

Stock taking of **common** Interreg indicators in 2021-2027 Report

November, 2024

The Interreg common indicators 2021–2027 represent a significant step forward and provide a robust foundation for systematically monitoring cooperation activities and outcomes. This report reflects the current use of Interreg's common indicators across 86 Interreg programmes, including early qualitative feedback with the aim of identifying policy insights to inform the future direction of Interreg post-2027.



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Executive summary

The Interreg common indicators 2021–2027 represent a significant step forward and provide a robust foundation for systematically monitoring cooperation activities and outcomes. While they do not capture broader impacts, their flexibility and adaptability make them a vital tool for understanding and communicating the direct contributions of Interreg. These indicators provide valuable insights into the scope, range, and intensity of Interreg's contributions. Their flexibility enables programmes to adapt them to specific regional needs, making them more effective than more rigid alternatives, such as ERDF indicators. The insights gained from their use will inform improvements to the framework, ensuring its relevance and effectiveness in capturing the diversity and scale of Interreg's achievements.

This report focuses on the rationale, methodology and outcomes of the ongoing work with indicators within Interreg programmes, with a focus on the common Interreg indicators for 2021–2027. Indicators are tools to outline the scale and thematic scope of achievements, complementing evaluations that assess broader impacts and objectives. Therefore, Interreg programmes are encouraged to adopt a pragmatic approach, focusing on the most promising indicators to effectively communicate Interreg's achievements to policymakers and stakeholders. The flexibility inherent in these indicators ensures their relevance across diverse regional goals, although a more consistent intervention logic and shared terminology could enhance alignment and understanding. Hence, indicators should support a variety of intervention pathways, ensuring that programmes can pursue innovative approaches without restriction.

The adoption of Interreg common indicators has revealed key insights into the contributions of Interreg. For instance, programmes are expected to engage 41,200 organisations in cooperation projects, develop 5,100 joint strategies or action plans, test 7,300 innovative solutions through pilot actions, and involve 234,000 participants in joint training schemes. These figures provide a clearer picture of the breadth and scope of Interreg activities, enabling better communication of their achievements.

The analysis of the uptake and implementation of Interreg common indicators presented in this report was carried out between March and October 2024. It was conducted by a dedicated group of Interreg programmes, known as the informal working group on indicators, with support from the Evaluation and European Semester Unit and Interact. The methodology was grounded in data triangulation, integrating multiple sources of evidence to ensure a comprehensive and balanced understanding. To support the conclusions presented in this report, representatives from the working group drew on three data sources, both primary and secondary data sources:

- **Cohesion open data:** This provided quantitative data on the use of common indicators across programmes, categorised by strand and specific objectives. It offered insights into patterns and trends in indicator adoption across different Interreg programmes.
- **Qualitative feedback through fiches:** Feedback was gathered on selected common and/or programme-specific indicators, including the seven most widely used common Interreg indicators. This qualitative input offered deeper insights into how these indicators were implemented and perceived at the programme level (e.g., information on guidance to applicants, contracting, project monitoring, communication on results)
- **Online survey:** A survey was jointly developed by the Evaluation and European Semester Unit, Interact and the informal working group. Distributed to all 86 Interreg programmes between July and October, the survey sought to capture broader feedback on the usefulness and relevance of the 2021–2027 Interreg common indicators. Interreg

programmes 'representatives were asked to provide information on their selected indicators including ranking them based on the RACER criteria (relevance, accuracy, comparability, ease of use, and reliability).

This approach allowed the working group to gather both quantitative and qualitative evidence, creating a well-rounded basis for analysis. However, despite its robustness, certain limitations were observed. For example, some survey questions lacked clarity, leading to potential misinterpretations. Additionally, inconsistent understanding and application of indicator definitions across programmes, as well as occasional contradictions in the responses, added complexity to the analysis.

However, the application of these indicators has also highlighted areas for improvement. Clearer definitions and guidance are required to ensure consistency in interpretation, and especially prevent double counting and support accurate target setting. Logical pairings of output and result indicators, such as linking joint training schemes to completed training activities, have proven effective, but for some Interreg programmes inconsistencies and rigid distinctions between outputs and results continue to pose challenges. While programmes appreciate the flexibility offered by the 2021-2027 indicator system, more tailored guidance is needed by the Interreg programmes. Addressing these issues is essential to enhance the accuracy and reliability of the indicator system and accordingly of the aggregated data.

Despite these challenges, the common indicators have been widely appreciated for their utility in planning, monitoring, and communicating results. They provide critical insights into direct deliverables, such as strategies, pilot actions, and training schemes, while evaluations continue to assess broader impacts and objectives. The experience of defining and applying these indicators offers valuable lessons for future cohesion policy reforms, particularly in structuring performance-based payments and enhancing outcome-focused monitoring.

Moving forward, Interreg programmes, with the support of Interact and the Evaluation and European Semester Unit, are committed to continuing the exchange of experiences and solutions to further improve the indicator system in response to emerging needs and challenges. This ongoing effort aims to enhance consistency across Interreg programmes by aligning indicators with forthcoming regulations and potential delivery approaches. enhancing the utility of programme-specific indicators, and aggregating data across programmes to create a cohesive narrative of Interreg's contributions.

By addressing these areas, Interreg can further strengthen its monitoring framework, reinforce the impact of regional cooperation efforts, and create a cohesive narrative of Interreg's contributions through aggregated data across programmes.

1. Background

The European Territorial cooperation goal under cohesion policy 2021-2027 is composed of 86 adopted Interreg programmes grouped in 4 strands of cooperation:

- **64 Cross-border programmes (CB):** focussed on cross-border regional cooperation along all EU land and maritime borders (including the Peace Programme);
- **13 Transnational programmes (TN):** focussed on transnational cooperation, including macro-regional strategies and sea basins;
- **4 Interregional programmes (IR):** focussed on building pan-European networks allowing regions to share their policy successes and experience across the territories and providing territorial analysis and services;
- **5 Outermost regions programmes (OR):** focussed on deepening relations between the EU's remote regions and their neighbourhoods.

The funding for Interreg for 2021-2027 encompasses three EU funding sources: 1) ERDF funding for the Territorial cooperation goal through cooperation programmes in the EU27 with a budget of EUR 9 billion; 2) the funding of cooperation under the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) with a budget of EUR 401 million; 3) the funding of cooperation under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) with a budget of EUR 611 million.

