Regional coordination group eHealth and welfare technology Agder

Different societal challenges require finding a suitable response strategy, and collaboration becomes increasingly recognized as a mean to address such challenges. Collaborations often aim towards more efficiency and effectiveness, in policy making, service delivery or in the use of public resources. This case study examines the Regional coordination group eHealth and welfare technology Agder (“Regional koordineringsgruppe e-helse og velferdsteknologi Agder”, hereafter: RKG) which is a successful example of network collaboration established to respond to numerous challenges connected to implementation of the eHealth and welfare technology in the county of Agder, Norway.

The RKG, by utilizing a network management approach, seeks to solve societal challenges that cannot be solved by only one sector/actor alone, but which cross several sectors and policy areas, as well as geographical and administrative divisions (I:1). Work in the eHealth service area is a good example of such a challenge as it includes aspects related to both IT, procurement and health, and lies on the borderland between work of municipalities, hospitals, GPs, etc. (I:1).

Below, the context of collaboration within the RKG is presented, including the role that Information and Communications Technology (ICT) plays in the collaboration. This is followed by a discussion of the effects of collaboration on efficiency and ‘red tape'/bureaucratic procedures in the RKG. Available online information (primarily from the RKG website) and two in depth interviews with centrally placed actors within the collaboration informed this study of the collaboration in the RKG.

Context

The RKG, established on 13.01.2016 by the Councillor Group – “Regional Plan Agder”\(^1\) is a successful collaboration in the field of eHealth and welfare technology. It was internationally

\(^2\)https://www.ehelseagder.no/rkg-e-helse/
recognised when it received a European Public Sector Award (EPSA) best practice certificate in 2019. The RKG was also granted a Reference Site status (3 out of 4 stars) by the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Aging in 2016 and 2019.

The RKG is a network created to coordinate numerous projects and activities within eHealth and welfare technology while providing municipal anchoring, to coordinate procurement process and share experiences in the region (I:1). The collaboration gathers representatives of 25 municipalities from four regions in the county of Agder (with over 300 000 inhabitants). The municipalities engaged in the RKG are collaborating on a voluntary basis.

The RKG includes the following actors:

- Representatives of four health leader networks in Agder, and in the municipalities of Kristiansand and Arendal (the two largest municipalities in the region). These are (formal) top level leaders in their municipalities and play a central role in the collaboration.
- The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) - KS Agder (observatory status)
- The County Governor of Agder (observatory status)
- Representatives of Agder County Municipality (observatory status).

The RKG also has a Secretariat and a Working Committee RKG Agder. Additionally, in response to the suggestion from municipalities engaged in the collaboration, an ICT reference group, providing an overview in the field of IT has been created (I:1).

The RKG has a steering group, organised under eHelse Adger 2030 which takes decisions regarding projects coordinated by the collaboration. The steering group consists of leadership-level representatives of the regions/municipalities (Heads of Municipal Affairs), representatives from the primary and specialist health services, and from the regional hospital management. eHelse Adger 2030 consists of several collaborative initiatives within eHealth: Innovation

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2 https://epsa2019.eu/files/repository/editor/6873dc34806b08c635ba194570750d6ad1a6e715_EPSA2019_BPs_Total%20list.pdf
4 https://www.ehelseagder.no/e-helse-agder-2030/
partnership Agder⁵, Security Technology Agder⁶, Digital home follow-up⁷, Introduction of national e-health solutions⁸ and Akson Agder (One inhabitant, one journal). The decisions regarding these projects are taken by the joint regional steering group.

Figure 1 illustrates the structure of the RKG e-helse Agder.

**Figure 1: RKG e-helse Agder structure**

![RKG e-helse Agder structure](image)


The structures marked green had existed before establishment of the RKG in 2016, whereas the structures marked yellow have been implemented in 2016 (I:1).

The main goals of the collaboration can be summarized under three themes (I:1):

1. Making Agder the leading region when it comes to welfare technology in Norway.
2. Stimulating research and (business) development in the region.
3. Increasing regional coordination and anchoring [participation by relevant actors] in Agder.

