and corresponding responsibilities determined. This plan not only co-ordinates high-profile activities within the framework of co-operative regional development, it also helps in co-ordinating the activities of participating network members.

### Communication technology and communication medium

The form (technique and method) and medium of communication are dependent to a large extent on the target group that is to be reached. A combination of different media is the most successful method.

Of particular importance are **personal discussions**, direct exchange and face-to-face contact between participants, which occur in the form of one-to-one conversations, within the scope of events and functions, or in the form of regular telephone contact. Local, and regional **newspapers, brochures, (interim) reports** etc., have all proven their worth as communication media; whereby not only existing media (press, radio, television) can be used, but also internal information material and media (regional newspaper, newsletter, Intranet etc.).

### Provide access to communication infrastructure

The communication infrastructure required for regional communication, information and public relations must be available or, at least, easily accessible. Technical requirements are letterheads, telephone, fax machine and, if necessary, direct Internet access, copying facilities, secretariat, mailroom etc.

A **communication centre** has proven to be effective, where all-important information is gathered and forwarded, and which is also responsible for the communication process (- > Development organization). This is frequently part of the duties of the director of the regional development agency. Where there is a great deal of work and information, however, a bottleneck can arise, with the result that relief has to be sought through the setting up of a secretariat, for instance, or by transferring the work to the EDP department of one of the co-operation partners.

If need be, an **information, advice and liaison office** can also be established in the region. This can contribute to the cultivation of contacts, and can also collect, process and make information available to interested parties in the form of advisory and other services (technical consulting, funding advice etc.). The installation of a single telephone number for the region, or for the co-operation project, under which initial information and advice as well as further services can be provided, is also worth considering.

### Communication skills are essential

Precise and effective communication has to observe certain basic rules. Comprehensive and open communication between all participants is important. There has to be a good command of conversational and moderation techniques as well as seminar and conference techniques and presentation and visualization techniques (OHP, flip chart, pinboard). Conference management is also necessary, which keeps an eye on precise, result-orientated communication and ensures that results are documented and their realization controlled. The number and duration of meetings has to be restricted to a necessary minimum.

### Develop information and communication routines

Communication between participants must become a matter of routine. Information and communication routines as well as automatism are therefore important. This includes **distribution lists, rotational working meetings** as well as **press interviews** and regular **information material and newsletters**. Participants should also be required to provide of their own accord information that is necessary for dealing with tasks, and to collect information in the same manner.

#### A-I-D-A PRINCIPLE (A basic rule of communication)

- **Attention:** Create attention (for example with eye-catchers).
- **Interest:** Stir up interest in the matter.
- **Desire :** Create the desire to know more about the matter, to enjoy direct contact, to seize the offer, to participate in the action or activity.
- **Action:** Instruction for action, how the desire can be fulfilled (time and place of an event).  
(Cornelsen 1997)

### Create communication events

Communication events are important, which, on the one hand, provide an opportunity to get together and exchange news and views, and on the other hand, attract the interest of journalists and the general public. They include, besides regular informational and working meetings, important regional "events", such as opening ceremonies, celebrations and parties, festivals, special cultural highlights, "open-days", visits of high-ranking figures, regional competitions, specialist/trade conferences etc.



## 4. Success factor: process

### Permit and promote creativity

#### Classic methods from the creative tool case

- Brainstorming
- 6-3-5 method
- Mind-mapping
- Reversal technique
- Synectics

Successful regional development means challenging old values and traditions as well as developing and realizing new ideas. Creativity is in demand. But thinking is sometimes inflexible, new ideas simply do not emerge. Where the flow of ideas is to be inspired and creativity increased, thinking blocks have to be broken through and old thought patterns discarded; and here, creativity techniques are helpful. They also help to structure and refine ideas, to develop alternatives and thus, in the end, to achieve an optimum solution.

In order to release creativity, people with creative potential must be involved. A creative environment has also to be developed, by cultivating open and co-operative relations among those involved, by encouraging a positive conversational atmosphere and ensuring that sufficient time is available for programmatical discussions.

### Secure the financing of activities

Adequate funds have to be provided in a financial and budgetary plan for communication, information and public relations throughout the life of a project (-> Costs and financing). In addition, isolated high-profile activities can also be financed, or financially supported by sponsors in the form of money, contributions in kind, services or prizes (for example, prizes for regional competitions, the printing of posters and placards, brochures, the imparting of specialist knowledge through further training or the moderation of events).

### Corporate identity, logo

**Corporate design** – that is, the professional design of letterheads, business cards, advertisements, posters, leaflets and other information material – increases the recognition value of the co-operation process and its varied projects; it also moulds the public image. Moreover, corporate identity can contribute to identification with the region.

A logo is also very useful; one that is distinguished by originality and distinctiveness, that represents the special features of the region. A professional graphic designer can be commissioned to develop the logo; alternatively, a competition or workshop can be organized. Realization should not always occur professionally. Communication and public relations live from the engaging design of their "products", which influences intelligibility, clarity and recognition value. Besides typography and layout, linguistic creativity and text style play a special role.



#### Good example

In the Mecklenburg Lake District, an exhibition was organized of the logos of companies, organizations and institutions resident in the region. The aim was to discover whether something like a regional identity, or regional values could be illustrated through the diversity of the different logos. Visitors to the exhibition made up the jury, and they selected the logo that best reflected the region's identity. In a subsequent workshop, "Quality in Design", staff from administrative offices, companies, organizations and agencies as well as designers and marketing experts discussed the forms of presentation with which regional qualities could be uniformly conveyed. According to one proposal, the logo's colour scheme could be used as a unifying factor for the region.

### Management of information and knowledge is important

Planning and decision-making require specific information and knowledge concerning application. Co-operative regional development, in particular, requires a tremendous intensity of information and knowledge. Generating the required information and necessary knowledge, as well as using them in the interest of regional development, is therefore a key function.



### Stumbling blocks

Information and knowledge are frequently not employed in the best possible way or used in the interest of regional development. The cause can be an information policy guided by self-interest, which holds back important information, or only passes it on in watered-down form.

A typical communication problem of many co-operation processes is also that the process as a whole, as well as current activities and subprojects, are insufficiently known to the general public and the network. Subprojects have little or no information on parallel projects. As a result, synergy through the exchange of information and project networking is ineffective. A sense of belonging rarely emerges.

But also bad timing, the conveying of "unimportant" detailed information, which is of no interest to the particular target group, or a "flood of information", with which individuals can no longer cope, can give participants the impression that they do not have at their disposal the information they judge to be important.



#### Checklist: Management of knowledge 1

- ✓ Clarify the need for information and knowledge (lack of know-how)
  - Which knowledge and information is required for the process?
  - Which knowledge and which information is needed by whom?
- ✓ Gathering of information and knowledge (gaining knowledge)
  - Which information is available?
  - Which sources and channels of information and knowledge can be tapped?
  - How is information and knowledge gathered? (discussions, surveys information routines, use of information technology etc.)
  - How are important sources of information and knowledge included on a continuing basis?
- ✓ Assessment of information and knowledge
  - Is information and knowledge required at present, in the medium term or in the long term?
- ✓ Storage and documentation of information and knowledge
  - Where is information and knowledge gathered?
  - Who gathers information and knowledge?



#### Checklist: Management of knowledge 2

- ✓ Availability, distribution and exchange of information and knowledge (processing and distribution of information and knowledge)
  - How is information and knowledge processed?
  - How is information and knowledge distributed?
  - How is existing information and knowledge made accessible to process participants who are dependent on them?
  - How can participants learnt from each other?
- ✓ Use of information and knowledge
  - Is information and knowledge used as well as possible?

## 4. Success factor: process

### Public relations concept – basis for successful public relations

Public relations are a significant component of communication strategy within the framework of the co-operative regional development process. Public relations are more effective when it is systematic, planned and regularly conducted. Public relations measures are only sensible and effective when they are integrated into a well thought-out, long-term concept. Such a concept typically comprises different elements (see Illustration)

### Means of public relations

Besides timing control with the aid of a media plan, the following aspects should be considered in the run-up to a high-profile activity or measure:

#### Elements of a public relations concept

- Taking stock
  - Definition of objectives
  - Definition of target groups / type of audience
  - Strategy development
  - Media plan
  - Corporate identity / logo
  - Press work
  - Publications
  - Means of presentation
  - Success control
  - Financing
- Aim and purpose of the activity or measure
  - Type of occasion (periodic and situational information)
  - Type of audience (broad or limited audience, target group)
  - Time of information (limited in time / long-term, objective–setting phase, conceptual phase, realization phase)
  - Responsibilities
  - Documentation

#### Public relations tools

##### Self-projection

Prospectus, flyers  
Information leaflets  
Posters/placards  
Exhibitions  
Diagrams  
Video/slides  
Showcases  
Information stands  
Advertisements  
Talks/lectures  
Internet presentations

##### Press/Media

Press release  
Press conference  
Press interview  
Press kit  
Distribution list

##### Publications

Magazines  
Specialized brochures  
Handbooks  
Guides  
Operational and financial reports  
Sustainability and  
Agenda reports  
Books  
Specialized articles  
Protocols  
Newsletters

##### Events/Activities

Congress  
Conferences  
Symposia  
Fairs  
Seminars  
Series of events (under a motto)  
Workshops  
Future workshops  
Public forum  
Open-days  
"Day of the Region"  
Project tours  
Excursions  
Festivities  
Competitions  
Questionnaires  
Seminars and tours for journalists

Recourse can be made within the scope of public relations to a whole range of aids. Which activities or measures of self-projection, which publications, which type of media activity, which type of event, function or activity should be chosen, depends on the respective objective and purpose, the respective target group and the respective occasion.

### Seek co-operation with the regional media

Good, regular media work is the most economical form of public relations.

Potential contacts are local and regional newspapers, free papers, district, town and community gazettes, regional and local radio and television stations as well as *Länder* programmes of the ARD ["Association of Public Broadcasting Corporations in the Federal Republic of Germany"]. The press, in

particular, is an important medium for regional public relations. Unfortunately, the layout of the regional newspaper landscape in many cases hampers regional media activities.

Successful media work depends on the quality and topicality of the **distribution list**. To begin with, the media and respective contacts have to be listed; the press list has to be regularly updated, since addresses and people can change, new contacts emerge.

It also has to be clarified, how a particular item of news gets into the newspaper; that is, whether the **press text** (for example, a press release) is prepared beforehand, or left to an interview or press conference with journalists.

**Press releases, press information and press reports** provide the basic framework for all media activities. They contain information, explanations, statements or news on the co-operative process and its projects.

Press releases should be dispatched regularly. They must be topical and intelligible as well as brief and factual. The most important statement should be at the beginning (6 Questions: see box).

A thematic "peg" is important; for instance, a regional function, national or international event (World Climate Conference, Rio + 10 Summit etc.), personnel changes in the co-operation network, new developments or proposals, publication of research findings or the results of surveys.

