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## Knowledge management in Interreg cross-border cooperation: A project perspective

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**SIMAT Arbeitspapiere**

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# Knowledge Management in Interreg Cross-Border Cooperation – a Project Perspective

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Susanne Marx

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Hochschule Stralsund  
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Die „SIMAT Arbeitspapiere“ dienen einer möglichst schnellen Verbreitung von Projekt- und Forschungsergebnissen des SIMAT. Die Beiträge liegen jedoch in der alleinigen Verantwortung der Autoren und stellen nicht notwendigerweise die Meinung der Hochschule Stralsund bzw. des SIMAT dar.

# Knowledge Management in Interreg Cross-Border Cooperation – a Project Perspective

Susanne, Marx<sup>1</sup>

## Summary:

The management of knowledge in projects delivers benefits, while the implementation of knowledge management is challenged by (project-specific) issues. Based on practice in inter-organizational, cross-border projects funded by the Interreg South Baltic Programme (SBP), this paper analyses the potential value and hindrances of knowledge management in projects funded within Interreg programs.

The SBP mentions repeatedly “Transfer of knowledge and exchange of good practices” as an example activity in the program manual (Interreg South Baltic Programme 2016b, pp. 13, 25, 34, 38), however, dedicated knowledge management processes, tools or plans are not part of the compulsory application for funding nor its assessment.

Knowledge management (KM) can provide value at different levels: to individuals, project partner organisations, the entire programme and even cross-programme as well as other project stakeholders. While KM can support strategy towards building competitive advantage in the programme region, KM processes can enhance the efficiency of project implementation. Worth noting is the impact of KM on individual motivation both for joining a project and for contributing to knowledge exchange.

In the Interreg environment, major challenges of KM are identified as the temporary nature of the projects, the inter-organizational setup, the multinational, geographically dispersed team, the embeddedness in funding regulations and the kind of relations to other projects.

This paper suggests a Knowledge Management Framework of five processes: identify, create, apply, store and share, supported by both Information

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Technology (IT) and project cultural enablers. To stress the importance of knowledge, it proposes to make knowledge management a compulsory part of project development and implementation. It is further recommended to create a dedicated role of a Project Knowledge Facilitator supporting KM processes in the projects and establish a Chief Knowledge Officer in the Program Management Office as a knowledge broker.

Expanding the investigation of knowledge management practices across further Interreg projects and programs presents opportunities for future research.

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**Schlüsselwörter:** Project Knowledge Management, Interreg, EU project, Inter-organizational Cooperation, Cross-border Cooperation, Knowledge Management Framework, Knowledge Management Processes, Project Knowledge Facilitator

**JEL-Klassifikation:** M16, O13, O22, Z39

## Preface

Since 2008, the Stralsund Information Management Team (SIMAT) at Stralsund University of Applied Sciences has developed and implemented various projects funded by the cross-border Interreg South Baltic Programme, as partner or lead partner of the international project teams. The exchange and joint creation of knowledge has always been a driver in project management both for initiators and project partners.

In the projects, various knowledge management tools were used. Wikis and project management software stored explicit knowledge as knowledge repositories. Study visits enabled the project team to learn from tacit knowledge of partners and other experts. Meetings within the project team and with external stakeholders supported practice-based learning by enabling social interaction. An atmosphere of trust, empowerment and no-blame helped knowledge exchange to develop. In a recent project, a workshop had kicked-off project development comparable to a knowledge audit.

Based on that experience with various elements of knowledge management and a review of project knowledge management literature, this paper aims at developing a framework for knowledge management in Interreg inter-organizational, co-operation projects. The findings can serve as a basis for future projects in the Interreg environment to embrace the importance of knowledge management for the benefit of all stakeholders.

This paper summarizes the view and experiences from the perspective of a project partner. The recommendations are not ultimately complete. Feedback and notes on additions are welcome.