The 86 programmes across the 4 strands are structured using a list of 30 specific objectives (the Peace programme has an additional 9 specific objectives not available to other programmes). The 30 specific objectives are used 640 times by the 86 programmes. The four most popular specific objectives, making up nearly 40% of all specific objectives, address 1) climate change adaptation 2) nature and biodiversity, 3) culture and sustainable tourism and 4) enhancing research and innovation. The ERDF/CF fund regulation¹ for 2021-2027 listed 20 Interreg specific common output and common result indicators. The intention was to measure through project monitoring the outputs and results of support to typical actions that would capture important dimensions of cooperation across the 85 programmes. The common indicators are linked directly to the specific objectives and form an important part of the performance framework of each programme.

The thirteen 21-27 common outputs provided a more complete set of output measures than the comparable output indicators used in 2014-2020. The seven common result indicators introduced a new layer of "outcome" indicators to capture typical outcomes in line with the overall approach taken to ERDF/CF programming for 2021-2027. The 2021-2027 common indicators were developed through consultation with Interreg practitioners facilitated by the Interact programme. The listed indicators were described in fact sheets annexed to Commission Staff Working Document (2021) 198 of 8 July 2022²

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R1058&from=EN>

² https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information-sources/publications/evaluations-guidance-documents/2021/performance-monitoring-and-evaluation-of-the-european-regional-development-fund-the-cohesion-fund-and-the-just-transition-fund-in-2021-2027_en

2. Working group tasks and methodology

The "Informal working group on Indicators" gathered by Interact and the Evaluation and European Semester Unit in 2024, was established to review the use and effectiveness of Interreg's common indicators and to collect insights to shape future programme preparation, monitoring and evaluation exercises. The group's tasks included:

- To take stock of how the 86 Interreg programmes had used the Interreg common indicators;
- To provide early qualitative feedback on how the process of monitoring involving beneficiaries is developing;
- To draw policy learning that could contribute to the thinking on the future of Interreg post 2027.

This initiative began with a call for volunteers from the four Interreg strands, announced at the 2024 Interreg Knowledge Fair in Riga. The working group met four times to analyse indicators' use and discuss potential improvements. The list of the participating programmes is provided in Annex 2.

The working group used three main sources of evidence for its work and to underpin the conclusion presented in this report:

- The data from Cohesion Open Data, including common indicators used by programmes, by strand and by specific objective.
- Qualitative feedback collected through the fiche on selected common and/or programme specific indicators, including the 7 most widely used common Interreg indicators.
- An online survey, jointly developed by Evaluation and European Semester Unit, Interact and the informal working group, was distributed to all 86 Interreg programmes during July-October. The online survey aimed to capture broader feedback on the 2021-2027 Interreg common indicators and to rank their usefulness and relevance using the RACER criteria (Relevance, Accuracy, Comparability, Ease of Use, and Reliability).

The respective data provided by the three aforementioned sources and related to the seven most popular indicators were thoroughly discussed through online and in-person meetings held between April and October by the informal group members, Evaluation and European Semester Unit and Interact.

This report summarises the key findings from the discussions and outlines the primary sources consulted throughout the process. It offers a roadmap for refining and enhancing the set of indicators, aiming to better meet the monitoring and evaluation needs of Interreg programmes.

3. Use of Interreg common indicators in programming based on Cohesion Open Data

Across the 86 adopted Interreg programmes, there are nearly 3,300 uses of common indicators, with output indicators being utilised more frequently than result indicators. Cross-border programmes, accounting for 63 out of the 86 programmes, contribute the majority of these common indicators. Notably, over 82% of these common output and result indicators used are common Interreg indicators.

On average, each Interreg programme includes 8 specific objectives and applies Interreg common indicators 32 times - 19 for output indicators and 13 for result indicators, as per Table 1 below:

Table 1: 2021-2027 - Use of common indicators by Interreg strand

| | Interreg common indicators | Other common indicators | Grand Total |
|--------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| OUTPUT | 1,585 | 391 | 1,976 |
| Cross-border | 1,152 | 363 | 1,515 |
| Transnational | 352 | 10 | 362 |
| Outermost | 73 | 18 | 91 |
| Interregional | 8 | | 8 |
| RESULT | 1,112 | 188 | 1,300 |
| Cross-border | 829 | 173 | 1,002 |
| Transnational | 219 | 5 | 224 |
| Outermost | 61 | 10 | 71 |
| Interregional | 3 | | 3 |
| Grand Total | 2,697 | 579 | 3,276 |
| | 82.3% | 17.7% | 100.0% |

Source: Authors calculations based on Cohesion Open Data - <https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/d/xi3a-zddk>

3.1. Interreg common indicators used by Interreg programmes

Focusing on the 20 Interreg common indicators the 2,700 recorded uses reveal significant variation in adoption and coverage across the 86 programmes. For both output and result indicators, three distinct groups emerged, categorised as green (high use), yellow (moderate use), and white (low use) in Table 2 below.

Table 2: 2021-2027 Interreg common Indicators use and targets

| | Interreg common indicator short name | Indicator uses by SO | Programme coverage (N=86) | Target value 2029 | measurement unit |
|-------------------|---|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Output indicator | RCO87 Interreg: Organisations cooperating across-borders * | 371 | 72 | 41,867 | organisations |
| | RCO116 Interreg: Jointly developed solutions * | 293 | 66 | 5,891 | solutions |
| | RCO84 Interreg: Pilot actions developed and implemented jointly * | 281 | 64 | 7,310 | pilot action |
| | RCO83 Interreg: Strategies and action plans jointly developed * | 269 | 59 | 5,079 | strategy/action plan |
| | RCO81 Interreg: Participation in joint actions across-borders | 160 | 54 | 2,334,957 | participations |
| | RCO85 Interreg: Participations in joint training schemes | 80 | 46 | 234,182 | participations |
| | RCO115 Interreg: Public events across-borders jointly organised | 68 | 35 | 7,917 | events |
| | RCO117 Interreg: Solutions identified for legal/admin. obstacles | 27 | 24 | 262 | solutions |
| | RCO90 Interreg: Projects for innovation networks across-borders | 13 | 12 | 134 | projects |
| | RCO82 Interreg: Participations in horizontal principles actions | 9 | 7 | 10,515 | participations |
| | RCO86 Interreg: Joint administrative or legal agreements signed | 6 | 4 | 65 | legal or administrative agreement |
| | RCO118 Interreg: Organisations cooperating for MLG of MRSs | 4 | 4 | 218 | organisations |
| | RCO120 Interreg: Projects supporting urban-rural linkages | 4 | 3 | 33 | projects |
| Result indicators | RCR104 Interreg: Solutions taken up or up-scaled * | 338 | 73 | 12,846 | solutions |
| | RCR84 Interreg: Organisations cooperating post-project * | 307 | 66 | 9,917 | organisations |
| | RCR79 Interreg: Joint strategies and action plans taken up * | 261 | 58 | 3,821 | joint strategy/ action plan |
| | RCR85 Interreg: Participations in actions post-project | 96 | 35 | 170,323 | participations |
| | RCR81 Interreg: Completion of joint training schemes | 78 | 46 | 189,587 | participants |
| | RCR82 Interreg: Legal/admin. obstacles alleviated or resolved | 27 | 24 | 137 | legal or administrative obstacles |
| | RCR83 Interreg: Persons covered by joint agreements signed | 5 | 3 | 20,936,247 | persons |
| Total uses | | 2,697 | | | |

*These seven indicators were the subject of a specific examination by the working group.