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⁵ [https://www.ehelseagder.no/innovasjonspartnerskap-velferdsteknologi/](https://www.ehelseagder.no/innovasjonspartnerskap-velferdsteknologi/)
⁶ [https://www.ehelseagder.no/prosjekter/innforing-velferdsteknologi-agder/](https://www.ehelseagder.no/prosjekter/innforing-velferdsteknologi-agder/)
⁷ [https://www.ehelseagder.no/nvp-avstandsoppfolging/](https://www.ehelseagder.no/nvp-avstandsoppfolging/)
⁸ [https://www.ehelseagder.no/nasjonale-e-helselosninger/](https://www.ehelseagder.no/nasjonale-e-helselosninger/)
RKG’s initial objective was to move from small-scale operating to large scale operation. To achieve this goal, the interviewees highlighted that five aspects of innovative collaboration were used: 1. Needs, 2. Solution, 3. Drivers, 4. Team, and 5. Anchoring (I:1).

According to the interviewees, an important factor that facilitated creation of the RKG was a general pre-existing tradition of collaboration in the region of Agder⁹, and the use of previously created structures as a basis for the group (I:1) – see Figure 1. One of the main goals of the collaboration was creating a regional structure that also can be re-used in fields beyond eHealth.

An especially relevant factor was providing a coordination structure that includes involvement from and anchoring (in Norwegian: forankring) at the leadership level. The Norwegian term forankring is frequently used when describing the collaboration process within the RKG, both by the interviewees and in the various documents and online information presenting the RKG. Forankring (anchoring) here means providing a coordination structure that includes involvement and participation at the leadership level, which also contributes to the legitimacy of the collaboration. The involvement of the leadership level is an important difference between the RKG and other professional networks, which often gather only professionals in their own field. Involvement of the municipal/regional leadership in decision-making processes, thus – proper anchoring, has proved to be crucial for successful implementation (I:1).

RKG’s work is very much project-based. The collaboration initiated its work in 2016 with organizing a joint procurement process of welfare technology for the region (2016-2017). This was followed by the creation of a Municipal Response Center for safety alarms and digital telecare (2017-ongoing), and participation in a National Welfare Technology Program (Nasjonalt velferdsteknologiprogram) through a project «Implementation of welfare technology Agder» (Innføring velferdsteknologi Agder) established in 2017 (I:1). This project dealt with technical implementation, service innovation, management, and competence building (I:1, I:2). The «Implementation of welfare technology Agder» initiative, as a project steered by the joint regional steering group in Agder, has been formally concluded in 2020. However, the project still exists and is currently in the process of transformation into a more

⁹ For more information, you can see for example: http://ris-centre.no/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/FINAL_Report_Entrepreneurship_and_Local_innovation_systems_in_Agder_KHrU62.pdf, p. 10, p.132-133.
operational organization/permanent part of the organization (steered through intermunicipal collaboration), with a piloting phase in 2021.

This timeline showcases that the collaboration in the RKG has developed from one project to more projects gradually.

**ICT and its impact on the collaboration**

As indicated by both interviewees, ICT has played a crucial role for successful collaboration in the RKG (I:1, I:2). The digital tools have been essential, both as a part of working practices in the collaboration, and as a channel enabling achievement of other objectives – such as transfer of knowledge, document sharing, decision-making, involvement of different actors, etc. (I:1). Moreover, the use of ICT itself has, according to our interviews, had a positive impact on the collaboration’s efficiency, as a factor saving time and resources that would be otherwise spent e.g., on organisation of physical meetings and covering the participants’ travel allowances.

The working practices in the RKG are very much dependent on and intertwined with ICT tools. One of RKG’s objectives was to make the collaboration innovative and conduct as many meetings as possible digitally, in an effective way, which would reduce travel costs and be environmentally friendly (I:1).

«Since 2016, all the meetings have been digital, besides the kick-off meeting and one meeting last year. So, we were largely communicating digitally also before the COVID-19 pandemic» (I:1).

Similarly, different projects within the RKG have had regular meetings within project groups, with fixed meeting structures and often conducted digitally as well. One project who did this is for example the «Implementation of welfare technology Agder» project (I:2).