Prof. Dr. Michael Klotz

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## Abbreviations

CKO	Chief Knowledge Officer
CoP	Community of Practice
CSF	Critical Success Factor
DG	Directorate-General
EC	European Commission
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
EU	European Union
EUR	Euro
IT	Information Technology
JS	Joint Secretariat
KM	Knowledge Management
Mio	Million
PKM	Project Knowledge Management
PM	Project Management
PMO	Program Management Office
SBP	South Baltic Programme
SBR	South Baltic Region
SECI	Socialisation, Externalization, Combination, Internalisation
SIMAT	Stralsund Information Management Team
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

## 1 Introduction

Knowledge Management (KM) is regarded a key success factor in projects (Gasik 2011). While in the objectivist approach, knowledge results from enhancing data and information in a hierarchical model (Ackhoff 1989), the practice based view takes a broader perception of knowledge embedded in practice and context, thus Davenport and Prusak (2005) define knowledge:

“Knowledge is a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information. It originates and is applied in the mind of knowers.”

(Davenport and Prusak 2005, p.4)

Based on reviewing literature, this report relates knowledge management theory to case study projects, that were developed and managed by Stralsund University of Applied Sciences from 2008 to 2015: BalticMuseums 2.0 and BalticMuseums 2.0 Plus (Figure 1). The projects were follow-up initiatives, both part-financed by the South Baltic Programme under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The purpose of this paper is to develop a suggestion of a knowledge management framework for future Interreg projects, based on theory and practical experience.

Definition of knowledge

Case study projects

Characteristic	BalticMuseums 2.0	BalticMuseums 2.0 Plus
Title	Joint development of cross-border tourism information products by South Baltic Oceanographic Museums	Implementation of eGuides with cross-border shared content for South Baltic Oceanographic Museums
Timeframe	2008-2011	2010-2013 (prolongation 2015)
Funding Program	South-Baltic Cross-border Co-operation Programme	South-Baltic Cross-border Co-operation Programme
Budget	Total project budget: 1.14 Mio EUR (ERDF: 0.96 Mio EUR, National co-financing: 0.18 Mio EUR)	Total project budget: 1.12 Mio EUR (ERDF: 0.95 Mio EUR, National co-financing: 0.17 Mio EUR)
Partnership	6 partners (oceanographic museums and universities)	7 partners (oceanographic museums and universities)
Countries of partners	Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Russia	Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Russia, Sweden
Lead Partner	Stralsund University of Applied Sciences	Stralsund University of Applied Sciences

**Figure 1**  
Overview of the case study projects

Source: Marx (2017)

Projects, funded by the SBP, require cross-border, inter-organizational collaboration with limited funds dedicated to investments and the majority spent on human resources and external expertise. Potential for growth shall be realized by cooperative networks in the region, with “Transfer of knowledge and exchange of good practices” named repeatedly as an example activity in the program manual (Interreg South Baltic Programme 2016b, pp. 13, 25, 34, 38). Thus, knowledge sharing is at the heart of these projects, from which benefits shall be derived.

## 2 Value of Knowledge Management in Interreg Cooperation Projects

### 2.1 Supporting Strategy

Being financed by an Interreg program, the case study projects had to contribute to the strategy of the European Commission (2017) of balanced development of the European Union (EU) region in economic, social and territorial terms. The tangible outputs of the projects were e.g. tourism products to attract more visitors for economic prosperity in the region, that, though contributing to the European Commission (EC) strategy, show in themselves only a short-term impact. The value of such projects, however, can be found in the development and maintenance of inter-organizational knowledge, that supports the ECs strategy if supported by KM processes in the long run.

Inter-  
organizational  
knowledge

### 2.2 Gaining Sustainable Competitive Advantage

With managing knowledge, a process of organizational learning towards building and maintaining strategic capacities is enabled (Mueller 2015). Researchers agree that KM helps to gain and keep sustainable competitive advantage (Davenport and Prusak 2005, Zack 1999, Mueller 2015). Therefore, the value of KM in the case study projects was building sustainability of project results by creating strategic capabilities and thus a competitive advantage not only of one organization but of the region in total. Davenport and Prusak (2005) point out that the nature of knowledge as a source of competitive advantage is a barrier to copying. In contrast to intra-company KM approaches, the knowledge gained in Interreg projects has to be disseminated to external stakeholders, in fact extensive knowledge transfer beyond the projects’ partners increases the value gained from public funding. Sustainability is reached by exponential growth of knowledge by building on existing knowledge (Zack 1999), even more so if transferred and used by

Wide reach by  
transfer to stake-  
holders

many players. Some authors consider KM as part of a resource-based view to build competitive advantage (Zack 1999, Mueller 2015, Grant 1996) with knowledge being a strategic resource generated by the capability of learning. Grant (1996) regards knowledge even as the most valuable strategic resource.

