

Abstract

Inter-authority cooperation – focus on the administrative sector of the Ministry of the Interior

Successful inter-authority cooperation requires a clearly set goal. Clear-cut regulations will facilitate inter-authority cooperation. Other important issues in terms of success include the correct party coordinating the cooperation and all the parties benefiting from the cooperation. Communication is one of the key goals of inter-authority cooperation. An open and confidential atmosphere is a prerequisite for communication.

If the goals for cooperation are not clearly laid, determining the resources used and assessing the benefits and added value offered by the cooperation will be difficult. The benefits from cooperation are not usually systematically assessed, nor are the resources needed for cooperation studied in a transparent manner. However, information that could be used to justify the need for cooperation could be obtained from an assessment of the expenses and benefits of cooperation. Ultimately, inter-authority cooperation should improve societal effectiveness. Performance based management indicators are not sufficient to assess the results of inter-authority cooperation, however. Many of the indicators describe functional efficiency instead of benefits and the impact on society.

The public administration operating environment is rapidly changing, and cooperation across administrative sectors is often the key to resolving problems. The development of technology provides new opportunities, but also creates new challenges.

Based on the review results, the structure of central government does not comply with the needs of the modern society that focuses on cooperation, but flexible and practical actions by the authorities promote cooperation.

Networked, informal and agile cooperation has become the practice in the security sector and also more extensively in central government. It offers a flexible and cost-efficient means of responding to new challenges. The opportunities provided by digitalisation support networking and cooperation.

According to the review results, cooperation between parties in the security sector is functional and practised. The parties know each other, which facilitates successful cooperation. The meagre resources of the parties in the security sector have, in part, promoted cooperation. However, in extreme cases the meagre resources can also lead to a party's partial refusal of cooperation.

The review focused on inter-authority cooperation in central government, with a particular emphasis on the security sector, which is included in the administrative sector of the Ministry of the Interior. The meaning of the concept of 'cooperation' varies a great deal, depending on the situation, the parties involved and the context. Current legislation only determines inter-authority cooperation at a very general level or is only limited to authorities in a specific sector. The vague definition of cooperation has not caused any difficulties in practical cooperation in the administrative sector of the Ministry of the Interior, however.

Development proposals of the National Audit Office

1. The Ministry of the Interior could conduct a test where it determined cooperation goals, measured the resources used and assessed the benefits achieved in the case of some cooperation projects. The systematically documented results achieved could be used in the monitoring of cooperation and in development in general.
2. The Prime Minister's Office could apply a procedure similar to the coordination system in EU matters to some national cooperation projects that involve several administrative sectors. The administrative sectors could use the experience obtained to assess applicability of the procedure to broader processing of national affairs across administrative sectors.