Despite benefits resulting from digitalisation, the collaboration is at the same time aiming to find balance between digital and physical meetings, and to also organise workshops and working meetings physically. As indicated by the interviewees, digital meetings require good preparations, e.g., preparing an agenda to keep focus during the meetings (I:1), and it is important for the participants to know each other well in order to keep good meeting dynamics (I:2). Physical meetings are an important element of relationship-building (I:1, I:2).
As explained by the interviewees, the tools used in the collaboration are primarily online collaboration and communication tools – with Microsoft Teams being the most popular, but also Skype for Business, whereas some of the engaged actors use professional networking platforms like LinkedIn. These channels, including a RKG Facebook group and RKG’s website are important digital spaces where information and ideas can be shared, and are crucial in keeping the participants informed about different initiatives, e.g., opportunities to participate in new projects or apply for new funding (I:1).

The ICT aspect is seen as very important, especially when it comes to exchanging experiences. For example, when one of the municipalities in the region orders a new product, it can prove useful to not only share experiences orally, but also provide necessary documentation that can be reused by others which is facilitated by digital tools (I:1).

When it comes to the costs of ICT, the RKG as a coordinating group did not spend much on that, as tools used by collaborating municipalities were at their disposal by default (I:1) and has not resulted in much additional cost for the RKG as such. ICT tools in the RKG have utility value as they increase process efficiency and facilitate involvement of numerous actors (I:1).

Moreover, the presence of an ICT reference group as a part of the collaboration’s structure plays an important role in the collaboration, as a support, e.g., in the procurement process, where their knowledge of IT is an important contribution to a transaction (I:2). However, as indicated by one of the interviewees, there might have been even a real need for an active working ICT group rather than a reference group (I:2). In our interpretation, this means that when it comes to the digital aspect in the collaboration, besides advice provided by the reference group, it could be also beneficial to have a group of experts within ICT actively working on the progress of concrete issues or tasks.

The interview data shows that one of the challenges of the use of ICT in the collaboration is interoperability of the tools used by the municipalities. That is one of the reasons why the RKG is currently starting the Innovation Partnership (I:1). On 24.06.2020, Innovation Norway10 granted 8 projects, including the RKG/Kristiansand municipality as a project owner, financial support to carry out an Innovation Partnership11 (in the case of RKG – 15 million NOK). Currently, RKG’s Innovation Partnership is in a planning phase – with the objective to develop

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11 [https://www.innovasjonnorge.no/no/om/nyheter/2020/100-millioner-til-a-lose-samfunnsutfordringer/](https://www.innovasjonnorge.no/no/om/nyheter/2020/100-millioner-til-a-lose-samfunnsutfordringer/)
integrated solutions that will respond to the patient's needs and simplify health professionals’ work (which can be achieved through public-private collaboration)\textsuperscript{12}.

When it comes to collaboration between municipalities, it is important to have a tool that will enable such collaboration – that is why currently the focus is placed on development of Microsoft Teams, e.g., in order to share folder structures among municipalities (I:2).

\textbf{Efficiency}

Based on the interviews, we can conclude that the collaboration within the RKG has brought a number of effects when it comes to efficiency. These are primarily connected to simplification of processes, economies of scale, saving time and resources, and perceived improved quality of services within eHealth in the region.

Efficiency in the RKG can be considered following two different approaches. This case study will first discuss the efficiency in the context of the RKG as a central coordinating actor, followed by looking into the project «Implementation of welfare technology Agder»\textsuperscript{13}, thereby providing insights on the relation between collaboration and efficiency on the example of a particular project within the RKG.

\textit{Efficiency in the RKG}

As indicated by one of the interviewees, the RKG is constantly aiming to achieve process efficiency, e.g., by keeping the balance between short meetings, yet making sure that there is sufficient time to provide all the necessary information to participants (I:1). According to the interviews, an important benefit resulting from collaboration within the RKG is economies of scale, as, thanks to RKG’s coordination, the municipalities benefit from joint organisation of processes (e.g., procurement), instead of performing these tasks each separately (I:1).

