Cross-border Governance Framework and Tool

V. 16 July 2024

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1 What are the cross-border governance framework and tool?

Objectives

This cross-border governance framework and tool are designed for use by national and subnational governments that are interested in establishing or reinforcing their cross-border governance architecture.

The cross-border governance framework identifies the main aspects that policy makers should consider when establishing or reinforcing existing cross-border co-operation initiatives. These range from defining the purpose of enhanced cross-border co-operation, to strategic planning for transboundary development, and from mobilising funding and financing for cross-border governance bodies and actions to building political support for addressing shared cross-border challenges.

The cross-border governance tool builds on the framework and provides policy makers with a series of practical recommendations to:

- **Assess the need for cross-border co-operation** and determine how to establish, organise and reinforce cross-border governance bodies.
- **Design, implement, monitor and evaluate strategic planning documents** that guide the actions of cross-border governance bodies and their partners.
- **Ensure sustainable funding and financing** for cross-border governance bodies and actions that can adapt to changing needs and circumstances.
- **Effectively promote and advocate** for the needs and interests of cross-border regions.

The tool can also be used by non-governmental actors, including academic institutions and civil society organisations. For example, academic institutions could use this tool to contribute to the design of cross-border development strategies, assess whether cross-border co-operation bodies are meeting their objectives, and support the creation and operation of cross-border observatories. Similarly, civil society organisations could leverage the tool to advocate for an increased contribution by non-governmental actors to the work of cross-border governance bodies, for instance, by being allowed to co-develop cross-border projects. As such, the tool can be deployed as a resource that helps include diverse community needs and voices in cross-border activities.

Background

This cross-border governance framework and tool build on the preliminary findings of the European Commission/OECD project "Building More Resilient Cross-Border Regions", and, in particular, the

experiences of the five cross-border regions participating in this initiative.[1,2] The project helps them improve cross-border governance through reinforced multi-level governance arrangements and co-development of cross-border co-operation initiatives. It also aims to build on the knowledge and experience of the pilot regions to develop an analysis and set of tools that can help other regions establish up or further strengthen their cross-border governance systems. The project focuses on the following four governance aspects:

- **Framework conditions**. This includes a focus on how differences in territorial-administrative structures and decentralisation arrangements affect the ability of regions to collaborate on a cross-border basis. It also looks at how geographic and socio-demographic characteristics (e.g. population density, culture, language) affect a citizen's sense of cross-border identity and support for cross-border co-operation.
- **Actors and their interactions**. This looks at the public and non-governmental actors that are involved in cross-border co-operation and how they engage with each other. It also deals with how decision making is organised.
- **Strategy and implementation**. This aspect focuses on the development objectives and priorities of cross-border co-operation initiatives. It also looks at critical obstacles/gaps in designing and implementing integrated cross-border policies, plans and public services, and how these can be addressed.
- **Means:** This looks at the financial, human and material (e.g. IT) resources that are available and can be further developed to support cross-border governance bodies and action. It also deals with how cross-border regions support information gathering and sharing among levels of government and across sectors, for example, to track the success of cross-border initiatives.
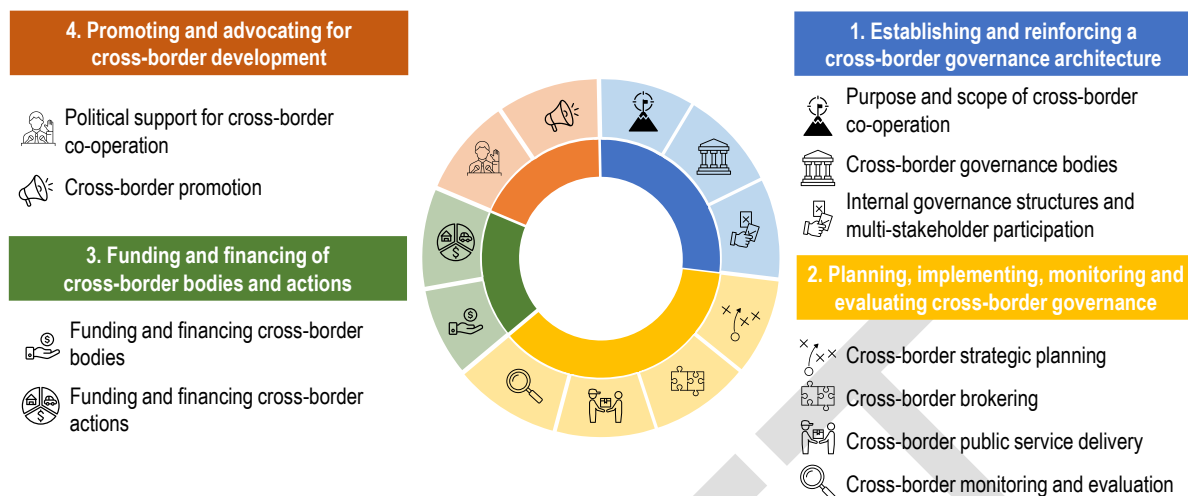
A framework for cross-border governance

The cross-border governance framework identifies four complementary dimensions: 1) establishing/reinforcing a cross-border governance architecture; 2) planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating cross-border co-operation initiatives; 3) funding and financing cross-border bodies and actions; and 4) promoting and advocating for cross-border development. Each dimension includes one or more development areas, presented in Figure 1.

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[1] The five pilot regions cover parts of the following seven countries: Belgium and France (Eurometropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai); Lithuania and Poland (EGTC Niemen-Nemunas); Luxembourg and France (EGTC Alzette-Belval, Pôle Métropolitain Frontalier, PRO-SUD); France and Spain (EGTC Cerdanya Hospital); and Portugal and Spain (EGTC Rio Minho).

[2] The cross-border governance tool also builds on several reports, tools and manuals on cross-border governance development developed by other organisations and institutions. These include the ESPON's Practical Guide for Developing Cross-border Public Service, INTERACT Handbook on European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) and Manual on Removing Obstacles to Cross-border Cooperation, developed by the Institute of International Sociology Gorizia and the Council of Europe.

Figure 1. Cross-border governance framework

4. Promoting and advocating for cross-border development

- Political support for cross-border co-operation
- Cross-border promotion

3. Funding and financing of cross-border bodies and actions

- Funding and financing cross-border bodies
- Funding and financing cross-border actions

1. Establishing and reinforcing a cross-border governance architecture

- Purpose and scope of cross-border co-operation
- Cross-border governance bodies
- Internal governance structures and multi-stakeholder participation

2. Planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating cross-border governance

- Cross-border strategic planning
- Cross-border brokering
- Cross-border public service delivery
- Cross-border monitoring and evaluation

Source: Author's elaboration.

Dimension 1: Establishing and reinforcing a cross-border governance architecture

This dimension includes three development areas:

- **Purpose and scope of cross-border co-operation**: Several conditions need to be in place before an informed decision can be made about the need to establish or reinforce cross-border governance architecture. For instance, it is essential for policy makers to develop a robust, shared understanding of the cross-border region's challenges and opportunities. Furthermore, there should be consensus on whether the identified challenges or opportunities can be more effectively addressed through cross-border co-operation or existing national or subnational governance structures. Fulfilling these pre-conditions can help policy makers make an informed decision about the need for, or scope of, enhanced cross-border co-operation mechanisms.

- **Cross-border governance bodies**: This development area considers the different steps required to establish a cross-border governance body. Governance bodies that can support cross-border co-operation within the EU include EGTCs, Euroregional Co-operation Groupings (EGCs), cross-border working communities, Eurocities and Eurodistricts. This development area helps policy makers understand the process through which they can select a legal body for cross-border co-operation that is most in line with their territorial needs, objectives and available resources for cross-border co-operation.

- **Internal governance structures and multi-stakeholder participation**: The way in which internal cross-border governance structures are set up can affect decision-making on cross-border issues. This development area focuses on the various steps involved in establishing different types of internal governance structures, (e.g. assembly, office of the presidency), deciding which actors should have a voice within the cross-border co-operation body, who should be able to make decisions, and how those decisions should be made. This development area also considers ways in which governance and decision-making structures can be adapted over time in order to suit evolving needs and priorities.

Dimension 2: Planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating cross-border governance

This dimension includes four development areas:

- **Strategic planning for cross-border development**: This development area presents various ways in which policy makers can support strategic planning for cross-border development,

ranging from creating comprehensive cross-border development strategies, to integrating a cross-border perspective into existing regional and/or local development plans. It also includes recommendations for policy makers in terms of defining their cross-border strategic planning needs, and elements to consider for the design and implementation of cross-border development strategies and action plans.

- **Cross-border brokering**: Many cross-border governance bodies work as brokers of cross-border contacts, building trust among actors and supporting the co-ordination and co-operation of cross-border initiatives. This development area outlines steps that policy makers can take in order to establish cross-border brokering activities (e.g. strategic relationship building and knowledge sharing). It also identifies steps that cross-border co-operation bodies can take to build their internal capacity for leading cross-border brokering initiatives.