In the inter-organizational case study projects, apart from staff no resources were shared, putting the resource of knowledge incorporated in humans at the center of cooperation. KM is a continuous process, considering that knowing is derived from daily practice (Orlikowski 2002) with dedicated management processes to support, develop, enable interaction and exploit this knowing to build social capital. Based on this knowing of people, applying processes of KM helps to develop intellectual capital (Zack 1999), in the case of the case study projects - of all partner institutions involved and beyond. An additional benefit of KM is innovation (Hanisch *et al.* 2009, Mueller 2015), with the Interreg projects striving to develop new products and services with a cross-border aspect.

Knowledge re-  
sources towards  
innovation

### 2.3 Impact on Motivation

In the case study projects, the participants joined with high personal effort in particular to gain and share knowledge (Swacha *et al.* 2018). The case study projects could not provide financial rewards or direct career advancement to the project team members. However, with KM processes in place, the involved individuals could be motivated by providing room for personal growth and recognition, motivators according to the Herzberg theory (Mullins 2013). Kianto *et al.* (2016) proved in their research, that KM processes had a significant positive impact on job satisfaction, particularly the process of knowledge sharing.

Knowledge sharing  
as personal benefit

### 2.4 Impact on Performance

Moreover, KM could have a positive impact on performance. Productivity can be increased (Hanisch *et al.* 2009, Mueller 2015) by standardizing processes, elimination of ‘re-inventing the wheel’ and continuous improvement. Wiewiora *et al.* (2014) point to the positive impact of tacit knowledge on performance. Considering the geographic dispersion of the case study project team, KM processes become essential for both efficiently generating and exchanging explicit knowledge (e.g. in knowledge depositories) and providing for means to build and use tacit knowledge (e.g. face-to-face meetings).

KM for efficiency

## 2.5 Macro Benefits

In their research on benefits of KM, Yahyapour *et al.* (2015) present three macro benefits. Relating to this in Figure 2, the potential KM benefits in the case study projects are mainly to be found in human capital. KM could lead to increased strategic capabilities in all partner organizations, thus developing sustainable competitive advantage with a larger outreach compared to investments in tangible resources that cannot be shared and disseminated.

Macro benefits	Benefits	Applicable in case study projects (author's experience)	Micro Benefit (author's experience)
Human capital	Training and learning	++	empowerment, upskilling learning curve, share best practices, joint on the job learning, reflection
	Communication and participation	++	improved communication across organisations, collaboration
	Motivation and retention	++	motivational factor for project participants: project content, PM knowledge, language; identification of knowledge capital in partner organisations
Market and consumer relations development	Customer relationship management	+	depends on type of project: e.g. involving users
	Market management	+	enhanced product quality by knowledge sharing on visitor experience, entrance to international markets
Organizational performance	Tangible performance	-	
	Intangible performance	++	improved strategy to meet customer requirements, improved strategy to attract new target groups

**Figure 2**  
KM-Benefits of case study projects

*Adapted from Yahyapour et al. (2015)*

## 2.6 Value in Project Environment

The case study projects were embedded in the Interreg structure. Looking from the perspective of Interact, the Interreg cross-program support, the focus of KM lays on capitalization (Interact 2016) as a process to disseminate project results from all Interreg programs. With distinct KM processes, the case study projects could support this capitalization and thus gain reputation and awareness and some impact on future policies. Interact (2016) supports the transfer and use of the produced results to improve performance. Although capitalization is structured around results and explicit, codified knowledge, Interact follows an additional strand of personalization in KM by building networks, like Communities of Practice (CoP) (Wenger and Snyder 2000), though directed only to programs and not directly to projects.

Interact KM approach

### 3 Challenges of Knowledge Management in Interreg Cooperation Projects

#### 3.1 Major Challenge-Creating Factors

People joining the case study projects were motivated to achieve something they care about in a joint effort, a positive starting point for knowledge processes (Ajmal and Koskinen 2008). However, five specific factors impose various challenges to KM in this environment:

- the temporary nature of the projects,
- the inter-organizational setup,
- the multi-national, geographically dispersed team,
- the embeddedness in Interreg funding regulations and
- the relations to other projects.