The interviews revealed that some of the projects coordinated by the RKG are using «\textit{Prosjektveiviseren}» («project roadmap») (I:1) developed by the Norwegian Digitalisation Agency – an online tool for project managers/owners supporting management of IT projects in

\textsuperscript{12} \url{https://www.ehelseagder.no/innovasjonspartnerskap-velferdsteknologi/}

\textsuperscript{13} The project «Implementation of welfare technology Agder» was steered by the joint regional steering group in Agder and concluded as per 31.12.20. Currently the project is transferring into a more operational organization (steered through intermunicipal collaboration), with a piloting phase in 2021.
the public sector in order to follow goal achievement/efficiency. «Prosjektveiviseren» provides a model for overall project management, based on five management phases: 1. Concept, 2. Planning, 3. Implementing, 4. Completion, 5. Realization. According to «Prosjektveiviseren», the project’s concept phase is not about choosing specific solutions. Instead, the tool stresses the need to investigate the actual needs, and, based on that, should be followed by assessing different conceptual approaches that may constitute the basis for a project\textsuperscript{14}. The collaboration is also currently looking into the PRINCE\textsuperscript{2} (PRojects IN Controlled Environments) methodology (I:1) – a process-based method, helping to order a project into defined steps to improve its project management.

The collaboration has already brought numerous outcomes, including creation of the Municipal Response Center, and joint procurement (thus also implementation) of security and warning technology in Agder. When it comes to R\&D, the RKG has been for instance engaged in project Digital Telecare Twinning, Scotland supported by the Digital Health Europe EU project. This is linked to Agder’s (previously mentioned) status of European reference region within active and healthy aging, through the collaboration The European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing.

The use of digital tools contributes to making processes more efficient and optimized (I:1). Tools like Microsoft Teams are used for several purposes besides video conferencing or document sharing, like planning or solving different tasks (I:1). According to our interviewees, this contributes to decision-making and involvement processes and following-up on tasks more efficient (I:1).

The use of digital tools relates to one of the most important aspects when it comes efficiency in the RKG - learning from each other (I:1). Coordination of different processes by the RKG is a time-saving factor – if one municipality starts/participates in a new process and shares their experience with other municipalities, it facilitates the process for others (which otherwise would have had to go through the entire process separately from the very beginning) (I:1).

The RKG coordinates a large number of projects focusing on different kinds of services, therefore, the perceived quality of such services can vary from project to project. However, according to the interviewees, the feedback from the users is generally positive (I:1). An example of such service that according to the interviews has been favourably received by the

\textsuperscript{14} Hva kan Prosjektveiviseren brukes til? | Digitaliseringsdirektoratet
users are activities of the Municipal Response Center, handling a large number of alarms (thus according to the interviews, reducing time and saving money compared to if the municipalities were handling the alarms separately) (I:1).

In 2020, the Municipal Response Center received 1,000,000th alarm call. The Center receives around 1200 alarms per day, with a degree of cases solved by phone at around 60-80%, and 95% of alarms answered within a minute\(^{15}\) (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Development of the Municipal Response Center**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of municipalities</th>
<th>Number of users</th>
<th>Number of alarms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>2 (outside Agder)</td>
<td>approx. 3,000</td>
<td>approx. 54,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>approx. 8,000</td>
<td>approx. 260,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>approx. 11,000</td>
<td>approx. 350,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>31*</td>
<td>over 20,000</td>
<td>approx. 350,000, average response time of 18 seconds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{15}\)number reduced compared to 2019 due to municipalities’ merger process

*Source: Closing seminar «Welfare Technology Agder 2020», presentation 05 - Kommunalt responscenter, Tellu IoT as Facebook*

It is important to note that the Municipal Response Center, hosted by Kristiansand Municipality in Agder/ company Tellu handles alarms also in municipalities outside Agder. Table 1 presents figures relating to all activities of the Center, not only those that relate to Agder municipalities.

As stated by the interviewees, a major RKG’s achievement with regard to efficiency is its smart way of working (I:1). It is perceived as beneficial for the participating municipalities in Agder, as, on the example of joint procurement – “one procurement equals bigger volume and interest, enabling achieving better price and/or solutions” (I:1).

\(^{15}\) [https://www.kristiansand.kommune.no/aktuelt/2020/anrop-nummer-1-million/](https://www.kristiansand.kommune.no/aktuelt/2020/anrop-nummer-1-million/)
The interviewees emphasised that the creation of the RKG was an ambitious endeavour as this was a very new type of collaboration in Norway. In many aspects, they perceived themselves as frontrunners when it comes to creating their working structures and planning potential benefits (I:1). Partly because of this, (prior to the establishment of the RKG) access to data that would enable showcasing that the collaboration would bring expected benefits was limited (I:1).