Only really important events – such as the signing of a co-operation agreement with new partners, realized projects etc. – require a **press conference**. Press conferences involve a great deal of effort, but they allow better presentation of a cause, unresolved questions can be dealt with immediately and personal contact to journalists can be made. In the case of less important occasions, recourse can be made to a **press interview**.

**Press kits** can be included with press releases; they can be distributed at press conferences. Besides the latest news, press kits contain further background information, and therefore provide an opportunity to bring more detailed information on the co-operation process to the attention of journalists. Press kits should be continually updated, and the most important item of information should be placed at the top. A press kit can include, for instance, image material, annual report, information material, project descriptions, leaflets, posters and placards, stickers, local maps and guides as well as, where appropriate, notepad and small presents. At events and functions, they can include a programme, information on speakers, texts of speeches, statements and additional information on the particular subject matter (facts, diagrams, graphics etc.).

### Internal publication of a "regional magazine"

There is a lot to be said for a magazine of one's own, which can supplement press work with existing regional media: One is not dependent on the goodwill of journalists. The content is decided on internally. Information, concepts, projects etc. can be presented in greater detail. One creates a **source of information** for co-operation partners, members, friends and promoters, politicians (mayors, for instance) and administrative authorities. Such a magazine can strengthen the sense of belonging as well as identification with the region and the co-operation process. It can also serve as a **discussion forum** for matters of importance for the region.

These advantages must be compared with the costs – including staff and time expended – involved in producing a regional magazine. Before a magazine is published, different questions must be resolved concerning its purpose, target group, publication schedule, editing and design.



#### Stumbling blocks

**Public relations activities are not co-ordinated and regional co-operation has no corporate identity. This can lead to the situation, that the process is hardly known in the region, or that subprojects are not attributed to the co-operation process. As a result, there develops only a weak sense of belonging, network co-operation suffers and acceptance and participation remain at a low level.**

**The image within the region is considerably worse than outside the region, where the process enjoys a positive image among experts.**

**Six questions** whose answer is important for drawing up every press text:

**Who?**

**What?**

**When?**

**Where?**

**How?**

**Why?**

A **calendar of events** provides information on internal events and functions as well as on the regional and supra-regional events of other players that are of interest for the regional development process. The following information must always be provided: place, date and time, title/theme, target group, registration, cost, contact information (name and address).

#### **Internet and Intranet**

The Internet is increasingly used for communication, information and public relations in the area of co-operative regional development. The Internet, as an open system, is at the disposal of all users. With the setting up of appropriate structures it can also be used as an Intranet, in the sense of an expert-network to which a limited number of people have access by means of a password. This provides the opportunity to feed in protocols of meetings and working groups or other documents not intended for public attention, as well as for internal exchange within the expert-network.

The merits of communication technology lie in its speed, its unlimited availability in terms of time and space (in so far as the necessary infrastructure is at hand), and the possibility to develop and update contents and presentation step-by-step. The Internet unfolds the expected benefits, however, only when co-operation participants also have at their disposal the appropriate **means of access and use**; something that up to now has frequently not been ensured. Moreover, information must also be fed into the system and updated, which requires both personnel and time.

The appearance of a regional, co-operative platform on the Internet should be part of the publicity concept (outward, inward). The development of the Internet concept should proceed step-by-step; that is, it should be continually expanded and extended with different modules during the course of time. A simple, initial version should be set up on the Internet as soon as possible, in order to establish a presence. This can then be expanded gradually according to requirements. It is also worth considering setting up a working group "Regional Development Goes Online". In utilizing the Internet, programmatical, design, technical, organizational and financial aspects have to be considered.





### **Tips**

- Tailor contents and methods of dissemination as well as the communication medium to different target groups.
- Guarantee communicative feedback to participating institutions by means of information commitments and routines.
- Employ methods of dialogue and of participation on the part of the general public that are specially adapted to each case.
- Create clear lines of responsibility and ensure personnel continuity in respect of information and, in particular, public relations.
- Set up a communications centre for the gathering and forwarding of important information.
- Provide communication events and opportunities for informal meetings and exchanges (festivities, excursions etc.). The substance of a matter can often be more easily put across by means of PR events, functions and activities (symposia, festivals, competitions, anniversaries) than with dry press releases.
- The corporate design of printed matter increases the recognition value of the co-operation process and its different subprojects, and it also moulds the public's image of the process.
- It is advisable to lay down specific design and procedural features in a handbook, or design charter, as a guideline for co-operation partners concerning their public relations activities. This handbook can also include suggested colours, font types and sizes, logo variations and sample designs for posters and brochures. Examples of press releases, checklists for various occasions, such as press releases, press conferences, interviews and events, can also be included.
- Public relations always encompasses purely informative elements (leaflets, press releases) and communicative elements (project "open days", project days at schools, competitions and workshops, also for the public). Information alone is not enough to encourage the public to participate in regional development or Agenda processes. Opportunities should also be created for the active participation of those interested (tree-planting, viewing of positive projects etc.).
- Set up structured management of information and knowledge.
- Effective public relations should be systematic, planned and ongoing; a corresponding concept is the basis for successful public relations.
- An annual media plan is advisable for the co-ordination of planned public relations activities with other activities intended for the general public, as well as of measures on the part of different network members.
- Establish and cultivate good contacts to local journalists and editors in order to maintain a regular presence in local and regional newspapers.
- Provide journalists with relevant background knowledge; for instance, on Agenda 21, or on sustainable regional development (data, facts, addresses, sources and documents, legal foundations, photos). This should be announced as a free service in a press release.
- Public relations should be documented as a form of success control. Such documentation should be more than a mere press review; it should also include matters of relevance to public relations, such as notes on conversations with journalists, internal photos of PR activities and events, as well as annual reports.


**Checklist: Communication, information, public relations**

- √ Is there a communication or public relations concept?
- √ Are communication and the provision of information effective?
- √ Are there communication problems, and if so, which?
- √ Are there clear lines of responsibility and personnel continuity in respect of regional communication?
- √ How are regional media used?
- √ Is there optimized management of information and knowledge?
- √ Is it ensured that relevant information is gathered and made available?
- √ Is there a corporate identity and corporate design?


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### **Information Material**

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These publications contain a number of working aids concerning different elements of public relations, such as checklists, sample forms and letters etc.



### **Links**

[Aktionsbörse](http://www.lfu.baden-wuerttemberg.de/lfu/abt2/agenda/index.html) des Agenda-Büros der Landesanstalt für Umweltschutz Baden-Württemberg (high-profile Local Agenda 21 activities are collected, briefly processed and made available in paper form or on the Internet) .  
[www.lfu.baden-wuerttemberg.de/lfu/abt2/agenda/index.html](http://www.lfu.baden-wuerttemberg.de/lfu/abt2/agenda/index.html)

Example of a public relations concept of the regional co-operation network REGIO Bodensee  
[www.regio-bodensee.net/organisation/8.asp](http://www.regio-bodensee.net/organisation/8.asp)



#### 4.5 Further training and qualification

Competitive disadvantages in a region frequently result from modest professional qualification, lack of knowledge or inadequately-employed human resources. The activation, networking, further development and utilization of regional knowledge and know-how for the purpose of sustainable regional development and the promotion of so-called human capital are part, therefore, of the central tasks of successful regional development.

A high level of professionalism is required on the part of participants in different functions. Further training and qualification must therefore be closely linked with the regional development process. One speaks, in this connection, of "learning regions".



- Certain **professional groups**, such as farmers, direct marketers, tourism operators etc., must be enabled to carry out their existing activities differently and also to undertake completely new tasks.
- **People in responsible positions** in associations, clubs and action groups who offer a high level of potential initiative and social commitment can be strengthened through further training.
- **Project sponsors and participants** must be qualified and trained.



#### Stumbling blocks

In many regions, available know-how is not used, or goes to waste, because it is unknown or insufficiently specialized.

All the more regrettable is the fact that regional development and strategies for training and qualification, which are mostly financed from different sources, frequently run parallel to each other and synergy effects are not realized.

Abilities and qualifications are primarily required for the control of regional co-operation projects, because co-operation and participation processes quickly collapse when they are not professionally co-ordinated, managed and mediated. Participants and players generally do not have the necessary abilities and qualifications.

- **People responsible for co-operation processes** (Regional managers and advisors, co-ordinators and facilitators) who develop and realize integrated development projects, require a broad range of skills.

- **Holders of responsible political offices** (mayors, community councillors), as

well as **administration heads** and **staff**, have to "learn" to understand and carry out co-operative action.

The further training and qualification of participants is important in many ways for the process of regional development.

### Promote changes in attitude and behaviour

Sustainable, co-operative regional development requires changes in attitude and behaviour. The sense and purpose of necessary changes can be put across through further training and qualification measures.

Those bearing responsibility in politics and industry can be made aware of the problems and opportunities of co-operative processes; the population in rural areas can be provided with a "development culture".

### Provide abilities, skills, instruments and tools

Regional players must be enabled to bring about necessary changes. **Economic know-how** must therefore be procured in order to realize projects, to venture into self-employment and to hold one's own on the market.

The qualification of participants also increases the quality of regional action. The sustainability of construction and settlement projects will be improved, for instance, when the architects, planners and craftsmen involved, as well as the future inhabitants, are made sensitive to and qualified for ecological construction.



### Good example

Learning as a development factor

With its new policy guideline BANZ ("A new style of co-operation"), the **Dutch Agricultural Ministry** pursues the objective of promoting projects and supporting dialogue and learning in the regions. This instrument can be employed whenever a region formulates a joint proposal. Training and advisory measures for local players are financed during the first five years; this enables them to tap other sources of finance and to draw up, or complete their programmes. It is not a question of promoting isolated projects and investment, but rather of accompanying joint processes of discussion and consensus in the region through competent support (qualification measures and advice). The development of business enterprise is promoted, in so much as people are supported in the development of their skills and more or less compelled to plan and realize projects. When ideas, money and people are brought together – for instance, in a foundation, club or co-operative – support is provided by independent training and research institutions for the further development of ideas and completion of plans. Advice and qualification measures are strictly orientated towards the project.

### Enable players to manage co-operation processes

Very rarely is a co-operative development process started by a "regional development professional". Such a process is generally started by regional action groups, regional planners, administrative staff, job promotion organizations, local or regional politicians and others. The new approaches that characterize co-operative processes cannot, however, be tackled with classic control instruments and procedures; new tasks for and demands on players are involved. Only in the case of very few participants can appropriate and necessary qualifications and skills (know-how) be assumed. There is frequently a lack of **communicative** abilities and **skills in conflict-solution**. In most cases, therefore, experienced external mediators are called in during the initial stage. From the beginning, however, the aim of participants should be to acquire necessary knowledge and develop appropriate skills. Through training and further training, public and private players in the region can be enabled to set up co-operative projects and to actively participate in or manage them.