#### 3.2 Temporary Nature of Projects

Knowledge develops over time (Hansen *et al.* 1999) in a continuous, ongoing process (Zack 1999, Pemsel and Müller 2012, Rubenstein-Montano *et al.* 2001). As projects are characterized by their time limitation, knowledge processes end with their termination (Pemsel and Wiewiora 2013). KM processes, especially for capturing and codifying knowledge, occurred towards the end of the projects with the final report to be presented. This one-off activity at the crucial finalization stage facing high time pressure can have impact on the quality of captured knowledge. A major challenge for Interreg projects is how to maintain the knowledge related activities after the projects end and the consortium dissolves.

KM as an ongoing process

It is common sense in the literature, that trust enables KM processes to realize full benefits (Hanisch *et al.* 2009, Pemsel and Müller 2012, Mueller 2015, Szulanski 1996). To develop trust takes time, which is challenged by the timeframe of the case study projects of three years. A strong shared project identity can help support communication and coordination (Orlikowski 2002), an important factor to build at the beginning of the project.

Importance of trust

#### 3.3 Inter-organizational Setup

In the case study projects, several organizations joined for cooperation, led by one of the partners. Fostering a culture of encouraging sharing and growth of knowledge is regarded as a major factor for KM to thrive (Pemsel and Müller 2012, Yeh *et al.* 2006, Oliva 2014, Ajmal and Koskinen 2008,

Culture as enabler for KM

Hanisch *et al.* 2009, Chang and Lin 2015). In the inter-organizational setup, a KM approach is challenged by uniting the various cultures of the project partners and stakeholders: different organizational, professional and national cultures and the program culture by the Program Management Office (PMO), the Joint Secretariat (JS) – merging them into a project culture (Ajmal and Koskinen 2008).

The inter-organizational setup limits the project in incentivizing engagement in KM. Although Szulanski (1996) argues that incentivizing itself is not sufficient, various authors regard it an important factor for KM implementation (Hansen *et al.* 1999, Yeh *et al.* 2006, Oliva 2014).

Incentivizing KM engagement

Personality influences knowledge sharing attitude (Matzler *et al.* 2011). Since the various partner organizations of the case study projects decided which staff they dedicate to the project beyond the case study project's influence, thus personal traits could build a challenge for KM.

Personality impact on KM

Top-management support is another key factor for KM success (Hanisch *et al.* 2009, Yeh *et al.* 2006, Gasik 2011). In the Interreg environment, it can be interpreted as support from the lead partner, who can act with leading example in KM. The challenge here lays in ensuring that learning occurs not only with project team members but also in a double-loop learning aspect for long-term strategies of the institutions (Rubenstein-Montano *et al.* 2001). A potential challenge in the inter-organizational setup could be the conflict of interest (Pemsel and Müller 2012). With inter-organizational cooperation, organizational context (Pawlowski and Bick 2012) is complex and linking KM strategy to organizational strategy (Rubenstein-Montano *et al.* 2001, Hansen *et al.* 1999) not directly approachable.

Management support

### 3.4 Multi-national, Geographically Dispersed Team

Different attitudes towards KM processes like fear of loss of face can create a challenge for KM in international teams as can communication in a foreign language (Solli-Saether *et al.* 2015). Taxonomy is key for knowledge codification and reuse (Malafsky and Newman 2010, Hanisch *et al.* 2009, Gasik 2011). Setting up such taxonomy can be a challenge in a multi-national team with different language skills and perceptions.

Language issues

Geographic dispersion resulting into working in a virtual team, imposes additional challenges to KM (Pemsel and Wiewiora 2013), since face-to-face interaction is rare, but important to build trust (Orlikowski 2002) and to enable knowledge identification (Davenport and Prusak 2005). Storing and

IT as enabler



sharing knowledge can be supported by IT as a KM enabler (Hanisch *et al.* 2009, Yeh *et al.* 2006), however, acceptance of the tools can be a limitation.

### 3.5 Embeddedness in Interreg Funding Regulations

The case study projects as EU funded projects have to deliver tangible results (Hachmann 2011), while the intangible nature of knowledge (Reich 2007) requires to measure the value of knowledge in nontraditional ways (Wenger and Snyder 2000) such as stories. The salient challenge is how to measure knowledge as a result of the case study projects, with the program focusing on codification to produce tangible results. Hachmann (2011) demands a discussion on interpreting ‘tangibility’ in the EU context, with generated benefits having non-tangible traits. Allan *et al.* (2004) present an overview for measuring intellectual capital in companies, however, not applied to an inter-organizational setting.

