

District meetings as a tool for successful project management



The core instrument for the management of local activities concerning the European project SINFONIA is the district team and its periodic meetings. The district meetings are organised by the district lead for the local representatives of the project consortium of the demo city of Innsbruck in order to monitor the project progress, provide exchange of information and update about administrative issues.

The district lead of Innsbruck is responsible for the regular meetings (every one to three months) of the consortium partners of the demo city. These meetings follow the purpose to ensure the successful implementation of the project in line with the description of work and the coordination between the tasks of the different work packages. The district lead informs about administrative issues regarding the project implementation (e.g. about the status of the amendment) and coordinates dissemination events like site visits or any other events which involve the partners of the demo city.

SINFONIA is a complex project with a wide range of interdependencies between the partners and, hence, holds a considerable potential for conflicts. Besides the timely realisation of implementation measures the district lead is

responsible for the establishment of a positive working atmosphere and has to manage arising conflicts so that the overall targets come back in the focus of the partners.

vision

The district lead is an additional management and coordination layer on the local level to guarantee the fair and neutral encounter of local partners.

addressed stakeholder groups

- ▶ Municipality of Innsbruck
- ▶ local energy suppliers
- ▶ local building owners
- ▶ local scientific & technical consultants

outreach

30 district meetings over a period of 63 months were held in Innsbruck.

Résumé

Challenges

- ▶ The district lead is responsible for the set-up of management structures that are suitable for all partners. Partners have to follow a common well-defined goal to make them pull together for the overall targets.
- ▶ Most local project partners had no experience with international EU-funded projects. Hence, some partners lacked the understanding for project management procedures like e.g. reporting to the Commission.
- ▶ Team formation and the establishment of good cooperation routines required a significantly high amount of time and mediatory skills in the beginning of the project. However, the opportunity to meet in regular periods led to the increase of trust between the local partners. Trust is a fundamental relational component of European projects that permits to reach shared goals and a coordinated implementation of envisaged activities.

„The district meeting is a persuading tool to exchange information and to get updates about on-going SINFONIA activities, status and progress reports as well as informal exchange between the local partners.“

Hanna Krimm,
University of Innsbruck



District meeting in the refurbished SINFONIA school VS Angergasse

Recommendations

- ▶ The district lead has to be a neutral figure that is not directly involved in any implementation activity. He or she has to function as a mediator between the project partners if necessary.
- ▶ Create a good contact with all the partners on a project as well as on an institutional level.
- ▶ Do not neglect the municipal political players since their backing supports the smooth process of local demonstration measures. Consider that the composition of the council may change during the project term.
- ▶ Make sure to hold a well-balanced discussion between all the participating actors. Do not overstrain your partners - a meeting of three hours was experienced to be the maximum reasonable duration.
- ▶ Get more information [here](#) !