- **Cross-border public service delivery**: This development area lays out a series of critical considerations for cross-border regions interested in providing new cross-border services or enhancing the delivery of existing ones (e.g. public transport). It looks at issues such as defining the need for cross-border service delivery, the specific services that will be provided in the short-mid- and long-term, as well as the delivery models and funding mechanisms. It also addresses the need to assess whether legal and regulatory frameworks allow for, or are conducive to, cross-border public service delivery.

- **Cross-border monitoring and evaluation:** Robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and practices are essential for cross-border co-operation. For example, they can provide data that helps policy makers assess project effectiveness and make informed decisions, for example, to adjust resource allocation. This development area identifies several elements to consider by cross-border policy makers involved in designing and implementing monitoring and evaluation activities. This includes clearly defining monitoring and evaluation goals and objectives (i.e. what should be tracked). It also includes ensuring that monitoring and evaluation findings are used effectively to support cross-border decision making.

Dimension 3: Funding and financing cross-border bodies and actions

This dimension has two development areas:

- **Funding and financing for cross-border governance bodies**: This development area identifies actions for policy makers to consider when deciding on the cross-border governance body's funding model. These include accurately assessing and costing the human resources and operational expenses required to sustain the activities of the governance body. They also include determining an equitable and clear mechanism to set membership fees, and periodically reviewing them.

- **Funding and financing for cross-border actions**: Cross-border co-operation bodies often turn to Interreg funding to implement projects (OECD, 2023[1]). However, there are many other funding and financing mechanisms available to them (e.g. a wide range of other EU programmes, project calls organised by national and subnational governments, private sector contributions and bank loans). This development area can guide the efforts of cross-border policy makers to mobilise and diversify funding and financing for cross-border action. It also lays out a wide range of EU funding and financing mechanisms that could be tapped into, and details other non-EU funding and financing opportunities.

Dimension 4: Promoting and advocating for cross-border development

This dimension has two development areas:

- **Political support for cross-border co-operation**: This development area can help policy makers navigate different political challenges that can impede cross-border development, including the waxing and waning of political interest in cross-border co-operation, as well as a

frequent loss of institutional knowledge on cross-border needs, priorities and efforts due to regular elections. In recognition of these challenges, the development area includes differentiated recommendations to (re)build political awareness of and support for cross-border co-operation among both newly elected and incumbent politicians.

- **Cross-border promotion:** Promoting cross-border areas can have multiple benefits, from economic (e.g. to attract additional business investment or tourists) to cultural (e.g. to foster a stronger sense of cross-border identity). This development area looks at the steps that policy makers can take to: (i) identify their cross-border promotion needs and goals; and (ii) develop and implement a cross-border promotion plan.

2 The cross-border governance tool

The cross-border governance tool serves as a self-assessment checklist, offering a comprehensive list of elements relevant to establishing, operating, monitoring, and evaluating effective cross-border governance systems.

Different dimensions and development areas within the tool may serve cross-border regions at different stages of their co-operation. For example, regions that are in the early stages of establishing cross-border co-operation may find Dimension 1, Establishing and reinforcing cross-border governance bodies, to be most relevant. Conversely, for governance bodies that have been operational for some time, Dimension 3, Funding and financing cross-border bodies and actions, and Dimension 4, Promoting and advocating for cross-border development, may be more pertinent as they seek to secure sustainable funding and reinvigorate political support for cross-border co-operation.

Moreover, while some development areas, such as strategic planning and stakeholder engagement, are relevant for all cross-border regions, others—such as providing cross-border public services – may depend on a region's specific needs and goals. Similarly, while several development areas propose specific actions and considerations related to establishing and operating cross-border governance bodies, most of the elements covered by the tool are also relevant for cross-border regions that may not have a dedicated cross-border governance body.

This flexibility means that policy makers can use the entire tool as a comprehensive resource or focus on specific dimensions or development areas that are most relevant to their particular cross-border co-operation needs. It also means that this tool should not be used as a prescriptive or a one-size-fits-all template, but rather as a versatile resource that can assist cross-border regions in adapting to their unique challenges and opportunities.

Structure of the cross-border governance tool

The tool is divided into four broad governance dimensions, development areas, actions and considerations, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Structure of the cross-border governance tool
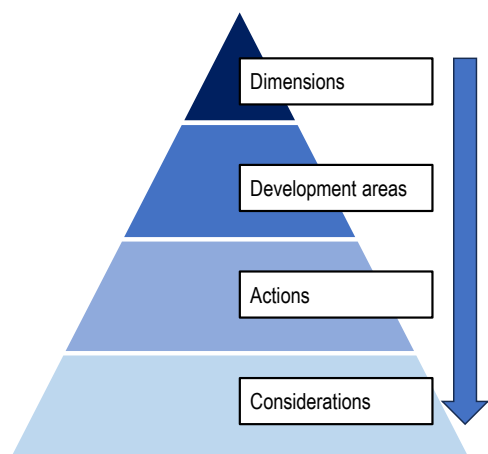
Source: Author's elaboration.

- **Dimensions**: This tool covers the four governance dimensions presented above. Taken together, they can guide policy makers through critical elements for setting up and managing cross-border governance arrangements, including cross-border governance bodies.

- **Development areas**: Each dimension identifies two or more development areas. Each development area includes a description of key elements that policy makers could consider when aiming to establish or reinforce cross-border governance and proposes an overall goal that can guide the actions of policy makers.

- **Actions**: Under each development area, the tool proposes different actions that can help cross-border regions achieve the goal.

- **Considerations**: For each action, the tool proposes a series of considerations for steps that policy makers could take, depending on their governance needs, the development context, etc.

The check and comment boxes included in the action tables can help policy makers visualise progress, track adjustments in strategic approaches, and focus on the dimensions and goals that require particular attention.

Dimension 1: Establishing and reinforcing cross-border a governance architecture

This dimension includes three development areas: i) purpose and scope of cross-border co-operation; ii) cross-border governance bodies; and iii) internal governance structures and multi-stakeholder participation.

DEVELOPMENT AREA 1:
PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF CROSS-BORDER CO-OPERATION

Goal: To define the purpose and scope of enhanced cross-border co-operation, building on a robust assessment of cross-border challenges and opportunities.

In recent decades, many cross-border regions in the EU have set up co-operation initiatives to address shared challenges such as limited access to public services, congestion, pollution, labour market inequalities, and disaster management. For instance, 90 European Groupings of Territorial Co-operation (EGTCs) have been established to date, ten of which have been created since 2021. This highlights a continued interest across European regions in creating new cross-border governance bodies (European Parliament, 2024[2]; European Committee of the Regions, 2024[3]). Simultaneously, regions may pursue enhanced cross-border co-operation without establishing dedicated cross-border co-operation bodies.

Successfully addressing cross-border challenges, such as those mentioned above, often requires overcoming significant obstacles. These can include differences in legislation and regulations, in the responsibilities assigned to levels of government and in culture. Moreover, it takes time to establish cross-border governance mechanisms and build trust among cross-border actors. This means that for cross-border co-operation initiatives to be successful, policy makers should adopt a long-term perspective. It also means that enduring commitments from successive government administrations are necessary.

Therefore, when considering the need for enhanced cross-border co-operation, it is essential for the involved policy makers to develop a robust understanding of the cross-border challenges affecting the region. Similarly, policy makers should have a clear sense of the opportunities that strong cross-border co-operation might bring to the region (e.g. building economies of scale, and , improving public service delivery).

The following proposed actions can help cross-border regions create a shared, evidence-informed understanding of the need for enhanced cross-border co-operation. This forms the basis for defining clear cross-border co-operation objectives. The actions could help policy makers ensure that the groundwork for co-ordination and co-operation is based on mutual understanding of cross-border challenges and opportunities and buy-in, but also resilient enough to withstand shifting political landscapes.

The proposed actions are particularly relevant to cross-border regions that do not yet have formal cross-border governance mechanisms. They may, however, also be relevant to existing cross-border co-operation initiatives that are keen to revisit and refine their overall goals.

