

MINUTES CG2

Core Group, hybrid, 17 February, Brno, 9.30m–18pm

Masaryk University, Faculty of Economics and Administration

Summarized Minutes

Present: Nathalie Behnke, Noémia Bessa Vilela, Iveta Reinholde, Jarosław Kostrubiec, István Hoffman, Juraj Nemeč, Teresa Ruel, Miro Haček, Bettina Petersohn, Nicola McEwan, Damir Kapidžić;

Excused absence: Ivan Kopríc, Sean Mueller, Blendi Çali

CORE GROUP DECISIONS

1. CG Decision 1: Giving the Action Chair the power to amend the budget without the need for consulting the CG;
2. CG Decision 2: Allowing the STSM coordinator/ co-coordinator to decide, on their sole motion, to decide on the attribution of the STSM/ITC/VM grants upon consultation of the Action Chair/ Grant Holder Administrator;
3. CG Decision 3: Amending the plan of the Ljubljana meeting, to allow the possibility to invite Action Members to attend 2 days, and WG members to attend 1 day of the meeting, hence increasing the number of invited participants;
4. CG Decision 4: Methodology for Each working Group
5. CG Decision 5 : STSM and ITC calls applications

Next steps for each WG:

All WGs:

- Analyse and accept/ decline participants on a monthly basis;
- Distribute the research protocol by all WG participants;

- Identify potential Grantees for STSM/ ITC Grants
- Decide on methods/ mechanisms to avoid the overlapping of work/ data/ information between WGs;

Next (Hybrid) meeting in May, Ljubljana, 26/27 2022.

The Action Chair terminated the session.

Full Minutes

Project team members **present on the meeting** (online and offline) were: Noemia Bessa Viela, Bettina Petersohn, Nathalie Behnke, Teresa Ruel Damir Kapidžić, Haček, Miro, Iveta Reinholde, Juraj Nemeč, Nicola McEwen, Hoffman István, Jarosław Kostrubiec and Sladjana Benković.

Noted absence: Ivan Koprić, Blendi Çali and Sean Mueller.

Introduction to the meeting

After greetings by the Action's Chair, the working project group (WG4) is introduced with project progress.

The group was informed that up to now, on the level of the project we have completed all activities in line with a work plan. Basically:

1. We have organized a Kick-off meeting and we have delivered minutes and pictures and what is most important we launched the project and start with project activities;
2. Further, we have started with promotional activities;
3. The first Policy Brief was issued in time;
4. We have completed the dissemination strategy and at this point, we are further developing the Action's dissemination plan;
5. The website is under construction and the domain www.IGCOORD.eu has been registered;
6. All Social Network accounts have been created and are now starting to get followers;
7. The first call for ITC Grants and STSMs is now open until September 15th.

General Issues

The Action Chair pointed out some major rules regarding STSM. It is generally, mandatory that all spending should be in a line with the projected budget which is one person by one application. Additionally, it was mentioned that young researchers may use STSMs to help with research activities designed by each WG. It was also mentioned that research candidates should be found in our universities as soon as possible (preferably in the next two weeks) and before any further activity or mobility, we should get contact the STSM and Miro Haček. The determination of which kind of mobility will suit the needs of the project/ researcher/ host can vary between STSM, VM, ITC grants. Information on each of the mobility funding schemes may be found in the COST annotated Rules.

Furthermore, all meetings of the research should be documented with as many documents, pictures, videos and dissemination activities as much as possibilities.

In the continuation of the meeting, the dissemination plan (see attachment) was presented by Iveta Reinhold. Additionally, it was also pointed out that there are social networks, like Facebook @IGCOORD, Instagram - igcoord & Twitter - igcoord, that should be used to the maximum to disseminate the achieved project activities and results. Access to social networks was shared with the present members of the meeting. The coordinator Noemia Bessa Viela has especially

pointed out the need to invite all members of the network and researchers to join social networks in order to achieve visibility of the project at an adequate level as soon as possible. In addition to social networks, the importance of the project website (www.igcoord.eu), which is under construction, and which will be presented in May 2022 at the coordination meeting, was pointed out. In the meantime, in case we have some materials to be posted on the website, we should send them to the coordinator.

