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3. Territorial cooperation programmes 2014-2020

3.3 Interregional cooperation programme
3.3.1 Interreg Europe

PROGRAMME/CALL	INTERREG EUROPE PROGRAMME
Programme	The INTERREG EUROPE programme, active for the period 2014-2020, concerns interregional cooperation in Europe, after the conclusion of the Interreg IVC programme. It supports policy learning among public authorities to improve the performance of policies and programmes for regional development. It allows public authorities across Europe to exchange practices and ideas on the way public policies work thus finding solutions to improve their strategies for their own citizens.
General objectives	The INTERREG EUROPE programme shall contribute to achieve the following overall objective: • To improve the implementation of policies and programmes for regional development, principally of programmes under the Investment for Growth and Jobs goal and, where relevant, of programmes under the ETC goal, by promoting exchange of experience and policy learning among actors of regional relevance. The operational objectives of the programme are: 1. To facilitate ongoing EU-wide policy learning and capitalisation of practices among actors of regional relevance in order to strengthen regional policies, and in particular the implementation of programmes for Investment for Growth and Jobs and, where relevant, ETC. 2. To support exchange of experience and sharing of practices among actors of regional relevance with the aim to integrate the learning from the cooperation into regional policies, in particular through their programmes for Investment for Growth and Jobs and, where relevant, ETC. The main thematic objectives that will be addressed by INTERREG EUROPE and will correspond to eligible activities are: • Strengthening research, technological development and innovation • Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs • Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors • Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency
Types of projects funded	INTERREG EUROPE will finance two actions:

a) **Cooperation projects**: partnerships of public organisations coming from different countries in Europe work together for 3 to 5 years to exchange their experiences on a particular policy issue. Each region involved in the cooperation project will produce an Action Plan. This specifies what will be done in the region to ensure that the lessons learnt from the cooperation are put into action. Projects are also asked to monitor what happens to the Action Plan, to see how well the cooperation has worked.
<u>Calls for project proposals will be launched throughout the programming period.</u>
Interregional Cooperation Projects as a general rule have two phases:
1. Phase 1 is dedicated to the exchange of policy experience and to preparing the implementation of lessons learnt (closing with the production of the Action Plans for the integration of lessons learnt from the cooperation in their regional policies and/or programmes)
2. Phase 2 is dedicated to the monitoring by each partner region of the implementation of their Action Plan by the responsible actors in their territory. The actual implementation of these actions is not funded by INTERREG EUROPE.

Activities of projects can include (non-exhaustive):
➢ Elaboration of Action Plans (mandatory)
➢ Policy related studies and analysis
➢ Meetings and activities with the local stakeholder group
➢ Exchange study visits
➢ Interregional seminars and events for exchange and capacity building on the topic
➢ Communication and dissemination of project results
➢ Monitoring and analysis of Action Plan results (phase 2)
➢ Pilot actions (phase 2)

b) **Policy Learning Platforms**: a space for continuous learning where any organisation dealing with regional development policies in Europe can find solutions to improve the way they manage and implement their public policies in the four topics promoted by the Programme. The main aim is to support local and regional governments to be more effective when planning and implementing policies for the benefit of citizens.
Activities and services of the Platform can include (non-exhaustive):
➢ Follow as far as possible the developments in G&J and ETC programmes around Europe on topics related to the Axis to identify possible interesting experiences
➢ Maintain a close collaboration with the Smart Specialisation Platform33 to share information and ensure complementarity of activities
➢ Analyse and benchmark the content of projects in the