Actions	Considerations	Checklist	Comments
Define the need for cross-border co-operation	**Establish a political steering group** (e.g. composed of representatives of local, regional and/or national government bodies) that can help to explore the need for enhanced cross-border co-operation and guide the creation of cross-border governance mechanisms, if deemed opportune.	☐	
	Assess the policy and service challenges facing the cross-border region (e.g. congestion, pollution, limited access to specific public services), their root causes and effects (e.g. on specific sectors, actors).	☐	
	Assess the opportunities that can stem from enhanced cross-border co-operation (e.g. to increase trust among cross-border actors; generate economies of scale to improve public service delivery; boost the region's attractiveness to talent, visitors and investment)	☐	
	Map previous or existing formal and informal cross-border co-operation initiatives, including their objectives, achievements, etc.	☐	
	Map the public and non-governmental actors at the national, regional and local levels (e.g. municipalities, regional business associations, civil society organisations, academic institutions) that could help address the identified cross-border challenge and identify their relevant competences.	☐	
	Determine whether enhanced cross-border co-operation is likely to offer better solutions to the identified challenge(s) than those that can be offered through existing governance mechanisms. For example, the creation of a cross-border hospital in an underserved border region may be a more cost-efficient solution than creating medical centres on each side of the border.	☐	
	Based on the assessments and mapping, establish: - A shared understanding of the cross-border challenges and opportunities for enhanced cross-border co-operation; - A mandate to take further action (e.g. to establish or strengthen a cross-border governance body); - An agreement about the territorial scale of the cross-border co-operation; - An agreement about the actors to be involved in setting up a cross-border governance mechanism.	☐	
Define the objectives for	**Propose general, long-term objectives of enhanced cross-border co-operation.**[3]	☐	
	Invite relevant public and non-governmental actors (e.g. representatives from the private sector, civil	☐	

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[3] Public authorities interested in establishing or reinforcing cross-border co-operation bodies may wish to explore the Manual on Removing Obstacles to Cross-border Co-operation developed by the Council of Europe and Institute of International Sociology Gorizia. This publication includes, among other elements, examples of cross-border challenges, barriers to enhanced cross-border co-operation in different fields (e.g. transport, education, healthcare) and objectives. https://rm.coe.int/16806f93c9.

enhanced cross-border co-operation	**society organisations, academia, thematic experts) to comment on and/or propose new objectives** in order to include different perspectives and experiences, and build ownership of the initiative.		
	Confirm e.g. within the political steering group) the overall, long-term objectives of enhanced cross-border co-operation, building on the feedback from relevant public and non-governmental actors.	☐	

DEVELOPMENT AREA 2:
CROSS-BORDER GOVERNANCE BODIES

Goal: To establish cross-border governance bodies that can help address shared cross-border challenges and opportunities.

Before establishing a cross-border co-operation initiative to address particular development challenges, it is essential to first consider which governance mechanism(s) would be most suitable to achieving their joint objectives. There are two particularly important elements for policy makers to consider. First, they need to assess which type of governance arrangements is most suitable for reaching the cross-border region's objectives. One possibility is to establish a cross-border governance body. However, establishing such a body is not essential for successful co-operation; across the EU, there are numerous examples of alternative governance mechanisms to support the achievement of cross-border goals. For instance, many cross-border public services are provided by networks involving national and local government bodies and service providers (Zillmer, 2024[4]).

Second, in case a decision has been reached to create a cross-border governance body, the involved cross-border partners should decide on the type of body through which cross-border activities (e.g. projects, investments) can best take place. Governance bodies that support cross-border co-operation within the EU include EGTCs, EGCs, cross-border working communities, Eurocities and Eurodistricts (European Union, 2008[5]). This selection process can be followed by adopting a founding document (e.g. a constitution) that can guide cross-border action.

The decision regarding which type of cross-border governance body to establish can be influenced by several factors. For instance, it can depend on the purpose of cross-border co-operation as defined by involved partners, levels of political commitment and available human and financial resources. The process of developing a founding document may also depend on EU- or national-level requirements, co-operation objectives and the range of tasks that partners wish to attribute to a cross-border co-operation body.

As such, when establishing cross-border governance bodies, policy makers may wish to conduct background research on the suitability and feasibility of different governance bodies that could be established, based on the framework conditions of the cross-border region. Moreover, once a body has been set-up, it is also important to ensure that the drafting of its founding document is reflective of legal requirements and the agreed upon objectives of involved partners. This can help to create a stable basis for long-term co-operation.

The following proposed actions can help guide policy makers through the process of establishing a cross-border governance body. They may be particularly useful for cross-border actors that have already defined the scope and purpose of expected cross-border co-operation within a region, but that have not yet developed, or are seeking to amend, the legal basis for such co-operation to take place.

Actions	Considerations	Checklist	Comments
Determine appropriate governance mechanisms to address shared needs	**Consider establishing a technical working group** (e.g. comprised of representatives of the relevant national and subnational governments, including legal experts) dedicated to providing research and recommendations on prospective governance mechanisms for enhanced cross-border co-operation.	☐	
	Assess which governance mechanisms could be used or set up to address the region's cross-border challenges and opportunities. These could include cross-border governance bodies such as EGTCs. They could also include a network model in which existing institutions and governance structures collaborate, for instance to deliver a cross-border public service (e.g. healthcare), or relatively light form of intergovernmental co-ordination (e.g. through a periodic cross-conference). The assessment could take into account: - **National and international frameworks for setting up cross-border governance mechanisms**. For example, in addition to the EU (see EGTCs), some countries have created special legal mechanisms to institutionalise cross-border co-operation[4]; - **Suitability of different governance mechanisms** (e.g. network model, EGTC, EGC) based on the framework conditions of the cross-border region (e.g. cross-border objectives, territorial scale, involved partners)[5]; - **Financial and human resources required** for establishing and operating the different governance mechanisms; - **Legal requirements** for establishing and operating the different governance mechanisms; - **Experiences/lessons learned from other cross-border regions.**	☐	
	Decide on whether to pursue the establishment of a cross-border governance body (or bodies) (e.g. through a vote among founding members).	☐	
Develop and adopt a constitution for the cross-border	If a decision has been made to establish a cross-border governance body, **develop a draft constitution for the body** to be reviewed by involved partners. This document could include guidance on how potential conflict among co-operating partners will be managed.[6] The constitution could be periodically reviewed to	☐	

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[4] In some EU Member States, inter-governmental agreements allow for the creation of specific forms of EGTC. For example, Belgian, Dutch and Luxembourg government bodies can create Benelux Groupings of Territorial Co-operation (Council of Europe, 2018[16]).

[5] Cross-border regions could use as input the "Legal toolbox for cross-border cooperation in Europe", developed by la Mission Operationnelle Transfrontalière.

[6] Regions interested in establishing an EGTC can use the EGTC convention template[6] and statutes template developed by the European Commission as starting points. They can also use the monitor and "Practical guidelines on the establishment of EGTCs" developed by the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives (CESCI) Budapest. It describes the history and general aim of EGTC legislation, and provides practical information and recommendations about the EGTC founding process (Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives Budapest, 2024[18]).

co-operation body/ies	assess whether it remains well-aligned with cross-border needs and if modifications are necessary.		
	Submit the constitution for approval by local, regional and national government authorities, as applicable.	☐	
	Register the cross-border co-operation body (e.g. EGTC, EGC) at the subnational, national and/or international levels, e.g. by using the EGTC registration guidelines developed by the European Commission[7].	☐	

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[7] Guidebook for Registering EGTCs, developed by the European Commission.

DEVELOPMENT AREA 3:
INTERNAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES
AND MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION

Goal: To set up or reinforce internal governance and stakeholder participation structures that support effective decision making on cross-border issues.

When establishing a cross-border governance body, policy makers need to think about the governance structures that can support relevant actors make timely and effective decisions on transboundary issues. Such structures influence which actors have a voice, who can make decisions, how those decisions are made, and importantly, how votes are distributed among co-operating partners.

In this regard, several steps can be envisaged. First, policy makers may need to review any specific legal requirements for governance structures. For instance, the EU Regulation on a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation requires an EGTC to establish: i) a representative assembly of EGTC members and ii) a director to act on its behalf (EUR-Lex, 2014[6]).

Second, once legal requirements are defined, policy makers need to decide which type(s) of internal governance bodies to establish. They should also determine what human and financial resources are needed and available for their effective operation. Typically, several types are formed: executive bodies (e.g. a political director or presidency office); representative bodies (e.g. assemblies of elected officials), administrative bodies (e.g. a technical staff secretariat); and consultative bodies (e.g. working groups or advisory councils), each of which can support the cross-border agenda in unique ways (European Union, 2008[5]).

Third, policy makers need to consider multi-stakeholder participation in governance bodies. This involves determining how decision making among the founding members will be organised, for example on a parity basis or based on the population of member territories. It also requires making decisions about the involvement of external actors in the work of the cross-border governance body. This can imply identifying which actors to involve and the means through which they may participate (e.g. in working groups or a non-governmental actor forum).

The following proposed actions can be particularly helpful for policy makers who are in the process of establishing a cross-border governance body, and are also considering elements such as how governance and decision-making structures should be organised. They may also be useful for policy makers that have established governance and decision-making structures but are considering amending them.