Source: Authors calculations based on Cohesion Open Data - <https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/d/xi3a-zddk>

Green group: high use

- The green group includes eight widely used Interreg indicators – five output indicators and three result indicators.
- These indicators have high uptake, with each being used between 260 and 370 times across programmes, averaging 2.5 to 4.5 uses per programme.
- They are implemented by 54 to 73 programmes, forming the core set of Interreg common indicators that best capture outputs and results of the programme's most widely used instruments.

Yellow group: moderate use

- This group includes three output indicators and three result indicators.
- They are used between 27 and 90 times across 24 to 46 programmes.
- While less representative of Interreg's overall outputs and results, these indicators capture monitoring data on activities relevant to approximately 35-50% of Interreg programmes.

White group: low use

- This group consists of five output indicators and one result indicator.
- These indicators are used sparingly, with between 5 and 13 uses across 3 to 12 programmes.
- While important to certain specific programmes, these indicators have limited applicability as common indicators across Interreg.

3.2. What the main common Interreg indicators tell us about expected performance

The most widely used and significant indicators provide important new insights on the scale and scope of the cooperation actions planned across the different Interreg strands. As all the indicators are collected by specific objective (theme) they also “speak” about the nature and scope of co-operation at a more detailed thematic level.

Examples of these insights from the common output target set:

- 41 900 public, private and voluntary organisations are expected to engage in cooperation projects across the full range of specific objectives;
- 5 100 strategies and/or actions plans are planned to be developed jointly to address common objectives;
- 7 300 pilot actions are planned that will practically test experimental solutions through joint cooperation
- 234 000 participants are planned in joint training schemes linked to cooperation.

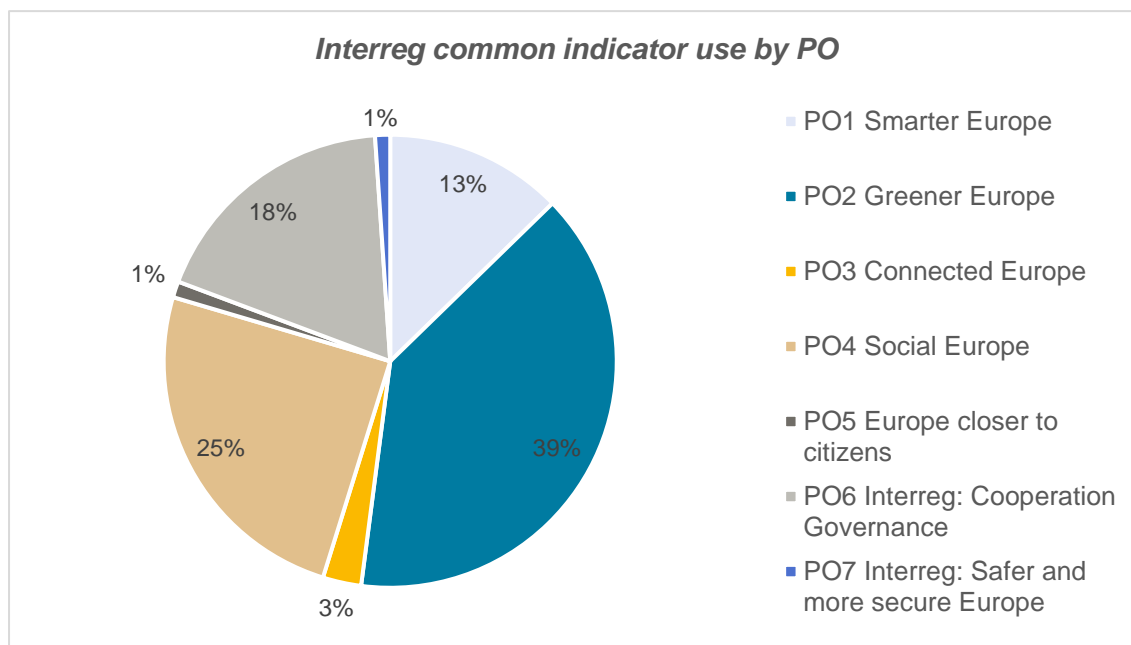
From the common result indicators selected insights include:

- 12 800 solutions taken up or up-scaled in different territories as a result of cooperation;
- Nearly 10 000 Organisations continuing cooperating after the Interreg project;
- 3 800 Joint strategies and action plans taken up and implemented;
- 190 000 participants completing joint training schemes linked to co-operation.

3.3. Interreg indicator use by PO/SO

The Figure 1 highlights the relative prioritisation of policy objectives within the Interreg programmes, with a stronger focus on environmental sustainability and social cohesion compared to other thematic areas.

Figure 1: Interreg common indicator use per policy objective (PO)



Source: Authors calculations based on Cohesion Open Data - <https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/d/xi3a-zddk>

Table 3 shows the use of both mainstream and Interreg common indicators used by Interreg programmes per policy objective. Across all policy objectives, there are 3,276 indicators, with 2,697 (82%) being Interreg common indicators and 579 (18%) being mainstream indicators.

Table 3: 2021-2027 Common Indicators use per PO

| Policy objective | Total indicators | Interreg common indicators | Mainstream common indicators | Interreg common indicator use % |
|--|------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| PO1 Smarter Europe | 553 | 343 | 210 | 62% |
| PO2 Greener Europe | 1,228 | 1,061 | 167 | 86% |
| PO3 Connected Europe | 105 | 74 | 31 | 70% |
| PO4 Social Europe | 796 | 668 | 128 | 84% |
| PO5 Europe closer to citizens | 74 | 31 | 43 | 42% |
| PO6 Interreg: Cooperation Governance | 491 | 491 | 0 | 100% |
| PO7 Interreg: Safer and more secure Europe | 29 | 29 | 0 | 100% |
| Total | 3,276 | 2,697 | 579 | 82% |

Source: Authors calculations based on Cohesion Open Data - <https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/d/xi3a-zddk>

4. Synthesis of and the programme survey and working group discussions

This chapter presents the key findings from the primary sources of evidence utilised in the report, offering a detailed and comprehensive overview of the data and insights that inform our analysis and recommendations, namely, the data collected in the online survey and the indicators' fiche.

