



I. Cooperation with the EU

EU PROGRAMMES FOR CITIES AROUND THE BALTIC SEA - UBC Project Manager reports

During the last years, the Baltic Sea region has got more into the focus of the interest of the Commission of the EU. This is reflected in the increase of funding and programs available for local and region authorities in the region.

It is difficult to have an overview of the new possibilities. New programs are implemented, and old ones phased out, but as a general there is a steady increase.

This article intends to give an overview of the EU programs available for cities and other local and regional authorities.

In addition to these, there is a number of EU programs where local authorities are not the main targets. LIFE, the EU program for environment, is heavily engaged in the Baltic Sea, and the UBC Commission on Environment has been granted funding from LIFE.

In general, the funding for the projects with cities and regions in the Baltic States and Poland comes from Phare. Projects where Russian cities can take part are funded from Tacis. The participation of cities from the EU is funded from Directorate-General XIV.

The programs listed in the table below are often combination of these sources, and since the general background and rules differ between Phare, Tacis and DG XIV, many of the rules of the programs are influenced by compromises and the often difficult processes inside the Commission to put the programs together.

There are some fundamental differ-

ences between the programs, depending of the source of money. In programmes that are financed only from Phare or Tacis, the main beneficiary shall be the CEC or NIS partners. However, the reason for the EU partner to engage should be mentioned. Otherwise the Commission might wonder why an EU partner is interested of engaging in projects in eastern Europe.

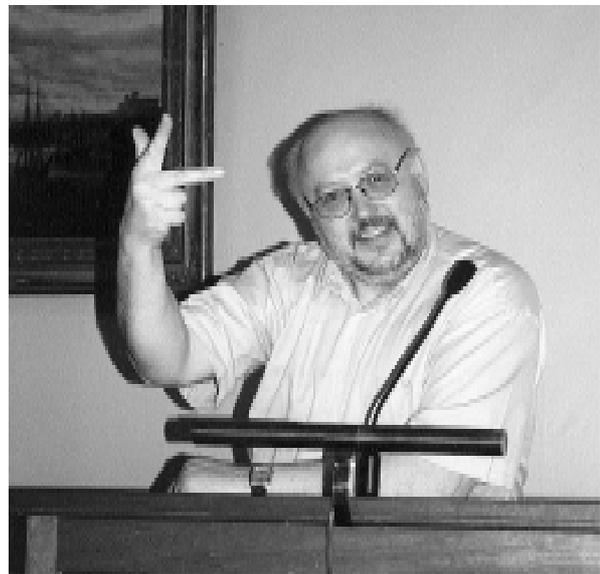
In projects financed by DG XIV, there must be a clear benefit also for the EU partner to engage. The stress is on cooperation, not aid, as in Phare or Tacis financed projects.

The Phare projects should also have a clear connection to the EU enlargement. The focus is set to meet the accession process, only simple aid is not enough. The Commission states, in its Agenda 2000, that:

'The applicant country must have achieved stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities;

It must have a functioning market economy, as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the EU;

It must have the ability to take on



UBC Project Manager in action trying to describe intricacies of the EU programmes.

the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union.'

Even if the criteria for the projects may differ between each program, there are some general, common characteristics that should be met.

In general, emphasis is laid on cooperation and exchange of experiences. Investments can only be a minor part of the project budget. The exchange should concentrate on the such areas that facilitates democratic and economic development. Projects that has the main goal only to fight poverty as such have limited possibilities to be approved.

In general, there are some main characteristics of projects that are approved by the Commission. One such



is innovative actions. It is clear that when experts in Brussels evaluate maybe 100 applications, and spend maybe 45 minutes on each application, the projects that in some way or another stand out as being more interesting than others have greater chances to catch the eyes of the experts. As one expert told me, if you have read 25 applications on Business Development Centres or Waste management, and find one that have "something special", it is more likely that you feel more interested.

An other good aspect is a "bottom-up" perspective. The projects should be concrete and practical. Also, projects that could give experiences also to others have an advantage. It is very difficult to get approval of a project that is so unique to a special

place, that dissemination of experiences have limited meaning.

The experts, who are never known beforehand, have a very strong influence on which projects will be chosen. Only if the experts recommend more projects than there is money, the commission makes its own selection.

The guidelines for each program are very extensive and should be read with care. The guidelines for the smallest programs, BSPF Micro and Tacis CBC Micro, covers 20 pages, loaded with information. In addition to that, there are 10 pages of detailed guidelines on how to fill the forms, which in turn are minimum 23 pages. However, if read carefully, the guidelines and instructions are of great help when preparing the application.

The table below shows the main programs that are aimed at cooperation between local or regional authorities, and where cities can cooperate.

The Interreg IIC differs somewhat from the other programs in many respects. In terms of funding available it will be the largest, 24 million Ecu for EU partners. Also the time-perspective is longer, the projects may continue for one or two years into the next millennium.

Additional funding for Interreg IIC CEC or NIS partners must come from Phare. This process is not yet clear, and at the UBC Board Meeting in Kotka, the Board member cities urged to write to the Phare authorities in their respective countries in order to show the demand for funding for Interreg also for CEC and NIS countries.

Also the CREDO programme differs in the sense that an EU partner in the project is not needed.

Program	EU Contribution	Maximum EU contribution
BSPF-Micro, Tacis CBC Micro	< 10 000 ECU	80%
European Twinning Grant	< 20 000 ECU	77%
Tacis Twinning Grant		
CREDO	< 50 000 ECU	80 - 90 % (depending on project)
Phare Micro/Ecos Ouverture II	< 50 000 ECU	80, 75, 50% (depending on partner)
BSPF (Phare)	<100 000 ECU	80 %
Tacis CBC SPF	<200 000 ECU	80 %
Ecos-Ouverture II	<500 000 ECU	80, 75, 50% (depending on partner)
Interreg IIC	Not decided	

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