Actions	Considerations	Checklist	Comments
Establish governance and decision-making structures	**Identify possible or mandated cross-border governance and decision-making structures**, e.g. in the case of establishing an EGTC, the relevant EU regulation mandates that a representative governance body, such as an assembly, must be established.	☐	
	Prepare an assessment of: - Any legal requirements linked to the establishment of various cross-border governance and decision-making structures; - Possible governance structures that could be established (e.g. assembly, presidency office)[8]; - What their respective tasks and responsibilities could be; - The financial and human resource capacities required to support them over time; - Which governmental and non-governmental actors to invite to join the different structures; - How decision making within the governance structures could be organised (e.g. majority or supra-majority voting); - How the presidency of the governance body could rotate among its key founding partners to ensure a balanced and equitable leadership approach that reflects the diverse interests, perspectives and financial contribution of participating partners and fosters ownership; - What mechanisms could be used to ensure compliance with the body's regulations, division of tasks and responsibilities among members, etc.	☐	
	Present the findings of the policy brief, for discussion and critical review among founding partners.	☐	
	Develop a final proposal for how cross-border governance and decision-making structures could be organised, subject to approval by the founding partners. This could include developing statutes that outline the tasks and responsibilities of various bodies, the resources that will enable them to fulfil their responsibilities, as well as cross-border decision-making modalities.	☐	
Ensure continued relevance and functioning of governance and	**Hold periodic meetings to review whether the governance and decision-making structures are functional and have added value, and whether there are needs for reform.**	☐	

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[8] The comprehensive online EGTC tool developed by CESCI includes a detailed description of possible internal governance structures (e.g. general assembly, president, supervisory board, director, committees) to be considered.

decision-making structures			

Dimension 2: Planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating cross-border governance

This dimension includes three development areas: i) strategic planning for cross-border development; ii) cross-border brokering; cross-border public service delivery; and iii) cross-border monitoring and evaluation.

DEVELOPMENT AREA 4:

CROSS-BORDER STRATEGIC PLANNING

Goal: To adopt and implement strategic planning documents that enable public and non-governmental actors to address shared cross-border challenges and opportunities.

Good-quality strategic planning is essential for ensuring effective cross-border co-operation for several reasons. First, it can provide a roadmap for joint action with clear objectives within the cross-border region. Second, it can support an effective allocation of resources (e.g. human, financial). Third, it can provide a benchmark against which performance can be measured. Fourth, it can create a reference point for long-term engagement, partnership, and investment.

A wide range of approaches to strategic planning are available to cross-border policy makers. These range from designing a fully-fledged, integrated cross-border development plan, to embedding a cross-border perspective into existing planning documents (e.g. municipal development plans). Which approach to adopt depends on many factors, including the overall objective of cross-border co-operation, and whether existing national, regional, local or cross-border development plans reflect and address cross-border challenges. It also depends on the human and financial resources available to design and implement a cross-border strategic planning document.

The effectiveness of strategic planning for cross-border development depends on more than just the type of strategic planning documents adopted. It also relies on their quality (e.g. the soundness of the results framework) and the extent to which relevant stakeholders were engaged in their design.

The following actions and considerations can be useful for regions interested in establishing new cross-border governance mechanisms, for example by providing guidelines to determine the most suitable approach to cross-border strategic planning. In addition, they can be valuable for regions with established governance frameworks, for instance to help them review and strengthen existing cross-border strategic planning documents. Finally, they could support proactive communication about key cross-border objectives and how they benefit citizens and businesses.

Actions	Considerations	Checklist	Comments
Define strategic planning needs and capacities	**Map previous cross-border strategic planning initiatives**, their objectives, achievements, actors involved in their design and implementation, any lessons learned, etc.	☐	
	Assess whether there are international, national or subnational: - **Rules and regulations regarding the design of strategic planning documents for cross-border development.** For example, some countries may mandate an assessment of the possible cross-border effects of new/adjusted laws, regulations or policies prior to their adoption;[9] - **Policy frameworks** (e.g. international development agreements) that relate to and could shape cross-border development priorities (e.g. the EU Territorial Agenda 2030).	☐	
	Map existing strategic planning documents that are relevant to the development of the cross-border region (e.g. national, regional and local development strategies or plans); identify which actors are involved in their design and implementation; assess whether the documents address cross-border challenges and/or propose cross-border actions; and identify any gaps and possible complementarities.	☐	
	Identify national and international good practices related to cross-border strategic planning.	☐	
	Define cross-border strategic planning needs. This can, for example, include the need for: - A high-level, cross-border development vision; - A comprehensive cross-border development strategy; - A spatial development strategy that delineates geographical planning and land use priorities; - A strategy for the cross-border co-operation body (e.g. EGTC). Cross-border strategic planning needs can depend on several factors, including the purpose and scope of cross-border co-operation initiative, and whether existing strategic planning documents developed by national and/or subnational governments address cross-border issues.	☐	
	Assess human and financial resources available for cross-border strategy design and implementation. This includes an assessment of the strategic planning skills and expertise, and staff time available (e.g. in the cross-border co-operation body) to guide strategic planning and implementation.	☐	
	Decide on the scope and approach to strategic planning (i.e. which type of planning document(s) to	☐	

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[9] Since 2021, the Netherlands has mandated government bodies to conduct 'quality check border effects' when developing new or adjusting existing laws, regulation and policies that could affect cross-border regions (e.g. in terms of tax collection, social security, healthcare, crisis management). This involves an assessment of whether relevant new/adjusted laws, regulations and policies are likely to affect the lives and livelihoods of border regions, what their effects may be, and how any negative effects should be prevented or mitigated (Government of the Netherlands, 2023[15]).

	develop), based on the identification of the cross-border strategic planning needs and available resources.		
Develop a robust and realistic strategic planning document	**Mobilise external expertise (e.g. from researchers, private consultants) to support the strategy design process, if needed.**	☐	
	Engage relevant public and non-governmental actors in the strategy design process to obtain relevant information and perspectives, and build awareness about the strategy design process and ownership of the final planning document.	☐	
	Conduct a development diagnostic. This typically involves a qualitative and quantitative assessment of the current economic, social, environmental and/or organisation conditions (depending on the type of strategic planning document).	☐	
	Develop a focused results framework that identifies objectives, lines of action, and proposes ambitious, yet realistic targets and indicators.	☐	
	Ensure alignment and complementarity with existing strategic planning documents and frameworks (e.g. international, national, regional and local strategies for territorial development, sector development plans).	☐	
	Develop an implementation plan that identifies the actors that will contribute to implementation of the planning document, their relevant competences and the type of contribution they could make (e.g. financial, in kind).	☐	
	Identify sources to fund and finance strategy implementation (e.g. membership fees, grants, loans), clearly differentiating between sources of funding that are already secured and those that are more uncertain, for example because they need to be mobilised through competitive grants.	☐	
	Develop a monitoring and evaluation plan, identifying the frequency of monitoring and evaluation activities and how the gathered information will be used.	☐	
Proactively communicate about the strategy to key audiences	**Ensure the strategy is publicly available**, for example on the websites of the cross-border co-operation body (e.g. EGTC) and its founding members.	☐	
	Prepare an executive summary of the strategy that can be easily communicated to key audiences (e.g. newly elected officials) and uses easy-to-understand language.	☐	
	Regularly prepare and disseminate communication material about the strategy to key audiences. The messages can, for example, refer to specific objectives or lines of action, highlighting how they seek to improve the lives and livelihoods of cross-border communities and businesses. This also includes identifying strategic channels of communication (e.g. websites, newsletters, social media).	☐	

Convert strategic objectives into concrete action plans	**Develop annual action plans that convert strategic objectives into concrete actions**, clearly assign responsibilities, include a budget, and propose metrics to track progress. Ensure that cross-border action plans (e.g. of the cross-border governance body) are aligned with those of its founding partners and other relevant actors.	☐	
Support strategic planning activities of relevant public bodies to advance cross-border development objectives	**Identify strategic planning documents (e.g. national, regional or local development strategies) that could benefit from a strengthened cross-border development perspective** (e.g. identify how the influx of cross-border workers affects the local labour market and public service delivery).	☐	
	Provide input during the design phase of relevant strategic planning documents (e.g. municipal development plan) to ensure they effectively incorporate a cross-border perspective. This could be achieved by sharing evidence of cross-border challenges and opportunities, highlighting the outcomes of previous initiatives, and demonstrating the costs of inaction on specific issues.	☐	
	Depending on the strategic planning needs of the cross-border region, **convene relevant authorities to conduct joint cross-border planning exercises**, for example to design an integrated cross-border spatial development plan.	☐	
	Encourage peer reviews of draft strategic plans (e.g. municipal development plan) by subnational governments located on opposite sides of the border. This could help to leverage diverse perspectives and align objectives.	☐	

DEVELOPMENT AREA 5:

CROSS-BORDER BROKERING

Goal: To broker cross-border contacts and information sharing, in order to support relationship-building, knowledge-building, and implementation of cross-border initiatives.

One of the key objectives of cross-border co-operation bodies is to serve as a broker of contacts and information. This role is important for building trust among actors on both sides of the border, and to support co-ordination and co-operation on cross-border initiatives.

Cross-border brokering can include different tasks, such as: i) facilitating contact and exchange between actors (both public and non-governmental); and ii) facilitating flows of information (e.g. on different regulations, assignment of responsibilities of different levels of government). Such tasks may either support cross-border co-operation in a broad sense (e.g. by promoting relationship-building and knowledge sharing between cross-border actors), or by being supportive of certain specific sectoral objectives (e.g. securing regulatory change to support cross-border service delivery in a specific area).

The following proposed actions can be useful for actors that are involved in newly established cross-border co-operation bodies and are interested in learning more about how to set up effective cross-border brokering activities. They may also be useful for actors from long-established cross-border co-operation bodies who are interested in considering ways to improve the effectiveness of their cross-border brokering activities.