The chapter begins with a general assessment of the 2021-2027 Interreg indicators from the fiches. In these fiches the members of the informal working group provided detailed information on the set of indicators used in their programmes. For more details on the indicators' fiches, see also Annex 1 and 2.

Then a summary of the main findings drawn from the online programme survey, which was developed jointly by the Evaluation and European Semester Unit, Interact, and members of the informal working group is presented. For more details on the online survey, see also Annex 1 and 3.

Together, these sections offer a balanced synthesis of both quantitative and qualitative data, derived from the survey, fiches, and insights from working group discussions. This approach ensures a holistic perspective on the programme's performance and identifies areas for improvement.

4.1. General assessment of the 2021-2027 Interreg indicators from the fiches

In collaboration with Evaluation and European Semester Unit, Interact invited members of the informal working group to provide detailed feedback on Interreg programme indicators, using an Excel template (the “fiche”) designed to capture insights on both common and programme-specific indicators. This initiative aims to foster a shared understanding of how these indicators are defined, interpreted and applied, and to identify potential programme-specific indicators that could be standardised as future Interreg common indicators.

The fiche offers a thorough examination of how each Interreg indicator is implemented and monitored across various programmes. It begins by identifying each programme's name, strand, and the indicators used, detailing their codes, names, and specific objectives (SOs) where each indicator is applied. The document then explores the internal processes involved in defining, interpreting, and calculating target values, while also highlighting challenges encountered—such as unclear definitions or key assumptions required for target setting. Feedback from the guidance phase is reviewed, noting any interpretation or calculation issues raised by applicants. Further, the fiche addresses aspects of contracting and project monitoring, such as the frequency of target amendments, evidence requirements, validation systems and any issues with counting or double-counting.

Additionally, the fiche assesses the communication of programme achievements to stakeholders and captures suggestions for amending indicators to improve clarity and functionality. Finally, it provides space for additional comments on each of the presented indicators.

In this exercise, participants were specifically asked to provide feedback on a set of core Interreg indicators, including seven widely-used common indicators and a programme-specific indicator related to institutional capacity.

4.1.1. Identification of the most popular seven common Interreg indicators

At the Interreg Knowledge Fair held in March 2024 in Riga, participants engaged in a dotting exercise where they marked frequently used indicators with green dots and those presenting significant challenges with red dots (see Annex 2 for details). This qualitative feedback was complemented by quantitative data from the Cohesion Open Data platform, which tracks the usage of indicators across Interreg programmes. By combining these insights, we identified uptake trends and highlighted the seven most widely used common indicators.

The most popular 7 common indicators are:

Common output indicators

- RCO116: Jointly developed solutions
- RCO84: Pilot actions developed and implemented jointly
- RCO87: Organizations cooperating across-borders
- RCO83: Strategies & action plans jointly developed

Common result indicators

- RCR104: Solutions taken up or up-scaled
- RCR79: Joint strategies and action plans taken up
- RCR84: Organizations cooperating post-project

Furthermore, participants were invited to provide input on additional common and programme-specific indicators they proposed for consideration as common indicators. Based on this input, the members of the informal working group agreed to discuss one of the programme-specific indicators, namely:

- PSI: Organisations with increased institutional capacities due to their participation in cooperation activities across-borders.

The template of the fiche, the results of the dotting exercise, the list of proposed common and programme specific indicators (in addition to the most popular 7) as well as the list of the 29 Interreg programmes that contributed to this feedback are included in Annex 2. (see Annex X for details).

4.1.2. Detailed assessment of the seven top output and result indicators

The feedback on the indicator **fiches** from 29 programmes was consolidated into a single Excel file, which was then shared with participants of the “Indicators in Action” events and members of the informal working group. These fiches of each indicator were carefully analysed and the findings summarized, see Annex 2 for more details.

Additionally, **the online survey** feedback collected during July – October on each individual indicator was reviewed and analysed too.

Both the survey results and fiche summaries were presented and discussed across four Interact events. The exchange in these events helped identify key challenges and discussion points, from which conclusions were drawn and actions for improvement were proposed. (See both Annex 1 and 2 for further details).

Based on the insights gathered from the fiches, survey responses, and event discussions, several key findings have emerged. These findings are grouped into three main areas:

- **Indicator definitions:** Feedback highlighted several aspects related to the interpretation of indicators, including proposed changes to definitions, clarifications on assumptions, and improved guidance on target setting.
- **Guidance to applicants:** Challenges were noted regarding the guidance provided to applicants, particularly in areas of contracting, validation of reported values, and preventing double-counting.
- **Communication on results:** Participants emphasized the importance of effective communication on programme results, particularly in engaging stakeholders and conveying achievements in a transparent and impactful manner.

Indicator definitions

The findings on indicator definitions highlight the need for clearer guidance and more precise definitions, with examples to better illustrate the link between project deliverables, outputs, and results. The current numbering system is seen as confusing and there is a call to revise it to make it more logical and transparent, especially in aligning output and result indicators. There is also a need for clearer instructions on how to measure specific indicators, such as capacity building and addressing double-counting issues (e.g., RCO81) and post-project result indicators (e.g., RCR84). Flexibility in allowing programme-specific indicators to supplement common indicators was recommended. Overall, the goal is to improve consistency, clarity, and flexibility in defining and measuring indicators across programmes.

Guidance to applicants

The findings highlight the need for clearer definitions and better alignment between project and programme logic to improve applicant understanding of indicators. Applicants often struggled with the complexity of indicators, especially differentiating between similar ones and had difficulty grasping key concepts, such as the relationship between solutions and pilot actions. Despite comprehensive guidance documents and resources like manuals and webinars, inconsistencies in understanding still arose during the application phase, leading to corrections during contracting. While the contracting phase focused on ensuring the accuracy of indicator targets, it was time-consuming and required ongoing clarification, especially with complex indicators. Key challenges include ensuring clarity in definitions, managing data inconsistencies, preventing double counting, and refining quality control measures to improve reporting accuracy.