	target priority and other priorities, if relevant ➢ Write thematic productions such as newsletters, studies, policy recommendations related to the topic selected ➢ Organise thematic events and meetings for the community of actors and stakeholders involved in programmes for Investment for Growth and Jobs and ETC in the field of the target priority (with other Platforms where there are strong thematic synergies). ➢ Organise and facilitate peer reviews between European regions in support of policy improvement and capacity building ➢ Advise projects in the selected Priority Axis when relevant ➢ Advise INTERREG EUROPE programme bodies on the programme's strategic orientation on the selected topic ➢ Assess and advise on the relevance of possible pilot actions proposed by Projects in their phase 2 ➢ Provide and moderate on-line collaborative tools for knowledge sharing and policy learning ➢ Answer requests for information from individual actors and stakeholders involved in Growth and Jobs and ETC programmes in the field of the concerned Priority Axis.
Eligible activities	The projects that can be funded under the INTERREG EUROPE concern 4 main Priority Axis: *Priority Axis 1: Research, Technological Development and Innovation* - *Investment priority 1(a): Enhancing research and innovation (R&I) infrastructure and capacities to develop R&I excellence and promoting centres of competence, in particular those of European interest.* Types of actions to be supported: a) Interregional Cooperation Projects *Examples of possible Projects:* ➢ Regional authorities and business support actors sharing experiences on public funding schemes for innovation support as key element of innovation infrastructure, resulting in Action Plans for the creation in each region of a revolving fund for technology innovation either as a 'financial instrument' in a regional G&J programme or operated independently. ➢ Exchange of experience among regional authorities on policies and programmes to create research facilities and set up international R&D cooperation networks in less research intensive regions, and prepare the creation of such facilities and networks through Action Plans. ➢ Exchange of experience among regional development agencies to plan actions for improving the match between curricula of higher education institutes and human capital needs of businesses in their regional smart specialisation

sectors.
➤ Exchange of experience among regional actors to improve policies in support of innovation addressing the key societal challenges in the field of health, demographic change and well-being.

b) Policy Learning Platforms
Examples of possible actions of the Platform:
➤ Publication of policy recommendations for creating regional centres of competence for research and innovation based on successful experiences from different Projects and G&J programmes.
➤ Seminar for regional actors on strengthening the role of universities in the regional innovation system.
➤ Peer reviews among European regions, which have similar sectors of smart specialisation to analyse and improve their regional innovation infrastructures.

- *Investment priority 1(b): Promoting business investment in innovation and research, and developing links and synergies between enterprises, R&D centres and higher education, in particular product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, ecoinnovation, cultural and creative industries, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialisation and supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production, in particular in Key Enabling Technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies.*
Types of actions to be supported:
a) Interregional Cooperation Projects
Examples of possible Projects:
➤ Exchange of practices among regional authorities, universities and innovation agencies to develop for each partner region facilities and methods to support knowledge transfer and strengthen opportunities for open innovation between businesses and academia in the field of green technologies within and between partner regions.
➤ Regional innovation agencies exchanging practices on cluster development and management in life-science related clusters, resulting in Action Plans for establishing new regional and crossborder clusters through projects under their respective regional Growth and Jobs and cross-border ETC programmes.
➤ Cooperation among regional authorities and business support actors from regions with strong
➤ ICT/new media sectors to exchange practices and prepare action to increase intra- and interregional business cooperation for the commercialisation of R&D results.

b) Policy Learning Platforms

Examples of possible actions of the Platform:
- ➢ Publication of an overview of successful examples cluster support projects and measures implemented through Growth and Jobs programmes across Europe.
- ➢ Peer reviews among European regions (involving authorities and actors in their innovation chains) related to the organisation and governance of their triple helix cooperation.
- ➢ Workshop for procurement managers of regional authorities to disseminate regional practices in public procurement for innovation.

