



RegionArts

Interreg Europe



European Union
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Development Fund

EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE 6 – ONLINE: REPORT

March 19th–20th 2020,
Rovaniemi, Finland



EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE 6 – Lapland, Online

1. Introduction

The sixth Exchange of Experience event of RegionArts project was held partially on March 19th and 20th. Due to the COVID-19 situation the event was forced to be made with re-arrangements. Deriving from the original plans the event was held as online sessions focusing on timely vital activities for the project. According to this an Action Plan workshop was arranged on the 19/3 and Steering Group Meeting on 20/3 in virtual form. Rest of the original schedule with study visits and other exchange of experience activities was postponed according to the agreement with the Lead Partner and Project Secretary and the whole project consortium to be held in September 29th–30th 2020 in Rovaniemi Finland (assuming the situation allows).

2. More Information About the Session

Agenda for the virtual EoE was to focus on Action Plan work to ensure the progress of the project. The goal was to have common understanding about action plans in general and start drafting the first versions by partners. The session consisted of an introduction part and an active workshop part.

In introduction part there were presentations for *'From good practice to policy change, Development'* by director of Regional Council of Lapland Päivi Ekdahl; *'Creating the Action Plan'* by Pirkko Sivonen, Inno4Sports Interreg Europe project, Regional Council of Lapland and *'Creating the Action Plan'* by Sari Nisula, Social Spa Interreg Europe project, Lapland University of Applied Sciences. Also, two Inno4Sport project partner representant from Netherlands were involved according to the collaboration with these

two projects by partners in Finland and Netherlands. Through the presentations with theoretic approach and practical examples as well as discussion, the common understanding was created in terms of principles for action plan work and how should project utilize regional knowledge base, learnings from the project as well as additional knowledge from other project partners.

Discussion focused on questions on how policy change/influencing can be done amidst change of the programme periods and if the targeted instrument be changed. Based on discussion with secretary that changing the instrument shouldn't be the solution but to approach the targeted one as a learning process which should be turned into the next programme period. In general, the approach should be viewed in bigger picture of regional development which can be achieved through smaller goals with project plan in mind. Also, the bilateral work with partners and exchange of experience focused on the action plans raised questions which need yet further definition with the consortium. In addition, question arouse on how smart specialication in Lapland has been done (based on presentation by Regional Council of Lapland) and how this affect the policy instruments. From here a good learning was derived on the importance to make a comprehensive initial mapping of the starting point of projects/activities/strategies to enable the evaluation later on.

As practical actions for the workshop all partners started drafting the content for the first versions of Action Plans on separate templates provided by the facilitator. The workshop was facilitated by *Sari Nisula (Social Spa Interreg Europe project, Lapland University of Applied Sciences)* and University of Lapland project team. The workshop was planned so that there was common discussion with all participants sharing their thoughts and possible questions, combined with project partners being able to interact with their participating stakeholders in separate virtual rooms. This provided a way for all to actively consider and reflect their regional challenges and refine means to address these.

Due to the limited time the drafted templates were decided to be finished individually during the spring to be able to proceed again with the official project templates for

action plans. (A shared plan and schedule for the action plan work was made in the Steering Group Meeting on the following day.)

Based on the end discussions and Steering Group Meeting, where partners were invited to share their feedback on the sixth EoE of RegionArts (action plan workshop), the partners commented that the virtual form was a good solution (considering our physical exchange of experience had to be postponed) even if it does not substitute the real learning environment and study visits planned.

3. Recommendations and Next Steps

Quote from SCM memo: “For future reference, it is important to give more time to the partners to discuss in-deep about the action plans, do a roll-call when returning from these breakout sessions to make sure every partner is still following the discussion and to use cameras – if the connection allows it – to make the pp interaction more dynamic. “

Also, it is very important to have “back-up means” in case of bad connections. This can be tackled at least by sending the visual presentations forehand to be viewed also in offline mode (which was in this case done during the meeting after challenges emerged). In addition, it is important to plan such virtual workshop in terms of needs and means available. For the afternoon workshop the software was shifted for another to enable better interaction within partners and their stakeholders. This was deemed necessary by hosts even though it caused change between different software. After all this didn't seem to cause problems but is something that could be predicted better beforehand.

4. Conclusion

Overall, the virtual event was successful despite the quick re-arrangements and was seen definitely worth it. Presentations offered good overall view on the action plans and discussion enabled to focus on more specific questions by partners. “The partners interacted effortlessly with the speakers and assimilated the most important aspects to, later on, apply on their own actions plans” (SCM memo). According to the

experience, the RegionArts consortium gained shared understanding on practical level concerning the action plan work.

5. Annexes

- a) Agenda
- b) Photos: *limited due to the online session (taken by SERN)*
- c) Attendance sheet: *to be compiled in the physical EoE*
- d) News for the RegionArts website: *to be made in connection to the physical EoE*

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