Communication on results

The findings on communication highlight that common indicators, which often focus on cooperation and strategies, tend to be too abstract for the general public, with concrete examples preferred for better engagement. To communicate effectively, both quantitative and qualitative project results are necessary. While quantitative data is useful, qualitative elements are also essential for conveying the true impact of projects. However, many programmes are still in their early stages, making it difficult to fully assess the effectiveness of communication efforts.

4.1.3. Priorities for future work on Interreg common indicators

The discussions and exchanges on how programmes are applying indicators and the lessons learned were highly valued by the participating programmes. The detailed discussions on selected indicators proved to be particularly beneficial, as it allowed participants to gain insights into how other programmes manage indicators in their day-to-day operations. Programmes appreciated the opportunity to learn from one another, identify common challenges, and highlight areas in the indicator system that require improvement or revision for future programming periods. Overall, there was a strong consensus among the programmes representatives to continue these exchanges, as they believe that sharing experiences and solutions will help tackle challenges more effectively. Additionally, there was a wish to expand the discussions to include other indicators that were addressed in the fiches. To address the wish of the programmes, Interact is planning to continue these exchanges through further online events in 2025.

4.1.4. Possible candidates for future Interreg common indicators - programme specific indicator

The programme specific indicator (PSI) *“Organisations with increased institutional capacities due to their participation in cooperation activities across borders”*, was considered by the working group well-defined, with a clear understanding of what it measures and what it does not. This programme specific indicator has been used by several transnational and interregional Interreg programmes seems particularly suitable for them. However, it is worth to mention that no common indicator currently captures the increase in institutional capacity across all Interreg programme strands. This PSI is often closely connected to RCO87 (pilot actions developed & implemented jointly) and RCO84 (organisations cooperating across-borders). As a relatively new indicator, it is still too early to fully assess its effectiveness.

One of the biggest challenges related to this indicator is the data collection through a survey. Nevertheless, despite these challenges in the survey process, programmes agree that this PSI would benefit from being standardised and adopted as a common Interreg indicator. Moving forward, the focus of future work should be on refining and harmonising this PSI across programmes to increase its effectiveness and utility as a common indicator across Interreg programmes.

Further details on the programme specific indicators, can be found in Annex 1. Additionally, the list of other PSI proposals is available in Annex 2.

4.2. General assessment of the 2021-2027 Interreg indicators from the survey

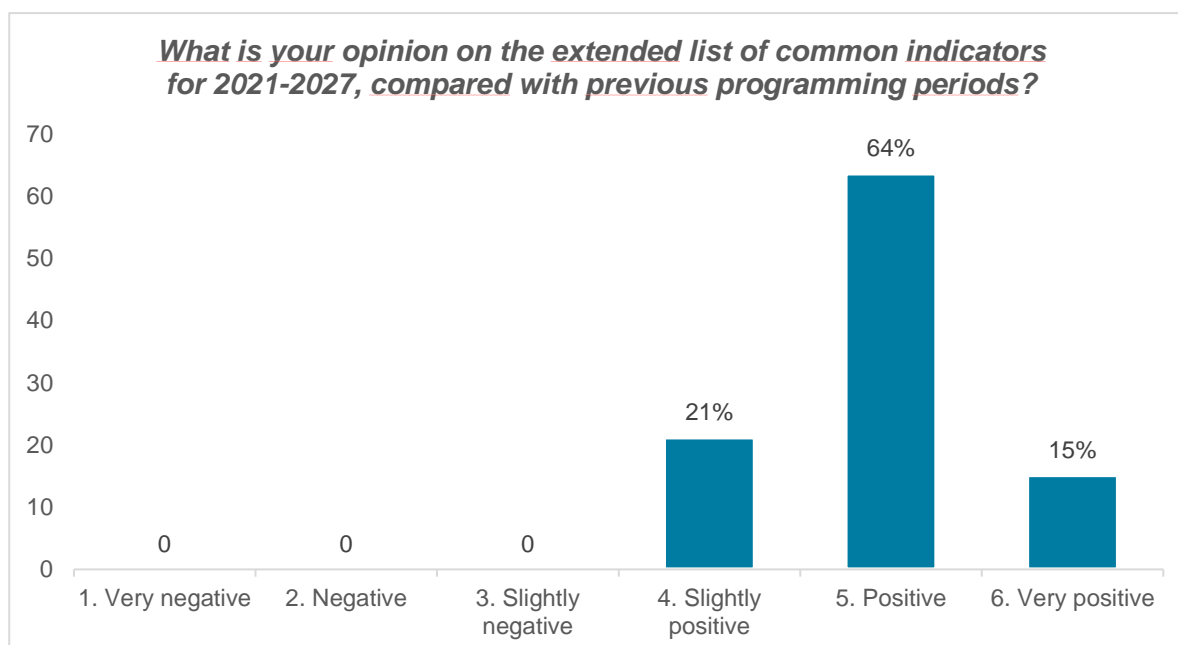
The Evaluation and European Semester Unit, in collaboration with Interact, conducted an online survey to assess the use and performance of Interreg common indicators during the 2021-2027 programming period. The primary objective was to gather feedback on the relevance, challenges, and effectiveness of these indicators to refine the system for the next generation of Interreg programmes after 2027. The online survey aimed to determine which indicators should be retained, modified, or removed, as well as whether additional indicators are necessary. The full online survey questionnaire is provided in Annex 3.

The online survey was conducted between July and October 2024, with one representative invited to participate from each programme. A total of 33 responses were received, providing a wealth of qualitative and quantitative data. Programme representatives provided feedback on over 140 indicators, offering a comprehensive basis for this analysis.

The representation of programme strands was diverse, with the majority (67%) coming from cross-border cooperation (CBC) programmes (strand A). transnational programmes (strand B) accounted for 27%, while interregional and outermost region programmes (strands C and D) each constituted 3% of respondents. The programme representatives were evenly split in their roles, with 60% working within Joint Secretariats and 40% from Managing Authorities.

The feedback revealed a generally positive perception of the expanded list of Interreg common indicators introduced for the 2021-2027 period. As shown in Figure 2 all programme representatives viewed the extended list positively, with 15% considering it very positive, 64% positive, and 21% slightly positive.

Figure 2: Interreg programmes experience with common indicators



Source: Authors elaboration from the online programme survey results

Over half of the programme representatives (55%) reported using ERDF or mainstream common indicators alongside Interreg-specific ones. This approach was necessary to address

major operations, outputs, or results not covered by Interreg common indicators, as noted by 52% of programme representatives.

Despite their overall utility, challenges with indicator selection were reported by 70% of programme representatives. These challenges were discussed in dedicated meetings organised by Interact (i.e., Indicators in Action).

