

Policy Area / Horizontal Action Development Model

Phase 1: Setting Up the Policy Area / Horizontal Action

Actions and Capacity

Policy Areas / Horizontal Actions are being formed – through interaction of **internal implementing actors/stakeholders**. They meet regularly, formulate joint statements, make sense of the Action Plan / Objectives, discuss Targets & Indicators, establish first routines, clarify roles and responsibilities, brainstorm and, possible, agree of main formats to be employed (e.g. flagships).

Capacity effects in Phase 1 mainly concern individuals and translate – **via the individuals – to the institutions**. PAC/HAS's home institutions are being set up for the task (structures and management).

Effects

Almost **no visible effects** beyond this group of individuals (and definitely **no external performance effects** on the thematic/content progress, e.g on “water quality”)

Phase 1A: Scouting and Mobilisation (MLG)

Actions and Effects

Once the structures are set and plans made, the PA/HA goes into Phase 1A (intermediary phase) with the purpose of exploring the operation environment and a possible action field:

- analysing its prerequisites (e.g. “greenfield” or “brownfield”-effects, barriers and possible drivers)
- scouting for thematic issues (existing and emerging) that could be objects of attention for the PA/HA
- exploring possible value-added aspects and effects of Multi-Level Governance (MLG) on the PA/HA

Effects are still largely individual-based (‘leaders’) – early awareness of the PA/HA existence and intentions (and increasing awareness of the EUSBSR as a strategic framework, too). Ideally, PAC/HAC's home institution starts to engage externally.

Possible actions: Participation days, active networking; internal discussions continue.

Horizontal Actions have developed their plan of activities and start to engage in activities carried out by Policy Areas, in order to fine-tune their ideas and do reality-check with PACs.

Phase 2: Starting to Operate

Capacity and Effects

Based on Phase 1A (Scouting and Mobilisation), there is a **shift from the internal players** (implementing stakeholders) **to external players** (external stakeholders and target groups, in MLG-perspective).

Capacity effects shift from being individual-oriented to **institution-oriented**:

- *Internally*, PAC/HAC's home institutions are fully set up for the task (structures and management, PAH/HAS-task is fully embedded).
- *External stakeholders* understand how the EUSBSR operates and how they can make use of incentives and opportunities provided. E.g. they realise that the EUSBSR does not have funding of its own, they should be prepared to participate in /contribute to alignment of funding and work in partnerships to increase their chances for funding from other sources.

As a result, the stakeholders **develop capacity on how to use MRS**.

First **"internal results"** of the PA/HA emerge (e.g. the pool of stakeholders widens, their readiness to contribute increased) - however, it is little change (or probably **no change**) can be detected at the level of the performance of the external stakeholders in the region.

Policy Area / Horizontal Action activities in Phase 2

Actions and Capacity

As a result of Phase 1A, the PA activities are now based on a **wider base of stakeholders/target groups** (in MLG-perspective) and focus on **selected thematic issues with clear macro-regional value** added (base for flagships).

The Policy Area is a home for a number of thematic flagships, platforms etc – i.e. developmental processes that have a purpose of **policy development** and **policy implementation / enactment** within the chosen theme. Each flagship has a *flagship leader* (ideally, a sustainable institution well-positioned in the theme in question).

In all flagships, coherence with the PA Action Plan is ensured **at the level of targets and indicators**. **Monitoring and evaluation happens at the flagship level** (aggregated, if applicable, from the project level, the projects being elements of the flagship). Monitoring and evaluation happens also at *the PA-level*, against the targets&indicators (quantitative and qualitative) set in Phase 1.

The Policy Area Coordinator hold **regular meetings with flagship leaders**, individually and in group, thus facilitating **cross-flagship learning**. This space is the PAC's arena for practicing leadership and executive capability – the PAC is to make sure all flagships keep the course, continuously learn and adapt, and deliver relevant outcomes in the form of *policy generation* and *policy enactment* (action on the ground).

PAC can arrange **capacity development initiatives** for the flagship leaders and other stakeholders where needed.

Horizontal Actions are implementing their activities that are integrated with activities of Policy Areas, either at the PA (strategic) level or at the flagship-level (operational).