As explained in the interviews, this was caused by the fact that, at the time when the RKG was created, there were not many similar collaborations within the field that the group could use as an example (e.g. when it comes to measuring efficiency) in planning of their collaboration. Creation of the RKG as a regional coordination group, and ensuring involvement of the municipal/regional leadership level took around nine months and required some time to see the benefits (I:1).

*Efficiency in the project «Implementation of welfare technology Agder»*

When it comes to efficiency in the example of the project «Implementation of welfare technology Agder», as explained by one of the interviewees, some of the municipalities used a specific tool developed by PA Consulting for the National Welfare Technology Program to measure the efficiency and profit realization in the project (I:2). The tool is a large Excel file that enables municipalities to follow-up on their efficiency (I:2). However, the feedback provided by the municipalities to the Implementation project indicates that the tool is very complex and difficult to learn how to use it (I:2).

Other municipalities use simpler manual calculations (developed by the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities - KS) instead, which look into cost and expenses, and provide information on the quantitative gains (I:2).

The National Welfare Technology Program uses the following indicators to measure efficiency: avoided costs, increased quality and saved time, thus, there has been a lot of focus on these indicators in Agder municipalities over the last year (I:2). When the project is completed, the final report will include the summarised figures on these indicators reported by the municipalities (I:2).

However, the interviews emphasized that reporting of the qualitative benefits proved to be easier than providing quantitative data, and in this case, their perception was that the municipalities in Agder are doing a good job in documenting these (I:2). In general, respective projects coordinated by the RKG are working on their own profit realisation separately (I:2).
On the example of the «Implementation of welfare technology Agder» project’s steering group, the interviews showcased that the collaboration looked into a number of parameters connected to the efficiency, and outlined benefits of conducting meetings digitally (thus, saving travel costs and travel allowances for the participants) (I:2). It also had a positive impact on reducing CO2 emissions, calculated over the project lifetime (I:2) (see Table 3). Table 3 showcases total benefits achieved by the project resulting from digital way of working over the 4.5 years project lifetime (presented during the project’s closing seminar).

**Table 3: Total benefits resulting from organisation of digital meetings in the «Implementation of welfare technology Agder» project over the 4.5 year project lifetime**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Saved costs (NOK)</th>
<th>Saved time (hours)</th>
<th>Avoided CO2 emissions (kg)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL 1 784 899 NOK</td>
<td>40,855 hours</td>
<td>18,251 kg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Closing seminar «Welfare Technology Agder 2020», presentation 06 – Innføring velferdsteknologi Agder*

The RKG as the coordinating body has also benefited from digital working practices:

«(...) I have also heard from the regional coordination group that the digital meetings have enabled the structure to work well in practice. The Heads of Municipal Affairs in the RKG Agder are busy people, so it is clear that, when it comes to the organization, this digital aspect is a success criterion» (I:2)

Moreover, the interviewees perceived that the efficiency level changed significantly in 2020 due to the COVID-19 situation. The pandemic resulted in an increased working tempo, and a heavy emphasis has been placed on the municipalities’ participation in as many collaborations as possible and delivering a lot (I:2). Compared to the beginning of the project «Implementation of welfare technology Agder», there was less time for extensive working meetings where various topics could be discussed (I:2).

The municipalities in Agder that are purchasing products connected to welfare technology from the supplier within the joint framework agreement have their own budget used for buying these products (I:2). However, it requires much planning from the municipalities’ side when it comes
to when and what they will purchase, and it takes much work to map the needs and to implement the new technology in practice (I:2).

Regarding the quality of services, according to deliverables and reports submitted by the municipalities, it can be concluded that it has improved over time (I:2). Especially when it comes to supplementary technology, e.g., use of GPS, medication dispensers, or medical monitoring over distance (camera surveillance), such technology can help the users to receive service in their own home and avoid institutional space (I:2).

«This way, it brings benefits and increased quality for the users and relatives. There are many success stories like that» (I:2)

The interviewees agreed that seeing the benefits from the collaboration requires a long perspective (I:1, I:2), both when it comes to the RKG as a coordinating actor, and the respective projects.