75% of programme representatives declared to find it easy to find indicator pairs to use with a direct quantitative link between output (RCO) and result (RCR) indicators.

Figure 3 illustrates the Interreg common indicators most frequently used by the programmes participating in the survey. The feedback collected through the online survey aligns with data available in the open data database (see Table 2: *Use and Targets of Interreg Common Indicators for 2021–2027*).

Figure 3: Interreg common indicators used by the programmes in 21-27



Source: Authors elaboration from the online programme survey results

In addition to the Interreg common indicators, 47% of respondents reported using programme-specific indicators. According to their feedback, the effort required for monitoring these

programme-specific indicators is comparable to that of Interreg common indicators for 74% of the programmes, greater for 13%, and less for the remaining 13%.

To guide indicator refinement, the survey applied the RACER criteria, assessing indicators for their relevance, acceptability, clarity, ease of use and robustness.

The subsequent sections, particularly Annexes 1 and 2, focus on the analysis of the seven most frequently used Interreg common indicators, utilising the data available from Cohesion Open Data, the fiche and the survey, and provide detailed insights into their application and performance.

4.3. Assessment using the RACER Criteria

To the extent possible monitoring indicators should be chosen based on the RACER criteria.

Programme representatives rated these criteria on a six-point scale, where 1 represented the lowest and 6 the highest score, based on the following questions:

- **Relevance:** Does the indicator measure relevant outputs/results of the actions financed by your programme?
- **Acceptability:** Do stakeholders readily accept to measure the indicator? And are the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders for the indicator clear?
- **Clarity:** To your knowledge, is the indicator unambiguous and easy to interpret by the project beneficiaries?
- **Economy/Ease of use:** Is the indicator easy to monitor? Are there any problems with reporting the indicator?
- **Robustness:** Is the indicator robust against manipulation, i.e., is the use of the indicator likely to distort behaviour (over/underreporting)?

The survey was completed by 33 programmes' representatives. The programmes' representatives were invited to answer general questions and to reply to specific surveys questions of their views on the multiple specific common indicators providing a wealth of quantified and qualitative feedback. Over 140 indicator assessments were provided by the programmes' representatives. For more details refer to Annex 1 and 2.

Table 4: Average RACER scoring of the Interreg common output indicators

| | # REPLIES | Relevance | Acceptance | Clarity | Economy | Robustness |
|---|-----------|-----------|------------|---------|---------|------------|
| RCO87 Interreg: Organisations cooperating across-borders | 30 | 5.5 | 5.2 | 5.0 | 4.6 | 4.8 |
| RCO116 Interreg: Jointly developed solutions | 24 | 5.0 | 4.4 | 3.6 | 3.7 | 3.7 |
| RCO83 Interreg: Strategies and action plans jointly developed | 22 | 4.8 | 4.6 | 4.2 | 3.8 | 4.0 |
| RCO84 Interreg: Pilot actions developed and implemented jointly | 22 | 5.3 | 5.0 | 4.1 | 4.2 | 4.4 |
| RCO81 Interreg: Participation in joint actions across-borders | 17 | 5.2 | 4.9 | 4.4 | 3.5 | 4.4 |
| RCO85 Interreg: Participations in joint training schemes | 16 | 5.3 | 4.7 | 4.6 | 3.8 | 4.6 |

| | | | | | | |
|--|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| RCO115 Interreg: Public events across-borders jointly organised | 12 | 5.3 | 5.3 | 4.9 | 4.1 | 4.2 |
| RCO117 Interreg: Solutions identified for legal/admin. obstacles | 12 | 4.9 | 4.2 | 3.8 | 4.0 | 3.9 |
| RCO118 Interreg: Organisations cooperating for MLG of MRSs | 3 | 5.3 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 6.0 |
| RCO120 Interreg: Projects supporting urban-rural linkages | 2 | 5.0 | 5.5 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 6.0 |
| RCO86 Interreg: Joint administrative or legal agreements signed | 2 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 4.5 | 4.5 |
| RCO90 Interreg: Projects for innovation networks across-borders | 2 | 5.5 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 3.0 |
| RCO82 Interreg: Participations in horizontal principles actions | 1 | 3.0 | 4.0 | 5.0 | 3.0 | 3.0 |

Source: Authors elaboration from the online programme survey results

The highest rate of response is linked naturally to the eight most widely used common output indicators. Five indicators have 3 or fewer assessments, no doubt explained by the fact that they are not widely used in programming.

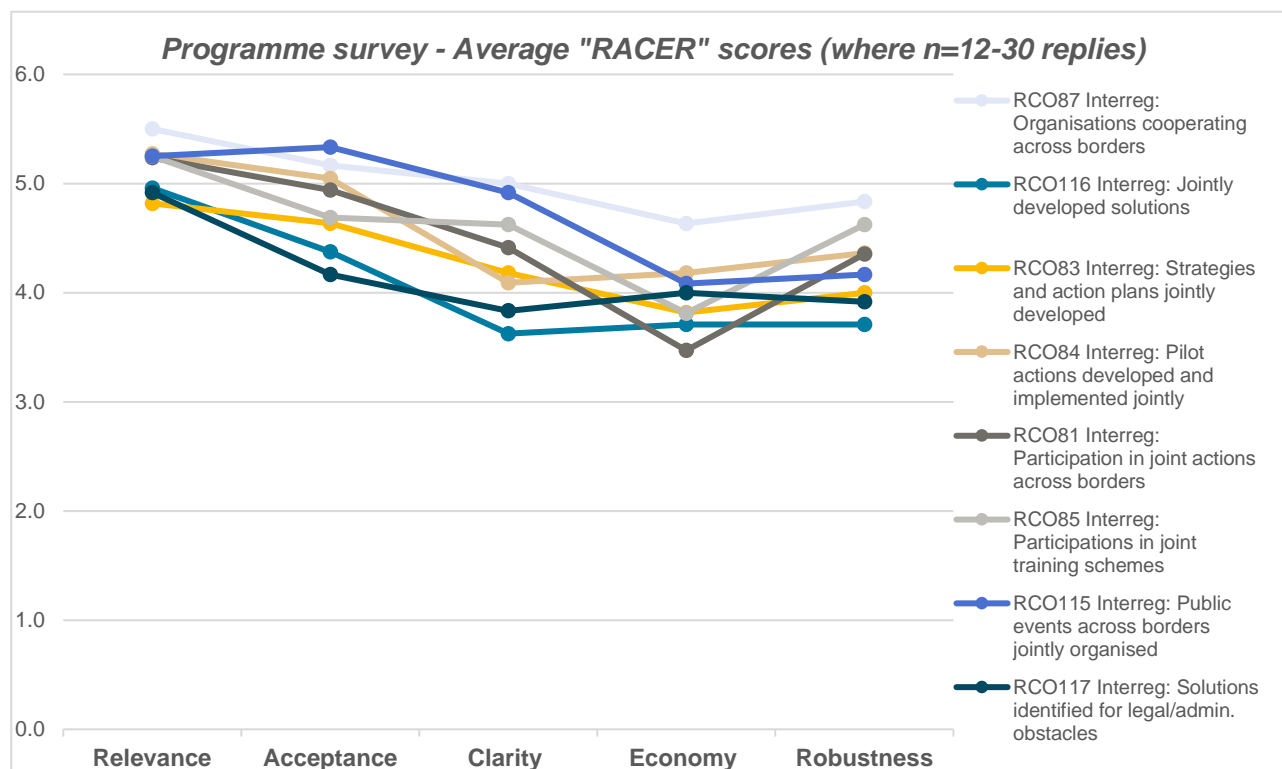
The average scored assessment under the 5 criteria of the eight widely used indicators (i.e., 12 or more assessments) are presented in the Figure 4 below.

