KARELIA
CBC // Cross-border cooperation

Capacity building event for the ongoing projects
Summary and next steps

Thank you for participating the capacity building event in Joensuu on 9th October 2019. This is a short summary of the issues discussed in the evet.

Kindly give feedback on the event at: https://link.webropolsurveys.com/S/3586546239E5D29C

How the projects are doing – experiences of the first year

The projects defined the most common challenges and shared their best practices. Communication, both internal and external, seemed to be tricky in many projects. Then again, there are several tips and tools for efficient communication. Also bureaucracy both in terms of the programme and the partner organisations themselves were considered challenges. Mutual respect between the organisations and competent staff are important for all projects.

A more detailed compilation of the findings will be posted on the programme website later.

Interim reporting

When writing the interim report use plain language and describe the progress of the project truthfully. The Managing Authority is interested in both the challenges and successes.

The deadlines for the interim report and payment request are defined in the Payment and reporting plan. The plan has been submitted to the lead partner when the project was launched, and can be also found as a memo in Promas. Remember to respect the deadlines.

The interim report and the payment request are submitted separately and both have annexes of their own. The expenditure verification report is an annex to the payment request.

Communication (obligations)

Keep up the good work in making your projects visible!

Do remember to use the programme logo in all your communication, as well as the sentence "The project is financed by the European union, the Republic of Finland and the Russian Federation." Choose the language according to the target group.

All the projects will receive in the near future their own version of the programme logo including the project acronym. If you have created a specific logo for the project it can be used in addition to the programme logo.

It was asked if more specific instructions on where to place the programme logo could be provided. We'll create some visual examples in the near future. In the meantime, it is good to keep in mind the basic rules: the programme logo is the first one from the left and can never be smaller than the other logos used.

Finances workshop

It is important to realize the difference between the budget and the financial report. The budget is based on an estimate of costs. The financial report is based on actual, realized costs. In most cases at the closure of the project, the budget is not fully used.

It is important to carefully plan the processes and scheduling of financial reporting in order to meet the reporting deadlines to the Managing Authority. We recommend that the partners start to prepare their financial reporting from the first month of the reporting period. Update the financial report every month throughout the reporting period. This way it is much easier to meet the reporting deadlines.

Communication workshop

Tell a story!

Photography workshop

Remember to take photos – it is highly important that you have a good variety of project photos. Especially remember to take photos of your end-users or target groups participating the project events or using the products created – humans make the photos more interesting.

For taking better-quality photos check the tips from photographer Alejandro Lorenzo on our website.

Tendering workshop

Price is not the only factor in tendering: also quality can, and in many cases should, be taken into account. It is important to try to find the right weighting between price and quality when scoring the tenders. Of course, the weighting needs to be defined already in the invitation for tenders.

It is worth considering asking the price to be presented separately from the tender itself (for example to be submitted in a closed envelope as an annex to the tender). This way the price doesn't affect the evaluation of the quality.

Electronic market places such as Hilma, www.hankintailmoitukset.fi, in Finland can be used also when the value of the tender does not exceed the threshold values. This can be an easier way to get tenders compared to searching for potential companies.

Risk Management workshop

Workshop approached risk management from practical viewpoint: why projects should consider risk management? Who is responsible and who should be involved? When to do risk management? Participants shared the understanding that risk management should be an ongoing function throughout the whole project life cycle.

According to the participants to the workshop the organisations managing projects have very modest risk management strategies or do not have them at all. Project partners anyhow do assess the threats that may endanger the project implementation but do not work in a systematic way.

More efforts need to be put on risk management both by projects but also by the Managing Authority. Projects called for support and practical tools to facilitate their work.

CBC post2020 workshop

An overview to the preparation of post2020 programme period was made in the workshop. Discussion focused on the changes foreseen to the future programmes. Structure of three programmes on the Finnish-Russian border was seen as the best option also for the future. Participants expressed their concerns of the project preparation and management in the future programmes and based their opinions on complicated methodologies in the existing Interreg programmes.

Logframe approach with problem analysis was considered as a best practice that should be maintained also in the future. Existing PROMAS monitoring system was seen as a user friendly system compared to those used in Interreg Programmes.

Stakeholder events and hearings are foreseen during the official programming process and the experience of the organisations and people working with CBC projects will be utilized.

Other issues

- It was asked if the programme could provide instructions on how the GPDRS should be taken into account within the projects. The Managing Authority will take a look on the issue.

- Also relating to the personal data it was asked if the names of the employees need to presented in the financial reports. The Managing Authority will provide more specific instructions on the matter as soon as possible. At this point, it can already be said that it is possible to create the financial report without writing the names of the employees, just using the titles and creating a link to the personnel by numbering the employees on the personnel list (provided in PROMAS) and using the same numbers in the financial report as well.

Presentations

Presentations can be downloaded from http://kareliacbc.fi/en/capacity-building-material

Next steps

- Annual event of the programme will take place in Petrozavodsk on 17th December, 2019. This year the event is targeted for the Russian partners and stakeholders.
- Follow-up training for the auditors and a capacity building event for the bookkeepers and financial managers is foreseen to be organised in spring 2020.
- The European Cooperation Day event will be held in Kajaani and Kostomuksha on Saturday 19th September 2020 (tbc). All the project partners from Kainuu and Kostomuksha regions are asked to participate.
- Two capacity building events will be held in autumn 2020: one for closing and one for continuing projects.