Through a selective strategy of further training, regional and local potential for process control can be developed or existing control supported. This way, regional independence and the capacity for self-control are strengthened.

### Competence management is advisable

For the success of the regional co-operation process it is not necessary that everyone knows and does everything. Knowledge and skills must be brought together in the team – or made available together with network partners – and reappear in the organizational structure of the co-operation process.

In order to make optimum use of knowledge and know-how available in the region, the management of **knowledge and competence** is advisable (-> Communication).

This involves

- Making use of and further developing the knowledge and know-how of staff;
- Structuring the operational organization so that the knowledge of all participants bears fruit and can be exploited.



## 4. Success factor: process

### The broadest range of knowledge is in demand

#### Further training needs

- Specialist knowledge
- Process knowledge
- Knowledge of methods
- Regional knowledge

Co-operative regional development operations demand of those actively involved not only specialist knowledge, but also experience and cognizance of work with the general public, working groups and decision-making committees. At the same time, communicative and process-shaping abilities are required, in order to be able to initiate, support, co-ordinate and implement co-operative processes. Process co-ordinators – those charged with the task of pushing ahead with regional development as well as initiating and realizing projects – also require good knowledge of the region and its potential.

### Specialist knowledge

Specialist knowledge is particularly necessary in the realization of specific projects. Sustainable regional development strategies require **wide-ranging integrative knowledge**, in order to be able to recognize, initiate, network and co-ordinate projects with synergy effects.

The spectrum of required specialist knowledge is as broad as the spectrum of topics and projects on sustainable regional development:

- Ecological agriculture.
- Regional and direct marketing.
- Renewable energy.
- Regenerative raw materials.
- Development and cultivation of man-made landscapes.
- Nature conservation.
- Sustainable tourism.
- Local Agenda 21.
- Telematics.
- Regional and landscape planning.

### Knowledge of methods and processes

Most players have professional or interest-related specialist sectoral knowledge at their disposal. Further training needs are therefore mainly in the area of methods and processes. All areas are addressed that are necessary for participating in or undertaking **co-ordination or management functions** in co-operative processes:

- Development of a vision.
- Strategy development.
- Process and project management.
- Co-ordination of players.
- Communicative techniques (negotiating, argumentation strategies).
- Moderation techniques.
- Conflict-solution strategies.
- Social skills.
- Team leadership.
- Mobilization of the inhabitants; participation procedures.
- Presentation and visualization techniques.
- Organizational development.
- Network development and cultivation.
- Project management and controlling.
- Start-up advice: business plan, costing and financial planning.
- Financing / fund-raising / business sourcing.
- Lobbying.
- Event management.
- Public relations and marketing.
- Integrated knowledge; conversion of information into knowledge.

### Regional knowledge

An adapted strategy assumes knowledge of the respective region that has to be acquired within the framework of co-operative regional development:

- Economic and social structure.
- Infrastructure.
- Administrative structure.
- Geographic and natural environment.
- Development problems.
- Existing institutions and networks.
- Type and structure of communication.
- Power structures (who can bring influence to bear in the region?)

### Ascertain the regional demand for knowledge and further training

Further training in the regional co-operation process should be tackled strategically. At first, the knowledge and skills have to be ascertained, which will be needed both currently and in the future. These needs must then be compared with the potential available in different institutions or offered by individuals. On the basis of this analysis, the specific demand for further training, and a training programme tailored to meet it, can be formulated. This demand can be met by qualifying individual staff members or through the dissemination of basic knowledge and skills through the involvement of further partners.

### Guarantee a high-quality, attractive and varied programme

Knowledge and skills can be imparted in very different ways. In order to satisfy the demands of co-operative regional development, innovations have to be created not only through training, but also in training.

A programme tailored to **regional target groups** is important. The objectives and substance of training measures have to correspond to the needs of the players involved in the co-operative strategy. The methods, didactics and syllabus must be co-ordinated with training programmes and course participants.

To ensure the motivation of course participants, training measures of a high quality should be guaranteed. Attractive course design is characterized by an appropriate language, a close connection to practice, a variable spectrum of teaching and learning methods as well as the possibility for participants to introduce their own ideas and problems. It is worthwhile combining further training with concrete examples or model projects within the employment context of participants, or in their community or region.

#### Further training programmes

- Exchange of experience
- Group work
- Talks / lectures
- Seminars and specialized conferences
- Traditional instruction
- Distance learning
- Training on the job
- Practical training
- Excursions / study trips
- Coaching

### Speed up the exchange of information, knowledge and experience within the region

An important and, moreover, reasonably priced form of further training, qualification measures and communication of knowledge is the "normal" exchange of information, knowledge and experience between participants. This can occur in one-to-one conversations, working meetings or in other forms of exchange (-> Communication).

To achieve optimum effects, reports **on progress and practical experience** must be speeded up and knowledge selectively introduced. Know-how can also be spread in the region

- through the preparation and distribution of relevant information material,
- through appropriate information events,
- through the realization of projects of a pilot nature, or
- through networks, in which individual skills are brought together and jointly employed.

In addition, the regional development agency or liaison office can also act directly with respect to qualification measures and advice by providing its **own information and advice programmes**, or by employing relevant experts (-> Regional development agency).

### Seminars, courses and training

There are widespread Information and training activities, which are regularly offered in the form of seminars, courses and training lasting from one day to several days, or modular in the form of course blocks. They can be taken up alongside working activities, "on the job" or during normal working hours. Further training can take place in the form of **standardized courses** that are open to everyone. **"Tailor-made courses"** can also be offered, which are primarily directed at people involved in a particular project or strategy (for example, regional marketing).

Moreover, two types of qualification measures can be distinguished: those comprehensive measures with a final examination and diploma – such as "regional manager / regional advisor" – and those that relate to special topics of co-operative regional development (see above).

## 4. Success factor: process

### Coaching – the intensive form

Coaching is the most intensive form of qualification measure. It is particularly useful for the further development of managers, or staff promotion; that is, their personal and professional advancement as well as the development and long-term stabilization of the organization. As an outsider, the coach advises and deliberates on the action of individual people or of a group. Coaching comprises a mixture of:

- process-accompanying advice,
- specifically targeted guidance or instruction, and
- action-orientated training.

By means of direct personal **advice** and **deliberation**, joint implementation concepts should be developed, innovative projects intensively considered and introduced as well as previously unused or underused resources activated.



### Good example

Within the scope of the "**Biosphere Job Motor**", a training programme conducted by large conservation areas in the State of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern – such as the Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve and the Rügen National Park – together with a further-training institution run by industry as well as external experts, potential founders of new businesses in these large conservation areas are monitored, trained and coached. In accordance with the motto, "Quality instead of Quantity", new business ideas must correspond with the criteria of sustainable regional development.

### Seek co-operation with providers of training and further training

Apart from the communication of knowledge and skills within the framework of co-operative regional development, co-operation with providers of training and further training has proven worthwhile (-> Clubs, associations).

With particular respect to regional co-operation processes, a broad spectrum of providers of training and qualification measures has been established in recent years:

- Universities or university-related institutions.
- Adult education bodies.
- Non-profit-making and private bodies.
- Chambers of Industry and Trade.
- Associations, such as the *Katholische Landjugend* (Catholic youth organization).
- Academies/colleges sponsored by the established churches or the *Länder*.
- "Rural information Carrefours", promoted by the European Commission.



### Good example

In the District of Neumarkt in Oberpfalz, regional players are being specifically trained in process moderation. The **Regionale Entwicklungsagentur Regina GmbH** [Regional Development Agency] conducts a training programme in close co-operation with the **Schule für Dorf- und Landentwicklung Plankstetten** [School for Community and Regional Development] and the **Direktion für ländliche Entwicklung** [Office for Rural Development] in Regensburg, which qualifies participants as "process moderators". The aim is to provide town mayors, staff of municipal authorities, responsible people in clubs and associations as well as committed members of the general public with a means of contributing to the organization of existing, or newly-planned participation processes in their communities and fields of action. It is intended to provide skills in the areas of modern project management, the effective moderation of planning meetings, the control of processes of change as well as in intercommunal co-operation. The courses are modular and practically orientated; they include overall concept development, the elaboration of a Local Agenda 21, the direction of communal working groups and round tables as well as the planning of programmes of action.



### **Tips**

- Integrate further training into a comprehensive regional development strategy.
- Qualification measures and training projects, which are financed from programmes such as the European Social Fund, Initiatives of the European Union or from employment market support funds, should be tailored to the demands of regional development.
- Increase the quality of projects for the purpose of sustainability through accompanying qualification measures.
- Create varied possibilities for the regional transfer of experience and knowledge.
- Organize direct exchange with practitioners and the viewing of projects; for example, in the form of excursions.
- Develop internal regional potential for the moderation and co-ordination of regional and local development processes through further training and qualification measures.
- Training measures, seminars, and further training programmes should be tailored to the specific problems and needs of the region and its players.
- Seek co-operation with regional players, such as adult education institutions, providers of training and universities.
- Earmark a specific annual amount of money and time for the further training of staff.



### **Checklist: Qualification**

- √ What are present and future needs for knowledge and skills
  - for the co-operative regional development process of the whole region?
  - for individual fields of action and sectors?
  - for individual projects?
  - for specific target groups?
- √ Who needs these skills, and to what extent do the people in question already dispose of such skills and knowledge?
- √ Do people acting as process co-ordinators or regional managers require further training in order to better fulfil and perform their functions?
- √ What are the training requirements of staff members?
- √ Which partners, or other regional players have corresponding abilities at their disposal? How can these be utilized for the development process?



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## Links

Further training exchange, on which seminars, courses and specialist training programmes are offered for trainee and practising regional managers or advisors from the areas of community, town and regional development:  
[www.euregia.de/html/fortbildung.html](http://www.euregia.de/html/fortbildung.html)



## Addresses

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EU-Forum Nordhessen - Initiative zur Förderung regionaler Entwicklung e.V., Kassel  
[www.zmk.de/forumkassel/](http://www.zmk.de/forumkassel/)

Carrefour Lüneburg Forum für den ländlichen Raum  
[www.carrefour-lueneburg.de/](http://www.carrefour-lueneburg.de/)

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## 4.6 Motivation

Co-operative regional development is based on the principle of voluntary commitment. Co-operation projects make progress only under certain circumstances. "WANTING TO DO IT", the desire of regional players to do a lot for their region is the basic prerequisite. Co-operative regional development requires a change in the thoughts and minds of people: replacing thought of risk with thought of opportunity, parting company from egoism and parish-pump thinking in favour of partnership and co-operation. Bringing about these changes in attitude and breaking open long-standing practical routines are impossible without persuasion. The task involves

- tackling the **attitudes and motives** of process participants, but also those of critics and opponents;
- identifying and removing **barriers to motivation** that hamper co-operation;
- strengthening and bringing into play **factors that promote co-operation**, in order to fill participants with enthusiasm for the co-operation project and to retain their long-term support also in the face of unavoidable setbacks.