All eight indicator are scored at close to 5, or above, under the relevance criteria. This is a very positive average assessment. This criterion scores highest among the five criteria for seven of the eight indicators (except for RCO115).

The economy criteria ("is the indicator easy to monitor?") has the lowest range of scores ranging from 3.5-4.6 out of 6, with 4 of the eight-indicators scoring less than 4.

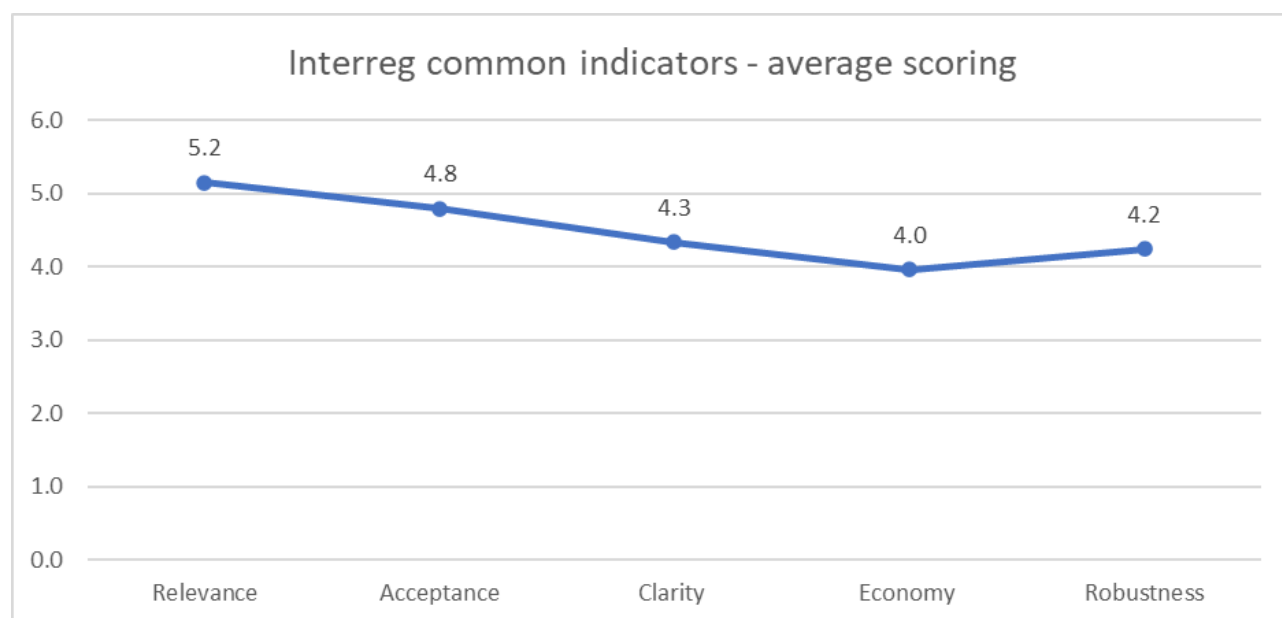
Considering that these indicators were all introduced as a novelty for 2021-2027, and that some learning effects and teething problems were to be expected, the average scores can be considered positively, as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 4: RACER programme survey scores for eight Interreg Common output indicators



Source: Authors elaboration from the online programme survey results

Figure 5: Average scoring of the Interreg common result indicators



Source: Authors elaboration from the online programme survey results

Qualitative feedback along the RACER criteria for the Interreg common indicators

The qualitative feedback supplementing the ranking along the RACER criteria for the Interreg common indicators was mixed and a representative sample size was not attained across the board. However, some key messages can be drawn from the qualitative feedback provided by the programmes.

Based on the use of the common indicators in adopted programmes for 7 of 13 common Interreg output indicators and 5 of 7 results indicators have a very high to high degree of relevance. The other 8 common indicators are each used less than 30 times in a minority of Interreg programmes.

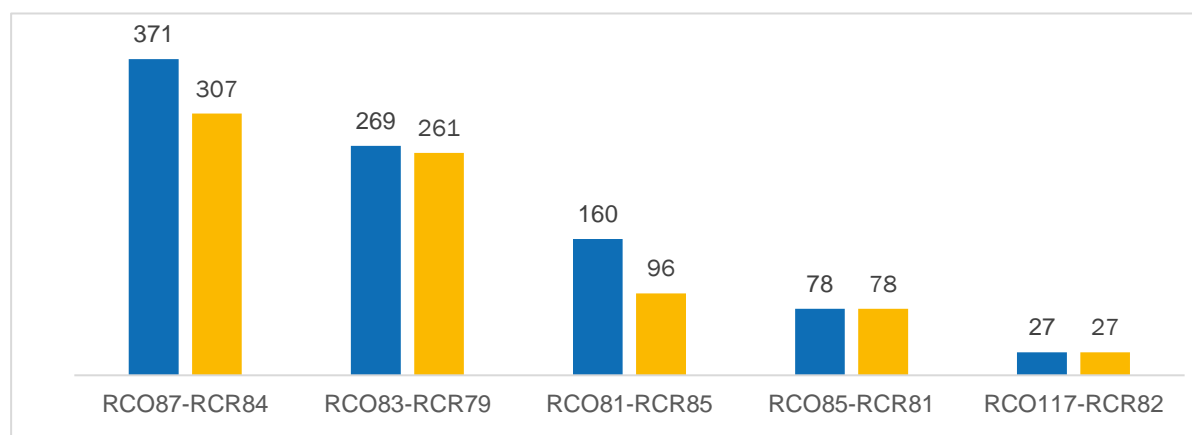
On the relevance and acceptability of certain common indicators, programmes occasionally raised interpretation and indicator definition issues that in some cases deterred beneficiaries from wanting to take up the indicator. Particularly on the acceptability of certain indicators, it was reported by some programmes that in cases where projects did not perfectly 'fit' the indicator definition, beneficiaries were reluctant to take up the indicator. These issues were further outlined in the feedback related to clarity. For multiple indicators, numerous programmes pointed to interpretation issues leading to counting difficulties and/or the need to provide further clarification to beneficiaries.