After coffee break project meeting was continued by presentation of the professor Nicola McEwen. She gave short intro regarding activities on the WG 1 that concerns Vertical coordination. Professor Nicola McEwen indicated that she did not have a strong interaction with other members of the group. The options that were considered from the aspect of this group were whether to approach:

- a) new empirical research
- b) preparation of a book based on previous and ongoing research
- c) hybrid option

Advantage of a) an opportunity to develop a common theoretical and conceptual framework and collect data based on a comprehensive and multi-country survey. The disadvantage of a) it is rather costly and asks for lasting massive participation of researchers from many countries. The advantage of b) development of a sound theoretical and conceptual framework is still here, a less costly option, based on the already existing research efforts and in a way more in line with the nature of COST actions. The disadvantage of b) a sort of lack of empirical research consistency.

Option a) seems to be realistic. Vertical IG coordination is not a new theme, and there are a lot of sources with useful insights and data. Many researchers from various disciplines work on issues that are part of it. Option c) combines the advantages of the first two and diminishes their disadvantages. Our approach has to be inclusive, structured, comparative and multidisciplinary.

It requires relatively urgent development of a theoretical and conceptual paper (at least its first draft, to be developed by the WG1 co-leaders and volunteers) to be used as a call for contributions for the colleagues participating in this Action and – maybe – those who do not participate as MC and WGs' members. It has to establish a comprehensive frame of understanding, necessary in the communities that consist of participants from various scientific fields and disciplines (public governance, political science, law, economy, and others). Such a paper can be debated at the May MC meeting in Ljubljana.

Professor McEwen suggests that from the beginning it has to be taken into account a need to present a body of policy recommendations and suggestions for practitioners at the end of this COST Action period. Because of that, she believes the attention should be focused on the issues that have the potential for the development of transferable knowledge. In other words, they cannot afford to deal with purely theoretical issues. The focus of the group WG.1. should be oriented on the :

- the main approaches to vertical coordination (actor-centered / institution-centered)

- current practices of vertical coordination in the (groups of) countries; examples of best practice
- current trends in the development of vertical coordination
- political and administrative sides of vertical coordination
- cultural issues in vertical coordination (different types of political, governance and administrative cultures; control vs. cooperation culture)
- the main challenges of vertical coordination
- vertical coordination instruments and mechanisms (I&M)
 - o political
 - o policy
 - o legal
 - o organizational & managerial
 - o fiscal, financial & economic
- conditions under which these I&M are effective
- outcomes of vertical coordination (in)effectiveness

Professor McEwen indicated and some of the WG.1. goals such as:

G1: To discuss and map the situation with vertical coordination in the European countries in a comparable manner.

G2: To identify main features, approaches, sides, challenges, developmental trends, instruments and cures for problems in vertical coordination, as well as cultural and other obstacles for their effectiveness.

G3: To list lessons learnt.

G4: To propose policy recommendations and write a guidebook for practitioners.

Some outputs that are recognized are by the group are:

- Conceptual paper – a call for contribution.
- Collection of working papers / edited volume / special issue/s in scholarly journals.
- Guidebook for practitioners.

Furthermore, the section was continued with the presentation of professor Nathalie Behnke, PhD., chair of the working group assigned for horizontal coordination of the group. WG3 is co-chaired by Bettina Petersohn, PhD. WG3 consists of 34 group members. The topics that are being analyzed are related to processes and institutions of horizontal coordination among territorial units at the same level of government

a) horizontal relations within one country at different levels of government (horizontal regional relations or inter-municipal relations)

b) relations between countries (cross-border relations).

They are relying on the Methodology which assumes usage of secondary empirical evidence provided by WG members in their research, then comparative case studies, expert interviews and structured-focused comparison.

Goals are oriented Collection, systematization and transfer evidence on how best to organize, manage and implement horizontal coordination; then analyzing infer from this evidence ways to achieve effective and legitimate democratic governance; inform policymakers and interested publics on best practices and foster interdisciplinary and international academic exchange.

The expected outputs of this working group are

- From the aspect activities: annual WG meetings, joint WG meetings with WG 1, Training School on horizontal coordination, Conference
- From the aspect of the publications: conference proceedings - OA edition of comparative case studies including an analytic chapter on patterns and determinants of coordination; policy briefs with best practice examples
- And from the aspect of the digital communication of results (blogs, social media, COST Action website ...)

During presentation are raised and some open questions, such as planned expenses; travel costs for WG meetings; travel costs for Training School; travel costs for conference; 10-20 STSMs for expert interviews and OA costs for publication.