### Prerequisites for co-operation

- Information and transparency
  - Burdens and benefits
  - Credibility and trust
  - Participation and influence
- Selle 1996, p. 101)

### Motivation is always necessary

Co-operation projects have to be initiated, structured and kept alive. Motivation is therefore necessary **in all phases of the co-operation project**. At the beginning of the

co-operation process – in the start-up and orientation phase – future co-operation partners, who might show a great deal of reservation, have to be convinced. During the co-operation process, the motivation of all participants must be preserved and sufficient tension maintained. In crises, with setbacks and failures, in moments of disillusionment, motivational capabilities are especially demanded, in order to pep up the disappointed and the disheartened and to keep them going.



### Stumbling blocks

Co-operative regional development frequently suffers from the fact that only a small core group is actively involved, and that co-operation does not "click" with those in the region who are actually affected.

But even regional co-operation projects that are begun with great alacrity and enthusiasm are not immune to signs of tiredness. Protracted decision-making processes, conflicts or failures bear the risk that more and more participants are involved only half-heartedly, or perhaps even withdraw completely.

There must be basic readiness for change on the part of regional players. A certain self-motivation and personal activities are necessary. People are needed who activate and communicate the motivation for change.

Important internal **motivators** are:

- those responsible for the process,
- moderators,
- but also backing from the group and
- the co-operation network.

In addition, there are also **external motivating incentives** from:

- state ministries, as (potential) providers of development aid,
- other regions, which achieve a better competitive position (with or without regional co-operation, and
- successful co-operation projects, which are worth following.

These are not only motivators, however; they themselves have to be motivated where necessary:

- Potential providers of funds and development aid have to be convinced of the quality and sense of the co-operation project as a whole, and of individual projects, before they provide the required funds.
- Superiors –the decision-making level –, who take responsibility for the approval and realization of co-operatively-developed ideas and projects, have to be convinced of the opportunities and benefits.





## 4. Success factor: process

- Where changes in attitude and behaviour – for instance, concerning the consumption of regional products – have to be achieved, it is above all the general public that has to be convinced of projects.
- But also those responsible for the process, including process sponsors and process moderators, require a high level of motivation, especially in the case of unavoidable setbacks.

### MOTIVES for creative teamwork

<b>Factual interest</b> .....	Interest in the specific problem
<b>Cognitive interest</b> .....	Interest in learning something new
<b>Occupational interest</b> .....	Inclination to perform certain activities
<b>Status</b> .....	Striving for a specific social standing
<b>Personal interest</b> .....	Social Identification with superiors, moderators
<b>Sanction</b> .....	Striving for public recognition
<b>Career interests</b> .....	Striving for professional advancement, for personal advantage.

Lehman, Günter: Verhaltensstrategien in der Teamarbeit; in: Selle; Klaus (1996)

### Motivation through pressure for action and the pressure of circumstances

Without problem perception – better still, "pressure of circumstances" or "threat" – co-operative regional development processes frequently do not get going. Insight into the necessity of co-operative action therefore often results from **serious changes** and far-reaching processes of economic restructuring in industrially monostructured or mainly agricultural areas, from ecological problems, from shortage of land or topographic locational disadvantages, but also from forthcoming major projects.

### Motivation through subjects and topics

The readiness to get involved is influenced to a decisive degree by the question of how important the subject matter is regarded, how necessary regional co-operation is judged to be and how high expectations of success are. Thematic "**pegs**", such as specific regional problems that many people are aware of, are important for motivation. Topics and problems taken up within the scope of co-operation processes need not only be of regional significance, they can also be of personal relevance to participants. Through regional co-operation, something should be set in motion, and laid down objectives must be regarded by participants as realistic and desirable. A programme and clear strategies are therefore needed that have been developed under the broadest possible regional participation. An attractive vision can also strengthen identification with the project (-> Programmes/Contents)

### Motivation through "self-interest"

Personal advantage and opportunities are central motives for personal commitment. Motives for individuals might be, for instance, that their own goals, ideas and projects can be realized, or be realized more satisfactorily and speedily, through co-operation with others. Another motive for action could be the gaining of information, experience, qualifications or knowledge, or more easily finding favour with providers of support. These advantages must be noticeable, and must not appear to be marginal. **Cost and expected benefit** may not be disproportionate. So far as co-operative regional development is concerned, this means formulating **win-win strategies**, from which all parties can benefit. A **distribution of benefits and burdens** that satisfies the interests of all participants is also necessary, making use of all available manoeuvrability and creative solutions (-> Financing).

### Motivation through co-operation culture and leadership style

The manner of co-operation can have the effect of promoting or impeding co-operation. A certain **co-operation culture** and **co-operation ethics** are beneficial. It is particularly a question of how the process is made transparent, of the manner of communication and mutual dealings, of how decisions are taken and of how conflicts are dealt with. The laying down of common values and orientation – for instance, in the form of a charter – is very helpful in this respect (-> Process organization)

Bound up with this is a motivational style of leadership, which is characterized, among other things, by frankness, **trust**, **interest**, **respect** and **mutual sympathy**, as well as offering the **opportunity to have a say and to contribute**. Leadership is governed by

objectives; persuasion is performed with objectivity and arguments; response and positive feedback occur. Controversial matters can and should be discussed and opposing views aired. Outspoken "post-mortems" and the frank treatment of problems and weaknesses are everyday practice. **Political** or **technical support** of the co-operative involvement of individuals by their superiors, or at the decision-making level, goes without saying.

A motivational style of leadership also means structuring **operating procedures** in an interesting and effective way. Continuity of action is important, because experience shows that single activities trigger off expectations and hopes on the part of participants that later can frequently not be fulfilled, which can have a highly demotivating effect.

**Membership of a network** also motivates and enhances self-esteem. This applies, in particular, when this network receives a great deal of attention, and when it enjoys public recognition. In the course of co-operation, a sense of community develops that also provides the individual with inspiration and strength for new thought and action.

### Motivation through a positive image

A positive image encourages the readiness to get involved; a negative image hinders it. A positive standing of co-operative regional development among responsible parties in government, administration at a regional and supra-regional level increases the chances of success and, as a result, the motivation of participants.

A high **degree of familiarity** with the project among the regional or supra-regional population also has a motivating effect. In this connection, public relations and informational activities are an important reference value (-> Communication)

Regional development processes are also given fresh impetus by means of the promotion of a regional sub-area through creative measures or high-profile events.

A **positive outward image** – for example, in the form of an award within the scope of a competition – can also inspire acceptance and the readiness to get involved within the region. As in the saying, "a prophet is not without honour save in his own country", positive external perception can serve as a burning glass, or focus, and lead ultimately to image enhancement in the region.

### Motivation through success

Nothing motivates better than success. Where fundamental progress is achieved, in so much as mutually-obstructing development factors (such as nature conservation and agriculture) are disentangled to their joint benefit, or projects are successfully started, this generally leads to a considerable motivational thrust, not only on the part of direct participants, but further afield.

For the programmatic and strategic alignment of the co-operation project this means, among other things, that, at least in the initial phase, relatively short-term and above all **noticeable success** (gateway projects) should be striven for, and the complex process subdivided into **manageable packages** (timewise and programmatically) (-> Process organization).

Outcomes and successes must be documented and communicated. Above all, they must be attributed to co-operative regional development and not only credited to the respective project sponsor.

### Motivation through reward

If success motivates, then recognition and praise are important.

**"Strategies of reward"** can be employed in a variety of ways: as a form of personal recognition, as an expression of thanks, as commendation, or by way of certificates and diplomas or promotion. Co-operative behaviour can also be "rewarded" with development aid, in so much as co-operative projects are given precedence or better conditions (co-operation bonus), or the project is recognized as a model or pilot project.

### Motivation through challenge and competition

Competitive situations in the sense of a "contest for the best ideas and projects" (for example, "Regions of the future", "InnoRegio", "Regions Active") can provide motivation

## 4. Success factor: process

not only within a region, but also beyond regional boundaries. As the saying goes, "competition is good for business": Competitions appeal to the "sporting spirit" and are an **incentive to try something new**. If these competitions are also in the public eye, this especially inspires motivation and the readiness to get involved. Prizes, awards and the prospect of development aid or other forms of recognition are motivational incentives, and have to be proportional to the cost involved. Such awards and prizes can be used for longer-term inward and outward publicity.

It doesn't always have to be competitions, however. "**High expectations**" conveyed to the region and the network by superior sectoral authorities or ministries, or by other external parties, are a mark of confidence that influences the readiness to get involved.



### Good example

Learning from each other in the development of self-sufficient structures for sustainable development was the fundamental aim of the **competition, "Regions of the Future"**, which was conducted by the Bundesamt für Bauwesen und Raumordnung [Federal Office for Civil Engineering and Regional Planning] in the period 1997 - 2000. Through this competition, regional players and decision-makers were mobilized for co-operation through offers of support as well as prizes and awards for the regions. At the same an intensive exchange of experience took place, through which the regions could "learn from each other". Participation in the competition was itself motivation and inspiration for the optimization of co-operation processes in the participating regions.

### Motivation through created structures

Co-operation agreements, or a specially created development agency or company are an important connecting link of a network. "Resignation" or "withdrawal" would involve complicated resolutions and confrontation as well as public unease; for this reason, **withdrawal hurdles** are raised considerably. This does not necessarily guarantee active involvement, however.



### Tips

- Take into account general conditions that foster or hamper motivation, and not only technical and organizational conditions, but also those of a psycho-social nature.
- Bear in mind motivational strands specific to individuals and target groups.
- Develop and cultivate a co-operation culture and co-operation ethics, and lay down common values, for instance in a charter.
- Make use of specific problems as "pegs" to hang the process on.
- Create success for all participants, and orientate marketing towards target groups.
- Employ creative solutions in the distribution of burdens and benefits.
- Reward co-operative action.
- Seek motivation through exchange with other co-operative ventures in supra-regional networks.
- Develop a positive image.



### **Checklist: Motivation**

- ✓ **What are the motives of process participants (motivation profile)?**
- ✓ **What are the motives of critics?**
- ✓ **Which factors foster and hamper motivation and the readiness to co-operate?**
- ✓ **Does a "co-operation culture" exist in the region?**
- ✓ **Which gateway project is appropriate?**
- ✓ **How can participants be won over to long term involvement?**
- ✓ **Has the question of the distribution of burdens and benefits between the partners been discussed and satisfactorily resolved?**



### **Links**

BMVBW/BBR-Wettbewerb "Regionen der Zukunft" [www.zukunftsregionen.de](http://www.zukunftsregionen.de)

BMBF-Wettbewerb "InnoRegio" [www.innoregio.de](http://www.innoregio.de)

BMVEL-Wettbewerb "Regionen Aktiv" [www.modellregionen.de](http://www.modellregionen.de)



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### 4.7 Conflicts

Co-operative regional development is dependent on the interplay between many people and institutions of widely differing views, perspectives and ideas. Opposition and conflicts are therefore unavoidable, and dealing with them is part and parcel of the process.