Actions	Considerations	Checklist	Comments
Define cross-border brokering activities	**Map possible cross-border brokering activities that could support the strategic priorities of the cross-border governance body**, along with tasks and responsibilities for specific actors to support the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of these activities. Such activities could include: - Collecting and disseminating information for cross-border actors on the tasks and responsibilities of different levels of government in areas where obstacles to cross-border co-operation exist; - Collecting and disseminating information for cross-border actors on divergent regulations on different sides of the border that present obstacles to cross-border co-operation; - Organising networking events for cross-border actors (both public and non-governmental); - Establishing a hotline for cross-border actors (both public and non-governmental), in order to help them identify institutions and actors that they can reach out to in order to resolve specific cross-border issues.	☐	
	Follow up with actors from relevant levels of government on the implementation of cross-border decisions (e.g. by providing them with tailored information regarding the cross-border decision, and the specific actions and resources that are required to ensure its implementation).	☐	
	Prepare an annual report on how cross-border brokering activities have supported the implementation of transboundary decisions.	☐	
Build internal capacity to undertake cross-border brokering activities	**Conduct a cross-border employee training needs assessment to identify any knowledge or skills gaps** that could hinder their ability to serve as a broker for cross-border relationships and interests (e.g. language, communication skills).	☐	
	Where gaps are identified, **provide learning opportunities to upskill staff** (e.g. language training, online training modules, peer-to-peer learning opportunities).	☐	
	Periodically review skill needs to undertake cross-border brokering (e.g. if new employees are onboarded) and provide upskilling opportunities as necessary.	☐	

DEVELOPMENT AREA 6:
CROSS-BORDER PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY

Goal: To provide cross-border public services that meet the needs of residents and businesses.

Over the past decades, many cross-border regions in Europe have started delivering cross-border public services. As of May 2022, data suggest that 1 551 cross-border public services are being delivered across the EU (ESPON, 2022[7]).

The reasons for delivering cross-border public services can be manyfold. For example, cross-border public service delivery can enhance accessibility of public services to under or unserved territories and population groups. Cross-border public service delivery can also increase the affordability of services, through economies of scale. Cross-border public services are provided in several sectors[10] of which public transportation (61.5%), environmental protection and civil protection (8.6%) and disaster management (8.5%) are the most recorded cross-border service delivery initiatives in Europe. An important share of initiatives also target education and healthcare (both around 5%) (ESPON, 2022[7]).

As policy makers consider initiating or enhancing cross-border public service delivery, it is important for them to reflect on different elements. First, it is essential to define the need for, or opportunity, offered by the delivery of one or more cross-border services. It is also important to develop a robust understanding of the obstacles to public service delivery, which can range from legal or regulatory and physical, to cultural and economic reasons. Second, once an agreement has been reached about providing public service(s) on a cross-border basis, policy makers need to assess if there is a business case, and if so, carefully define the short-, mid- and long-term objectives. These objectives may be different as regions may want to start delivery through a pilot project and gradually expand the scope and type of services on offer (ESPON, 2018[8]).

Third, policy makers need to carefully assess whether national legislative and regulatory frameworks allow for, or are conducive to, cross-border public service delivery, and what modifications may be needed. Fourth, policy makers should define the specific services that will be provided, the beneficiaries (both in terms of groups and territories), and the payment model. Fifth, they need to define the responsible organisation and delivery models. This includes identifying the actors who will be involved in co-ordinating, providing and supervising the service delivery (ESPON, 2018[8]).

As cross-border public service delivery is not a linear process and can relate to a wide range of service areas, not all proposed actions may be equally relevant or applicable to all regions.

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[10] Cross-border public service delivery areas include: transport; spatial planning; economic development; tourism and culture; healthcare; long-term care and social inclusion; education and training; labour market and employment; communication, public broadcasting and Information Society; environmental protection, natural resources management and climate change action; civil protection and disaster management; and citizenship, justice and public security (ESPON, 2022[7]).

Actions	Considerations	Checklist	Comments
Agree on which public services to provide on a cross-border basis and set overall service objectives	**Agree on which cross-border public services to provide, if at all** (e.g. [public] transportation, civil protection, education, healthcare, environmental protection, economic development). This could be based on an evidence-based assessment of the key service delivery challenges, their root causes and effects (e.g. on specific services, sectors, communities, etc.).	☐	
	Identify possible solutions to meet the identified cross-border public service delivery needs, and decide on the best possible approach, e.g. by providing public services delivery on a cross-border basis or through national or local service delivery mechanisms.	☐	
	Define where the cross-border public service(s) will be delivered (e.g. in which part of the region).	☐	
	Define the beneficiaries of the cross-border public service(s). These can include, for example: general public (cross-border workers, people requiring medical care, students, businesses, tourists.	☐	
	Formulate expected results for the short, mid and long term. For example, it may be beneficial to start with a pilot project and, based on lessons learned, gradually expand service provision.	☐	
	Identify the actors (public and/or non-governmental) that can support the delivery of the cross-border service and map their competences.	☐	
	Set expectations of decision makers in terms of the support (political, financial, human, material) needed in the short, mid and long term to ensure continued quality cross-border service delivery.	☐	
Assess and strengthen relevant legal and regulatory frameworks	**Assess relevant national, subnational and EU-level legislation and regulations affecting the delivery of the proposed cross-border service(s)**. This is to identify, for example, whether cross-border public service delivery is allowed, and what the service delivery standards and requirements are.	☐	
	Identify whether adjustments to the legal and regulatory framework are necessary to support cross-border public service delivery, and which actors can make such changes.	☐	
	Lobby for legal or regulatory changes that can support cross-border public service delivery.	☐	
Decide on the organisation and delivery of the cross-border public service(s)	**Define the involved public bodies and their responsibilities**, e.g. which body/bodies (e.g. national, regional or local governments, EGTCs) will co-ordinate the service delivery, deliver the service(s), provide supervision, etc.	☐	
	Define the cross-border service delivery model. For example, cross-border healthcare services could be delivered in a hospital, through mobile clinics or via digital platforms.	☐	
	Define the model for funding and financing the cross-border public service(s). This includes reflecting on: - Whether or not the service(s) will be free for users; - The costs for establishing/upgrading the service delivery mechanisms; - The costs for maintaining service delivery capacity over time.	☐	

	Decide on legal and fiscal matters, e.g. in which country income taxes will be paid.	☐	
	Define the tools and infrastructure needed for the delivery of the cross-border public services. Both "hard" (e.g. roads, energy grid) and "soft" infrastructure (e.g. human resources) may be required.	☐	

DEVELOPMENT AREA 7:
CROSS-BORDER MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Goal: To ensure that monitoring and evaluation of cross-border governance, actions and development trends takes place, and evidence is used to improve performance.

Robust, outcome-oriented monitoring and evaluation frameworks are crucial for the success of cross-border co-operation initiatives. They can provide governments with data to assess the effectiveness of projects and help policy makers make informed adjustments, for example to meet changing needs. By providing evidence about the benefits of cross-border actions or shining a spotlight on areas that need attention, monitoring and evaluation can help bolster support for cross-border co-operation. Moreover, making monitoring and evaluation data publicly available can enhance transparency in public action (including spending), strengthen accountability, and help build trust in cross-border action.

When designing their monitoring and evaluation approach, cross-border co-operation bodies and their partners can consider several steps. First, it is important for them to define their monitoring and evaluation goals and objects (i.e. what to track). This can include the implementation of a strategic planning document (e.g. integrated cross-border development strategy), cross-border development trends (e.g. cross-border labour mobility, pollution), or cross-border service delivery (e.g. access and quality of public services provided).

Second, cross-border co-operation bodies and their partners should critically assess the human, financial, and material resources (e.g. IT resources) that are necessary and available to ensure the quality and sustained use of monitoring and evaluation efforts. For instance, establishing and maintaining a cross-border observatory over time requires stable funding.

Third, cross-border co-operation bodies may wish to identify public and non-governmental needs for cross-border data, determine where gaps exist, and explore how they can be bridged. For example, by facilitating collaboration between statistics institutes and research centres, cross-border co-operation bodies can help address challenges related to cross-border data comparability, thereby enhancing the utility of the data collected.

Finally, it is essential for cross-border co-operation bodies and their partners to determine their overall monitoring and evaluation objectives, and the tools needed to support those. For example, monitoring and evaluation findings can be used to foster transparency and accountability (e.g. by presenting findings on a publicly accessible platform) but also to adjust and improve implementation (e.g. by discussing with decision making how to overcome implementation obstacles).

The following actions and considerations can be useful for regions interested in establishing new cross-border governance mechanisms or reinforcing existing ones. For example, they can provide guidance on how to ensure that monitoring and evaluation findings are used to improve strategy implementation. The actions and considerations may also help cross-border co-operation bodies identify actions to increase the availability and use of data on cross-border priorities, thereby contributing to better informed cross-border policies and actions.

