

SEE Thematic Seminars:

- **SMART SEE:** Thinking of the future based on the experience gained
- **SUSTAINABLE SEE:** Thinking of the future based on the experience gained
- **INCLUSIVE SEE:** Capitalising experiences for inclusive growth and job creation in the Southeast Europe area 2014+
- **ACCESSIBLE SEE:** Coordinating the results of SEE projects for improved accessibility across the region

Conclusions of the Workshops



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1. Introduction

Since 2007 in total 122 projects have been approved following four calls for proposals published by the South East Europe (SEE) Programme. These projects cover a wide range of topics and enable cooperation among organizations and institutions coming from 16 partner countries, out of which 9 are EU member states and 7 are still non-EU member states. To date these transnational partnerships have generated a large number of outputs and results, e.g. guidelines, studies, platforms, networks, strategies. In this sense it is important to highlight synergies between SEE projects working in similar fields and to leverage the impact of their achievements for the benefit of the territories involved, and even beyond.

This is why the South East Europe Programme [Thematic Capitalisation Strategy](#) has been created to streamline the process of synergy-building between projects and encourage the capitalisation on results of previous or parallel initiatives. The Strategy is a response to a demand expressed by programme beneficiaries and so follows a bottom-up approach, putting projects at the core of the process. The SEE Capitalisation Strategy strengthens the links between projects working on similar topics (14 Thematic Poles formed), encourages projects to exploit each other's achievements, and leverages projects' impact. It enhances both projects' and Programme visibility.

Furthermore the SEE Capitalisation Strategy provides a window of opportunity to take stock of good and bad experiences from the current programme implementation, draw lessons learnt and suggest improvements. In the framework of four thematic seminars the SEE Programme collected beneficiary input for the preparation of the two future programmes to replace the current one, i.e. Danube and Adriatic-Ionian. These seminars have allowed **project partners** to take the floor and share their **vision of a smart, sustainable, accessible and inclusive Southeast Europe** (reflecting the Europe 2020 Strategy priorities). In particular, discussions focused on future thematic approach (considering the EC proposal of ETC thematic objectives and investment priorities)¹, engagement of key stakeholders, effectiveness and potential for impact and practical implementation considerations. In total 287 people contributed to these discussions representing the position of project partners, thematic experts, policy makers and other institutions involved in transnational in Southeast Europe.

This document gathers the conclusion summaries² from the workshop discussions held within each seminar's framework. Even considering the different moments in which the seminars took place and their specific nature, this is part of SEE programme legacy upon which future cooperation builds on. Therefore the following pages can be considered as a valid input to the work of the Task Force groups in charge of the preparation of the Danube and Adriatic-Ionian transnational programmes.

¹ See annexed table.

² The volume and detail of input provided reflects the number of participants and their level of involvement in the discussions.

2. Key findings

Certain discussion points were recurrent throughout the thematic seminars. These are listed below under the titles of the main discussion blocks.

Future thematic approach

- ❖ Seminar participants thought that the thematic focus of future transnational programmes was to be based upon a sound regional territorial needs analysis. In this respect, realistic goals should be defined and not overly optimistic or too broad ones.
- ❖ It has been suggested to consider what has already been achieved in the current programming period in order to avoid duplications in the future.
- ❖ Similar to the above, to avoid duplication with other funding sources, future programmes should ensure complementarities between EU territorial cooperation (ETC) programmes as well as other funding schemes in the programme areas.
- ❖ In most workshops the participants expressed their support for a programme capitalisation initiative that is launched already from the programme start. In this connection, many ideas were put forward. For instance, forming a programme capitalisation task force group, linking projects with similar topics through thematic platforms and events, making sure that current project achievements are used in future projects. In addition, capitalisation calls were also mentioned. Cooperation between the Danube and the Adriatic-Ionian projects should be encouraged as well as cooperation across ETC programmes.

Detailed input to the discussions on the selection of thematic objectives for the future programmes can be found in the seminar sections below.

Engaging key stakeholders

- ❖ Most seminar participants admitted having experienced difficulties in reaching and engaging key stakeholders, decision-makers, in particular. For the future, they hope to receive more support in this regard from the programme team and the national contact points.
- ❖ It has been suggested to consider setting up a programme databank (contact details) or even a cooperation platform to liaise projects and stakeholders. This could facilitate stakeholder analysis and could help link stakeholders even across themes and countries.
- ❖ Decision-makers have been difficult to involve according to seminar participants. It has often proven time-consuming, whereas stakeholder commitment has been inconstant. The specific role of decision-makers under the different themes is described in the workshop conclusions that follow.
- ❖ The involvement of private bodies in transnational projects was also a recurrent topic. The degree of involvement varies dependent on the cooperation theme, however, participants made it clear that it is of added-value. Private bodies are understood as representing profit making organisations, chambers of commerce, non-governmental organisations, etc. Projects saw private bodies involved through, e.g. covering their travel

and accommodation to attend transnational events or to participate to pilot activities. Some voiced their support for enabling private bodies to become full project partners.

Effectiveness and potential for impact / SEE results and their impact

- ❖ Many participants emphasised SEE programme contribution to the integration of non-EU partners in ETC and the positive impact this has on political agendas of non-EU countries.
- ❖ For the future, seminar participants proposed to check the quality or even the added value of project activities and outputs either through compulsory external evaluation or through peer review among projects in the same field of action.
- ❖ An obstacle to projects having real impact in the current programming period was the need for harmonisation across partner countries of legal framework, technical standards, etc.
- ❖ It was recommended to involve decision-makers as early as possible, even at preparation phase, in order to have better chances of project product take-up later on.
- ❖ There were recurrent observations that project achievements sometimes cannot be taken up by national, regional or local decision-makers or other stakeholders due to lack of sufficient capacity on the stakeholder side.
- ❖ To ensure better programme impact seminar participants suggested that future programmes should have an output repository, which could be continuously updated with project achievements as soon as those were available. Contact details to output 'holders' could also be considered.
- ❖ An interesting proposal was to encourage/facilitate cross-sectoral exchanges, i.e. exchanges between projects working on different themes. According to project partners this would allow for experience sharing and learning in a more holistic fashion.
- ❖ Pilot activities were considered as a guarantee for transferability of project results.

Practical implementation considerations

- ❖ In almost all workshops the possibility for pre-financing was highlighted as an important issue, esp. for smaller organisations.
- ❖ There was a proposal to consider cancelling or decreasing own co-financing for smaller entities.
- ❖ Seminar participants would recommend lowering the administrative burden, although this usually touched upon national rules and regulations, e.g. first level control. However, simplification of programme rules was also mentioned.
- ❖ Reducing the reimbursement time was another improvement that was requested for the future.
- ❖ There was a wish for more support from national contact points for the dissemination of project achievements.

3. Summary of conclusions per seminar and workshop

3.1. Conclusions of the seminar 'SMART SEE: Thinking of the future based on the experience gained'

38 people coming from relevant institutions on innovation issues in the South East of Europe area attended the seminar. 13 SEE projects belonging to Priority 1: Facilitation of Innovation and Entrepreneurship were represented.

3.1.1. Workshop 1: Strengthening research, technological development and innovation

a) Future Thematic Approach

Representatives expressed the opinion that of key importance in considering future approaches is planning based on an acute understanding of regional needs. This was viewed as ever more important with Europe's emphasis on smart specialisation and working together to align regional policies with the policy approaches of other levels of government.

Linked to the above understanding, views were expressed that Programmes could take a more specific targeted approach with topics that have a high level of importance to the SEE region. Some examples were offered as in the case of cyber physical systems and public service innovation but key areas should be defined with due process.

Whichever future direction is taken delegates expressed a strong opinion around the need to maximise on the existing environment, including the current industrial base. Linked to this, consideration should be taken of existing banks of significant work that universities, research entities and public bodies have. Without full consideration of this the view expressed was that existing resources are redundant and there will continually remain the risk of duplication.

As well as considering past work the point was made that greater joint programming should be encouraged to provide complementary portfolios of work. FP7 was mentioned strongly but for the new period, linking with the more encompassing Horizon programme work was highlighted. As an example with the previously mentioned targeted specific sector of cyber physical systems the following linkages were offered: with FP7 Cyber-Physical European Roadmap and Strategy; the ARTEMIS European Technology Platform; ARTEMIS Industry Association Steering Board, European Institute for Innovation and Technology ICT Labs.

In consideration of the research focus and the transfer of knowledge opinions coalesced around the need to place an emphasis on the involvement of the exploiter side, primarily SMEs.

Final comments included the point that the SEE Programme or whatever follows should not overly emphasise so called 'excellence' with its initiatives. Whilst striving for excellence has

its place it is of greater importance to put in place solid, effective projects that develop on the area's current needs.