#### Stumbling blocks

Opposition and conflict in co-operative regional development are of the most varied kind, manifestation and effect. Conflicts do not have to occur openly; they can also strain the co-operation process in the form of "tension", inadequate frankness or extreme reserve. It is a form of opposition to refuse or delay contributions, to block necessary resources or to oppose co-operation in the background. Where opposition and conflict are not recognized and resolved in good time, the result can be that matters, which are relevant for regional development but also conflict-ridden, are ignored or that co-operation comes to grief.

#### Seize upon conflict as an opportunity

Conflicts are part of everyday human life. If one succeeds in accepting and standing up to conflicts, their constructive powers take effect. Conflicts are often a **turning point**. They highlight problems, and ensure that necessary decision-making

processes are started, and that energy can again be used for other activities. Where existing conflicts are denied, or played down, the room for action is greatly restricted, and the destructive effects of conflicts become the focus of attention.

#### Conflict "partners"

Disagreements, opposition and conflict can take place at different levels. They can occur between individuals or institutions, within a group or between different groups. It can involve opposition and conflict with the co-operation organization (**inner-organizational conflicts**). Opposition and conflict can also arise, however, among people and institutions not directly involved in the process. They can be important on account of their function as decision-makers in government, administration and industry; and, under certain circumstances, as highly articulate **opponents** they can damage the co-operation process (-> Promoters and opponents).

#### The causes of conflict are manifold

Opposition and conflict can have very different causes:

Co-operative regional development stands for change. This can appear to be a threat and cause anxiety. **Opposition to change** can arise quite simply because ideas are new and participants have had no opportunity to get accustomed to them, or because they fail to comprehend the full scope of their effects. Change can also amount to direct loss, in so much as power, competence, resources and previous action are the subject of discussion and possibly called into question.

Moreover, conflict can also result from the **personality** of individual people. Maybe there is a lack of the right "chemistry" between players. The cause and background of differences of opinion can lie a long way back, and be difficult to recognize and understand, especially by external mediators.

Differences in expectations, or supposed or real competition and mutual mistrust, can lead to opposition and conflict.

A minimal interest in co-operation as well as opposition to co-operation and related conflicts frequently also result from **communal and departmental egoism**. The relationship of communities among themselves is not infrequently characterized by competition for inhabitants, the location of business enterprises, infrastructure facilities, visitors etc. and so for sources of revenue. But a "competitive mentality" between different sectoral departments can also hamper co-operative regional development.

In some cases, **conflicts of interest** – for instance, between agriculture and nature conservation – also represent a serious restriction on regional development, the solution of which can spark off future development.

#### Conflicts concerning

- Values
- Objectives
- Processes
- Distribution
- Material matters
- Relationships

#### Conflicts have different backgrounds

Conflicts can occur in different forms. In order to take countermeasures, it is important to know the cause and background of the conflict:

**Conflicts of value** occur whenever individual members, or whole groups believe in conflicting value systems (economic, social, political, moral or of a

another kind). In the area of co-operative regional development this would include, for instance, conflicts between conservationists and farmers, or certain "departmental egoism" on the part of different sectoral departments. Conflicts of value can be resolved, for instance, by

- objective analysis of the values of the other party, and
- involving the parties in the formulation of objectives, strategy and measures.

**Conflicts concerning objectives** are characterized by clashing conceptions of the objective to be attained. In the context of co-operative regional development this includes, for instance, differences of opinion on the relative importance of individual tasks and policies, but also conflicts between different partial objectives.

Conflicts concerning objectives can be avoided, for example, through

- jointly developed objectives, where possible laid down in writing (agreements on co-operation and objectives),
- the use of effective process and project management techniques (communication and information routines, protocols etc.), and
- regulated responsibilities and the clear-cut distribution of tasks.

**Process conflicts** arise when the path towards the achievement of objectives is contentious. Differences of opinion and conflicts in co-operative regional development can arise, for instance, over the question as to which organizational form is to be chosen, whether new committees or bodies (such as a regional development agency) should be created, which measures or projects should be undertaken, and when.

These conflicts at the process level can be avoided, in part, through

- transparency and an animated exchange of information;
- frank communication;
- a clear concept;
- project management tools;
- integration of participating decision-makers; and
- process-accompanying analysis and optimization.

Where the question concerns how resources are to be distributed or tasks assigned, **distribution conflicts** can arise. These problems come to light within the framework of co-operative regional development when decisions on the location of regionally significant institutions or facilities have to be taken, or where the distribution of costs and proceeds is concerned.

These conflicts can be prevented, for instance, through

- the disclosure of resources,
- involving conflicting parties in the distribution process,
- the involvement of a neutral mediator,
- distribution according to aptitude and competence, as well as
- the drawing up of unambiguous rules and distribution criteria.

Problems at the programmatic level lead to **material conflicts**. These can be expressed within the scope of co-operative regional development through dissension concerning the benefit of the development strategy pursued, or by calling into question individual projects and activities.

Conflicts at the material level can be precluded through

- the formation of an interdisciplinary team according to expert skills,
- the involvement of specialized experts,
- avoidance of competitive situations, and
- agreement on a strategy to be jointly pursued.

**Conflicts of relationship** arise from different feelings and attitudes among the conflicting parties.

They can be avoided through

- a sound basis of trust between co-operation partners,
- good and frequent communication and interaction,
- bearing relationship-concerns in mind when bringing network members together,
- developing and laying down common values, visions (charter) and rules.

#### Conflict-solution strategies

Most problems and conflicts are solvable, even when a balancing of interests is not immediately obvious. Very few conflicts resolve themselves, or subside. What is needed, therefore, are strategies for the solution of conflicts. Specific solutions, tailored



to the specific situation, have to be developed and applied. The decision on whether a conflict should be dealt with or steered clear of, or whether the controlled limitation or solution of a conflict is preferred, depends on subjective cost-benefit considerations. A decisive role is played in this respect by the actual significance of the conflict for regional development and the whole process.

#### Identify conflicts early

It is important to foresee differences of opinion before they escalate and grow into fundamental conflicts. The time and energy, which is necessary to bring a full-blown confrontation to a constructive solution, are considerable and bear the risk of a possible dramatic loss of motivation.

Every endeavour for change should begin with a diagnosis of potential conflicts and areas of conflict. Conflicting parties have at first to be identified (-> Promoters and opponents), sources of conflict discovered, possible counter-arguments anticipated and critical points addressed in good time and clarified (-> Evaluation).

Conflicts do not always come to light. In many cases latent situations of conflict exist. That is why, even in periods of "apparent consensus", differences must be disclosed early. If they are already demonstrated when objectives are being discussed, for instance, the conflict becomes manifest in the discussion and not only when objectives have been laid down and decisions made, and can possibly be settled through the development of appropriate alternatives.

#### Take disturbances seriously

Care should be taken to ensure a good working atmosphere; that means, the mediator and those responsible for the process should take disturbances in the network seriously and shift the needs, moods and opinions of participants more strongly into the centre of attention. Experience shows that **positive group-dynamic processes** contribute to a considerable extent to the settlement or avoidance of conflict situations (-> Communication).

A certain conflict control is also possible through the **choice of topic**. Topics, which deal with the formulation of organizational and development matters, are more easily treated in an atmosphere of consensus. Speedy success can be achieved with specific projects and measures. Gateway topics serve as a "training field" for co-operation and have the function of an initial "confidence-building measure". After this "test", conflict-ridden problems can possibly also be tackled.

#### Find compromises

##### Conflict-solution strategies

- Identify conflicts early and take disturbances seriously.
- Establish positive group-dynamic processes.
- Choose promising, low-conflict gateway topics/projects.
- Seek compromise and win-win solutions.
- Enlist the services of arbitrators.
- Early clarification at a political level.

A basic prerequisite for coping with a conflict is first of all the readiness to face up to the confrontation and to work together to reach a basic consensus. Standard conflict-solution procedures include bringing the conflicting parties together, letting critics have their say, seeking a common basis for discussion, examining the different positions and arguments, exercising persuasion with plain data and facts, appealing to the common sense of the opponents and, where applicable, intimidating critics through reference to possible disadvantages.

Also important is a certain **frankness** in thought and action on the part of participants, thinking that lets the past rest and looks forward, thinking in alternatives, pointing out several feasible paths, putting forward suggested solutions that are acceptable to both sides and "building bridges". **Win-win solutions** have to be formulated, through which all "conflicting parties" derive advantages from joint action. Winner-loser solutions have to be avoided. Suggestions for the fair **distribution of burdens and benefits** are also helpful.

#### Enlist the services of arbitrators

Calling in a third, neutral party to act in a mediatory capacity is just one well-tried conflict-solution strategy. In the case of full-blown conflicts, special conflict-solution techniques are conceivable. One method of support and overcoming conflicts in teams is **coaching**. The coach has the task of looking after and advising the team in situations of crisis (and therefore conflict). A mediation procedure is also conceivable, using the services of a mediator, a neutral and impartial third-party who intervenes in conflicts and attempts to rationalize them. In the mediation procedure, clear rules of communication and behaviour are applied.

### Use decision-making competence and the authority to issue directives cautiously

If the situation is in such a blocked state, that from an objective view a fair agreement appears impossible, allies can be sought at a higher hierarchy level (a superior authority or other instrument of power), or political coalitions set up, in order to organize and mobilize "support for ideas behind the scenes". It has to be borne in mind in this respect, that the settlement of conflicts by directive leads only in the rarest of cases to a change of attitude, and that conflicts are thereby more likely to be suppressed than resolved.

On the other hand, it has proven worthwhile to discuss and sort out conflicts at a



#### Good example

One objective of the **Konstanz pilot project** is to take part in nature conservation and the protection of resources in co-operation with different interest groups from the areas of nature conservation and agriculture. Against this background, advocates of both areas were won over, and they championed the project at both a state and a regional level.

In the run-up to the project, the minister of agricultural and a project initiator, with a considerable reputation in nature conservation both at a technical and political level, were able to settle the basic conflict between conservationists and farmers. They acted, especially in the early phase, as a connecting link between agriculture and environment protection/nature conservation and made a major contribution towards the development of a positive atmosphere for the talks.

**superior, political level.** This way, a political or ideological dispute is largely kept out of operative project realization. Representatives of associations and administrative authorities are thereby released from the obligation to represent the ideology of their respective bodies and institutions also in material issues, and, as a result, the scope extended for pertinent and result-orientated action. It is therefore advisable to provide for a board of arbitration or an arbitration or conciliation committee in organizational plans and in the allocation of tasks and duties.

