

OPTIMISING SUPPORT TO POTENTIAL PROJECT DEVELOPERS

Making support services more consistent

The aim is to ensure the consistency of the various support services. To do so, it is necessary to **clarify the areas of expertise and intervention of each type of structure** that may support project developers. Concretely, this means defining a “support pathway” that identifies the resources that project developers may draw on for each aspect of their project.

EXAMPLES:

A **functional diagram shows the support services** proposed by the different players illustrates the consistency between the different support resources.

A **directory of experts** contains detailed information on the services offered by each support structure as well as useful contacts.

The **“Les aides et les services supports dédiés aux entreprises”** (“Aid and support services for businesses”) guide, published in September 2011 in Nord-Pas de Calais.

This clarification can help to create a real **network of competence and expertise**, or even a quality label for public or private-sector support structures on the basis of a list of jointly defined criteria. This model is used for example by the European Enterprise Network, which brings together SME support structures to develop their innovation potential and inform them of policies implemented by the Commission.

While it is possible to use general interest web portals, for example, to **increase the transparency of overall support resources**, it is more effective to target the information. Specifically, when a potential project developer approaches a support structure, this structure, having provided the project developer with its expert advice, should point out the other structures that should subsequently be used to address remaining questions. The advantage of this network system is that it ensures that the project developer receives answers to all its questions in an efficient manner.

Strengthening overall coordination of the support network

Putting in place a support network means identifying a structure in charge of facilitating the network. Its role is to:

- ↳ ensure the consistency of the support pathway;
- ↳ maintain an overall vision of the network and the territory;
- ↳ gather information on the support services offered by each structure;
- ↳ lead efforts to formalise the support pathway (functional diagram, directory, etc.).

This facilitator or integrator is solely in charge of facilitating the network. Due to the wide diversity of support structures (territorial authorities, public, private and semi-public-sector players), it seems counterproductive, or even impossible, to appoint a coordinator or set up a reporting relationship. In addition, the facilitator should have a neutral stance and a territorial vision.

Overall coordination mechanisms:

- ↳ The task of facilitating the support network may be assigned to existing **cross-border cooperation structures** in a given territory.

EXAMPLES:

The **EURO 3 EEIG** groups together the Greater Lille, West Flanders and Wallonie Picarde chambers of commerce. Its operational tool, the CTE GO-KMO (Cross-Border Centre for Businesses) specialises in the material, collective and individual support of companies that wish to do business on the other side of the border.

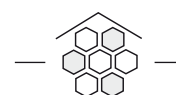
<http://euro3-lille-kortrijk-tournai.webnode.com/>

More details may be found in the factsheet on the project.

Bihartean brings together the Bayonne-Basque Country CCI and the Gipuzkoa Chamber of Commerce. The main aim of this European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG) is to support businesses in their cross-border projects and offer targeted advice.

<http://www.bihartean.com/>

More details may be found in the factsheet on the project.



Shared resource centres may act as facilitators or one-stop shops.

EXAMPLES:

The **French-German-Swiss Infobest** network provides information and advice to individuals, public administrations, associations, businesses and elected representatives on all cross-border issues.

<http://www.infobest.eu/>

The **French-German TransInfoNet (Cross-border Crafts Information Network)**

provides information and advice on administrative, social and tax questions to craft enterprises (worksites and provision of services). TransInfoNet also offers technical support to businesses (assistance with cross-border formalities and resolution of specific problems), organises information meetings and training sessions, and may interface with the public authorities and European institutions.

<http://www.ulam.info>



POINT OF FOCUS

The effectiveness of the support network is based on:

- Updating information: in a changing environment (reforms, private-sector support structures), it is crucial to regularly update the functional diagram or directory of support services.
- Pooling of information within the network: the network can only function if each member structure keeps the other members informed of changes. Each link in the network must be responsible for contributing to the cohesion of the whole.