Finally, the view that the networking opportunity offered by the SEE Programme was of significant benefit and should be ensured in future programming was widely expressed.

b) Engaging Key Stakeholders

Participants expressed the view that given the emphasis of the programme and the understood need to develop the innovation exploiter side the difficulties of working with profit making organizations remains something of an anomaly. At present profit making organizations are not eligible to become project partners and there are difficulties in working directly with business due to State Aid issues. With somewhat of a consensus the programme was encouraged to explore ways of working more closely with business. Potentially this could be assisted by perhaps looking at other programmes of work such as the EIT and their KICs or the Technology Platforms and considering their way of working.

Whilst the above was a common position, opinion was expressed that whilst improving the public/private working should be encouraged, in tandem, to really develop the situation on this National and Regional restrictions also need to be understood and addressed if needed, to create the appropriate environment.

In considering NGOs as stakeholders a number of points were made. Firstly, that many NGOs find it difficult to secure cofinancing and future programmes should explore special cofinancing arrangement for smaller organisations. Secondly, that NGOs cover a myriad of organisations and that the understanding of 'NGO' (legally and organisationally) differs throughout the region. Given this the view expressed was that measures should be taken to develop common understandings at the National and Regional level to enable like organisations from around the SEE region to work with the Programme as project partners.

In terms of public authorities as stakeholders the expressed views indicated that PAs could be more effectively engaged to have an increased role in disseminating outputs and results around the regions.

c) Effectiveness and Potential for Impact

Opinion came forth that in order to maximise the short, medium and longer term possibilities to make the most of outputs and results a Programme repository should be developed – allowing a constant access to relevant information and contacts.

Of benefit could be maximising potential for impact with more emphasis on cross sectoral approaches which builds experience sharing and learning in a more holistic fashion.

In order to further develop the programme potential, more emphasis should be placed on developing strategic links with a wide range of actors not just the EU but with National and Regional initiatives along with international initiatives e.g. WB and UN

Again the point was made strongly that the potential effectiveness and depth of impact could be developed with joint programme working. Joint in terms of planning, funding and follow up. This was viewed to be important strategically, operationally and for sustainability and impact.

d) Practical Implementation Considerations

The main success was viewed as the building of transnational partnerships. This aspect was seen as a particular strength, facilitated with the freedom choose partners with the bottom up approach. As previously indicated participants felt that this could potentially be improved further with the possible inclusion of private bodies and wider possibilities with NGOs.

The Programme operational model was viewed to be largely effective. There was some feedback that reporting procedures could be further simplified.

The final point was that cofinancing remains an issue for some key organisations and that this should be addressed.

3.1.2 Workshop 2: Enhancing competitiveness of the SMEs

a) Future Thematic Approach

The SEE Programme has supported a large number of projects addressing enhancing competitiveness of SMEs. However, still a lot has to be achieved by the countries participating in the SEE Programme area, and it is expected that the future programmes will consider the work done so far and take advantage of the cooperation established.

Discussion with the projects during the capitalisation seminar revealed that one of the main problems of the area is filling the gaps between research side and SMEs, concentrating on the transfer of technologies (mainly through facilitation of investments). In fact commercial exploitation of the R&D results was rather lightly addressed by the projects; therefore support for the development of innovation-friendly business environments to assist SMEs (identification of the scientific research findings that could be commercially exploited) represents a challenge in the context of Smart Growth of the area.

The SEE economic area relies on a SME-based economy, but the most part of SMEs are characterised by a lack of internationalisation and are not fully exploiting their opportunities due to the unawareness of the importance to incorporate innovation, especially as in innovative approaches for entrepreneurs, therefore support measures for this could be very appropriate for this type of programme.

One of the problems that the current programme faced was the difficulty to involve the SMEs sector, given the non-eligibility of these types of bodies, consequently reflection on the possibility to directly involve them, as financing partners, in the next programming period would bring added value.

Considering the number of SEE projects addressing the competitiveness of SMEs – 13, it is suggested that synergies are exploited from the very start of each project through a structured Programme “task force” that should be present from the beginning of the Programme. Also it was outlined that special attention in creating synergies should be given to the new directions outlined by the EU Commission within the Innovation Union initiative

(in what concerns Smart Specialisation Platform, Social Innovation Europe Platform etc.), Horizon 2020, Cluster Innovation Platform etc. Approach towards creative industries, as a catalyst for structural change in many industrial zones and rural areas with the potential to rejuvenate the economy and help change the public image of regions would bring added value.

b) Engaging Key Stakeholders

Involving key stakeholders in the implementation of the projects and transferring to them the results has proved to be a very difficult task. Consequently, they need to be addressed already from the preparation phase in order to raise their awareness on the added value and advantages in participating or supporting the projects. Many SEE projects tried to involve stakeholders as observers but still their contribution was limited by the impossibility to support their travel costs to meetings.

Enterprise market proved to be difficult to be addressed, mainly due to the ineligibility of these types of partners. Consequently the projects highlighted that facilitators would have an important role in this direction. The programme raised high interest among academia and research bodies, often submitted projects involving only this type of partners. In this respect the projects highlighted the fact that the role of the technology transfer offices should be enhanced. Moreover the general agreement was that regional authorities have a lower contribution and should not have a leading role but should be involved as partners in charge of strategic planning in the territory.

Decision/ policy makers are in general difficult to approach therefore more efforts should be put in involving them.

The Programme, through the network of the SCPs, could have a role of facilitator in organising thematic meetings in each country, which would have more potential in bringing together different decision makers.

c) Effectiveness and Potential for Impact

The projects agreed that capitalisation should start from the first stages of the programmes in order to really be effective and have an impact, since towards the end of the projects the resources available are low.

Even though some of the projects' main aim is to introduce new SMEs supporting structures, sustainability is not clearly ensured. In this respect the programme could contribute through the organisation of joint events with the support of the contact points that can also have a major contribution national level. It was also highlighted the fact that pilots proved to be one effective tool for ensuring the transferability of the project results.

Also, it was highlighted that the programme should have involved more customers focusing on internationalisation and marketing in order to build up truly transnational support innovation systems.

d) Practical Implementation Considerations

Since the debate focused more on content related issues this part was less tackled. However, based on inputs of the projects gathered during implementation the next programming period should concentrate on simplifying the procedures and in particular the financial ones, especially on lowering the timeframe for reimbursements and working on common eligibility rules.

3.2. Conclusions of the Seminar 'SUSTAINABLE SEE: Thinking of the future based on the experience gained

78 people coming from 49 relevant institutions on environmental issues in the South East of Europe area attended the seminar. **17 SEE projects** belonging to Priority 2: Protection and Improvement of the Environment were represented.

17 relevant institutions on the topic tackled in **Workshop 1** actively participated in that workshop representing 8 SEE projects (Orientgate, Green Mountain, SeeRisk, SEE River, SEE Mariner and Effect).

16 relevant institutions on the topic tackled in **Workshop 2** actively participated in that workshop representing 10 SEE projects (Orientgate, SEE Hydropower, Wide the SEE by Succ Mode, SeeRisk, RE-SEEties, Effect, Mild Home, M2Res, EnVision2020 and Co-Wanda).

17 relevant institutions on the topic tackled in **Workshop 3** actively participated in that workshop representing 11 SEE projects (Orientgate, Green Mountain, SeeRisk, Bioregio Carpathians, SEE Mariner, Effect, M2Res, Co-Wanda, SaRMA, Danubeparks2 and Natreg).

3.2.1. Workshop 1: Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management

a) Future Thematic Approach

A wide range of projects addressing environmental risk management were implemented through the SEE Programme; more recently projects have also started to include the impacts of climate change in risk management planning. Disaster risk management is a very important area for transnational cooperation, due to the fact that environmental risks are by nature trans-border and communication between key stakeholders from different countries is essential for effective risk management. It was also noted, however, that legal structures differ considerably across countries, which makes it more complicated to consider joint implementation approaches. The EU has been working on harmonisation of these approaches across the Member States, which should continue to serve as a catalyst for further transnational cooperation.

Less effort has so far been dedicated to coping with the longer-term socio-economic effects of climate change in the SEE programme, although some of the projects have included this as part of their work. There is considerable opportunity for future work on including the integration of adaptation measures into different sectors.

Participants also pointed out that, in order to improve the future thematic approach, priority should be given to proper capitalisation of what is done in the current programme. This would include increased focus on promotion and dissemination within the projects, and also a stronger capitalisation strategy proposed by the SEE programme, which should ensure more effective visibility and take-up of the results. It was also suggested that a capitalisation call is included in future programmes from the very beginning.

The cross-cutting nature of climate change was also mentioned during the discussion, as climate will impact a wide range of economic sectors and social issues across the SEE Programme area (e.g. water, health, agriculture, tourism, employment, housing). It was suggested that the Programme considers a cross-cutting requirement that all projects in all areas of intervention consider climate change impacts in their methodology and approach, similar to the requirement in the Cohesion Policy general regulation for the next programming period.

b) Engaging Key Stakeholders

Participants highlighted that the projects carried out within the SEE Programme and in general transnational cooperation projects are important platforms for discussion between different types of stakeholders, both within countries and transnationally. On the topic of climate change adaptation, this generally refers to three types of stakeholders:

- Academic and research circles: where data about climate change impacts, vulnerabilities and adaptive capacity is generated
- Authorities and decision-makers: who needs to design policies and determine responses
- Socio-economic groups: including business, civil society, local authorities and other interest groups, which need to adapt their interests and activities to climate change impacts.