These committees – for example, in the form of a steering committee or an advisory board – have the task, among other duties, of dealing with conflicts that might flare up and working towards amicable solutions (-> Development organization)

A further means of resolving differences of opinion and conflicts – even if less effective in the long term – is offered by **voting procedures**. Experience shows that results of "crucial votes" are not always accepted by the "losers", and are in some cases circumvented.



#### Tips

- Discuss conflicts of interests at an early stage, already taking them into consideration in the recruitment of co-operation partners and in the formulation of objectives, strategies and measures.
- Involve important critics in co-operation committees, and not only at the decision-making level, but also at the operating level.
- Tackle conflicts that have broken out aggressively; do not steer clear of or conceal them.
- Conflicts of a volatile nature, which can hardly be resolved, can also be bypassed by temporarily "leaving them aside" and concentrating for the time being on less contentious matters.
- Practise a democratic "culture of dispute" by arguing out conflicts reasonably and depersonalizing discussion.
- Jointly defined objectives, laid down in writing, are invariably helpful. In the case of conflicts based on strongly differing values, contractual agreements (written commitments) can also be helpful, in which the activities to be carried out by each side – and the circumstances under which they are to be carried out – are laid down and compliance can be controlled.



## 4. Success factor: process



### Checklist:

- ✓ What opposition, which opponents or conflicts can be seen to emerge?
- ✓ Are the parties to the conflict involved in operating and decision-making processes?
- ✓ Where are the causes of conflicts and disturbances to be found?
- ✓ How are conflict-ridden matters dealt with?
- ✓ Are the adopted strategies suitable for resolving conflict?



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## 4.8 Costs and financing

Regional development cannot be realized without finance. However, a start can be made with comparatively modest means. The financial and economic consideration and conduct of co-operative regional development is an important task of regional management.

### Draw up a cost schedule and financing plan on a regular basis

It is one of the tasks of those responsible for co-operation projects to calculate – or at least to estimate - the probable costs of processing the project (**total cost schedule**).

Due to the openness of the co-operation process with respect to both time and substance, this is only possible to a limited extent. In the interest of a degree of security concerning planning and action, at the very least a certain **financial continuity** and **perspective** is necessary.

In particular, guaranteed funding for personnel is important for a particular period of time, so that the co-ordination and management level can be staffed, if required, for a certain time and changes in or shortages of personnel due to gaps in financing can be avoided. There should be a certain degree of financial flexibility, so that unforeseeable demands can be met. For this reason, calculations should not be too tight.

In order to point out gaps in financing, this total cost schedule should be compared with the budget limits laid down by decision-makers or in prospective funding.

An **annual budget** is not only a "necessary evil", it also "compels" time-related and programmatical planning and structuring of strategic procedure and work. The comparison of actual and anticipated costs provides an overall view of the development in costs, helps to ascertain the cause of cost overruns and to choose appropriate counter-measures. At the same time, the **statement of account** serves as a (continuous) measure of control and also as a medium of presentation to decision-makers (-> Evaluation).

### Attempt to balance costs and benefits

The benefit of co-operation is often difficult to ascertain, and is to be found in many cases in an immaterial area that is difficult to quantify. It is nevertheless advisable to quantify the advantages of co-operative action by comparing co-operation costs with co-operation receipts (acquired development aid and investments made in connection with the co-operation project).

It is thereby possible to create greater transparency concerning expectations and to elucidate the different dimensions of benefit of a co-operation project. At the same time, it has to be made clear that, apart from the **monetary benefits of co-operation**, which are deemed to be particularly important, other financial effects, such as cost savings and optimization, and **immaterial co-operation effects** can emerge for communal and regional development. Such effects include:

- Advantages of information and knowledge.
- Process is more widely known.
- Development of contacts and networks.
- Lobbying.
- Getting regional initiatives going.
- Increased efficiency in the execution of tasks etc.

These immaterial benefits of co-operation play an important role when people, who are directly involved, weigh up the results.



### Stumbling blocks

**Co-operation projects frequently suffer from limited personnel and capital resources; and in many cases they lack even a certain financial perspective and continuity. This makes effective and purposeful work more difficult. A considerable amount of time has to be spent in acquiring funding and development aid at the cost of conceptual work, and projects that have been started are delayed as a result of gaps in financing.**

**This often leads to staffing problems. It is difficult to fill new management positions with appropriately qualified people, and people who have already familiarized themselves with the work can then not be further employed because of a shortage of finance.**

**A proportional or time-bound disparity between personnel costs and investive funds can lead to problems, since funds might possibly be lacking for the realization of projects, or there might be insufficient staff to make best possible use of available finance.**

### Financial requirements according to cost category

Not only is the available total budget of relevance for the outcome of co-operation, but also the respective cost categories:

- **Personnel costs**

for salaries in respect of permanent positions or fixed-term contracts, and for fees.

The amount of personnel costs to be included in cost calculations depends, on the one

#### Cost categories

- Personnel costs
- Technical costs
- Costs of planning
- Project costs / investments
- Overheads to be borne by co-operation partners

hand, on the extent to which the partners themselves undertake co-operation tasks within the scope of their professional occupations, or on a voluntary basis; and on the other hand, on the number of jobs additionally required for the co-operation project, their remuneration and term (-> Regional development agency)

Personnel costs can be compensated for, to a certain extent, through the involvement and utilization of the co-operation network. Activity in a network may not, however, become an end

in itself. Involvement must produce a distinct incremental value; otherwise the danger will arise of capacity being wasted that is already scarce.

- **Material costs**

are incurred for the setting up, (technical) equipping and maintenance of the liaison office, for communication and public relations, for events (including hospitality), for the cost of travel as well as for further training and qualification measures.

- **Planning costs**

arise in connection with the elaboration of regional visions and concepts (for example, regional development concepts), accompanying or preparatory studies and expert opinions, feasibility studies etc.

- **Project costs/ investment costs**

are incurred in connection with the planning and realization of subprojects, sites/locations and isolated actions.

Orientation towards projects and action requires (investment) finance for the realization of ideas and projects. Corresponding funds should be available as early as possible, so that "visible and tangible" signals can be set in the form of specific activities and projects.

- **Sundry costs**

for the use of regional licences, for example, or possible financial disadvantages for individual co-operation partners, resulting perhaps from the loss of tax revenue through the realization of joint projects in the territory of another partner.

**Overheads and organizational costs** have also to be considered, which arise for individual co-operation partners in the form of personnel and material costs through participation in committees, events and projects of regional development. These costs, which in the case of frequent meetings, periods of preparation and subsequent review as well as travelling time are considerable, are borne by the co-operation partners.

Individual cost categories vary during the course of co-operation:

Whereas at the beginning, personnel and planning costs are predominant, as the process goes on, project and investment costs increase.

A balanced relationship is important between individual cost categories, in particular between personnel costs and project and investment costs.

#### Co-operation saves costs

Costs can also be saved through co-operation; in so much as infrastructure facilities are jointly realized and maintained. Planning and investment decisions that fail to take account of demands can be avoided or optimized as a result of regional deliberation or more detailed bases of information and data. Plans concerning regional matters, which are commissioned jointly, are also less costly than those commissioned by individual communities, due to the sliding scale of fees.



### Possibilities and sources of finance – fund-raising

As a rule, co-operative regional development processes are financed from different sources (mixed financing). All activities in connection with the procurement of resources for organizations serving the public interest are commonly designated as fund-raising.

Besides money, these resources also include contributions in kind, services provided free-of-charge, immaterial promotion and support of organizational objectives as well as voluntary work. Potential sources are public budgets, individual people, institutions (for example, political parties, associations, foundations) and companies.

The procurement of resources is always a matter of persuasion, for potential financiers demand good arguments and sound concepts. An important basis is provided by a sophisticated development strategy and substantiated project planning (-> Success factor: "Concept").

#### Sources of finance

- Own resources or services provided
- Public support
- Money from foundations
- Bank loans
- Sponsoring
- Donations
- Receipts, proceeds and returns

Sources of finance for co-operative regional development are:

- **Own resources or services of participating co-operation partners**

in the form of financial contributions by members, or the provision of personnel or technical services. The financial contributions of co-operation partners are in many ways decisive. They increase the room for manoeuvre, since few activities requiring a great deal of finance can be realized without a prolonged preliminary period. Moreover, they allow a more flexible and immediate reaction to support programmes, since an adequate element of self-financing is generally a prerequisite for co-financing within the framework of support.

- **Public support through a wide variety of funding programmes**

on the part of municipalities, *Länder*, federal government and the European Union. Support programmes are generally limited to a specific target group of public and private recipients. The group of public recipients also includes local-authority-initiated, special-purpose associations. Because public support is merely a means of interim financing of co-operative ventures or co-operation projects, projects have to be "self-supporting" after a certain period of time.

- **Money from foundations**

Potential financial backers also include public and private foundations. In order to find the most appropriate source among the more than 8,000 active foundations in Germany, precise preliminary information is required, (addresses, purpose, amount of capital and operative or supportive characteristics). Of particular relevance are foundations that provide funds for non-profit-making organizations.

- **Bank loans**

Credit finance from banks is a possibility when risk capital is required, which is refinanced through forecast receipts. Bank loans can be granted for the setting-up of companies or isolated projects, which are initiated within the scope of regional co-operation.

- **Sponsoring**

through individuals, groups or organizations. Sponsoring can take the form of money, contributions in kind or services. In contrast to donations, which are made without self-interest or preconditions, sponsoring is a high-profile business based on the principle of quid pro quo.

Sponsoring is particularly widespread within the scope of public relations, where prizes for regional competitions and posters and brochures are financed or co-financed by sponsors.



#### Good example

The **PAMINA Region** was able to obtain finance from different sponsors for its participation in the "Regions of the Future" competition and thereby for the support of sustainable regional development. The sponsors included a bank, a building society, an energy supply company and an IT company. The finance supplied was not earmarked for specific purposes, but was used in a number of ways. Joint projects were also carried out with the sponsors. Sponsoring supported a number of PR measures, including brochures on specialist themes (wood, for example), competition brochures and an exhibition, an Internet platform, an invitation to a competition, a further competition under the title, "Agenda 21 prize for sustainable building and refurbishment in the PAMINA Region", as well as various events, such as the symposium "Save Land" or the future workshop "PAMINA 2020".

But sponsoring can also take place in the communication of specialist knowledge, through further training, the moderation of events, catering etc. The more attractive and unusual the action the easier it is to find sponsors. It is important that sponsors and their appearance and activities suit the supported project, and that their involvement is credible. Sponsoring is a contractual commitment on the part of both parties. Sponsors expect that they will be adequately acknowledged, and they use their involvement for the purpose of their own public relations. Because sponsoring, under certain circumstances and in contrast to donations, has tax implications, the tax authorities, or a tax consultant should be consulted in advance.