Tangibility of KM

Although installing a no-blame-approach in the project (Ajmal and Koskinen 2008, Hanisch *et al.* 2009) is feasible and was common practice in the case study projects, the lead partner carried full responsibility towards the funding authorities, which might impose budget cuts. This impedes a learning attitude towards failures. By focusing on formal KM mechanisms with mid- and end project review and formal reporting cycles in the SBP, knowledge creation can be limited (Pemsel and Müller 2012). The case study projects thus concentrated on these as deliverables and not on continuously reflecting and capturing lessons learned. The literature points to the poor quality of lessons learned (Pemsel and Wiewiora 2013, Reich 2007).

Formal KM requirements

### 3.6 Relations to Other Projects

From a program view, KM processes should extend across projects. While programs demand codified information from the projects, Pemsel and Wiewiora (2013) found in their research on project managers’ expectations, that the project management office should act as a knowledge broker. In the Interreg environment, the JS as the PMO could take this role. Working on the case study projects, a strong identification developed fostering trust and intra-project knowledge sharing. However, this could impose a challenge for cross-project knowledge sharing, enforced by the competition for funds. Support should be dedicated by the PMO to build an overarching program identification, e.g. building up Communities of Practice (Wenger and Snyder 2000, Cambridge *et al.* 2005), that could motivate for voluntarily contributing to this exchange supporting personal growth and recognition.

PMO as knowledge broker



## 4 Key Components for a Knowledge Management Framework in Interreg Cooperation Projects

A closely related framework is found in the capitalization strategy developed by Interact (2016). However, this framework has a focus on capturing and disseminating project results from the program perspective only, with less emphasis on identifying and creating knowledge. Therefore, the author proposes an alternative KM framework (Figure 3) based on Heisig's (2009) findings resulting into five processes: identify, create, store, share and apply, with enabling system factors such as culture, strategy, management-support and enabling IT. As knowledge is held by knowers (Davenport and Prusak 2005), KM can only manage knowledge via the factors of people (culture), processes and technology (Laiyemo 2014). In the choice of proposed activities drawing on various proposals from the literature (Skymre 2017, Mueller 2015, Cambridge *et al.* 2005, Liebowitz *et al.* 2000), the author suggests a combination working both with explicit and tacit knowledge (Zack 1999) in an interconnected understanding of Nonaka's SECI model (1994).