It is important that SEE projects consider a range of these different types of stakeholders, all of which are necessary actors in developing and implementing responses to climate change impacts.

The participation of the private sector in transnational projects on climate change adaptation was considered very important; workshop participants wondered whether some provision could be made for the participation of private sector entities in future projects. This could be via an observer status in case funding is not permitted for them.

In any case, it was agreed that future programmes shall be less theoretical and more oriented towards the needs of socio-economic stakeholders, including local authorities, as the end users of project outputs.

c) Effectiveness and Potential for Impact

As mentioned above, disaster risk management is a topic that depends heavily on transnational cooperation between key stakeholders. Related to this, climate change adaptation is also an interesting area of focus for the programme, for a number of reasons. First, there is a clear capacity-building opportunity, as there are varying degrees of adaptive capacity amongst the SEE programme countries as well as specific regions within countries. Second, as climate change adaptation is a relatively new field of research and policy-making in most Member States, there is a great need for more dissemination of existing experience, thereby bringing together the knowledge that is scattered in different institutions. Given that much of the SEE region will face similar impacts from climate change (e.g. heat waves, drought) there is also complementarity in needs. Furthermore, climate change will impact interconnected natural resources, such as rivers and coastal areas, which will require coordinated action.

Finally, it was mentioned that with the EU strategy on adaptation to climate change forthcoming in 2013, the timing was right to capitalise on the momentum generated by this work, which includes a focus on EU coordination and cooperation across Member States.

d) Practical Implementation Considerations

A main focus of this discussion was on quality control of the project outputs. In some cases projects engage external evaluations of their work, but these are not done universally and often focus more on the cooperation mechanisms than the actual quality and usefulness of the project results. The JTS staff does not have the capacity to evaluate the quality of outputs that address such a wide range of often very specific technical issues. Suggestions for improving quality control included stronger encouragement (or requirement) for thematic evaluation of outputs in the projects themselves, which could even possibly be done by different projects working on similar themes.

Additionally, participants suggested that longer periods of implementation for projects (e.g. 6 years), including a defined period for disseminating the achieved results. To ensure more continuity of programme results, participants suggested a 'priority lane' for project proposals that build on previous projects, to prioritise the continuation of processes initiated within a previous operation.

3.2.2 Workshop 2: Mitigating climate change consequences and promoting resource efficiency

a) Future Thematic Approach

The SEE Programme has supported a large number of projects addressing climate change mitigation, namely energy and resource efficiency. However, still a lot has to be achieved by the countries participating in the SEE Programme area, and it is expected that the future

programmes will consider the work done so far and take advantage of the cooperation established.

The relevance of the energy topic for both future programme areas has not been under discussion, although there is clear need for all EU Member States to meet the EU targets. Furthermore, the energy sector has a strong economic potential for each country in the SEE Programme area, which is further exploited and developed through transnational cooperation projects. Transnational cooperation in this sector is considered crucial as it allows viewing the problems from different angles and being able to comprehensively address them, especially for the SEE area where EU MS, candidate, potential candidate or neighbouring countries are working together. The development and knowledge about sustainable energy is also not on the same level. Therefore, just international cooperation will not give optimal results. In the energy field, common EU market is established and SEE represents a big potential in terms of new sources of energy that can be distributed across the EU when all instruments are working on the same level.

Considering the number of projects, 11, related to energy approved by the SEE Programme, it is suggested that synergies are exploited from the very start of each projects through a structured Programme “task force” that should be present from the beginning of the Programme.

The role of the Programme in supporting synergies and capitalisations should be improved in the next programming period. Examples of potential actions that a Programme could follow in pursuing a better cooperation among projects is the creation of a database of stakeholders, the organisation of thematic sectoral seminars, launch a capitalisation call (e.g. the last Programme call), facilitation of the creation of thematic platforms. Capitalisation and synergies with projects approved by other Programmes are options that need to be explored as well.

The inclusion of the private sector in the partnership of energy projects is considered as a potential for further capitalising the projects results (e.g. banks that could finance energy investments developed during the project).

b) Engaging Key Stakeholders

Engaging stakeholders in the implementation of the projects and in using the project results has proved to be a very difficult task. Experience shows that the development of tools to be provided to stakeholders won't reach the expected objectives, mainly due to the lack of ownership. Therefore, they need to be involved in the definition of the project itself by showing them the added value and advantages in participating or supporting the project. Often, having them in the role of observers did not prove to be a successful strategy: in a period of financial crisis, the possibility to cover stakeholders' travel costs for attending project meetings would have made a difference in terms of a more active participation.

Decision makers are a special type of stakeholders which is particularly difficult to engage. In order to overcome this difficulty, it is considered crucial to have in the partnership a partner able to take decisions, or having a strong political influence. Furthermore, the different administrative levels (local, regional, national) where the responsibilities are shared or not

defined well need to be taken also into account. This could generate a positive response from other decision makers beyond the country itself. Furthermore, organising special meetings targeting only decision makers could have positive effects on achieving a more active participation.

The banks and other financial institution and private sector have been identified as very important stakeholders to participate in implementing the results on the ground and to assure the long-term influence of the projects. SEE projects are as a spin off or start from scratch of new ideas that bring changes in the participating countries.

The Programme, through the network of the SCPs, could have a role of facilitator in organising thematic meetings in each country, which would have more potential in bringing together different decision makers.

c) Effectiveness and Potential for Impact

With the separation of the SEE Programme into two different Programmes, the potential impact of the current SEE project might be lost. Tools for allowing continuity of the strong cooperation between the two new Programmes are welcomed and expected.

A joint work between the projects and the Programme is thought to create a stronger impact in the Programme area. For this reason, the Programme itself should be more visible and put forward all project results on its website.

Past experiences show that towards the end of the project there is not enough time to properly disseminate the achieved outputs. This obviously dramatically reduces the potential impact of the projects.

So far, the SEE programme has been very successful in preparing non EU countries to adopt the EU environmental *acquis* in different areas. Partner countries were able to identify development potential in environmental projects. This has to be considered as important programme success towards EU integration since for many countries environmental issues were previously not on the political agenda.

d) Practical Implementation Considerations

Results achieved through a long implementation with a strategic collaboration with relevant stakeholders are usually lost after few years after the end of the project, due mainly to the closure of the project website. Therefore, there is a need to keep the project products “alive” and available in order to avoid re-doing the same activities after few years.

Criticisms towards the First Level Control (FLC) system are commonly shared: the timeframe for the selection of the FLC in decentralised systems, the exceedingly long time for validating the expenditures. The disharmonised systems and the bureaucratic requests that sometimes seem to make the control process unintelligible and inflexible are all part of a system that shows room for improvement and needs to be changed for the future programming.

3.2.3 Workshop 2: Protecting the environment, the biodiversity and the natural resources

a) Future Thematic Approach

The SEE projects related to environment, biodiversity and natural resources protection cover a wide range of domains. During the first part of the workshop, participants listed the environmental topics they wish to be included in the two new programmes in the South East of Europe area, which are to replace the SEE in the future.

The following topics were mentioned according to the participants' views on the present environmental needs, potentials and priorities for the area: sustainable tourism, forest management (Carpathian Convention), flooding protection, biomass, waste management, mining problem in Balkans (mine sites), risk protection for existing institutions, and sustainable spatial planning / ecosystems / green infrastructure. This list of fields must be considered as a personal proposal made by the workshop participants based on their own interests or expertise and not as a general opinion of all the projects' representatives.

One important aspect highlighted was the need to increase the link between the sustainable development and the economy showing that sustainable activities could bring wealth to the territories (for instance, creating sustainable models for specific areas).

In what concerns capitalisation, participants highlight the importance of sharing project's achievements in a specific domain with other related projects to increase their impact and leverage effect, facilitating in this way the capitalisation possibilities in the sense of implementing the found solutions in other countries, institutions or contexts. In this sense, there is a need to move from plans/documents to real action and for that the involvement of stakeholders and decision makers is essential. In order to get this involvement and the real implementation of the projects' achievements, the creation of aggregated easy-to-use solutions would be beneficial more than abstract plan or good ideas difficult to be put in practice. Better communication between projects working in similar topics would contribute to an easier capitalisation of the achievements and to the preparation of future common projects.

b) Engaging Key Stakeholders

There was a common agreement on the importance of stakeholder's involvement, even if this is a difficult task. Bringing together stakeholders of related topics offers more possibilities to implement joint solutions and to produce long term (even unexpected) results. Stakeholder involvement as well as the capitalisation activities should be foreseen during the project preparation and in a way to be able to establish a constant cooperation during the whole project implementation.

The need of funds to implement this stakeholder engagement and the differences between experts and political stakeholders (decision makers) were also highlighted.

c) Effectiveness and Potential for Impact

Participants brainstormed also on how to increase the effectiveness and potential impact of project achievements. Ideas collected suggested the involvement of decision-makers and reliable partners from the start of project activities. In addition, involvement of private bodies should be made possible. Finally, the programme(s) could make it compulsory for all projects to plan synergies or capitalisation activities with other projects in the same topic. These plans should be requested with the application form.