- **Donations**

Are granted for certain isolated actions that, in contrast to sponsoring, are basically not influenced by self-interest and are made without quid pro quo or personal advantage. The non-profit status of co-operation organizations is important for acquiring donations, because of tax relief for donors.

- **Receipts, proceeds and returns**

can be realized through the sale of informational publications, brochures, licences or admission fees.

A profit centre, committed to a certain degree of self-finance or even an explicit profit margin, may likewise generate profits from entrepreneurial activities or receipts for paid-for services (management and consultancy fees). This requires that the development of projects is "market-orientated", which applies not only to private, but also to public projects.

#### Self-financing is necessary

Contributing a proportion of required finance is frequently difficult for a number of reasons. Co-operation is a voluntary, and not a mandatory task, which in many cases has still to be rooted in the minds of people. Limited room for financial manoeuvre on the part of the co-operation partners is yet another aspect. It is further complicated by the fact that investment should be made in a "matter" whose result is uncertain and only long-term.

On the other hand, experience confirms the importance of self-financing; for those who get financially involved will be interested in **long-term success**. General declarations of interest alone are not worth much. As long as nothing is signed and money does not have to be made available, everything remains without obligation. The budgeting of partners' own resources also has the result that co-operative regional development has to be discussed at least once a year in municipal or other decision-making committees, and is thus more strongly perceived by decision-makers.

#### The calculation of internal financial contributions and the mode of apportionment

The apportionment formula, which is the manner by which co-operation costs are allocated to individual co-operation partners, is often a highly charged issue that is hotly discussed and can occasionally lead to the failure of co-operation projects. Experience shows that in this respect, imagination is set no limits:

A broad **structural scope** opens up solutions specific to the region and to partners.

The ratio of numbers of inhabitants of the participating communities or, in the case of institutions, the number of members, or the ratio of area brought into the co-operation project is frequently used as a formula for apportioning costs and proceeds between territorial authorities. Also conceivable is that the partners participate in different cost categories to a varying extent. The view that all partners profit in the same way from the organization (development agency) can lead to flat-rate contributions. Other costs (project costs, for instance), on the other hand, can be apportioned to the co-operation partners according to a formula based on the number of inhabitants, in order to be fair to those partners with little room for financial manoeuvrability.

#### Decide which institution is to be responsible for budget management

It also has to be clarified, which institution will take responsibility for financial management and cost control. These tasks can be undertaken by one of the co-operation partners or by the liaison office (development agency).

Making financial commitments, and possibly being able to make use of development aid, requires possession of a **legal status**; for instance, a club, Limited-liability

Company, a local-authority-initiated special-purpose association or other territorial authority

(-> Development organization).

Where such legal status does not exist, one of the co-operation partners must act as applicant for and recipient of development aid and ultimately bear all related risks (such as the provision of a financial contribution in the event of one of the co-operation partners withdrawing).

In his connection, it has also to be decided whether finance and budget management should be conducted in the manner of a **public budget** (that is, according to the principle of annuality, or according to **private legal principles** (transferability of funds to the following year, deductibility of turnover tax) in order to be able to react more flexibly. In choosing the legal form, the advantages and disadvantages of all possible alternatives have to be carefully weighed up. Tax aspects, in particular, should be thoroughly examined by experts.



### Good example

**WALDLAND Vermarktungs- ges.m.b.H. (Waldviertel, Lower Austria)** is an economically- successful example of a hive-off. Waldviertel Management exists since 1982. This development agency provided the initiative to develop animal and vegetable alternatives in agriculture and so react against overproduction in traditional agricultural sectors, the unfavourable climatic conditions in the Waldviertel and the small size of Waldviertel farms (about 15 ha on average). To begin with, a number of farms joined forces with Edelhof Technical College to plant crops typical for the region – such as poppy and herbs – and to test suitable methods of cultivation. In 1984, 70 farmers got together and founded the "Verein zur Förderung der Sonderkulturen im Waldviertel" [Association for the promotion of special cultivation in Waldviertel]. In the year 2000, around 750 farms devoted themselves to the cultivation of traditional and alternative crops, such as poppy, cumin, herbs for tea and seasoning, bio-cereals as well as lady's thistle and St. John's wort for the pharmaceutical industry, linseed for oil etc. The "Verein zur Förderung der Tierhaltungsalternativen im Waldviertel" [Association for the promotion of alternative livestock breeding] was founded in 1987, and has developed into a group representing the interests of around 150 farmers, who produce, ducks, geese, rabbits and guinea fowl.

Both associations founded WALDLAND Vermarktungs- Ges.m.b.H. as an umbrella as well as a marketing and distribution organization, which markets and partly refines and processes their products.

### Hiving-off of activities and projects


Strategic factors in the planning of co-operative activities and projects are their long-term sustainability, viability and refinancing. This includes cost-savings, as already mentioned, as well as receipts from the awarding of licences (for instance, for the use of a regional seal of quality).

The hiving-off of financially self-supporting functions and activities into independent companies, operating according to free market principles, can be economically successful. Such consideration of profitability should not lead to the situation, however, that due to financial considerations only "profitable" matters are treated and "problems of public interest" are neglected.



### Tips

- In accordance with the saying, "that which costs nothing is worth nothing", partners' contributions should be included in the financing plan from the very beginning, in order to emphasize the seriousness and importance of the co-operation project.
- Include partners' financial contributions to the co-operation project as a recurrent cost position in the annual budget. The result will be, that the co-operation project will become a standard topic in budget deliberations in political bodies and that, at the same time, a report has to be made annually.
- Personnel costs must be in a reasonable relation to project costs / investment costs.
- Provide for funds (in the form of partners' contributions) in order to be able to react promptly to new programmes.
- The results of co-operation should also be presented in a financial statement and the costs and receipts (acquired development aid, charges, investments made in connection with the co-operation project, fees, cost savings) thus made transparent for decision-makers).
- With respect to sponsoring, take care to select suitable partners (credibility) and develop a sponsoring concept.

-  **Checklist: Financing**
- ✓ Is a realistic analysis of costs and funding available?
  - ✓ Which financial contribution is required from partners, and how can it be provided?
  - ✓ What further finance can be acquired for co-operative regional development?
  - ✓ What are the possibilities of fund-raising and sponsoring?
  - ✓ Does the sponsor suit us; which projects can he promote; what does he expect from us?
  - ✓ Which regulation of the distribution of burdens and benefits and of the apportionment of costs is suitable?
  - ✓ Who takes responsibility for cost control and financial management?

 **Links**

WALDLAND Vermarktungs Ges.m.b.H.: [www.waldland.at](http://www.waldland.at)

Bundesverband Deutscher Stiftungen e.V.: [www.stiftungen.org](http://www.stiftungen.org)


Förderdatenbank „Nachhaltige Regionalentwicklung“  
[www.foerderdatenbank-regionalentwicklung.de](http://www.foerderdatenbank-regionalentwicklung.de)

Index Deutscher Stiftungen des Bundesverband Deutscher Stiftungen (with research possibilities) [www.stiftungsindex.de](http://www.stiftungsindex.de)

Maecenata Institut für Dritter Sektor Forschung Stiftungs-Datenbank (with research possibilities):  
[www.maecenata.de/centrum/datenbank.htm](http://www.maecenata.de/centrum/datenbank.htm)

Information on fund-raising and the Internet: [www.online-fundraising.de](http://www.online-fundraising.de)

Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Sozialmarketing (BSM) – Deutscher Fundraising Verband e.V. Information:  
[www.sozialmarketing.de/faq.htm](http://www.sozialmarketing.de/faq.htm)

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### 4.9 Evaluation

Co-operative regional development processes are frequently to be found in inextricable situations: the process makes no headway, co-operation declines and projects fail. It is at this point that the instrument of evaluation comes into play. Evaluation helps to identify problematical developments at an early stage and to preclude critical situations.

Evaluation covers a number of methods that can also be described using other terms, such as (indicator-based) success control, result checking, quality assurance, quality management, benchmarking, controlling, monitoring, facilitation, deliberation and balancing.



#### Evaluate = improve and assess

Evaluations are useful and necessary for the successful outcome of co-operative processes. Undesirable trends can be recognized in good time, central problems recognized, corresponding obstacles overcome and resources more efficiently employed. Players reflect upon their own action, in order to optimize it and make it effective.

Through success control and control of the application of funds, the process is legitimized in the view of financial backers, sponsors and participants. As a result, the process as a whole, but also individual projects, can be optimized and improved with respect to results.

A desired quality, such as the contribution to sustainable development, can be ensured. Through the communication of success, participating players are motivated and the process revived and spread. The comparability of different regions is made possible with

the help of indicators and criteria.

Through the discussion of criteria, the players involved learn what sustainable development means in concrete terms for their region.

#### Process and project evaluation

Co-operative development processes are multi-layered and complex. Their success with the public is measured by concrete

results in the form of realized projects. The functioning of their structures and the interaction of different process elements also contribute to success. Evaluations must therefore be conducted at both the process and project level. Evaluation in co-operative regional development processes thus ranges from the economic control of projects to constant deliberation by way of examination of strategic and grammatical aspects.

#### Subject of evaluation

- Total process
- Liaison office
- Regional development agency
- Networks
- Projects
- Individual events
- Advisory boards and supporting committees
- Objectives
- Programmes

The following can be investigated: the process as a whole, elements of the total process, the work of organizational units (regional liaison office, regional development agency), individual projects and measures, the function of the co-operation network, the work of advisory boards or other supporting committees, conceptual bases and objectives, individual events (such as meetings of working groups), grammatical aspects (such as the contribution to sustainable development) or the attainment of environmental quality objectives. Evaluations for co-operative regional development processes are not legally or otherwise standardized. Exemplar elements can be identified, however, which evaluation should include where possible.



#### Stumbling blocks

- Competent players generally have enough to do with their everyday work, so that no time is available for reflection and the early recognition of possibly undesirable trends. There is a lack of time, finance and personnel.
- There is generally no systematic integration of elements of evaluation.
- Imprecise objectives hamper success control, because assessment criteria remain unclear.
- There is a lack of adequately-detailed planning documents, or of milestones as the basis for evaluation.
- "Soft" co-operation results are difficult to measure. There are methodical difficulties in the assignment of effects.