Actions	Considerations	Checklist	Comments
Establish and implement a monitoring and evaluation framework	**Identify clear monitoring and evaluation objectives**, such as enhancing accountability, ensuring transparency, and supporting evidence-informed decision-making.	☐	
	Define what should be monitored and evaluated, for example: - The performance of the cross-border governance body; - The implementation of cross-border development strategy; - Cross-border development trends across key development areas (e.g. economic, climate, social, innovation ecosystem); - The delivery of cross-border public services.	☐	
	Define the monitoring and evaluation activities, methodologies, tools and indicators to be used. This should be based on a clear understanding of available and necessary human, financial and material (e.g. IT) resources. Actors involved in carrying out the monitoring and evaluation activities (e.g. by providing or analysing data) should be consulted to ensure the proposed activities, methodologies, tools and indicators are realistic.	☐	
	Provide training for relevant staff (e.g. of a cross-border governance body) to ensure they understand their roles within the monitoring and evaluation framework and are capable of performing them effectively.	☐	
	Integrate a mechanism for the periodic review and refinement of monitoring and evaluation objectives and methods, based on results achieved, and/or new cross-border challenges or opportunities.	☐	
Learn from implementation (through continuous monitoring, mid-term and ex-post evaluation)	**Conduct periodic monitoring exercises** to learn from strategy/project implementation and/or cross-border public service delivery.	☐	
	Organise regular meetings to discuss monitoring results among relevant technical staff and decision makers to ensure that they are used to improve implementation.	☐	
	Share monitoring results with relevant public and non-governmental stakeholders in order to foster transparency and encourage feedback, for example through stakeholder meetings or the website (e.g. of the cross-border governance body).		
	If relevant, conduct a mid-term review of the strategy/project to track progress, identify bottlenecks and determine the need to update the planning document.	☐	
	Share the results of the mid-term review with relevant public and non-governmental stakeholders in order to foster transparency, encourage feedback and generate buy-in for possible adjustments to the strategic planning document.	☐	
	Update the strategic planning document based on the outcomes of the mid-term review, if deemed necessary.	☐	
	Conduct an ex-post evaluation to assess the effectiveness and impact of the strategy or project. The evaluation can provide insights into what worked well, what did not, and guide future planning efforts.	☐	

	Consider applying for a B-solutions[11] project to build a more robust understanding of specific legal or administrative challenges to cross-border co-operation and obtain practical policy recommendations.	☐	
Enhance data collection and use for cross-border governance	**Assess the specific cross-border data needs of relevant public and non-governmental actors**.	☐	
	Map public and private institutions that produce and manage data relevant to cross-border activities, e.g. national and subnational statistics offices, subnational governments, business chambers, universities.	☐	
	Establish a partnership with relevant institutions to increase the availability, comparability and use of cross-border data for development purposes.	☐	
	Jointly map and assess existing data sets for their quality, accuracy and comparability. This analysis can also help identify critical gaps in data availability and awareness of existing data sets.	☐	
	Develop a plan outlining specific actions to address the identified data gaps, e.g. by harmonising data collecting techniques, using innovative technologies, or creating a cross-border data observatory.	☐	
	Establish a mechanism to regularly update the data needs assessment to help refine data collection, analysis and dissemination strategies.	☐	
Establish and operate a cross-border observatory	Together with relevant public and private institutions that produce and manage data relevant to cross-border activities, **define the objective and scope of a cross-border observatory**. This should be based on several elements, including: - A data needs and availability assessment; - An assessment of human, financial and material resources needed and available to establish the observatory and ensure its continued operation.	☐	
	Establish the technological and organisational framework needed to collect, analyse and disseminate the data.	☐	
	Develop and implement a robust communication strategy to keep relevant stakeholders informed about the observatory's resources and findings.	☐	
	Design and implement a user-friendly digital platform where data can be easily accessed by a diverse range of users, including policy makers, researchers and the general public.	☐	
	Establish mechanisms to receive feedback from users as a way to identify how to ensure or	☐	

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[11] B-solutions is a technical support tool offered by the European Commission to cross-border co-operation bodies to help them understand legal and administrative obstacles find sustainable solutions and raise awareness of cross-border co-operation (Association of European Border Regions, 2024[14]).

	improve the observatory's continued relevance.		

Dimension 3: Funding and financing cross-border bodies and actions

This dimension includes two development areas: i) funding for cross-border governance bodies; and ii) funding and financing for cross-border projects.

DEVELOPMENT AREA 8:
FUNDING FOR CROSS-BORDER GOVERNANCE BODIES

Goal: To ensure sustainable and adaptable funding for cross-border governance bodies.

For cross-border governance bodies (e.g. EGTCs) to be able to carry out their mandate, it is essential that they have sustainable funding to support their day-to-day operations. This includes funding to establish and sustain human (e.g. staff, their skills) and material (e.g. office space) resources and training.

The main source of funding for cross-border governance bodies such as EGTCs tends to be member contributions (OECD, 2023[1]). To ensure sufficient and predictable revenues and sustain the capacity of cross-border governance bodies over time, a number of matters need to be considered.

First, cross-border partners should define a clear system for determining membership fees. The statutes of the cross-border governance body can be used to clarify membership fees, for example by establishing the percentages of the total volume of membership fees that each member needs to pay. Second, in order to ensure that the financial capacity of the cross-border governance body can adapt to changing needs, it is important to ensure the membership contributions are periodically revised. Third, cross-border policy makers should also consider mobilising other funding sources to cover staff and operational costs. Examples include operational grants from members and/or external stakeholders (e.g. business associations, national government institutions) and user charges and fees for the delivery of cross-border public services (e.g. transport). Fourth, it is important to develop a multi-year budget to ensure that funding, and member contributions in particular, are sustainable and aligned with projected staffing and operational needs. It can also help to clarify financial expectations for members, for example as regards their financial contributions.

The following actions and considerations can be useful for regions interested in establishing new cross-border governance mechanisms. For example, they can provide a structured framework for assessing funding needs and ensuring financial viability, including by ensuring new bodies are well-resourced from the start. The actions can also help existing bodies enhance their financial sustainability, for example by conducting regular reviews and adjustments of membership contributions to meet changing needs.

Actions	Considerations	Checklist	Comments
Assess funding and financing needs of the cross-border governance body	**Conduct a needs assessment to identify:** - Staffing needs: e.g. the number and type of staff needed (e.g. technical, managerial); - Operational needs: i.e. the resources needed to carry out daily operations (e.g. office space, utilities, communication, events, missions) and support services (e.g. legal, financial or IT support).	☐	
	Based on the above assessment, estimate costs of staff salaries (including other remunerations) and operational spending.	☐	
Identify possible financial and non-financial contributions to meet staffing and operational needs	**Map relevant national and international regulations that could impact the funding of cross-border governance bodies.** For instance, national regulations on the management of public funding (e.g. from grants), asset management and taxes may vary.	☐	
	Identify potential sources of funding and financing, including: - Operational grants from founding members or external actors; - User charges and fees (e.g. in case cross-border public services are provided); - Asset income (in the event that the cross-border governance body owns physical/financial assets); - National grants for cross-border co-operation;[12] - Bank loans (e.g. EGTCs can obtain commercial loans) (European Union, 2008[5]).	☐	
	Identify alternative sources to cover staff and operational costs. For example, support staff or experts could be seconded from founding member organisations on a part- or full-time basis. Moreover, project funding can, in some occasions, be used to cover staff salaries.	☐	
Define and periodically review member contributions	Based on estimated needs and costs, **propose a fair mechanism or formula for determining membership fees[13]** (i.e. shares to be paid by individual members). This can, for instance, be based on: - The population of founding members; - Members' budget/fiscal capacity.	☐	
	Agree on a mechanism to periodically review and potentially adjust the membership fee structure (i.e. the shares to be paid by different members), for example to account for changes in the fiscal capacity of members, their populations or the composition of the members (e.g. new actors may decide to become a member).	☐	
	Validate the proposed mechanisms for determining, reviewing and adjusting the membership	☐	

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[12] In 2011, Hungary set up a dedicated fund to support the creation and operation of EGTCs (Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives, 2016[17]).

[13] The online EGTC tool developed by CESCI proposes different options for defining membership fees, including a calculation based on members' population, parity (i.e. the contribution to the annual budget is the same for each by participating country) and equal contribution of each participating government body (e.g. municipality, region).

	structure.		
	Include the mechanisms in the cross-border governance body's statutes (or a similar document). Including the member contributions as shares rather than absolute numbers facilitates adjustments over time.	☐	
	Periodically review and update member contributions.	☐	
Develop a multi-year budget plan	**Develop a draft multi-year budget plan that identifies how staff and operational costs are to be covered,** based on mid- to long-term objectives and priorities.	☐	
	Consult with EGTC members and other relevant stakeholders: - To validate budget assumptions and estimates; - To design the plan and ensure that it is in line with their priorities; - To receive support and approval on estimated needs for the coming years; - To raise awareness about possible increasing (or decreasing) funding needs.	☐	

DEVELOPMENT AREA 9:

FUNDING AND FINANCING FOR CROSS-BORDER ACTIONS

Goal: To ensure sufficient funding and financing to implement cross-border projects that contribute to cross-border needs and priorities.