Priority Axis 2: Competitiveness of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
- *Investment priority 3(d): supporting the capacity of SMEs to engage in growth in regional, national and international markets, and in innovation processes;*

Types of actions to be supported:

a) Interregional Cooperation Projects

Examples of possible Projects:
- ➢ Cooperation among regional authorities and business support agencies to exchange practices on the set-up and management of seed-capital facilities to support SMEs, to prepare the creation of such financial support schemes through the partners' programmes for Investment for Growth and Jobs or other regional business support programmes.
- ➢ Regional authorities and business support actors sharing experiences on awareness raising and building entrepreneurial qualities among young people and developing action plans for the introduction of young entrepreneur support schemes in their regions.
- ➢ Exchange of practices about SME internationalisation and export support facilities among regional development agencies, resulting in Action Plans for establishing new and improving existing SME internationalisation support facilities in each region through a project under the regional Growth and Jobs programme or other regional programmes.

b) Policy Learning Platforms

Examples of possible actions of the Platform:
- ➢ Publication of recommendations for regional SME development programmes based on an analysis of successful experiences from different projects and Growth and Jobs programmes.
- ➢ Seminar for regional authorities on the design of SME-friendly policies, including design of public procurement processes and the reduction of administrative burdens and barriers or SMEs.
- ➢ Peer reviews among regional development agencies and

education institutes of regional entrepreneurship development programmes in different European regions.

Priority Axis 3: Low Carbon Economy
- *Investment priority 4(e): Promoting low-carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular for urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multi-modal urban mobility and mitigation relevant adaptation measures.*

Types of actions to be supported:
a) Interregional Cooperation Projects
Examples of possible Projects:
  ➢ Exchange of experience and good practices of regional and local authorities resulting in Action Plans to plan for setting up regional structures to promote and facilitate local sustainable energy generation and distribution systems in rural areas.
  ➢ Regional and city authorities sharing experiences on sustainable mobility measures, resulting in Action Plans that prepare actions and investments to increase the use low-carbon transport options to be funded from Growth & Jobs programmes or other regional programmes.
  ➢ Cooperation among regions and regional energy agencies on practices to encourage and support businesses to invest in energy-efficiency measures, resulting in the preparation of regional support programmes for energy efficiency in companies.

b) Policy Learning Platforms
Examples of possible actions of the Platform:
  ➢ Creation of a web-based database of successful pilots and demonstrations of sustainable energy applications delivered with the support of Growth & Jobs and ETC programmes.
  ➢ Seminar for regional authorities and energy agencies to present regional practices in supporting the development of energy cooperatives for decentralised renewable energy generation.
  ➢ Peer reviews among regional energy agencies of regional tools and strategies for investment in renewable energy sources.

Priority Axis 4: Environment and Resource Efficiency
- *Investment priority 6(c): Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage.*

Types of actions to be supported:
a) Interregional Cooperation Projects
Examples of possible Projects:
  ➢ Exchange of practices between regional authorities and nature management agencies in urbanised regions on nature management to prepare development and

integration of regional green infrastructures in zones under urban pressure as part of regional (Growth and Jobs) programmes.

➢ Regional authorities and knowledge institutes exchanging experiences on methods to assess vulnerability of regional and cross-border ecosystems, identify mitigative measures and plan their application through regional Growth&Jobs and ETC/cross-border cooperation programmes.

➢ Exchange of experience among regional authorities and nature park management bodies on governance models for regional nature parks and NATURA 2000 areas to prepare the introduction of new management and exploitation models for their regional parks.

b) Policy Learning Platforms
Examples of possible actions of the Platform:
➢ Creation of an online compendium of successful regional policy measures and projects for the promotion and preservation of biodiversity and nature implemented through regional programmes for investment for Growth and Jobs.

➢ Seminar for regional authorities and nature managers to present and disseminate regional practices for integrated coastal zone management in view of the new EU framework regulation on maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management.

➢ Peer reviews among European metropolitan regions on their approaches to management and exploitation of cultural heritage in the built environment.

- *Investment priority 6(g): Supporting industrial transition towards a resource-efficient economy, promoting green growth, eco-innovation and environmental performance management in the public and private sectors*
Types of actions to be supported:
a) Interregional Cooperation Projects
Examples of possible Projects:
➢ Regional business support actors sharing experiences on support measures and schemes to encourage manufacturing SMEs to assess their resource use and introduce more resource efficient work processes, and to prepare the introduction of these instruments through a regional Growth&Jobs programme or other programme.