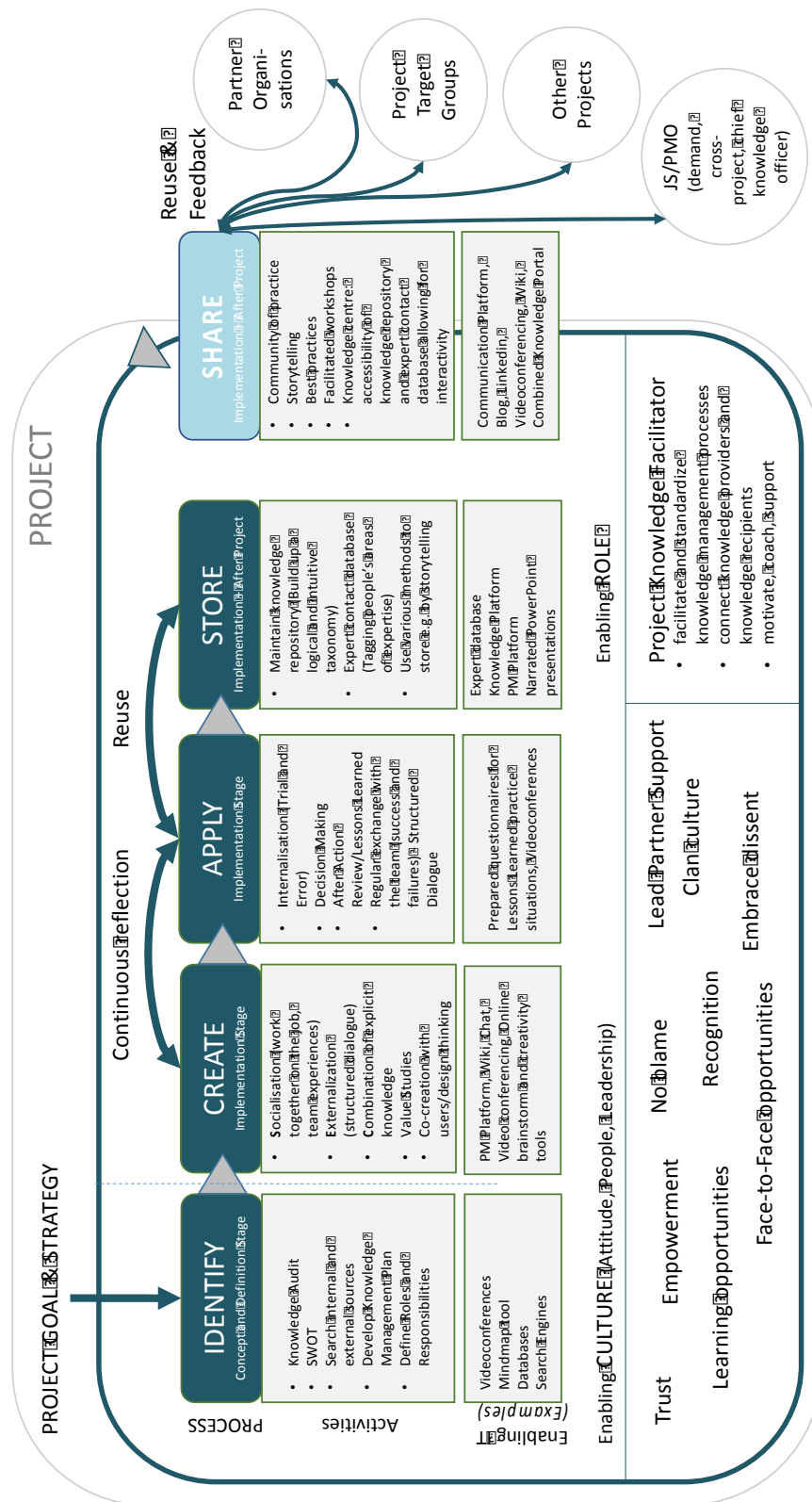
KM framework for  
Interreg projects

Considering that the Interreg projects should serve the PMO and the public with re-usable results, while the projects themselves tried to solve unique problems by collaboration, a combination of codification and personalization in KM processes is recommended (Hansen *et al.* 1999), starting with the overall goal of the project followed by the five processes:

Processes and  
enablers

- Identify,
- Create,
- Apply,
- Store and
- Share (within and outside of the project).

These KM processes require enablers of both technical and cultural nature (see 4.6).



**Figure 3**  
KM-Framework for  
Interreg projects

#### 4.1 Process: Identify

The process to identify knowledge needed and available is strongly related to the goal of the project. Using a KM audit (Liebowitz *et al.* 2000) to identify potential knowledge gaps, Burnett *et al.* (2013) recommend to analyze KM enablers, build and visualize the knowledge inventory and identify the needs. In this process, a SWOT analysis can be recommended to understand the inter-organizational knowledge capacity (Zack 1999). Both project specific and project management knowledge should be examined. Depending on the outcome, the case study projects should exploit know-how in the team (internal) and explore by considering external expertise. This process “Identify” should be conducted during the preparation of the project application, e.g. by a facilitated knowledge audit. The identification process should lead to a KM plan (Gasik 2011) including roles e.g. as KM facilitator to be defined.

KM audit, SWOT,  
KM plan

#### 4.2 Process: Create

The creation of individual, project and inter-organizational knowledge is central to the Interreg projects. A high variety and means of collaboration should allow to profit from all four modes of knowledge conversion, put forward by Nonaka (1994) considering the inextricable links of tacit and explicit knowledge. The project should create room for socialisation to experience on the job together, provide structured dialogue to make tacit knowledge explicit and to use a combination of available explicit knowledge to adapt to the project needs. Value studies and co-creation with users (Zack 1999) in a design thinking approach can drive interdisciplinary creative processes.

Value-study and  
co-creation

#### 4.3 Process: Apply

The Apply-Process is mutually connected with the Create-Process. While applying knowledge, it is adapted to context and especially tacit knowledge is created. Moreover, by installing regular reflection as a way of thinking rather than a one-off activity (Nonaka 1994), the non-static characteristic of knowledge is considered (Zack 1999). Nonaka's (1994) fourth mode, internalization with trial and error converting explicit into tacit knowledge could be allocated in this process. This would require a culture that is truly dedicated to learning from failure and embracing reflection. Regular feedback sessions at project meetings and major milestones could be a means for continuous improvement.