In terms of communication, there was a proposal of the new programmes facilitating a pre-designed common and flexible layout instead of single project websites. In this way some workshops participants think the project's achievement would increase their impact avoiding their dissemination in multiple websites.

d) Practical Implementation Considerations

This part of the workshop debates was mainly focused in the financial aspects of the projects' implementation. In this sense, there was a petition for including a pre-financing option in the future programmes in this area, as is already the case in other programmes. The possibility of allowing loans without interests for project partners to be able to start implementing was also considered an option. Such an option can be very relevant in these times of economical crisis.

The long process between the certification and reimbursement was also highlighted, as well as the need to make the reporting process easier with simple evidences (staff) or flat rates and no need to provide invoices for even the very small costs.

Some other recommendations included easier involvement of countries that are not part of the programme area (in particular of 20 %ERDF partners), organising workshops for training controllers or putting more focus in the quality of the projects than in the administration aspects.

3.3 Conclusions of the seminar 'INCLUSIVE SEE: Capitalising experiences for inclusive growth and job creation in the Southeast Europe area 2014+'

74 participants coming from a wide range of institutions in the fields concerned attended the seminar, representing 20 **SEE projects** as well as further SEE stakeholders and projects from outside the SEE area.

The three workshops were organised around three Thematic Poles, addressing topics mainly covered by the Programme Priority Axis 4 "Sustainable Growth Areas".

The **Workshop Employment and Demographic Change** was composed by 4 SEE projects (MMWD, PAIRS, SEEMIG and Silver City), further 6 representatives from Russian fellow projects actively contributed to it.

6 SEE projects (ATTRACT SEE, BUILD SEE, FATE, InTourAct, Jewel Model and STATUS) participated in the **Workshop Urban Development**.

9 SEE projects actively contributed to the **Workshop Cultural resources** (ATRIUM, CULTOUR, CMC, Danube Limes Brand, InTourAct, RECULTIVATUR, SAGITTARIUS, SUSTCULT and SY_CULTour).

Apart from the following summary, a more detailed summary of the outcomes produced for each workshop can be found [here](#).

3.3.1 Workshop 1: Employment and Demographic Change

a) Identify the results of the SEE Programme and analyse their impact

The Thematic Pole members have identified various areas where the SEE programme has achieved major results.

- All relevant SEE projects have contributed to the issue of shrinking labour force. Data gaps have been identified, country profiles and country comparisons have been elaborated. Nonetheless, pole members noted that the issue of sharp disparities between micro-regions in this aspect has not been addressed sufficiently.
- Regional (sub-national) differences in migration, labour market and human capital issues have also been addressed concerning data production systems, but the need to strengthen data production and use for such issues was also stressed. The same has been agreed on concerning data availability in migration statistics.
- Migration strategies, scenarios on national and local level and policy coherence have also been dealt with by various programmes concerning the identification and analysis of relevant policies and scenarios, enabling local communities to make better use of migratory and labour market data. Nonetheless, it has been agreed that there is a lack of capacities on the sub-national level.

- Roma integration into the labour market has also been addressed by projects in the SEE programme, by means of transnational learning, tool developing and policy formulation. A package of policy recommendations (national and EU level) has been provided. Projects have set up a network of European experts and transferable elements of good practices have been identified.
- Extending working lives have also been handled concerning country comparisons and raising stakeholder interest, but the comparability of results has been debated.
- Transnational policy dialogue among SEE key-stakeholders has been enhanced but doubts have been raised about the transferability of results.

Pole members have identified areas where there has been no major advancement during the current programming period, regardless of them being identified as strategic by previous calls. The areas include brain drain, unused female labour force potential, skilled female labour.

b) Engaging Key Stakeholders

Pole members have identified positive experiences with some key and recurring problems. Financing of stakeholder partners and the involvement of NGOs into projects have been seen as a major problem due to not having starting funds. Pole members also raised the issue of political instability: changes in the governance structure caused that the whole team got out of various ongoing projects and programmes. It has also been agreed that there is generally a loose contact between the stakeholders inhibiting cooperation in depth. It also causes problems that not the same kinds of stakeholders are involved in every country. Pole members have stressed the importance of face-to face interviews in order to get stakeholders involved.

It has been stressed that local authorities and stakeholders need to be involved from the beginning and their motivation requires special attention. It was also argued that there is a need to combine bottom-up and top-down perspectives throughout the project process in a creative manner. In the identification of issues there is a need to interview possible partners from the bottom, then during the call itself the top-down approach is more appropriate due to reasons of efficiency, while at later phases of the projects this approach is to be changed again for a bottom-up perspective. It was suggested that Roma partners need special attention when their integration is at stake. They need to be addressed specifically as Roma.

c) Future Thematic Approach

Increasing labour market participation and combating the labour market mismatches between skills and job opportunities (brain waste) were defined as the main challenges in view of the upcoming programming period. All other demographic processes, in- and out-migration and ageing should be linked to the above problem area with a clear priority for labour market mismatch.

Negative tendencies in the region (brain waste, increasing migratory losses, declining fertility, labour market processes) have to be handled in a way that the possible positive counterbalances should be stressed and focused on, instead of fighting combats which cannot be won. Thus, the advantages of Roma involvement, those of migration or those of the elderly participation are to be stressed and the utilization of these advantages should be enhanced. As an example, the better use of emigrant remittances should be promoted and not emigration itself should be combated. Pole members also stressed that it is important to specifically include the Roma among the targeted programme beneficiaries, since previous experience shows a higher efficiency in addressing Roma issues when the Roma are targeted specifically within funding programmes.

Ranking of the programming period 2014-2020 thematic objectives and investment priorities:

Pole members have identified and ranked the following thematic objectives and investment priorities which are highly relevant concerning main future challenges related to employment and demographic change in the programme regions and which need to be tackled by transnational cooperation.

A) Thematic Objective 10, investing in education, skills and lifelong learning by developing education and training infrastructure

This thematic objective was seen as the most important one due to the high relevance of the pole's thematic focus on human capital. Human capital need to be enhanced through education, in order to compensate for unavoidable demographic decline as forecasted by experts. This clearly needs a transnational approach due to intensifying migratory trends. There is an increasing need for coordinating these processes between sending and receiving communities through the recognition of qualifications (formal and informal competences), the coordination of educational and employment policies and the better integration of immigrants and Roma into education. Better coordination of related policies and strategies was seen as vital to tackle such processes.

B) Thematic Objective 8, promoting employment and supporting labour mobility (all Investment priorities)

Pole members drew attention to the increasing development gaps between micro-regions (highly uneven spatial distribution of opportunities) which need to be urgently assessed. Transnationally embedded complex local strategies should be formulated concerning ageing, population loss and negative labour market tendencies. There are also clear data gaps which are not handled appropriately and relevant capacities are also missing (such as local databanks), which hinder this adaptation to demographic and labour market change. Youth and Roma unemployment need to be specially assessed, probably with transnational business incubators for labour market integration, utilizing social entrepreneurship and cooperatives and combating micro-regional segregation.

Integration of vulnerable groups, such as domestic service workers of migrant background is a challenge but also an opportunity. Local community integration and improving neighbourhood services for the elderly can go hand in hand with the creation of new socially oriented jobs. It is a highly gendered priority which has its own special social dynamics, needed to be linked to the global chain of caretaking, local development and transfer of social and health care funds transnationally.

Considering population change (decline) is necessary when investing in / maintaining infrastructure. Investment should also mean the improvement of the organization of public employment services in order to avoid mismatches. Migrant remittances can also be channelled for financing development projects.

C) Thematic Objective 1, Investment Priority (a)

Aspects of existing mismatches between skills and job opportunities and prospective labour market (entrepreneurial) education goals need to be taken into account in every R&I and cluster development strategy. The mismatch is to be decreased via transnational labour market services on local, national and regional level, better integration of migrants through transnational cooperation between sending and receiving communities, better recognition of the human capital of migrants and various other groups like Roma. Pole members also stressed the need to improve statistical data systems by better combining labour market, migration and human capital statistics based on already elaborated strategies on the transnational, local and national level.

D) Thematic Objective 1 / Investment Priority (b); Thematic Objective 9 / Investment Priority (a)

Further relevance of the pole topic was identified regarding **Thematic Objective 1 / Investment Priority (b)** in view of small businesses for/by socially disadvantaged groups, e.g. migrant entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship and cooperatives. Furthermore within **Thematic Objective 9 / Investment Priority (a)** new forms of employment in healthcare need to be addressed (domestic care giving), while challenges such as the competition between vulnerable groups over scarce resources, the changes in the size of given social/demographic groups and the public discourses on exclusion also need to be assessed.