➢ Exchange of experience among regional authorities and waste management agencies on policies and measures to reduce waste volumes and increase recycling rates among small businesses and households to plan the implementation of those measures as part of regional waste management programmes.

➢ Exchange of practices among regional and local authorities on methods for the monitoring, management

	and improvement of air quality in urban and industrialised areas, resulting in Action Plans for establishing air quality and monitoring and mitigation schemes through projects under their regional Growth and Jobs programmes. b) Policy Learning Platforms *Examples of possible actions of the Platform:* ➢ Publication of examples and recommendations of regional development policies and tools to accommodate green technology and eco-innovation based companies to locate and develop in regions, based on Growth&Jobs projects around Europe. ➢ Seminar for regional authorities and development agencies to present practices and methods to promote eco-management in companies, based on examples from Growth&Jobs programmes. ➢ Peer reviews among European regions to assess and improve their programmes for monitoring and managing water quality in river basins and wetlands.
Eligible organizations	Organizations that can access funding for Cooperation Projects through this Programme are public bodies or bodies governed by public law, namely: - National, regional or local public authorities - Other institutions governed by public law (e.g. universities, regional development agencies, business support actors, etc.). Each country defines which institutions are eligible according to national regulations. The beneficiary of the Platform is the Managing Authority of INTERREG EUROPE.
Eligible countries	The INTERREG EUROPE programme is open to the participation of the entities listed above established in one of the following countries: • the 28 EU Member states; • Norway; • Switzerland.
Duration	The Programme INTERREG EUROPE shall be implemented for the period from 1st January 2014 to 31st December 2020. The funded cooperation projects should have a variable duration, from 3 to 5 years.
Budget	The INTERREG EUROPE programme has a budget of €359 million ERDF for the 2014-2020 period. For Interregional Cooperation Projects two co-financing rates by EU authorities apply at partner level: ✓ 75% (partners from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland,

	France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom) ✓ 85% (partners from Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia). The Policy Learning Platforms will be financed at 100%. Third country contributions are based on preliminary indications from CH and NO. To be confirmed by the Swiss and Norwegian authorities. Based on the Commission delegated regulation n.481/2014 supplementing the Regulation n.1299/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council concerning the eligibility of expenditure for the European Territorial Cooperation Programmes, the main cost categories will be: (a) staff costs; (b) office and administrative expenditure; (c) travel and accommodation costs; (d) external expertise and services costs; and (e) equipment expenditure.
Deadlines	The INTERREG EUROPE programme is expected to be officially launched in December 2014. The first call for proposals are expected in February 2015. At present no deadlines are known.
How to apply	Project applications can be submitted following calls for proposals whose terms of reference will be published on the programme website. At present, since the Programme has not been officially launched, this information is missing.
Evaluation criteria	Details of the selection procedure will be made available upon the launch of the programme and through the publication of the programme manual. At present, it is known that new features have been introduced to make sure that the use of EU funds is more effective: 1. Selection of more focused topics: the more focused the topics, the more chances there are to have effective results; 2. Mid to long-term monitoring: EU cooperation projects have been criticised in the past over the difficulty of capturing projects' results (on policy change) after the funding of the activities has ended. Now, regional partners will be asked to spend some time monitoring the impacts of the projects on their territories. This "monitoring phase" is essential for participating regions to demonstrate the value of the cooperation and to make sure that the results of cooperation (and of the investment of EU money) are captured more systematically. 3. Policy Learning Platforms: while many European networks exist on countless topics of regional development, none has the main aim of supporting local and regional governments to be more effective when planning and implementing policies for the

	benefit of citizens. Policy Learning Platforms seek to redress this: it is a tool to allow a faster and better share of knowledge to help governments do their job better. 4. Greater emphasis on improving policies and programmes that are part of the European Union's Cohesion policy.
Link	Interreg Europe Draft Cooperation Programme Document Interreg Europe Summary Document Interreg Europe Leaflet Interreg Europe Official Website