Results and Effects

Flagships are the main operation/implementation units of the EUSBSR. **Flagships' performance** determines **visibility and effectiveness** of the Policy Area. The **degree of integration of the flagships** and coherence with the relevant Objective of the PA Action Plan is another indicator of PA-success.

When flagships perform, the **PA performs** – externally observable effects are **consistent** and **transparent**, they are easy to monitor and evaluate externally.

Internally, the effects are **productivity** and **efficiency** of the PAC as individual and the PAC's home institution. The Policy area is no longer dependent on the PAC-person, this role is fully internalised in the institution: there is a succession plan, and recruitment is done consciously, according to the established capability criteria, with regards taken to the Phase of the PA development.

Possible Phase 2A: Cross-PA / HA field

Provided the PA is steadily operating in Phase 2, additional opportunities could be explored in the cross-PA/HA field: e.g. joint flagship "Cluster Leader Learning" of PA Education and PA Innovation.

Phase 3: PA Maturity and EUSBSR performance

Capacity and Impact

PA performance in Phase 3 shows stable efficiency, it is delivered by **mature Policy Areas and Horizontal Actions**, with full engagement of **the internal implementing** actors AND **external stakeholders** in the macro-regional scale. In a way, it is a bridge to (and maybe a precondition of) performance of the macro-region as such (the BSR).

All involved stakeholders have developed **the capacity of implementing MRS** relevant actions as contribution to the bigger picture, i.e. integration and development of the region. Results and effects of implementation become visible in terms of indicators such as income, inclusion, accessibility and environmental quality. These **macro-indicators** (often used for monitoring and decision-making) only show up at this late phase and should not be sought earlier.

It is only in Phase III, that the “impacts” of the MRS become clear. Usually, the impacts are those that are interesting to policy makers, media and the public. Lack of progress on the relevant metrics is considered a failure. It is **essential to recognise** that change at this level only comes late in the process.

Another obvious result is that the **ESIF funding is fully aligned with the EUSBSR** – not only thematically/strategically but also operationally/tactically. The EU funding system has expanded from project funding to **funding processes** that ensure learning, coordination and cooperation between all stakeholders of the macro-region, along the lines of policy work and policy enactment.

The management perspective of the funding authorities, at all levels – from leaders of Managing Authorities to line supervisors of MRS-initiated projects, has **shifted from solely national to macro-regional value that the EUSBSR** comes with. Provisions are made, and assistance is available to Policy Area Coordinators/Horizontal Action Leaders when they pursue alignment of funding.

Actions in Phase 3

Policy Area Coordinators and Horizontal Action Leaders initiate and participate in **structured cross-PA/HA processes** ensuring cohesion at the EUSBSR level (mixed-level working groups, networks, ad-hoc initiatives). **Joint flagships** are standard practice rather than experiments.

In this Phase, all Horizontal Actions are enacted across the EUSBSR. **Monitoring and evaluation activities** are running.

Major implementing stakeholders (PACs, HACs, NCs, MAs) carry out **continuous dialogues** aiming at fine-tuning alignment between political, strategical, operational and financial perspectives. **MA networks** are operative and work for dynamic alignment with the changing needs of the EUSBSR.

PACs /HACs have possibilities of regular consultations with the European Commission. They are interested in **larger context – beyond the EUSBSR**, e.g. participate in staff-exchange between the four MRSs.