Further crucial (sub-) topics to be considered during the upcoming programming period concern Local databanks in employment- and demography-related topics, which should be built in order to provide evidence base for policies on a local level developed with the help of national stakeholders and through transnational cooperation between development NGOs, development experts and research institutes, channelling experiences also from outside of the South East European region. Moreover, fellow project representatives from Russia raised the need to evaluate transnational cooperation of SEE countries to map ways toward a more liberal migration regime with neighbourhood policy countries in the light of recent changes and the redirection of migration flows towards non EU countries.

Stated finally, that SEE experiences gained in the field of employment and demographic change might provide very valuable and direct **contributions for linking future programmes to the macro-regional strategies** concerned, in particular to priority area 9 (People and Skills) and 11 (Security) as well as 10 (Institutional Capacity) of the **Danube Strategy**.

3.3.2 Workshop 2: Urban Development

a) Identify the results of the SEE Programme and analyse their impact

The main findings for the current programming period (2007-2013) gained by the thematic pole regarding main achievements in the field, can be summarized as follows:

- Successful participation processes have been a focus point in most projects
- The methodologies developed for stakeholder involvement (all projects)
- The development of integrated urban policies geared towards regeneration and property redevelopment
- Strategic approaches (Urban/Territorial Agendas) could be integrated urban development

Apart from these (main) achievements, areas were identified which were not sufficiently tackled and/or should be addressed more strongly by future transnational cooperation:

- The Multi-Level Governance aspect of urban development should be addressed more explicitly and more strongly.
- Town planning instruments. This should be promoted directly in order to constrain public administrations to think strategically.
- Specific policies for urban planning. These are – according to the thematic pole’s findings - not present at the local level in the SEE space.
- Precise topics and focus areas will have to be addressed in projects in order to develop transnational relevant integrated Urban Development projects, especially because in the current programming period many small, sectoral and very specific projects have been funded (low positive externalities)
- Strategies for shrinking cities – rethinking the link between urban and rural space, while controlling the urban sprawl
- The need for insisting of public space in urban development and regeneration (reuse, repurpose, redesign of public space as a driver for urban development and regeneration)
- The need for area-based integrated approaches to requalification of high-rise, high-density block areas

b) Engaging Key Stakeholders

Through the project methodologies, specifically directed towards stakeholder involvement and stimulating public participation, the thematic pole has so far received a clear positive response from the stakeholders involved. However, the political level even if involved in the process then is difficult the adoption of innovative policies and programs in short time of the project.

Concerning the national level (role of SEE National Contact Points / SCPs) a stronger and more proactive attitude of SCPs was found to be necessary for ensuring a more effective stakeholder involvement. The thematic pole recommended extending the national points beyond one contact person, either being developed in the future as a group of experts, or to be permitted to contract / involve national experts in facilitating the involvement of interested actors in future projects.

Finally the thematic pole stressed the importance of more strongly involving private sector actors in future Urban Development processes and recommended clarifying the use of PPP in urban development to be a priority for the future Programmes.

c) Future Thematic Approach

The thematic pole identified and ranked the following topics as to be the most important to be tackled by future transnational cooperation in the programme areas:

- A) Multilevel governance in urban development & the participation process
- B) Strategic planning
- C) Urban policy design
- D) Schemes for urban regeneration
- E) Developing and implementing the concept of Resilient Cities

The following thematic objective and investment priorities were identified to be most suitable for tackling the above mentioned main challenges related to urban development:

- B) Thematic Objective 11 – For the strategic framework for Urban Development
- C) Thematic Objective 4, with the investment priorities e) and c)
- D) Thematic Objective 7, with the priorities c) and b)
- E) Thematic Objective 1, with the priority b)

3.3.3 Workshop 3: Cultural Resources

a) Identify the results of the SEE Programme and analyse their impact

The projects of the past programme period managed to put a stronger emphasis on the valorisation and the use of cultural values for a better economic development in urban as well as rural areas rather than solely on conservation and management. Other issues well represented in the field of cultural resources are improvements in developing management methods, strategies and plans, cultural infrastructure and services and promotion activities.

Respective aspects not sufficiently addressed by the current SEE programme are the scarce public and private participation, the creation of favourable conditions for the development of a broad range of collaboration between the public and private sector. The involvement of certain key actors to the projects is extremely difficult to achieve partly due to the bottom-up approach in implementing projects and too short project lives for complex matters with a multiple number of partners and therefore lack of sustainability. The past SEE programme also lacks a more holistic approach to develop cultural resources projects considering and including more of the economic and social „environment“ in the areas of intervention.

b) Engaging Key Stakeholders

Through its targeted actions the current SEE programme successfully addressed and engaged key-stakeholders in public administration bodies, NGOs and various associations. At the same time all pole members from cultural projects involved in the evaluation process strongly emphasized the importance of more cross-project and cross-sectoral interaction in future. The future programme needs to consider more engagement and direct active involvement of key-stakeholders in the private sector and in the relevant thematic fields. This will not be easy to achieve if the future programming period does not provide more support for NGOs and PPP participation through flexible pre-financing tools. Improvements should concentrate on higher scores on stakeholder involvement in the selection criteria and foresee sub-granting actions at programme level to implement concrete pilot actions to the benefit of key stakeholders and beneficiaries. It is vital for the success of projects dealing with cultural resources to have an integrative strategy to address selected target group and communicate programme/project achievements, creating a cultural stakeholders map for example.

All project representatives emphasized that the role of national coordination mechanism (i.e. National Contact Points) in mobilising key-stakeholders is fundamental and should be more effective.

c) Future Thematic Approach

During workshop discussions the members of the Capitalization Pole 13 „Cultural Resources“ formulated five main recommendations which should be acknowledged by the TFs in the new programming period 2014-2020.

- Cultural Resource projects should stronger focus on the valorisation and the use of cultural values for a better social and economic development in urban as well as rural areas
- The next SEE programme should have a wider, more holistic approach to Cultural Resources considering material as well as immaterial culture, being at the heart of the European Union's and the regional/macro regional identity in the areas of intervention.
- Project related to Cultural Resources should better address and involve public and private key-stakeholders, fostering PPP, subject to the condition that innovative financing model are provided.
- Europe being THE first rate tourism destination, it should be better acknowledged that the exploitation of Cultural Resources provide a series of multiplier effects related to sustainable competitiveness growth, job creation and development in tourism.
- Preserving knowledge about Cultural Resources and providing more educating facilities should be included as a key element to stimulate the next generation and foster the knowledge society with new technologies and innovation potentials from existing traditional know-how.

The **most important thematic objective and investment priority** most suitable for tackling the main problems related to the valorisation of cultural resources by transnational cooperation programmes in the new programming period is **thematic objective 6) protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency; (c) protecting, promoting and developing cultural heritage**. This should not only rely to heritage but should also respect all other cultural material and immaterial resources including cultural landscapes (referred to in TO 6d).

Other thematic objectives in hierarchical order are:

(TO 3) enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs; (a) promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, especially in relationship to Creative industries; (b) developing new business models for SMEs, in particular for internationalisation in relationship to PPP;

(TO 1) strengthening research, technological development and innovation; (a) enhancing research and innovation infrastructure (R&I) and capacities to develop R&I excellence and promoting centres of competence, in particular those of European interest; (b) promoting business R&I investment, product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation and public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialization;

(TO 10) investing in education, skills and lifelong learning by developing education and training infrastructure;

(TO 8) promoting employment and supporting labour mobility; (a) development of business incubators and investment support for self-employment and business creation;

(TO 9) promoting social inclusion and combating poverty; (a) investing in health and social infrastructure which contribute to national, regional and local development, reducing inequalities in terms of health status, and transition from institutional to community-based services; (b) support for physical and economic regeneration of deprived urban and rural communities;

According to the Pole members opinion further crucial sub-topics related to cultural resources, which are NOT considered enough and explicitly in the draft regulation are a link to innovation and knowledge economic and key industries, a clear mention on tourism and the benefits of intangible cultural resources.

3.4. Conclusions of the seminar ‘ACCESSIBLE SEE: Coordinating the results of SEE projects for improved accessibility across the region’

90 people coming from 65 relevant institutions with competences on (physical and virtual) accessibility of the South East of Europe area attended the seminar. **25 SEE projects** belonging to Priority 3 – “Improvement of Accessibility” were represented.

20 relevant institutions on the topic tackled in **Workshop 1** representing 11 SEE projects (ACROSSEE-SEETAC, RAIL4SEE, SEE-ITS, ADB Multiplatform, NEWADA, NEWADA duo, NELI, HINT, DaHar, SETA, WATERMODE); 20 relevant institutions on the topic tackled in **Workshop 2** representing 8 SEE projects (ATTAC, ACCESS2MOUNTAIN, Iron Curtain Trail, TRANSDANUBE, SEE MMS, ROSEE, SENSOR, RAIL4SEE); 11 relevant institutions on the topic tackled in **Workshop 3** representing 6 SEE projects (WANDA and CO-WANDA, ECOPORT 8 and TEN-ECOPORT, SEE-ITS, GIFT); 13 relevant institutions on the topic tackled in **Workshop 4** representing 5 projects (SEE TV WEB, SECOVIA, SIVA, PPP4Broadband, SEE Digi.TV).

