

**GIG Regional Alliance**

Planning a Good Alliance



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# Planning a Gig Alliance

The establishment of a GIG Regional Alliance is a long-term process requiring high commitment from all stakeholders as well as excellent project management. For this reason, good planning is necessary to lay down the foundation for a successful partnership.

This planning includes:

*A: Project Management plan that shows how much time will be needed to create the inter-regional alliance and what milestones need to be achieved along the way (time schedule)*

A project management plan for the entire project is a must. Not only does it help to get a precise idea of how long it will take to finish each single project step. It will also be helpful to calculate financial needs and distribute tasks within the project team. Apart from that, it also shows potential partners until when project results can be expected and underlines the seriousness of the project. A well thought out project management plan can be considered a strong signal to convince prospective stakeholders to become actively involved in the alliance.

It is also important to configure the project management plan in line with events that may determine whether or not the project is successful. This means for example, that if funding is needed to financially support the establishment of an alliance, the project management plan must take funding cycles into consideration. If the project relies on funding but no funding is accessible momentarily, it will not be initiated. This may scare off potential stakeholders and partner regions, thus putting the entire project at stake. The same is true for the political agenda. It makes more sense to choose a policy area to become active which already has a high position on the (regional) political agenda as it renders receiving financial support much more probable. Of course, that does not mean that topics outside the political agenda should not be chosen, especially not when the alliance is set-up strong enough to become an agenda setter itself. However, it is important to be aware of the consequences that come along when dealing with problems that are not part of the political agenda of a region as e.g. receiving financial support and finding partners may become much more complicated.

*B: A precise idea of the necessary budget (financial plan)*

Clearly, it should be the goal to achieve the most with the least money available in any kind of project. As the establishment of an alliance requires human as well as many other types of resources, an idea of how much financial input is needed to realise the project is of critical importance. For this reason a detailed financial plan is a mandatory feature that may determine the outcome of the project. In many European regions a fair amount of funding opportunities, be it at local, regional, federal or even EU level are available. Therefore, to stay informed about these funding opportunities, the conditions that need to be met to qualify for them, deadlines etc. are of high importance in terms of financing the project. If no funding is available, it is also possible to gather financial support within the intra-regional alliance. However, also this alliance needs to be created first. Further, it will always be harder to convince possible stakeholders and partners if, aside from their time, they also need to financially contribute to the project.

*C: The selection of a good team that will have enough commitment and endurance to make the project a success (team)*

The selection of a good team is maybe the most important part of the planning process. Therefore, it should be carefully considered how many people and what types of qualifications (including social skills) are needed to establish the alliance. It is important to keep in mind that for the inter-regional alliance, in most cases, at least a fair level of English is required to build up a proper communication with prospective partners. Last but not least, good intercultural skills are needed to be able to cooperate with partners from different cultural backgrounds.

*D: An analysis of possible obstacles that might prevent the alliance from being established (obstacles)*

No project will be realised without any problems. This is especially true for transnational inter-regional co-operations. Hence, spending some time to think of possible obstacles that may be hindering the establishment of the alliance is already the first step to avoid them. However, not everything can be anticipated and thought of in advance as e.g. problems evolving from cultural differences or puzzling bureaucratic processes. Nonetheless, a good preparation will certainly speed up alliance building preventing many problems already in advance.

However, if conflicts between partners evolve a way to settle them must be found quickly. Usually misunderstandings due to language barriers, different working methods, cultural differences, etc. are the main cause of any conflict. To settle these conflicts the “appointment” of a moderator can be highly useful. Typically, the lead partner of the project is ideal to function as moderator. Hence, it should be clear to all project partners who takes on this responsibility within the project. As a matter of fact, all project partners need to know that there is a moderator, who can be contacted for any kind of problem at any time.

On the other hand, it must be clear to the moderator to take on a neutral point of view to all conflict parties. It is important to point out that transparent communication to each partner is a must do to settle any kind of conflict. Furthermore, it is up to the moderator to identify the main reason for the conflict and to get the conflicting parties together to discuss and solve their problems. Usually, problems can be solved easier than expected once the conflicting parties exchange their views on the subject matter being responsible for the existing conflict. However, the moderator can also make suggestions to solve the conflict at stake, if the conflicting partners are not able to identify adequate solutions their selves.