In the project «Implementation of welfare technology Agder» the municipalities’ task was to map what kind of technology they would need to carry out the project and what they expect to achieve/implement within 2020 (I:2). As highlighted by one of the interviewees, the achievement of the project’s objectives was dependent on the municipalities’ own contribution (I:2). The numbers connected to these costs are not available, but these were especially significant e.g. when it comes to development of new products/solutions (I:2). The project has also made some free purchases of some of the dedicated resources that have included new project groups (I:2).

**Red tape**

It is important to highlight that the term «red tape» does not seem to be commonly used in the Norwegian context. It does not mean that bureaucratic procedures/burden are not being considered, however, the interviews revealed that questions on (reducing) administrative burden seem to be considered in the context of efficiency and profit realisation rather than as a separate subject. As one of the interviewees admitted, they do not talk much about red tape as such, however, the collaboration within the RKG has proved to be an effective way to involve, anchor and provide an effective and quick implementation (I:1).

The impression from the collected material is that, in the case of the RKG, the effects of collaboration on red tape and bureaucracy are closely linked to the topic of efficiency. One of
the most important RKG’s achievements in that regard, where reduction of bureaucracy and red tape can be noticed, is the synergy effect and coordination/facilitation of numerous activities that otherwise would have had to be performed by municipalities separately (I:1). Such activities can be for example connected to procurement/negotiating purchasing agreements, planning future objectives related to eHealth in the municipalities, or implementation of new technology. Instead of 25 municipalities working on each task individually, the process gets completed faster in collaboration (I:1).

Another interesting example of red tape reduction are the Municipal Response Center’s activities connected to security alarms and alert technology. In this case, one Center is responsible for answering the alarms for several municipalities, thus, saving time that would be otherwise spent on home care services. This way, instead of engaging numerous institutions in the process, the centralised Response Center handles and brings many alarms to an end on its own. As a result, other actors are prevented from participating in the process and reacting to different alarms, when it is not necessary (I:1).

As indicated by the interviewees, the RKG as a coordinating actor contributes to a reduction of bureaucracy as carrying out different processes and decision-making goes faster while being coordinated by one group, compared to, e.g., going through numerous instances and being handled in several institutions (I:2). It would have been challenging for 25 municipalities separately to achieve as much as it has been achieved in the RKG context over the last years (I:2).

However, the collaboration also faces some challenges with regard to red tape in itself – e.g., when project leaders need a decision from RKG’s steering group. If, because of different reasons, the decision is not taken during the steering group’s meeting, the project leaders have to wait for the decision until the next meeting in around four weeks (I:2). The impression from the interviews is that, from projects’ perspective, this might introduce elements connected to red tape. Making the collaboration itself into a large organization with many levels, roles, and functions can on one hand improve different aspects of efficiency, but, as indicated by one of the interviewees, at the same time might sometimes result in losing momentum when it comes to some processes in the project (I:2).
Conclusions

The RKG is a widely recognized example of best practice collaboration in Norway and clearly achieved a lot when it comes to implementation of eHealth and welfare technology in Agder. All interviewees agree that this would be impossible without anchoring in the municipality leadership level (I:1, I:2). The crucial factor enabling innovative work turned out to be the combination of anchoring [here: ensuring legitimacy through participation and involvement of centrally placed leaders], and the presence of strong motivation and drivers for collaboration – as co-existence of these two factors turned out to be crucial for the successful functioning of the collaboration (I:1).

Interestingly, based on the material collected for this case study, we can conclude that the ICT aspect turned out to be one of the main success factors for the entire collaboration, especially when it comes to working practices in the RKG. Digital tools seem to have had a positive impact on the collaboration’s efficiency, expressed in saved time and spared resources. At the same time, the use of ICT in the RKG does not bring much additional cost for the collaboration as the engaged actors are primarily using tools that are available to them anyway (e.g. provided by the municipalities that they are working for).

The final impression from the collected material is that in the case of the RKG, efficiency and red tape should be considered in one context rather than as two separate themes. As highlighted in the interviews, one of RKG’s biggest achievements is using the synergy effect and being a coordinating actor that centrally performs many of the tasks and takes decisions regarding future developments in the region, instead of 25 municipalities doing this job separately (I:1). This can be considered both increased efficiency (spared time and resources) and reduction of red tape/bureaucracy. Therefore, there are crossovers in relation to these two topics in the RKG.