

## **DRAFT TEMPLATE OF THE STRATEGIC DOCUMENT**

The objective of this document is to provide the authorities involved in the process of drafting of the European Territorial Cooperation programmes to be implemented in the 2014-2020 financial perspective with a guidance explaining the thinking path expected by the European Commission from its national or regional counterparts. The guidance leads step by step and in a concise way through all stages needed to identify challenges and potentials to be addressed in the framework of the European Territorial Cooperation.

## **I. Designation of the area covered by the strategy**

The strategy shall be drafted either per border or, if there is a good justification for having separate strategies for two or more programmes alongside the same border, per programme. The reasons for having separate strategies might be e.g.: substantially different socio-economic situation in two sections of the border; different physical character of the border (e.g. mountain border – sea border); or the fact that certain programmes cover more than two states. The borders of the area covered by the strategy (hereinafter: strategy area) should be, as a rule, in line with the borders of programmes concerned.

## **II. Analysis of the current socio-economic situation in the strategy area**

The starting point in the strategy development is a snapshot of the current socio-economic situation in the strategy area, including but not limited to the thematic objectives, as stipulated in Art. 9 of the Common Provisions Regulation. A concise overview demonstrating basic statistical data, trends, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the strategy area should be provided.

## **III. Lessons from the past**

The objective of this step is to present an analysis of the results of the current and past, both national and European, programmes providing assistance to the strategy area. The analysis should among others list: programme(s) concerned; allocations (European and, if relevant, national ones), broken down by years and main areas of intervention; main achievements and failures (including especially an in-depth analysis of the latter ones); good and bad practices; linkages between different programmes and synergy effects (if applicable); effectiveness of the programmes and recommendations for the future. Particular attention should be paid to the added value that has been brought about by the cooperation projects.

## **IV. Identification of the main challenges**

The objective of this step is to identify challenges and untapped potentials in the strategy area. Challenges could be of various nature, e.g. related to the following fields: accessibility, inappropriate business environment, lack of networks among local and regional administrations, research and innovation and take-up of information and communication technologies, environmental pollution, risk prevention, negative attitudes towards neighbouring country citizens.

Challenges can have a national character i.e.: exist predominantly on one side of the border (e.g.: inefficient administration systems; low education performance) or have more cross-border/transnational character and be relevant on both sides of the border (e.g.: risk prevention; high unemployment; pollution; accessibility; prejudices or hostility towards the neighbours).

Potentials in the strategy area can result from overcoming the identified challenges and/or tapping into existing resources, especially in the context of the European Territorial Cooperation (i.e.: cross-border clusters, universities cooperation, enhanced cross-border mobility, increased business attractiveness).

At this step it should be also analysed, which of the challenges or potentials could be better addressed in cooperation than separately by each Member State and the appropriate cooperation level or levels (national, regional or sub-regional) should be identified.

A solid justification of the selection made should be provided.

#### **V. Establishment of the ranking of the identified challenges and potentials**

The objective of this step is to establish a ranking of the identified challenges and potentials, some of which, even though encountered mostly on one side of the border, may affect significantly the development or the cohesion of the whole strategy area.

The process of establishing the ranking should be transparent: all the relevant stakeholders, such as the regional and local authorities and main socio-economic partners (euroregions, representatives of NGOs, business and academia) shall be involved in the process. An appropriate weighting system is to be put in place with public consultations held so that the regional and local communities could also have a say. A summary of this process should be also provided in this step.

#### **VI. Identification of the challenges and potentials to be addressed in the framework of the European Territorial Cooperation**

The objective of this step is to identify which of the above mentioned challenges and potentials can be potentially addressed in the framework of the European Territorial Cooperation. It is possible that not all of the identified challenges could be tackled with the EU assistance provided under the European Territorial Cooperation programmes as they are e.g. too expensive (e.g.: TEN-T connections).

#### **VII. Identification of the challenges and potentials to be addressed in the framework of the European Territorial Cooperation in the forthcoming financial perspective**

The objective of this step is to identify the very most important challenges to be dealt with in the framework of the European Territorial Cooperation in the 2014-2020 perspective in the strategy area. Not all of the challenges or potentials that will be identified under step VI will be of equal importance for the strategy area and not all could be addressed with the scarce public resources. The national and regional authorities will have to be selective and focus on those few challenges that are deemed crucial for the further development of the strategy area and that still can be co-financed in the framework of the European Territorial Cooperation. In case where intervention in given area can be more efficiently implemented under regional or national programmes it should not be shortlisted for co-financing from the European Territorial Cooperation programme.

A solid justification of the selection made is crucial.

*If the identified challenge is, for instance, a low internal-accessibility, the strategy should indicate the areas, where the problems are particularly acute. The justification should give clear arguments as to why these and not other issues or bottlenecks have been selected for support under the European Territorial Cooperation instrument in the forthcoming financial perspective.*

A summary of the process leading to and resulting in the above-mentioned selection is also to be provided in this step.

### **VIII. Identification of the actions and results sought for addressing challenges and tapping into potentials in the framework of the European Territorial Cooperation in the forthcoming financial perspective**

The objective of this step is to identify the results to be achieved. The authors of the strategy should have a clear vision as to why EU support is needed, what can be achieved through it, in what way, i.e through what sets of measures the expected results can be achieved.

For each field of intervention a baseline (reflecting current situation); a satisfactory value (being the optimal situation); and a target value (to be achieved by the end of the financial perspective) should be provided.

The system of flagship projects should be used to meet the objectives. They should help achieve expected results especially as regards infrastructural projects, but also non-infrastructure projects having a tangible impact on the significant part of the programme area (e.g. establishing a common cross-border public mobility scheme, enabling cross border healthcare system etc.). The flagship projects might account for some 25% - 50% of the programme allocation.

A solid justification of the choices made is crucial.

### **IX. Linkages and synergy effects**

Linkages and synergy effects with other programmes and investment plans to be implemented in the same period in the strategy area should be indicated (e.g.: providing information on a project aiming at overhauling a local road connecting a border municipality with a TEN-T corridor to be co-financed from a national programme). European Territorial Cooperation programmes are encouraged to be used as catalytic funding for projects stemming from other, financially more substantial European Structural and Investment Funds programmes, or even for projects financed from other (EU, national, EIB) funding. The investments e.g. in the missing links or providing the necessary documentation to strategic transport, energy and ICT interconnections are encouraged.

### **X. Identification of the way other challenges will be addressed**

The objective of this step is to provide information (if available) by what means other challenges can be tackled in the strategy area. The information should cover the following elements: challenge or potential; programme concerned; thematic objective, area of intervention; amounts available; targets to be achieved against baseline value.