



**«The potential of integration in the delivery of Services of General Interest (SGI)»  
 Proceedings of the Final conference of the INTESI project, 9<sup>th</sup> of October 2018,  
 Innsbruck (Austria)**

Services of General Interest (SGI) are services that public authorities consider as being of general interest and, therefore, subject to specific public service obligations. Provided by either the state or the private sector, they include such things as public transport, postal services and healthcare. SGI have a significant impact on both the quality of life of a given population and on how attractive an area is for economic development. Their supply, quality, accessibility and affordability are crucial to overcoming social exclusion and preventing decreasing populations in rural and mountainous areas. Within the INTESI project, co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund through the Interreg Alpine Space programme and the Swiss New Regional Policy (NRP) 10 partners from 5 countries, worked to overcome the usual sectoral approach to delivering SGI by promoting better coordination and inclusion into integrated territorial strategies. The INTESI results were presented during the final conference on the 9<sup>th</sup> of October in Innsbruck presenting on how synergies across SGIs can be created by an integrated, territorial approach.

In the following sections the content of the interviews and plenary discussions are summarised. The INTESI project shows that an integrated territorial approach of service delivery (see also figure below) – implementing the steps of data analysis, awareness raising, collaborative meetings and elaboration of a strategy in a cooperative way (different actors, administrative levels etc.) - works best on an intercommunal/regional level. It is very ambitious to anchor such an integrative concept on a supraregional or even national level due to the fact that ministries are often strictly organised and also financed in a very sectoral perspective.

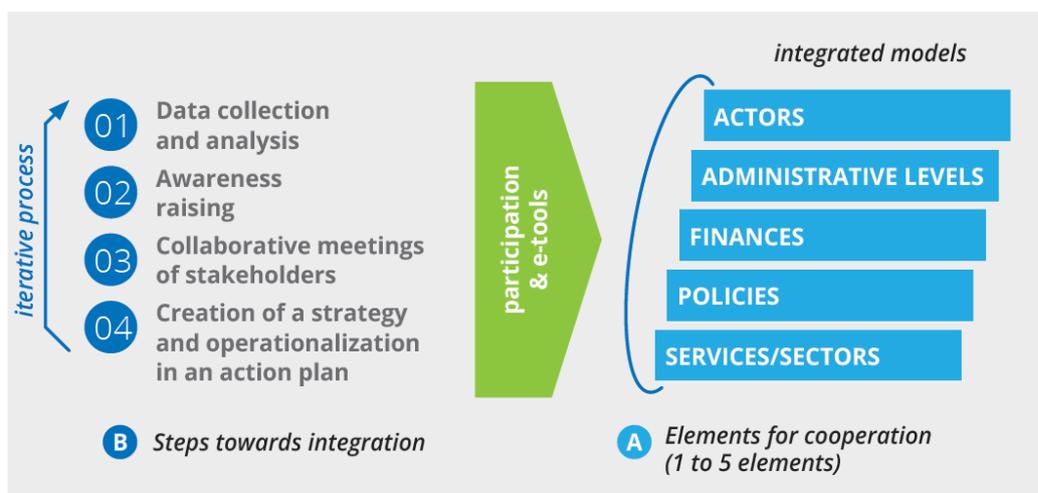


Figure: The INTESI approach to SGI integration (Intesi handbook)

However, there are many ways to remedy this situation. The subsidiarity in the service delivery has to be strengthened so that the “higher” political level gives more room to manoeuvre to the “lower” local and regional levels. In this way, the base for intermunicipal cooperation, coproduction and codesign as well as fetching of creative potentials is provided and the local level can really assure its role as playground for innovative solutions in integrated, territorial service delivery. The regional management plays a key role in the moderation of these processes. The output are integrated solutions that use synergies between different sectors and providers and create a benefit for all users. This added value for the user must be in the focus of interest of any project, the question; “who is providing the service”, is of second priority. multioperability (different operators), interoperability (cooperation of different systems) and intermodality (combining different modes of transport) are necessary elements to ensure a seamless service delivery. New technologies offer great opportunities in service delivery; nevertheless, we should always be aware of differences in culture, mentality and ability in the context of acceptance and adaptation of new tools and applications. In a bottom up approach, the “higher levels” can learn from experiences on the ground and the participants of the conference do believe that over a certain lapse of time, integrative cooperation becomes more and more possible even on a national level. Besides of strengthening subsidiarity, the integrative approach needs human resources (eg. an SGI coordinator) a good infrastructure (eg. broadband infrastructures) and therefore additional programmes with funding opportunities that also allow a certain degree of experimentation (eg. seed money/risk capital). The freshly introduced community-led local development (CLLD) initiatives of the EU go into the right direction. The same is true for the already well established Leader projects that enable integrative project implementation on an intercommunal/regional level. The Macroregional Strategy is an effective tool for the dissemination of the INTESI approach and the integration of the INTESI think tank into the AG5 contributes well to its development. It has been confirmed by the participants that the transnational cooperation through programmes such as the Alpine Space programme is decisive for sharing good practices and to raise funding.

Furthermore the plenary members underlined the role of spatial development in integrated, territorial SGI delivery. In some partner countries national spatial plans or strategies do foresee horizontal and vertical integration and even the possibility to develop regional spatial plans. On one hand, it is recommended that the INTESI results could be integrated into overall spatial Masterplans. On the other hand, a better implication of the regional management would be fruitful on a regional level.

In the future, the question of; “how to bring strategies of integrated, territorial service delivery to a higher level and how to develop viable, cost effective economic models to overcome shortcomings in SGI”, must be in the center of interest.

*INTESI is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund through the Interreg Alpine Space programme. For further information please refer to <http://www.alpine-space.eu/projects/intesi/en/home>*