Apart from the following summary, a more detailed summary of the outcomes produced for each workshop can be found [here](#).

3.4.1 Workshop 1: Multimodal Accessibility to Primary Networks

a) Identify the results of the SEE Programme and analyse their impact

A number of complementary projects focusing on contributing on improving multimodal accessibility have been and are currently being implemented through the SEE Programme; following a selection of projects carried out both through the bottom up and the top-down approach.

The SEE projects in the current programming period have highlighted that to tackle correctly an efficient primary accessibility in the SEE region, the multimodal approach shall be considering

- the state of the current infrastructure network in the region, which cannot be improved in the short term
- the current financial crisis, that has further postponed the intervention on the hard infrastructure
- that coordination among the different modes will result in the optimal utilization of the current potential offered by each mode resulting in an improved accessibility in the short term

The SEE projects have been addressing different problems in relation to:

- LINKS: capacity and quality of road, rail and river and maritime infrastructure in transnational corridors crossing the South East Europe Region, including cross-border sections.
- NODES: capacity and quality of intermodal terminals, dry ports and ports, quality and capacity of transshipment facilities, quality of connections with foreland and hinterland.
- SERVICES: availability and reliability of freight operations (regularity, frequency, speed, price), safety and security standards, traffic control solutions, performance quality and skills (e.g. in terms of labor force).
- SYSTEM TOOLS: planning and policymaking frameworks, regulations and principles steering the development of the transport system in the desirable directions, management and organizational approaches.

Until this moment, the SEE Projects have identified a number of obstacles which prevent the extensive use of multimodal transport. These include the lack of relevant interconnections between transport modalities including a serious under-exploitation of existing multimodal facilities, the lack of harmonization of technical standards and redundant and complex cross-border procedures.

Moreover, there are uneven levels of performance and service quality among modes, not well defined levels of liability and a lack of transparency and information about multimodal services. As a result, mode-independent and seamless door-to-door passenger and freight transport is largely still underdeveloped.

PPs retained that the impact of the results of the SEE Programme was extremely relevant because it covers big geographical area and improves transport connectivity and cooperation of national and local actors.

b) Engaging Key Stakeholders

Involvement of stakeholders and competent bodies within SEE projects was proven quite good by the partners, though many of them (above all Ministries and other national stakeholders) showed significant difficulties during the implementation (financial and administrative, mainly, but also a certain unpreparedness of procedures enabling them to efficiently make use of EU funds) with a high number of withdrawals.

In order to properly address the objective of an improvement of multimodal actions in relation to the SEE transport network, the capitalisation process within the thematic pole should take into consideration the main actors, who compose the multimodal transportation system:

- Planning layer refers to various approaches that are available for analysing, understanding and planning the complicated structures of multimodal transport systems in terms of flows, operations and multimodal facilities.
- Institutional/organizational layer is a framework for harmonizing approaches at national and international level and for illustrating how actors and stakeholders interact.
- Operational and information layer refers to the application of innovative processes, techniques and information and communication technologies, including machine-to-machine communications, cooperative and collaborative systems. Recent advances highlight the possibilities offered for transforming highly hierarchic information systems into more horizontal architectures of local networks inter-connected with each other.

c) Future Thematic Approach

The cohesion and optimization of transport networks in South East Europe (SEE) relies to a large extent on competitive and multimodal transport systems. Taking into account the need for urgent measures that will contribute to overcoming the current economic downturn, together with the opportunity of creating a viable transport platform in the SEE area, a simultaneous effect of a reinforcement and an enlargement of the multimodal transport system in SEE is considered to be a pre-condition for creating a strong improvement in terms of efficiency, sustainability and quality of service of the transport systems operations.

In this context, the new programmes should primary focus on multimodal passenger and freight transport, as well as on their interactions and interdependencies, in the context of creating innovative systems and platforms with regional, national and international actors that can integrate the operations of various related players from the SEE area.

PPs pointed out the need to continue with a corridor approach, with network effect taking into account the access to primary network (divisions between TEN-T and past project). As for the future funding programmes, the participants agreed that the focus should be on implementation of freight and passenger services, traffic management and ITS solutions for all transport modes and small scale infrastructure investments. Moreover, the parallel effort for extending the EU transport networks to the Western Balkans can ultimately contribute

to the creation of a coherent rail and road network in the whole Europe allowing a stronger network effect and improving the SEE multimodal facilities.

Eliminating existing barriers for the development of multimodal door-to-door seamless passenger and freight transport, and thereby promote a greater use of environmentally friendly modes of transport should be the aim of the future programmes. By improving the performance of individual transport modes (e.g. rail, road and waterborne), by increasing the interfaces among these modes (multimodality) transport and by offering, where appropriate, effective alternatives, multimodality will contribute to improved performance of the transport systems overall and to the reduction of the impacts of over utilized single-modal networks (resulting to congested conditions). Performance improvements, the full internalization of external costs, the promotion of multimodality and the integration of innovative multimodal transport solutions are part of an overall strategy for sustainable mobility.

As far as multimodality and TEN-T connectivity is concerned, focus should be on short-term investments and cross borders bottlenecks. PPs suggested pilot services (installations) and joint services model as an instrument for reaching increased accessibility and connectivity in SEE region. Harmonization of procedures and operative stakeholders were identified as important objectives that could be realized by conducting dedicated studies on specific issues (freight train/border control, cross border nodes) and by harmonization of timetables, databases and services. Current transport models and traffic analysis, elaborated within the current SEE programme, deserve to be deepened and further implemented in the next programme on the basis of the already obtained results.

d) Practical Implementation Considerations

Regarding the Cross fertilization activities, PPs underlined the need of cooperation between projects at an early stage – to be foreseen by the new Programmes - which could be realized through organization of dedicated events by same PP. The need of identification of concrete measures for capitalization (joint database, events, promotion) was also recognized as a very important subject for PPs.

Regarding Intern coordination, PPs emphasized the need for improvement of inter institutional (horizontal) and multilevel partners (vertical) coordination (national, regional, national agencies, municipalities, EC, etc.), in order to be more project (implementation) oriented.

Coordination among two upcoming programmes as well as with currently existing programmes is identified as extremely important in terms of harmonized objectives based on a thematic approach, having in mind ERDF 20% rule and conditionality based on existing results.

3.4.2 Workshop 2: Regional Mobility

a) Identify the results of the SEE Programme and analyse their impact

The analysis of the effectiveness of the SEE Programme in tackling regional mobility and the accessibility of the hinterland takes into consideration that most of projects are yet ongoing, and that the impact of their results is not fully deployed, but it is clear that still lot of work has to be done. The SEE Programme and projects have contributed in developing approaches directed to:

- Enabling easy access of travelers to information
- Facilitating the use of public transport – seamless access to services
- Testing efficient new combinations of sustainable transport modes for special categories of passengers like tourists
- Harmonizing passengers rights and quality standards on transport infrastructures and services
- Promoting road Safety
- Developing sustainable mobility plans
- Classifying hierarchy of networks / clustering of hubs
- Assessing user needs & Analyzing flows and services
- Recording problems (e.g. in cross border procedures, in regional integration, in national accessibility and transnational interconnectivity)
- Proposing ICT to improve connectivity, safety and quality of life
- Assess ICT impact in optimizing provided services
- Making initial proposals for harmonized procedures & new governance schemes
- Increasing competitiveness of multimodal transport
- Best practices in most cases

b) Engaging Key Stakeholders

The efficiency in the involvement of stakeholders varies very much in relation to stakeholders' type, but the pole members pointed out that the stakeholders have been involved sometimes only on a formal level, postponing the adoption of clear decisions regarding the adoption/modification of norms/regulations, with the project results remaining often only in the form of reports instead of being by adoption and implementation.

The main difficulties showed by the stakeholders and target groups are normally related to the multifaceted administrative and political framework of the regions, and different modality of communication and collaboration, but also to a sort of resistance towards the transnational problems and focus on local scale priorities.

The absence of real coordination and financial support, negatively influenced the involvement of all relevant actors, but it was highlighted that improvements in local professional networks and adequate communication tools and channels are needed.

Involvement of more experienced partners (e.g. from advanced countries) could have a positive effect on the work. Involvement of civil society proved to be also successful to better reach locals.

It was additionally highlighted that the private sector must be much more involved in the projects (not only the transport sector, but also NGOs and Chambers of Commerce and the tourists operators).

c) Future Thematic Approach

The debate around the production of concrete and harmonised inputs for the new transnational cooperation programme Danube and Adriatic Ionian has started by a clear analysis of the problems of the region to be tackled – and not only the results of the current projects and identified with a degradation of the public transport service quality (timetable, speed, information, fare etc.), with the consequence of having a lot of people exposed to the social exclusion, a high number of commuters that consequently moved on the roads creating unacceptable congestion problems, increasing very much the transport externalities, including a strong need for actions related to road safety, but above all the territorial and environmental impact.