Additionally, it was discussed about possibilities of coordination with WG 1 and with WG 5 with the Communication Officer.

As next steps are identified activities such as preparation of 1st WG meeting in Ljubljana, dealing task assignment to WG members and preparation of joint publication and brainstorm about organizing jointly Training Schools (and from the aspect of the organization and budget sharing).

The meeting was continued with the presentation by the presentation of the WG.3. that are leading Teresa Ruel and Damir Kapidžić. They believe that activities on this work package should start with precise defining political actors – parties, governments, parliaments, courts, lobbyists and civil society organizations – play an important role in making intergovernmental coordination work. These actors represent group-specific interests which they aim at implementing by means of influencing collectively binding decisions. Dynamics of competition between actors may overlap with territorial dynamics, in particular in multinational States with strong regionalist, nationalist or separatist (non-State-wide) parties, where political systems vary between levels of government or between territorial units.

Analytically, we can distinguish:

- a) the effect of competition between actors located at the same or different levels and
- b) the effect of political alliances, ad hoc or permanent, on multilevel coordination. (MoU, IGCOORD).

Project leaders of this working group are proposing methodology which starts with a working definition, reflecting the state-of-the-art on the topic. Then it will continue with precise defining the political actors in the countries from which the members of this working group come. Then activity will be continued with conceptualization and operationalization of “political actors” such as:

- Defining a key research question for our WG (based on the MoU). For example: “Do different actors coordinate in different ways?” or “How do competition and alliances shape coordination between actors?”
- Collecting comparative evidence – through an online questionnaire for our WG members and also everyone else involved in the Action. It can serve as the basis to identify common actors, issues, processes, and forms of coordination across countries.

- Mapping structures and coordinative institutions, the role of formal/informal coordination (link to WG1 and WG2? - relevant outputs, whether on types of actors or on the institutionalized forums they use for intergovernmental coordination).

Expected outputs of this working group are conference(s) and publication during 2023/2024 year.

The final presentation before lunch break was by professor Juraj Nemec. He presented the expected plan of activities of four workgroups that deals with *Intergovernmental fiscal regulations*. This group will be run by professor Juraj Nemec and professor Sladjana Benković.

The methodology of this workgroup will starts with mapping of various competencies in participating countries, i.e. what competencies have municipalities and is it differently based on their size, which will give us some legislative framework. A large part of intergovernmental coordination revolves around the allocation or distribution of money. Schemes of revenue sharing and redistribution are negotiated between territorial units or levels of government, intergovernmental funds and grants are provided by the state government to its units, and their capacity in producing public goods and services depends on the congruence or incongruence of tasks and finances allocated to them.

On the basis of these results, it will be possible to analyze the financial health of municipalities in particular countries, but also to make comparisons among members of the group who are from different countries. On the basis of those results, we will have the opportunity to analyze the financial health, as well the debt level in relation to the number of competencies.

Expected outputs and timeline that are recognized are by the group are:

- Conceptual paper – a call for contribution 2022
- Participation in work of conferences (regional and international) and publishing of reached results;
- Collection of working papers / edited volume / special issue/s in scholarly journals during 2023/2024

In the afternoon, the group reconvened and the remaining aspects in the Agenda were addressed.

Prof. Istvan Hoffman and Jaroslaws Kostrubiec briefly presented the advised methodology for both working at the level of the WGs and for avoiding the overlapping of collected data as well as the need to collectively collect data and the need for clear processes that will enable the analysis of the collected data.

The outputs/ deliverables of the WG5 were addressed and the leadership of the WG will verify the possibility/ willingness of the overall members of the Action to take part in the Textbook and Syllabus, to be delivered on the last month of the Action.

Finished with the research activities, the CG has voted on:

- Giving the Action Chair the power to amend the budget without the need for consulting the CG;

- Allowing the STSM coordinator/ co-coordinator to decide, on their sole motion, to decide on the attribution of the STSM/ITC/VM grants upon consultation of the Action Chair/ Grant Holder Administrator;
- Amending the plan of the Ljubljana meeting, to allow the possibility to invite Action Members to attend 2 days, and WG members to attend 1 day of the meeting, hence increasing the number of invited participants;

The core group has unanimously voted in favor of all the above-mentioned items.

The Action Chair closed the meeting, with special remark to the next meeting with all participants, in Ljubljana, Slovenia, in May, 2022.