To implement cross-border development initiatives, governance bodies need to secure sufficient and diversified funding and financing. Cross-border co-operation bodies often turn to the EU Interreg programme to mobilise funding and financing for specific cross-border initiatives (OECD, 2023[1]). However, there are many other funding and financing opportunities for cross-border projects at the EU, national and regional levels, as well as from private sector stakeholders.

Efforts to increase the mobilisation and diversification of funding and financing for cross-border action should be based on a clear assessment of cross-border needs and priorities. This can help limit the practice of chasing funding and financing opportunities regardless of whether the calls are closely linked to local priorities. The latter can result in expending scarce human and financial resources to develop project proposals that, if awarded, may not add significant value to the cross-border region. Based on the specific cross-border needs and priorities, the outlines of possible projects can be identified, as well as appropriate funding and financing opportunities.

Financing mechanisms to consider include EU programmes under shared management (e.g. Cohesion Policy funds). Cross-border regions should also explore EU programmes under direct and indirect management (e.g. Horizon Europe, LIFE, Europe Creative) which offer project-based funding on specific themes (e.g. research, environment, culture)[14].

Moreover, cross-border regions could also consider mobilising project funding and financing from individual members of a cross-border body or external public actors (e.g. national or regional government institutions) (OECD, 2023[1]). Cross-border regions could also explore financing from private sector stakeholders, for example to help deliver cross-border public services (e.g. public transport).

Establishing a cross-border investment fund with the support of national and subnational governments and development banks is another option. Such a fund could provide more reliable financing for projects and reduce the administrative costs associated with seeking project funding.

Efforts to mobilise funding and financing for cross-border action should be based on a sound assessment of the financial and human resource capacities needed and available to support such efforts. These could include skills for drafting project proposals, project monitoring or establishing public-private partnerships.

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[14] All the programmes funded by the EU budget fall under one of three types of implementation modes depending on the nature of the funding concerned: i) Direct management: EU funding is managed directly by the European Commission; ii) Shared management: the European Commission and national authorities jointly manage the funding; and iii) Indirect management: funding is managed by partner organisations or other authorities inside or outside the EU (European Commission, 2024[12]).

Actions	Considerations	Checklist	Comments
Assess funding and financing needs for cross-border projects	**Identify possible cross-border projects to be undertaken in the mid-term (e.g. 5 years)** that meet commonly agreed upon cross-border objectives and priorities. This can be based on a dialogue among relevant public and non-governmental actors at the local, regional and/or national levels.	☐	
	Prepare, discuss (among relevant stakeholders) and agree on a shortlist of cross-border projects to be undertaken in the mid-term.	☐	
	Develop a multi-year project plan that: - Estimates investment and operating costs related to the shortlisted cross-border projects; - Identifies potential funding and financing sources for each project. Specifying the projects/project components for which funding and financing has already been secured, and/or where additional funding and financing needs to be secured, can guide fund and finance raising activities; - Prioritises investment projects based on urgency and potential impact. The multi-year project plans should be reviewed periodically to assess progress against milestones, track funding mobilisation efforts, and adjust priorities and costs as necessary.	☐	
Assess relevant funding and financing regulations	**Map relevant national and international regulations that could impact the funding and financing of cross-border governance actions**. For instance, national regulations on the management of public funding (e.g. from grants) or the extent to which public bodies can borrow to finance cross-border action may vary. This is particularly relevant for cross-border co-operation initiatives that involve partners from non-EU Member States, which could affect their eligibility for EU project funding, for instance.	☐	
Identify and mobilise project financing from EU programmes under	**Periodically review opportunities provided by EU programmes under shared management[15]** against the investment needs identified in the multi-year project plan. Examples of specific programmes include: - European Territorial Co-operation programmes (e.g. Interreg[16]);	☐	

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[15] Contrary to EU programmes under direct and indirect management, EU programmes under shared management mainly provide investment (e.g. for infrastructure development) and cannot be used to cover operational and staff costs.

[16] Interreg

shared management	- Other European Structural and Investment Funds[17] (e.g. European Social Fund+, LEADER programme for the development of rural areas, Small Project Fund).		
	Identify specific financing opportunities that can help cover (part of) the estimated project costs and analyse eligibility criteria (e.g. co-funding requirements).	☐	
	Prepare a project proposal and apply for complementary funding or financing (e.g. from other EU, national or subnational programmes), if needed in order to cover the full project cost.	☐	
Identify and mobilise project funding and financing from EU programmes under direct and indirect management	**Periodically review opportunities provided by EU programmes under direct and indirect management**[18] against the funding and financing needs (e.g. operational) identified in the multi-year project plan, and in particular against the thematic focus of the shortlisted projects. Examples of such EU programmes include: - **Horizon Europe,** for research-related projects; - **LIFE**, for environment-related projects; - **Europe Creative**, for culture-related projects; - **Erasmus+**, for education-related projects; - **Single Market**, for projects related to the competitiveness of SMEs; - **Digital Europe**, for digitalisation-related projects.	☐	
	Identify relevant calls that are launched by (i) the European Commission and/or executive agencies for EU programmes under direct management and/or (ii) national agencies for EU programmes under indirect management and analyse eligibility criteria (e.g. co-funding requirements).	☐	
	Prepare project proposals and apply for complementary funding or financing (e.g. from other EU, national or subnational programmes), if needed, in order to cover the full project costs.	☐	
Identify and mobilise project funding from national and subnational governments	**Periodically review funding and financing mechanisms provided by national and subnational governments (e.g. calls for proposals)** against the funding and financing needs identified in the multi-year project plan.	☐	
	In the possible absence of specific funding and financing mechanisms, **present (elements) from the multi-year project plan to relevant national and subnational government institutions to gauge their interest in providing funding and financing for specific initiatives.**	☐	

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[17] European Social Fund+, LEADER programme for the development of rural areas, Small Project Fund for smaller local cross-border projects

[18] Horizon Europe, LIFE, Creative Europe, Erasmus+, Single Market, Digital Europe,

Identify and mobilise financing from the private sector	Based on the multi-year project plan, **identify and engage with private sector actors that could be interested in financing (part) of a cross-border project**. For example, cross-border regions across Europe have engaged with private sector representatives to[19]: - Deliver a cross-border public service (e.g. public transportation); - Establish and operate cross-border business, research and innovation parks.	☐	
Identify and mobilise financing through crowdfunding schemes	**Assess whether EU or national-level legislation and regulations allow for or support to crowdsourcing** for cross-border projects.	☐	
	Lobby national and regional governments to adjust existing or adopt new regulatory frameworks to enable crowdfunding for cross-border projects, if needed.	☐	
	Based on the multi-year project plan, **identify projects or parts of projects that could be funded or financed through crowdfunding schemes**.	☐	
	Choose an appropriate crowdfunding platform (e.g. a rewards-, or donation-based platform)	☐	
	Implement a campaign to raise awareness of crowdfunding initiatives.	☐	
Establish a cross-border investment fund	**Assess the value-added of creating a cross-border investment fund versus relying strictly on existing funding and financing mechanisms.**	☐	
	Lobby relevant national, regional and local governments and possibly (development) banks to help establish a cross-border development fund (e.g. shows the costs of inaction and possible return on investment).	☐	
	Define the specific goals of the fund and investment strategy (e.g. criteria for project selection).	☐	
	Determine the legal structure of the fund and ensure compliance with relevant regulations.	☐	
	Define the governance structure and responsibilities of involved actors to manage the investment fund (e.g. fund management).	☐	
	Ensure transparency and accountability through regular audits or evaluation of the fund and its projects.	☐	
Strengthen staff capacity to mobilise and manage funding	**Map the available and necessary capacities (e.g. number of staff and their expertise) to support the mobilisation and management of financial resources**. This can include skills and expertise related to project design and application procedures, procurement, and project monitoring	☐	

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[19] The cross-border public service inventory conducted for the publication "ESPON Cross-border Public Services 2.0 (CPS 2.0)" includes several examples of services being co-funding/financed through public-private partnerships.

and financing from diverse resources	and evaluation.		
	Develop and implement a capacity building plan to ensure sufficient capacities to mobilise and manage cross-border project funding and financing from diverse resources.	☐	

Dimension 4: Promoting and advocating for cross-border development

This dimension includes two development areas: i) political support for cross-border co-operation; and ii) cross-border promotion.

DEVELOPMENT AREA 10:
POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR CROSS-BORDER CO-OPERATION

Goal: To generate durable political commitment to and support for cross-border co-operation initiatives.

Ensuring that commitment to and support for cross-border co-operation can be generated and sustained over time is essential for resolving challenges within a transboundary area. Initial political commitments on cross-border co-operation can only be translated into concrete action and results through long-term political interest and support. Common political obstacles to cross-border co-operation can include initial enthusiasm among politicians that is followed by a gradual loss of interest; a lack of awareness by national governments of cross-border needs or limited awareness about the potential for enhanced cross-border co-operation (OECD, 2023[1]). Another challenge is that regular national and subnational electoral cycles can lead to a loss of institutional knowledge of cross-border issues and priorities among politicians. Finally, there is a risk that an increase in political partisanship may undermine relationships within the transboundary area and lead to a more limited interest in cross-border co-operation.