To respond to the above situation, 4 enabling elements having vertical dimension have been identified:

- Hubs integration: Efficient integration of modal transport services at major (urban metropolitan level) hubs of the region
- Regions accessibility to hubs: Enhanced according to the region needs (economic activities profile) intermodal mobility options for accessing the hubs
- Intraregional connectivity of mobility networks: High modal services connectivity at national/Transnational level. Efficient distribution of flows to secondary nodes of TEN and elimination of obstacles for service continuity beyond borders
- Users' accessibility to customized services: Provision of mobility services in accordance to the user's needs. Making regions accessible to different users' profiles (specific categories of users).

The priority horizontal activities to be included in the strategy of the new programmes include: an increased use of sustainable modes of transport; aiming to excellence in synergy

of multimodal accessibility, implementation of (transnational) interoperable mobility schemes, smarter mobility, improved accessibility to public transport services, new governance schemes, PPP schemes implementation, education to sustainable mobility, certification of quality of services, safety.

d) Practical Implementation Considerations

The thematic pole has obviously expressed the wish for higher cofinancing, prefinancing and lower administrative burden, which is common to all beneficiaries. Moreover a stronger support for the stakeholders' involvement and organisation through national contact points and programme's JTS, prior to calls announcement and during programme life cycle was also considered as a need.

Follow-up activities or future development and mainstreaming of pilot activities is considered as extremely important, as well as a good programme-level inventory of Best Practices and Stakeholders/Actors that are active in the SEE area on that field.

Accessibility, mobility, connectivity should be supported in a coordinated way by the Danube and the Adriatic Ionian Programmes in the future, to avoid creating new borders inside the consolidated networks:

- The concept of centrally coordinated projects dealing with the same topic has to be realized through innovative concepts, i.e. capitalization projects under co financing of different programmes.
- Support for transport topics cross-fertilization of partnerships from areas of different programmes
- For some coherent macro-region like the Carpathians it will be more difficult, even impossible, to find some fitting program area
- The topic in each Programme should be tailored to the common identified problems of the respective area as follows:
 - Accessibility of remote areas not involved into PT services
 - Shrinking financial support from the side of central governments
 - Generally, PT is not an attractive travel option
 - Underdeveloped PT supply (poor infrastructure)

3.4.3 Workshop 3: Greener Transport Systems

a) Identify the results of the SEE Programme and analyse their impact

Very effective in the field of greening transport systems were until now:

- Available road maps and strategy documents for different kind of green topics,

- Successful demonstration of thematic approaches (e.g. polluter principle) on transnational level,
- Environmental benefits can mostly not be seen immediately during or short-term after a project, but in a long-term.

Additionally following topics have been successfully tackled during the ongoing SEE programming period (not ranked): accessibility, sustainable transport, waste management, capacity building, improved knowledge, awareness and coordination among countries, optimization of services, utilization of existing infrastructural networks, harmonization among SEE countries, prioritization of national initiatives (e.g. national ITS Action plans), environmentally-friendly transport modes and new technologies in transport means.

Less successful has been the impact on (not ranked): green energy & production (e.g. biomass), CO2 emission technologies, promotion of environmental standards, integration of existing systems (e.g. ITS) and internationalization of external costs (externalities also of terminals, river transport and short sea shipping, railway than for road only).

Besides, the POLE-9 members articulated that knowledge transfer is important and needed. For instance, methodologies of SEE projects developed should be made available and easier to identify for further usage.

b) Engaging Key Stakeholders

The pole 9 has highlighted the need to ensure the participation of decision makers on national level (= political level), if not in a compulsory way, at least by facilitating the creation of some platforms for discussion and confrontation with the project team. This could be even foreseen at the level of application and requested as a structure to be implemented on an equal level with other project management instruments.

The projects have anyway expressed satisfaction in their result of involving the decision makers in their projects, with some examples of excellence and some common problems in involving effectively Associated Strategic Partners and Observers.

The POLE-9 members concluded that especially for ship waste, eco management in ports, external costs significant relevant actors could have been better stimulated and attracted.

The involvement of the private sector is crucial for greener transport systems, as the transport sector (road, rail, maritime, inland waterway) is involved in the whole spectrum of transport market activities and includes numerous of private market enterprises, e.g. truck/railway/vessel operator, port/terminal operators, forwarding agents etc. needed for project pilot tests and future implementations.

The private sector involvement in pilot projects is essential, as well as an increase sense of responsibility and ownership by them; this shall be however based on secured funding. Of course public entities have to be considered as final users, this especially in the field of traffic infrastructure.

c) Future Thematic Approach

The POLE-9 members did discuss and rank following sub investment priorities of the investment priority 7c as following:

1. Environment-friendly transport systems,
2. Low-carbon transport system,
3. Promoting sustainable urban mobility,

With regard to the sub investment priority “promoting sustainable urban mobility”, the POLE-9 members preferred to a) ensure transport connectivity meaning environmentally-friendly transports, which require the involvement of all “corridors” and “regions” and b) multimodal logistics chains and c) interoperable single modes.

Beyond the thematic object 7 “Promoting sustainable transport and moving bottlenecks in key network infrastructures”, the POLE-9 members suggested to address also on following other affine investment priorities for greener transport systems:

7a, as transport corridors are essential for all transport systems and hubs; 6a, as greener transport systems cover also waste themes for all modes; 6b, as water is an important element for transport, see maritime and inland waterways; 6d, as transport and logistics is also affecting green infrastructures and nature incl. emissions; 5b, as during transport operations accidents or along traffic infrastructure disasters may happen.

For what concerns the ranking of priority topics to be tackled in the future, the pole identified the following:

- Green corridor, and, within this cluster, the topic “Green traffic and transport infrastructure management”;
- Green transport systems, and, within this cluster, the topic “Increase of efficiency of transport systems (by avoiding empty runs and increasing load factor)”, “Green vehicles and vessels”, “Transport related waste management programme”(It should be noted that in this case the term “transport systems” could be used referring not only exclusively to transport modes but also in the whole transport system and transport system operation in general.);
- Green hubs, and, within this cluster, the topic “Promotion, adoption and benchmarking: environmental management systems, certification and standards”; “Usage of ICT technologies for optimizing processes and reducing resources”.

d) Practical Implementation Considerations

Besides the common proposal for reduction of the administrative burden and improvement of funding rate and prefinancing, some original elements were highlighted by the pole in respect to the practical implementation.

A stronger focus on “added value evaluation” of activities implemented, instead of classical “cost control approach” was suggested.

Besides common promotion events among different projects, cross-fertilization events – also with other financial instruments - needs be addressed since the beginning.

All POLE-9 members agreed to make use of the so-called “20%-Partner” rule, to enable the involvement of project partners outside the future programmes (e.g. Danube, Adriatic Ionian) to keep on cooperating within the networks established during the current programming period and beyond.

3.4.4 Workshop 4: Access to Quality ICT

a) Identify the results of the SEE Programme and analyse their impact

Eight (8) projects out of 25 projects listed under SEE priority "Improvement of accessibility" are targeting the digital divide and have the potential to be effective in improving one or more priorities of the ERDF thematic objective "Enhancing access to and use of quality of ICT". However, it is not easy to assess the results of those projects or analyse the impact without a proper impact assessment analysis and due to the fact that the majority of projects are in the middle of implementation.

Topics of the aforementioned projects are sorted in relation to enhancing Access and Use of quality ICT investments priorities as defined in the document COM(2011)614:

- extending broadband deployment and the roll-out of high-speed networks
 - Management of the networks (policy, technical approach, PPP models, deployment costs),
 - Broadband in external/internal digital dividend (Use of DVB-T/T2 to deliver Internet content, Broadband gap in rural, Speed up analogue/digital switch-off,
 - Exchange of experiences, consultation processes and coordination of policies and strategies related to the development of broadband infrastructures.
- developing ICT products and services, e-commerce and enhancing demand for ICT;
 - Delivering support IT applications for SEE stakeholders,
 - Cloud-based, virtualised IT platforms & infrastructures (Feasibility, roll-out plans...)
 - Common policy on joint, cross-border cloud provision to serve the needs of SEE administrations
- strengthening ICT applications for e-government, e-learning, e-inclusion and e-health.
 - e-Learning services, new training concepts based on ICT (unique harmonised training systems, Deploying e-learning).

Additional topics of the SEE projects not directly related to the investments priorities as defined in the document COM(2011)614 but in line with the following goals of the Digital Agenda:

- 2.4. Fast and ultra fast internet access & 2.6. Enhancing digital literacy, skills and inclusion
 - Internet content for non-connected users,
 - Internet content for people not using personal computers,
 - Digital divide,
- 2.7.5 Intelligent Transport Systems for efficient transport and better mobility
 - Support of efficient infrastructure management and traveller information on TERN (Trans European Road Network),
 - Co-operation and interoperability between isolated ITS,
 - Harmonisation of ITS specifications and definition of generic collaboration model,

b) Engaging Key Stakeholders

SEE programme has made an enormous effort to include decision makers/final beneficiaries in the project implementation. In many cases however decision makers have shown an insufficient level of engagement and commitment in the process of the project implementation (in participation of events, sharing information to the general public, sharing information for the project data gathering etc.).