Regular reflection  
and feedback

#### 4.4 Process: Store

A hybrid model, considering both a knowledge repository and peer interaction in storing is recommended (Desouza and Evaristo 2004). For storing, three salient points have to be considered: defining a taxonomy (Malafsky 2010) that allows easy search, considering various media and continuing development and retention of knowledge, e.g. by clear responsibilities. Reich (2007) recommends to continuously capture knowledge for increasing the quality of Lessons Learned.

Repository and  
peer interaction

A potential way also addressing knowing in practice (Orlikowski 2002) is working with Storytelling technique. Narrated stories are mentioned by several authors (Williams 2007, Wenger and Snyder 2000, Nonaka 1994, Swain and Lightfoot 2016) as a means to capture and transfer knowledge. While a well-organized knowledge depository builds the basis not only for efficient access to knowledge in the virtual team, it also builds a basis for reliable documentation towards the PMO. Additionally, tagging team members' expertise in a contact base is recommended. The Store- and the Apply-Process are mutually connected, by reusing stored data and eventually adapting it.

Storytelling for  
KM

#### 4.5 Process: Share

In the case study projects, the KM process of sharing can be considered the most important one, spanning not only over the project but also outside stakeholders. It is thus a boundary process. In addition, this process is iterative and continuously ongoing.

Interacting with  
stakeholders

The Share-Process should receive most attention by the lead partner, as it must satisfy different internal and external stakeholder groups. With this process, double-loop learning can be supported by transferring knowledge (Ajmal and Koskinen 2008) to the project partner organizations and their strategies, as well as to the PMO to promote to the overall Interreg community and as input to policy making.

Next to providing a knowledge center (explicit knowledge), enabling interactive communication with internal and external stakeholders is salient to externalize tacit knowledge and to maintain knowledge. One tool is building communities of practice (Wenger and Snyder 2000), that could help to exchange learnings and experiences with the stakeholders on a voluntary basis. The process should support a feedback loop from external stakeholders that reuse knowledge.

#### 4.6 Enablers

A project environment enabling knowledge processes to grow is a necessary prerequisite (Reich *et al.* 2014). For KM to thrive, people as the holders and creators of knowledge have to be motivated in a knowledge-supporting, sharing culture (Ajmal and Koskinen 2008, Reich 2007). Wiewiora *et al.* (2014) found that a clan culture has a positive impact on trust, which itself is a major prerequisite for knowledge processes to flourish (Nonaka 1994). Clan cultures focus on teamwork, collaboration and empowerment, exploiting tacit knowledge with a sense of informality, which was also found to have a positive impact on knowledge sharing by Pemsel and Müller (2012). It is therefore recommended to develop a clan culture in the case study projects, however, counteracting possible threats of inflexibility and conflict avoidance, by embracing dissent, regular review and preventing groupthink.

Project culture

A dedicated person should support the implementation of the knowledge management processes. For this purpose, Schacht *et al.* (2015a,b) recommend assigning the role of a Project Knowledge Intermediary. Since team members can be unsure of how to capture knowledge, the Project Knowledge Intermediary can provide guidance and semi-structured documents for a level of standardization. Stressing the importance of support, coaching and mediating the knowledge process, this role shall be called Project Knowledge Facilitator in this paper. While other roles such as the project, information and finance manager are demanded and described by the Interreg South Baltic Programme (2016b), a role responsible to facilitate gaining, storing, sharing or reusing knowledge is not mentioned.

Role of Project Knowledge Facilitator

KM processes should be facilitated (Bosch-Sijtsema and Henriksson 2014), relying on empowerment, a no-blame-approach and providing learning opportunities to team members. Especially in an inter-organizational setting, regular face-to-face contacts (live or video) are recommended. Identifying cues for motivation to actively participate in KM processes is crucial, rewarding recognition for engagement should consider personal preferences, in particular in projects spanning various cultures.

