



The regional signal panel

The first part of this project contained a period where the partners exchanged experiences on the methods they use in the regional strategic development process, and especially if the regions needed new methods or inspiration to see the development processes in different ways.

The exchange of experiences between the partners gave the following directions for the development work within the project:

- 1) The project search to find ways to gather information about the region that looks more into the future, instead of building the development process on statistical data as we normally do.
- 2) We often want to ask SMEs about their opinion and needs, but experience shows that it is often very difficult for them to state more general comments, that can be used in a strategic process.
- 3) The quality of the strategic work / process in regions heavily depends on the regional actors / partners who are involved, so it is important to use resources to pin point the relevant people from whom to get information.
- 4) We want to introduce new methods of co-operation between regional actors.

Hence, the idea behind the regional signal panel is to pinpoint relevant regional actors, who are capable of expressing tendencies, ideas, hopes, anxieties and wishes for the future regional development, which can be used as a qualitative and competent input to the regional development process.

It has been important for us to develop a method, which opens up the possibility to introduce people and thoughts that are normally not heard in these processes, as to underline the relevance and importance of democratic processes. This is the reason why we have tried to introduce three different categories of experts for the regional signal panel, namely

- 1) Traditional experts and researchers
- 2) Private and public decision makers
- 3) Alternative experts / citizens / "wild cards"

It is important to think more in the quality of the people than the usual organisations which are normally represented in these kinds of forums. By thinking in people instead of organisations, you have a greater possibility to think differently and untraditional and be more provocative – in a good way. Following is a list of issues that are important when pinpointing people for the regional signal panel.

- 1) Shown engagement and willingness to change
- 2) Shown that they have "flair" to estimate the future development
- 3) Shown pro-active thinking
- 4) Shown creative thinking
- 5) Representatives from regional areas of challenge and innovation
- 6) Bottom-up representatives
- 7) Top-down representatives