This is why civil participation needs to increase in the future program activities especially in some IPA but also in ERDF countries, where their participation was not fully exploited in the past period, reducing the impact of the SEE results (at least from the point of view of the wider public).

However, also between projects of this thematic pole experiences are different: in some cases stakeholders do not actually engage in the project either due to their lack of time or because they do not want to make their own data available to project partners; private companies have shown a lack of interest in participation, some of the public bodies/agencies which are a part of the stakeholder group have proven a remarkable dedication in project goal achievement, but some who actually have a greater benefit of the project and are more relevant to it have not been interested for cooperation.

Transnational approach has been successful in stimulating the cooperation of actors of different kinds, amongst others universities, municipalities and companies at a transnational level. This cooperation process does reflect the transnational character of the problem since the improvement of virtual accessibility is not an individual country issue. The transnational cooperation approach is moreover a great opportunity for the countries to share knowledge and learn from each other and it's crucial for further development of ICT at a regional level.

c) Future Thematic Approach

The members of thematic pole 10 of SEE programme share a perception of lack of interoperability, lack of investments in networks, insufficient research and innovation effort

and lack of digital literacy and skills in the SEE region. According to the reports the South East European economies still lag considerably behind the developed European economies and given the fact that the SEE programme area includes 16 countries among some of them are old EU MS, new MS and countries to become EU MS, the cooperation on the regional level is essential to be able to reach the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy.

Regarding the transnational cooperation aspect of the elements of **Thematic objective 2** (ERDF draft regulation), the pole highlights that investment priority (c) *“Strengthening ICT applications for e-government, e-learning, e-inclusion and e-health, has a strong transnational aspect. The level of development of e-government, e-learning, e-inclusion and e-health in the SEE region is highly unbalanced. Considering the diversity of countries where some have better developed services, sharing the knowledge and experiences would improve the overall situation in this macro economical region.*

The investment priority a) of the **Thematic Objective 2** group would be *“Extending broadband deployment and the roll-out of high-speed networks”* addresses the root for any further development of the information society. The development of regional and rural broadband infrastructures is facing difficulties related to the economy of scale and market demand. New opportunities in the released spectrum after analogue to digital switch-off in terrestrial television sector seemed to be an answer to the technical challenge to deliver broadband to rural areas. Considering the emerging of the second digital dividend, intensive regional harmonization and cooperation will be needed.

In addition to the above, it should be pinpointed that finally **all thematic objectives and investment priorities require the use or development of ICT** as a foundation for providing advanced services, tools, methods and approaches; thus in any case **ICT should be considered as a horizontal objective for all of them.**

d) Practical Implementation Considerations

The pole highlights some good successes of the SEE Programme, such as the capacity to involve different types of beneficiaries, the integration of the partners from IPA countries and the good efficiency in procedures, from application to reimbursements, in addition to the good cooperation spirit of the Programme bodies.

Some weaknesses are also highlighted, to be corrected, as for example the long procedure for application of the two-step approach and the time consuming administrative procedures.

Among the suggestions for the future, the pole members include a stronger involvement of the National Contact Point, in the process of communication with the regional, national and local stakeholders (i.e. thematic events), to strengthen the approach towards capitalisation of results of the projects along the whole programme life and the promotion of projects' results.

Some suggestions related to the control procedure are common to the request of all thematic poles.

In addition to it, the pole members look forward to the proper coordination across programs insisting on the same region.

4. Annex 1

MAIN AREAS	THEMATIC OBJECTIVES	Investment Priorities	SEE AREAS OF INTERVENTION
SMART SEE (Innovation)	Strengthening research, technological development and innovation	a) enhancing research and innovation infrastructure (R&I) and capacities to develop R&I excellence and promoting centres of competence, in particular those of European interest;	1.1 Develop technology and innovation networks in specific fields
		b) promoting business R&I investment, product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation and public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialization;	1.2 Develop the enabling environment for innovative entrepreneurship
		c) supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production in Key Enabling Technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies	1.3 Enhance the framework conditions and pave the way for innovation
	Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs	a) promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms;	1.2 Develop the enabling environment for innovative entrepreneurship
		b) developing new business models for SMEs, in particular for internationalization;	1.2 Develop the enabling environment for innovative entrepreneurship
	Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors	a) promoting the production and distribution of renewable energy sources;	2.4 Promote energy and resource efficiency
b) promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy use in SMEs;		2.4 Promote energy and resource efficiency 1.2 Develop the enabling environment for innovative entrepreneurship	
c) supporting energy efficiency and renewable energy use in public infrastructures and in the housing sector;		2.4 Promote energy and resource efficiency 3.1 Improve coordination in promoting, planning and operation for	

SUSTAINABLE SEE (Environment)			primary and secondary transportation networks 4.1 Tackle crucial problems affecting metropolitan areas and regional systems of settlements
		d) developing smart distribution systems at low voltage levels;	2.4 Promote energy and resource efficiency
		e) promoting low-carbon strategies for urban areas;	2.4 Promote energy and resource efficiency 4.1 Tackle crucial problems affecting metropolitan areas and regional systems of settlements
	Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management	a) supporting dedicated investment for adaptation to climate change;	2.2 Improve prevention of environmental risks
		b) promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems	2.2 Improve prevention of environmental risks
	Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency	a) addressing the significant needs for investment in the waste sector to meet the requirements of the environmental acquis;	2.2 Improve prevention of environmental risks
		b) addressing the significant needs for investment in the water sector to meet the requirements of the environmental acquis;	2.1 Improve integrated water management and transnational flood risk prevention
		c) protecting, promoting and developing cultural heritage;	4.3 Promote the use of cultural values for development
		d) protecting biodiversity, soil protection and promoting ecosystem services including NATURA 200015 and green infrastructures;	2.3 Promote cooperation in management of natural assets and protected areas
		e) action to improve the urban environment, including regeneration of brownfield sites and reduction of air pollution.	4.1 Tackle crucial problems affecting metropolitan areas and regional systems of settlements
	Enhancing access to and use and quality of ICT	a) extending broadband deployment and the roll-out of high-speed networks;	3.2 Develop strategies to tackle the “digital divide”
		b) developing ICT products and services, e-commerce and enhancing demand for ICT;	3.2 Develop strategies to tackle the “digital divide”
		c) strengthening ICT applications for e-government, e-learning, e-inclusion and e-health;	4.1 Tackle crucial problems affecting metropolitan areas and re-

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ACCESSIBLE SEE (ICT and Transport)			gional systems of settlements 4.2 Promote a balanced pattern of attractive and accessible growth areas 3.2 Develop strategies to tackle the “digital divide”
	Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infra-structures	a) supporting a multimodal Single European Transport Area by investing in the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) network;	3.1 Improve coordination in promoting, planning and operation for primary and secondary transportation networks 3.3 Improve framework conditions for multi-modal platforms
		b) enhancing regional mobility through connecting secondary and tertiary nodes to TEN-T infrastructure;	3.1 Improve coordination in promoting, planning and operation for primary and secondary transportation networks 3.3 Improve framework conditions for multi-modal platforms
		c) developing environment-friendly and low-carbon transport systems and promoting sustainable urban mobility;	2.4 Promote energy and resource efficiency 3.1 Improve coordination in promoting, planning and operation for primary and secondary transportation networks 4.1 Tackle crucial problems affecting metropolitan areas and regional systems of settlements
		d) developing comprehensive, high quality and interoperable railway system;	3.1 Improve coordination in promoting, planning and operation for primary and secondary transportation networks
INCLUSIVE SEE (Employment,	Promoting employment and supporting labour mobility	a) development of business incubators and investment support for self-employment and business creation;	1.2 Develop the enabling environment for innovative entrepreneurship
		b) local development initiatives and aid for structures providing neighbourhood services to create new jobs, where such actions are outside the scope of Regulation (EU) No [...] /2012 [ESF];	4.1 Tackle crucial problems affecting metropolitan areas and regional systems of settlements 4.2 Promote a balanced pattern of attractive and accessible growth areas

Demographic change, Sustainable Growth cities)		c) investing in infrastructure for public employment services.	4.1 Tackle crucial problems affecting metropolitan areas and regional systems of settlements 4.2 Promote a balanced pattern of attractive and accessible growth areas
	Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty	a) investing in health and social infrastructure which contribute to national, regional and local development, reducing inequalities in terms of health status, and transition from institutional to community-based services;	4.1 Tackle crucial problems affecting metropolitan areas and regional systems of settlements 4.2 Promote a balanced pattern of attractive and accessible growth areas
		b) support for physical and economic regeneration of deprived urban and rural communities;	4.1 Tackle crucial problems affecting metropolitan areas and regional systems of settlements 4.2 Promote a balanced pattern of attractive and accessible growth areas
		c) support for social enterprises.	4.1 Tackle crucial problems affecting metropolitan areas and regional systems of settlements 4.2 Promote a balanced pattern of attractive and accessible growth areas