Empowerment, no-blame, recognition

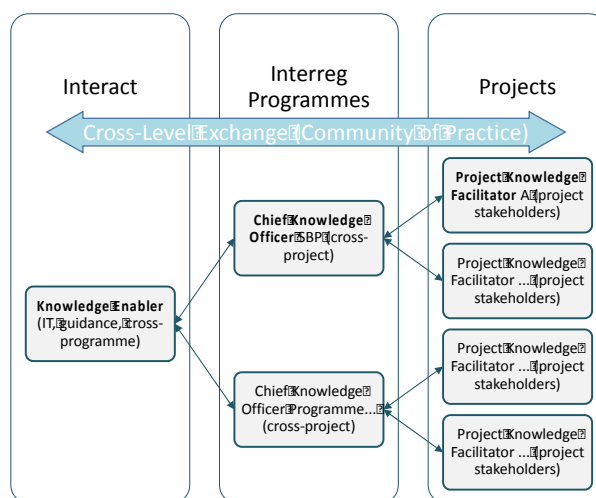
Along all processes, IT is a key enabler (Davenport and Prusak 2005). With a great diversity of tools available, it is important to select intuitive tools integrated in daily working routines (Hanisch *et al.* 2009). Schacht *et al.* (2015b) received positive test results to increase motivation for documenting, sharing and using knowledge, by incorporating gamification elements into a project knowledge management software.

Enabling IT and gamification

#### 4.7 Beyond Project Boundaries

KM from a case study project view has narrow boundaries. For KM value to fully unfold, KM processes of the project have to be embedded into the larger portfolio of Interreg projects, by consistent processes and interaction with the relevant PMO and the coordinating Interact program. However, Interact (2015) stated in its' SWOT analysis the weakness of lack of direct contact with projects. Interact (2017e) claims standards across programs are lacking due to capacity. While this is a complex matter considering the vast number of projects realized, this overarching program could provide IT enablers and facilitating support to projects, that are willing to engage beyond project borders in a knowledge process. This is backed up by the view of the project management office as a knowledge broker (Pemsel and Wiewiora 2013). While the JS as the PMO for the case study projects had an administrative and controlling role, the Interact program could support the role of the knowledge broker, e.g. by extending their established high-level network initiatives to bottom-up approaches, enabled by experience and IT support. This would require to move from a result dissemination, thus capitalization perspective (Interact 2016, Interact 2017b) towards a continuous collaboration and thus process perspective. In workshop series, intending to identify ways to improve the quality of projects, Interact (2017e, p.26) itself suggested to promote the role of the JS “as advisory rather than controlling body”. Schacht *et al.* (2015a) refer to the role of the chief knowledge officer (CKO), with responsibilities of strategic management of knowledge and of implementing a learning culture. These tasks along with facilitating cross-project knowledge processes could be executed by the JS, leveraging the impact of gained knowledge across projects (Figure 4).

From project KM  
to program and  
cross-program KM



**Figure 4**  
KM-Roles for Interreg projects

## 5 Summary and Conclusions

Sustainability is key for EU funded projects, as the European Commission DG Education and Culture (2006) described by the further development of project outcomes after the funding ends, measured by the intensity of activities and the cooperation beyond the project lifetime. KM processes can build the basis to achieve this goal, especially with establishing or participating in communities of practice that have access to maintained knowledge portals.

Sustainability by  
KM

In the version of the guidelines for the application form at the date of this report, KM is not mentioned in the work package for management and coordination (Interreg South Baltic Programme, 2016a). Therefore, it is suggested to include a compulsory description of planned KM processes in project applications of the SBP and the establishment of a role as Project Knowledge Facilitator. To support, the program could not only provide access to former project results, but to PM and KM methods and tools applied by other projects.

Integration in SBP

This report is limited by its project centered view. Further insights could be gained by a systematic research across all stakeholders, especially other projects, the PMO as well as the Interact program. KM processes that are beyond the projects' influence, e.g. ensuring double loop learning in an overall program, are a limitation for the KM model developed.

Limitations

However, with a dedicated approach to KM in an Interreg project, knowledge can be revealed, jointly developed, tested and refined, stored and most importantly shared with a broad community across Europe. The salient point though is to make participants enthusiastic about the topic and enable them to continue this professional exchange after the project ends to reach sustainability.

Opportunities



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AP	Datum	Autor	Titel
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01-09-002	02.2009	M. Klotz	Von der Informationsgesellschaft zum Informationsarbeiter
01-09-003	09.2009	L. Ramin M. Klotz	Aufgaben und Verantwortlichkeiten von IT-Nutzern anhand von COBIT
01-09-004	10.2009	S. Kubisch	Corporate Governance gemäß BilMoG und SOX
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