### Specific evaluations

Depending on the subject of evaluation, specific questions are raised and particular aspects have to be considered. An evaluation of the **process as a whole** is more than the sum total of its individual elements. Interaction and interdependencies are also investigated. The questions raised include: Was the process successful in terms of its objectives? What were the results, direct effects and side effects? Is the process stable? How does process control function as a whole? (-> Process organization)

**Liaison offices** often come under legitimation pressure from providers of funds and sponsors as well as from institutions with similar functions. Evaluation is therefore essential, in order to work effectively and to prove their own necessity. Evaluation raises such questions as: Which tasks are undertaken by the regional development agency? Does it have sufficient staff and finance to carry out these tasks? Which projects has it initiated, supported or advised upon? Which of these projects were successful? (-> Regional development agency)

In the case of **Networks**, their composition (development organization) and internal organization (process organization) should basically be investigated. Investigation should cover such questions as: Are the players relevant to the regional development process involved? What types of network exist? Which internal network relations exist? How stable is the network? (-> Development-/ process organization)

The realization of specific **projects** and **measures** is a success factor for the whole regional development process. **Project controlling**, as a forward-looking instrument of control, is very important for the success of projects; success can be demonstrated, a project's image is enhanced.

Controlling is not a single incident, however, but rather a loop that has often to be passed through in the course of a project. A systematic procedure is required. The basis is provided by good project planning and the laying down of milestones as points of control. Time must be allowed for project controlling. As a rule, a time factor of between 5 and 10 per cent of the total amount of work involved is sensible.

Events, such as working group meetings or moderated **conferences**, are supportive elements of the regional development process. Their success has significant effects on the motivation and work of participants and thus a decisive influence on the progress of the co-operative process. Events should be reflected upon and a balance drawn at their conclusion by mediators and participants. Time for this should therefore be set-aside in the planning of activities. Methods of reflection on meetings and conferences include the "balance question" method and questionnaires with pre-set answers. These help not only the survey of attitudes and assessments, but also discussion in plenum or in small groups.



### Good example

The **Mecklenburg Lake District Regional Planning Authority** sponsors and organizes every two years a "Regional Conference Mecklenburg Lake District" in the form of a review conference. At these conferences, the state of the entire process, as well as of individual projects, are reviewed and publicly discussed. This takes place in the form of project reports and presentations.

The work of supporting committees, such as an advisory board, a board of trustees, steering group or committee of experts should also be evaluated at least once a year. Evaluation provides all committee members with the opportunity to discuss the deficiencies of previous work and to undertake improvements. Evaluation can contribute to the motivation of committee members and examine their readiness to participate. A checklist should be employed for the annual evaluation, which should be filled in by individual committee members. The findings should then be discussed and lead to a strategy with attainable objectives for the coming year. (-> Development organization)

Regional Agenda processes draw their identity and legitimation – similar to Local Agenda processes – from the discussion on sustainable development. Through evaluations in the sense of **goal attainment controls** it can be established whether objectives have been attained (for instance, the contribution of the process or projects to sustainable development, or to environmental protection or nature conservation). For

### Exemplar elements of a structured evaluation

#### Introduction

Procedures

#### Bases

Project area, history

#### Analysis and assessment

Elements and structure of the whole process  
Effect, attainment of objectives, efficiency

#### Restriction analysis

Obstacles, stumbling blocks, success factors

#### Total assessment

#### Recommendations

Solution strategies

## 4. Success factor: process

this purpose, appropriate targets must be cited in each case as a basis of assessment. Recourse can be made in this respect to an existing target or to one that has been specially elaborated for the purpose of evaluation. Such success controls are particularly necessary to avoid arbitrariness of processes and their results, and they primarily serve quality assurance. (-> Concept)

### Evaluate precisely and adequately

Evaluations can be conducted in different forms and are orientated towards the purpose and addressee. If one desires an evaluation with greater participation, particularly on the part of the general public, one will organize a review conference (or balance conference), for instance. If it should be more thorough and more strategic, one will fall back on experts or coaching. A combination of different forms is particularly advantageous. The findings of an evaluation study can be discussed with the general public at a conference, for instance, or used as the basis for coaching key players.



### Good example

The **Bavarian State Ministry for Regional Development and Environmental Issues** supports the evaluation of regional co-operation processes in a variety of ways. It organizes every two years a so-called review conference, for instance, at which regional management approaches are presented, reports made on experiences with realization and information exchanged. Dialogue is made possible between government and administration on the one hand and science and practitioners on the other hand. Moreover, in addition to documentation of review conferences, the Ministry has commissioned several scientific evaluations of regional management approaches, which have also been published. These publications are generally obtainable free-of-charge.

Possible **forms** of evaluation are

- Studies / expert opinions.
- Progress reports, review reports, working reports.
- Regional development concepts as instruments of strategic control, which also include a sustainability report or something similar.
- Setting up a regional sustainability reporting system.
- Review conferences (for example, regional conferences).
- Facilitation / coaching of co-ordinators and key players.
- Critical moderation / reflection and deliberation.
- Quality management.
- Benchmarking.
- Indicator-based evaluation.
- Exchange of experience with other co-operative processes ("Region of the Future" network, review conferences in Bavaria, competitions).
- Dialogue in working groups.



### Good example

Empirically-based, so-called "**Model solutions in nature conservation**", which "increase the probability of project success", can provide a criterion for the evaluation of nature conservation projects. They set quality standards for the realization of nature conservation objectives.

Model solutions are: committed people, winner coalitions, strong players, people as advocates, manageable projects, follow-up capability, availability of working time and money, acceptance through success, active environment management, increased acceptance through reference to experts, flexibility, willingness to compromise, learning ability, process competence.

(Brendle 1999)

The choice of **methods** depends – besides the desired form – mainly on the subject of investigation. Frequently applied methods are, for instance:

- Effectiveness and efficiency controls
- Effect analysis
- Restriction analysis
- Strengths-weaknesses-Analysis (SWOT)
- Questioning,
- Theme-based interviews
- Critical reflection.

### Use assessment criteria

In order to sensibly assess something, one always needs a criterion, with the use of which success or progress can be assessed. Such criteria can be predetermined, or one can develop them oneself.

Such criteria include

- Exemplar elements of an Agenda process,
- Quality standards for processes and co-operative planning approaches,
- Quantitative and qualitative objectives (for example, sustainability and environmental quality objectives),
- Superior and regionally specific objectives,
- Sustainability indicators (+orientation values),
- Documented agreements and resolutions and
- Other comparable approaches (benchmarking).



### Take account also of soft co-operation results and side effects

The effect of co-operation processes should not only be measured on activities that are directly visible. Soft co-operation results and side effects, which can be both positive and negative, should also be considered.

Such side effects include

an improved relationship between public and private players,  
the initiation of projects,  
further application of communication forms and procedures that regional players have got to know during the co-operation process.



### Good example

The **Mecklenburg Lake District Regional Planning Authority** co-operates within the scope of an R & D project with Neubrandenburg Advanced Technical College, in the course of which a research team from the Neubrandenburg College carries out evaluations of the whole process known as the "Regional Conference Mecklenburg Lake District", and of certain of its elements. A strategy paper has been prepared, in which the self-image of the Regional Conference, the regional co-operation network, the development and process organization as well as further aspects of the co-operative process is evaluated and appropriate solutions recommended.

### Evaluate regularly

There is basically the possibility of conducting evaluations before (**ex ante**), after (**ex post**) or during the course of a process (**intermediate evaluation**). The important thing is that evaluations are carried out regularly and systematically. Regular, systematic evaluations are sensible, carried out, for instance, with the help of goals set for particular phases of the process, so-called **milestones**. Such "early warnings" enable problems to be quickly identified and appropriate modifications to be made. The advantage is that, at this stage, problems are not particularly serious.

One can calmly undertake modifications at an early stage, whose quality is then also higher. Nerves, time and costs are saved.

Sufficient scope for regular evaluations should be provided in the time schedules of processes and projects. Evaluation steps should be explicitly incorporated in process and project operation.

### Who evaluates?

- Players and process participants themselves
- Regional liaison offices / development agency
- External experts
- Advisory board
- Planning and consultancy firms
- Mediators
- Coaches / facilitators
- (Regional) scientific institutions ( universities, advanced technical colleges, non-university facilities)
- *Länder* institutions
- Providers of finance

### Internal or external evaluation?

The question generally arises, whether the regional liaison office or participants themselves carry out evaluation, or whether an external evaluation team should be called in. Both methods are useful and can be combined. There should be regular **internal evaluations**. **External evaluations** are advisable at greater intervals, or ad hoc with major problems. In the case of internal evaluation recourse can be made to external support.

Project controlling, for example, is a function of **project management**. It is sensible, however, especially in difficult and uncertain situations, to involve the **whole team** in

## 4. Success factor: process

controlling. This way, the knowledge and experience of all can be utilized, which enhances the quality of analysis and solution. Particularly for the tracking down of obstacles and for process quality control, a professional and neutral view from outside is helpful. Consultants can accompany a project or process as mediators or coaches through its different development phases from the beginning to the end. With their specialist knowledge and neutral perspective they can procure important input and provide suggestions for the employment of measures.

The regional organizational unit (liaison office or regional development agency) can take on the evaluation of its own work, the whole process or different projects. The regional development agency should encourage and support self-evaluation within projects. Joint deliberation can be undertaken, for example, within the scope of a **workshop** or **review conference**.

### Make use of the potential of scientific institutions

When time, finance and staff are not available for evaluations, use should be made of the potential of regional scientific institutions, in particular of universities and advanced technical colleges. Universities, or professors or assistants should be asked whether evaluations of the whole process or particular circumstances can be conducted within the framework of accompanying research, theses, dissertations or student projects. This helps to save costs and permits qualified evaluation.

Planning, economics and social science are fields of study of particular relevance.



### Tips

- Evaluations should not be regarded as an admission of the failure of the co-operative regional development process, but rather as a necessary element of it.
- Carry out regular, systematic evaluations.
- Institutionalize evaluation steps.
- Evaluations should apply to both processes and projects.
- Professional process supervision, advice and reflection.
- Take account of soft co-operation results and side effects.
- Carry out evaluations regularly within a broad public process of consultation.
- Make use of the potential of regional scientific institutions.



### Checklist

- ✓ Does regular, systematic reflection or deliberation, on the process and on co-operation within the network take place?
- ✓ Are time and staff available for evaluation?
- ✓ Who carries out evaluation and project controlling?
- ✓ Is a professional "view from outside" also provided?
- ✓ Which forms and methods are applied in this respect?
- ✓ Have objectives, milestones or other success controls been formulated?



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Di Lima, Sara N. und Johns, Lisa T. (1996): Nonprofit organization management: forms, checklists & guidelines. Gaithersburg.

### Evaluation in general

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Evaluation e.V. (DeGEval), [www.degeval.de](http://www.degeval.de)

### Project controlling:

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (Hrsg.)(1998): Projektmanagement. Verfahren und Instrumente für erfolgreiche Projektarbeit. Ein Trainingsbuch. Bonn.

Jugendstiftung Baden-Württemberg (1998): Projektarbeit für Profis. Münster.



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[www.region-seenplatte.de/html/aktuelles/regional.akt.html](http://www.region-seenplatte.de/html/aktuelles/regional.akt.html)

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