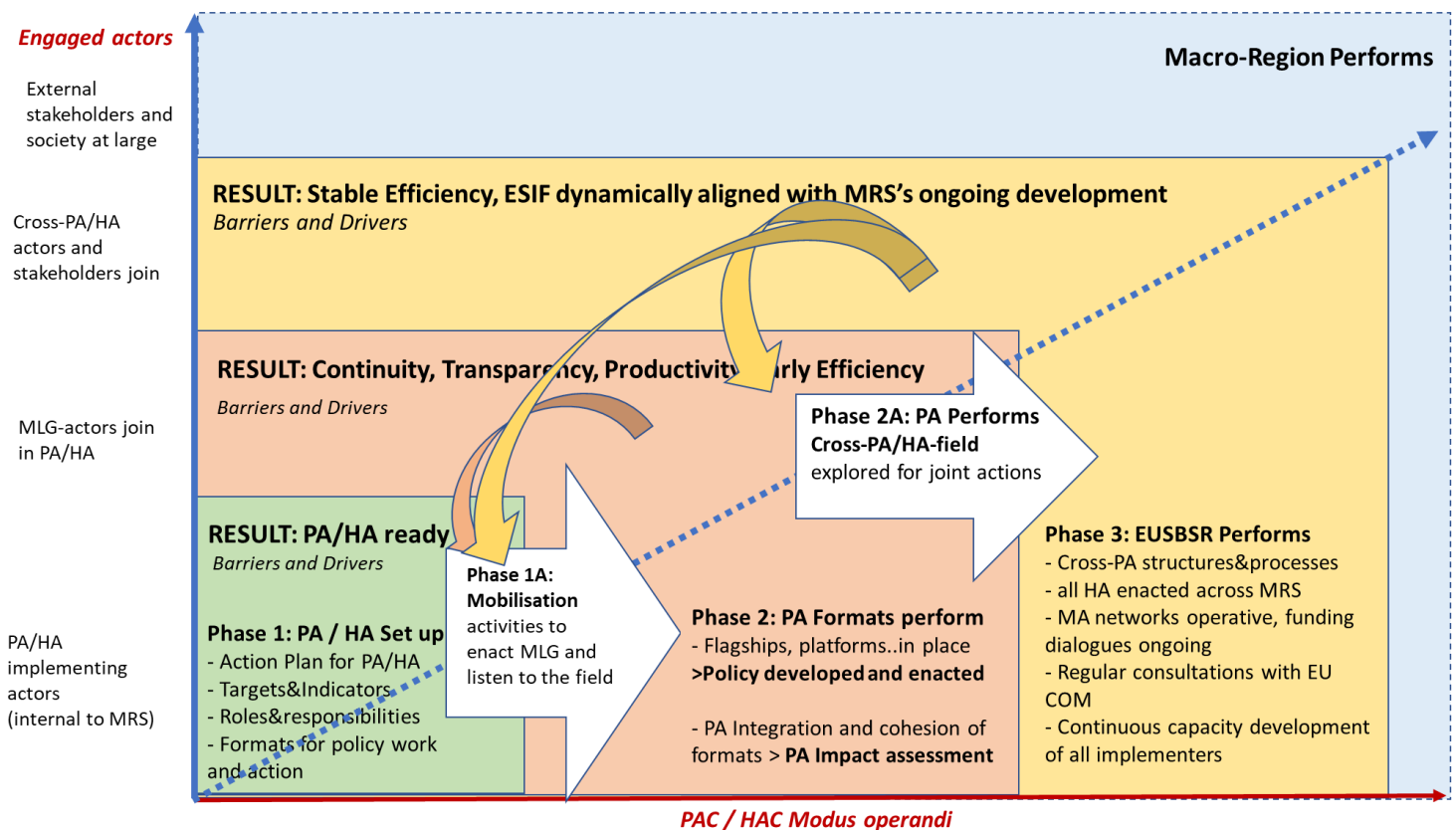
PACs/HACs and other implementing stakeholder regularly participate in **capacity development initiatives**.

General comment on the Phase Model

These phases are of course not absolute but should assist orientation into the scope of activities and results and effects sought. Development is not linear; as time passes and global, unforeseen challenges emerge, the MRS may need to redefine their priorities – and this is true for Policy Areas and Horizontal Actions, too.

Hence, an MRS or a PA can move from Phase 3 back to Phase 2 or even back to Phase 1 as thematic priorities, institutions and individuals change. Within the MRS and within one and the same PA, there can be little homogeneity: some thematic areas might already be in Phase 3 while others oscillate between Phase 2 and Phase 2 for a long time due to the existing barriers or lack of drivers.

PA / HA Development Model¹



¹ Adapted for PA/HA in the EUSBSR from COWI-report of the Study on Macro-Regional Strategies and their links with Cohesion Policy, 2017