In order to address these issues, cross-border co-operation bodies need various ways to galvanise durable political support for transboundary initiatives. This may include, for example, working with newly elected officials in order to build their awareness of and commitment to cross-border co-operation. It may also include working with more long-standing political representatives, in order to redirect their attention towards local challenges and the ability of cross-border actions to address them. Finally, political support for cross-border co-operation can be bolstered in an indirect manner by increasing citizen engagement. This can spur politicians to reach and implement cross-border agreements in areas that address these local priorities.

The following actions can be useful for regions that are interested in building durable political coalitions for cross-border action. In particular, they explore critical factors that policy makers need to consider when promoting and advocating for cross-border development, including priority-setting, messaging approaches, tools and platforms, use of data, human and financial resource capacity. They also include some indicative examples of actions that may help to generate and sustain political commitment and support for cross-border co-operation.

Actions	Considerations	Checklist	Comments
Build political awareness and support for cross-border co-operation among newly-elected politicians	**Develop an informational briefing package for newly elected politicians in the cross-border region.** This could include key information on cross-border challenges, priorities, initiatives and tangible achievements, as well as an overview of how the cross-border entity functions in practice.	☐	
	Hold question and answer sessions for newly elected politicians in the cross-border region. This could provide an opportunity for newly elected politicians to deepen their understanding of topics that are covered in briefing packages, and identify where they can find additional information.	☐	
	Consider follow-up activities that can further deepen an understanding of cross-border issues (e.g. field visits to project sites or partner municipalities), presentations in municipal council meetings) among newly elected politicians.	☐	
Build political awareness and support for cross-border co-operation among incumbent politicians	**Identify development challenges for which political support is lacking or wavering at the national, regional and/or local levels.** Examples of challenges include insufficient funding for a cross-border governance body to carry out its mandate or limited political support to address specific cross-border challenges (e.g. limited access to certain public services).	☐	
	Map the political actors (e.g. national, regional and or local elected representatives) that could help address the identified cross-border challenges, e.g. founders of the cross-border governance body, national- or regional-level political representatives.	☐	
	Develop and implement an advocacy strategy that is targeted to the actors whose support is needed to overcome specific cross-border challenges. The advocacy strategy may require decisions on: - Messaging style (e.g. whether positive or negative advocacy is more likely to be effective); - Tools and platforms that are needed and available to support advocacy (e.g. information campaigns, petitions, council meetings, networking events, peer-to-peer exchanges); - Data (e.g. economic data, surveys) that are needed to bolster the advocacy campaign; - Human and financial resources that are needed and available to support the design and implementation of the advocacy campaign; - Champions of the cause (e.g. other politicians, public figures) that can use their profile to support the advocacy campaign. When implementing an advocacy strategy, it is particularly important to ensure that any communication around cross-border concepts or initiatives (e.g. Interreg) is conducted in a simple manner, with a clear focus on the tangible benefits they can provide.	☐	
Use citizen engagement to generate political support for cross-border co-operation	**Prepare a short online survey aimed at citizens within the cross-border region** that seeks to ascertain: - Their current knowledge and awareness of the cross-border region; - Their views on the challenges of living in a cross-border region and the aspects they would address as priorities.	☐	
	Present the survey findings to political representatives at the local, regional or national levels to	☐	

	build their awareness about the cross-border co-operation needs identified by citizens.		
	Based on the results of the survey, **consider different activities to raise the profile of the cross-border region**. Examples include disseminating clear and concise informational leaflets or organising events (cultural, sport, networking) that could bring citizens and politicians together.	☐	

DEVELOPMENT AREA 11:
CROSS-BORDER PROMOTION

GOAL: To enhance the visibility and appeal of the cross-border region for residents, visitors and investors through targeted and consistent promotion efforts.

A factor that can support the long-term success of a cross-border region is ensuring that it is being promoted effectively among external stakeholders and the wider public. Promotional activities can support the development of a cross-border region in different ways. For instance, by drawing attention to the economic assets of the region as a whole, cross-border promotion can help attract external investment for both sides of the border. Moreover, by raising the visibility of the region's shared or diverse culture, history and geographical features, promotional efforts can also raise the profile of the cross-border region as a tourist destination (EUR-Lex, 2017[9]). Furthermore, promoting the cross-border goods and services (e.g. universities, swimming pools, green and blue spaces, concerts) offered or available in the cross-border region can foster a sense of shared cross-border identity and increase support for cross-border co-operation.

Different options are open to policy makers to support cross-border promotion within their region. These can include the dissemination of promotional messages through both traditional and digital media platforms, the creation of a shared tourism brand, as well as tailored events or promotional offerings. While activities will vary widely depending on each cross-border region's goals, previous examples by EGTCs have organising cultural events (e.g. cross-border walks or festivals), as well as providing subsidised cross-border public services to local residents (OECD, 2023[1]).

The following proposed actions provide a sequential list of elements to consider for cross-border actors seeking to identify their promotional needs and goals, as well as develop an implementation plan.

Actions	Considerations	Checklist	Comments
Identify cross-border promotion needs and goals	**Conduct a brief assessment of cross-border promotion needs**. This could involve reviewing the strategic objectives and activities of the cross-border co-operation body, and identifying areas where promotion could better support the development of the cross-border region (e.g. by helping attract investment, boosting tourism, improving local awareness of the goods and services offered).	☐	
Promote the cross-border region to external investors	**Map and gather relevant stakeholders within the cross-border region** (e.g. local business associations, private companies, relevant regional and local public bodies) to jointly: - Identify investment needs and opportunities, comparative strengths and challenges, leveraging insights from diverse perspectives; - Decide on the value-added of establishing a joint cross-border investment working group (e.g. as part of a cross-border governance body, if present) that could support co-ordination and collaboration among stakeholders, pool expertise and resources to identify and promote investment opportunities; - Define promotional objectives, such as increasing the volume of public and private investment in general or for different sectors from outside the cross-border region; - Establish a communication strategy, utilising traditional and social media platforms to amplify visibility and engagement with target investor audiences. This can include preparing key messages and promotional materials.	☐	
	Together with key stakeholders, **design and implement promotional activities**, for example: - Gathering and publishing comprehensive data on investment opportunities within the cross-border region to inform and attract external investors; - Identifying, organising, and participating in relevant events such as investment fairs and other networking opportunities to showcase the cross-border region's potential and opportunities to investors; - Implementing a marketing campaign that highlights unique selling points and success stories of cross-border investments.	☐	
	Monitor and evaluate the success of the investment promotion strategy, including through data analysis and interviews with key stakeholders, to identify areas for improvement and make the necessary adjustments.	☐	
Promote the cross-border region as a tourist destination	**Map and gather relevant stakeholders within the cross-border region** (e.g. regional tourism agencies, local tourism operators, relevant regional and local public bodies) to: - Assess the current tourism offerings, tourism infrastructure, visitor profiles and numbers, visitor experiences in the cross-border region, etc. This can include identifying comparative strengths (including complementarities) and weaknesses. - Assess the value-added of developing and implementing a joint cross-border tourism strategy. - Decide on the value added of creating a tourism promotion working group (e.g. as part of a cross-	☐	

	border governance body, if present) that could foster co-ordination and collaboration among stakeholders, and leverage combined resources to enhance the region's visibility as a unified destination.		
	Develop and implement a cross-border tourism strategy that aligns the tourism goals of the different partners in the cross-border region. This could include defining objectives, target markets, tourism promotion activities, and key performance indicators to measure success. Key activities could include: - Developing and disseminating a unified brand identity and marketing materials that highlight the unique attractions and cultural diversity of the cross-border region; - Organising joint cultural or sporting events;[20] - Establishing a joint tourism promotion agenda across the region, ensuring activities complement each other to enhance visitor experiences, and managing tourism absorption capacity; - Investing in and/or lobbying for investment to improve tourism infrastructure (e.g. improving transportation links that facilitate travel across the border).	☐	
	Monitor and evaluate the success of the tourism promotion strategy, including through data analysis and interviews with key stakeholders, to identify areas for improvement and make the necessary adjustments.	☐	
Promote the goods and services available in the cross-border region.	Gather relevant stakeholders (e.g. regional and local government departments, service providers) to **map goods and services available in the cross-border region**, (e.g. schools, universities, swimming pools, parks, sporting clubs, cultural events) in order to enhance residents' sense of belonging to a cohesive cross-border region that offers diverse amenities and services.	☐	
	Develop and implement activities to raise awareness about goods and services available in the cross-border region (e.g. through social media campaigns, newsletters, press releases and traditional media outreach, developing an interactive map, cultural events). It could also include partnering with public service providers to provide promotional offerings (e.g. a day of free cross-border rail travel for local citizens).	☐	

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[20] For instance several cross-border communities have applied for and served as the European Capital of Culture. In 2022, Esch-Alzette, held the title of European Capital of Culture together with 18 French and Luxembourg municipalities located in the cross-border region. The cross-border local governments of Nova Gorica, Slovenia, and Gorizia, Italy, have applied to be the European Capital of Culture in 2024.

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