For the qualitative questions in relation to economy and robustness, the majority of programmes' responses (for indicators with a representative sample size of responses) noted that more experience is needed to meaningfully reflect on reporting issues. However, for a number of indicators, some programmes pointed to potential risks of double counting. Some respondents also flagged risks of over- or under-reporting related to misinterpretations by beneficiaries.

4.4. Pairing of related outputs and results

The descriptions of the 2021-2027 common indicators in the 2021 EC Staff Working Documents identified logical pairing between output indicator and related result indicators. These relationships were proposed in the descriptions but not defined as obligatory. Based on an examination of the data from Cohesion Open Data on the use of the output and result indicators in programmes, there is a high correlation in the use of the five main pairs of output and result indicators.

Figure 6: Most popular pairing between common output indicators and common result indicators



Source: Authors calculations based on Cohesion Open Data - <https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/d/xi3a-zddk>

In the survey mixed experiences among programme stakeholders regarding the ease of pairing these indicators were expressed. A majority (75%) of respondents found it relatively easy to link output and result indicators due to logical connections in naming and content. For example, pairs like RCO87 (Organisations cooperating across-borders) and RCR84 (Organisations cooperating post-project), RCO83 (Strategies and action plans jointly developed) with RCR79 (Joint strategies and action plans taken up), RCO85 (Participations in joint training schemes) with RCR81 (Completion of joint training schemes), making the pairing process clear.

However, some of programme representatives encountered difficulties, particularly where direct quantitative relationships between RCO and RCR indicators were unclear. For example, some found it challenging to link outputs, such as RCO84 (Pilot actions developed and implemented jointly), when there was no specific RCR indicator available to measure the impact directly. This disconnect sometimes made it hard to interpret the overall programme outcomes accurately.

The success of pairing RCO and RCR indicators often relied on:

- Clear connections between the intended output and the corresponding result. When the output and result indicators aligned well in terms of the activity's lifecycle, this process was relatively straightforward.

- Some programmes developed specific indicators directly tied to both output and result measures, which simplified the pairing process and reduced ambiguity.
- A comprehensive documentation helped to clarify the relationship between certain RCO and RCR indicators, as in the case of RCO85 and RCR81, where training scheme completion logically follows the joint training scheme implementation.

Several challenges were noted:

- For some outputs, like RCO84 (pilot actions), there were no directly related result indicators. This made it difficult to quantify the impact of outputs that did not have corresponding results.
- In some cases, the distinction between outputs and results was too rigid, as they represented different stages of the same activity. Simplifying this distinction could help reduce ambiguity and enhance the clarity of outcome reporting.
- There were issues with inconsistencies between the quantitative values of certain output and result indicators, which sometimes led to a misalignment in measuring progress.

Based on survey feedback, several improvements were suggested:

- Where outputs and results essentially represent different stages of a single activity, simplifying the distinction between them could make the measurement framework more intuitive.
- Detailed guidance on pairing indicators could address issues with complex or ambiguous connections, helping beneficiaries better understand how to link RCO and RCR indicators.
- Addressing challenges around measuring long-term results would improve the reliability of impact assessments.

While many programme representatives of the online survey find the RCO-RCR pairing process quite intuitive, challenges persist in cases where indicators lack clear quantitative links or where rigid distinctions between outputs and results create barriers. Addressing these issues through simplified frameworks and enhanced documentation could improve the efficiency and accuracy of the Interreg indicator system.

5. General messages about the Interreg indicator's system

The results collected from the survey, fiches, online events and discussions have led up to eight key messages that address significant aspects of the current indicator system used in Interreg programmes in 2021-2027. These core messages highlight areas of success, challenges and opportunities for refinement, offering valuable insights to enhance the system's effectiveness and alignment with programme goals also in view of the next programming period.

- 1. Adoption of common indicators by Interreg programmes:** The adoption of common indicators, especially Interreg common indicators represents a significant advancement in systematic monitoring compared to previous periods. The common indicators are highly valued by Interreg programmes, achieving an impressive adoption rate - a proof for their widespread acceptance and utility.

The programmes view positively the use of common indicators in planning (target setting), monitoring the expected contribution of selected projects (forecasts) and tracking final achievements.

- 2. Highlight Interreg achievements:** The common indicators provide important new inputs to communicate on important Interreg actions and to complement the practical project examples in different themes. The indicators are available by specific objective bringing an understanding of the scope and scale of cooperation activity under the different themes
- 3. Maintain a broad and flexible indicator framework for Interreg programmes:** The Interreg indicator system should continue to prioritise flexibility, as this approach better aligns with the unique needs of Interreg programmes compared to the more rigid structure of ERDF indicators. The intentionally broad and adaptable design of the Interreg indicator system allows it to encompass the diverse local/regional/interregional/transnational goals and interventions implemented across various programmes. This flexibility ensures that programmes can showcase their own contributions and still adhering to the overarching objectives of Interreg. It is important to recognise that indicators are not direct proof of achievements but serve as tools to illustrate the scope, range and intensity of outcomes. By maintaining a framework that balances adaptability with consistency, the system can more effectively capture the complexity and variety of Interreg activities and their impacts.
- 4. High uptake of the most popular 7 Interreg common indicators:** Seven Interreg common indicators demonstrate the highest uptake, with each used between 260 and 370 times across programmes, averaging 2.5 to 4.5 uses per programme. To maximize their effectiveness, some refinements are recommended, such as clearer definitions, guidance on preventing double counting and methods to improve measurement post-project completion.

The current rationales for using these indicators vary widely across programmes. This variety points to the need for a more coherent set of underlying intervention pathways, which could support a shared understanding and consistent terminology when describing the intervention logic behind Interreg activities. Importantly, indicators should align with intervention pathways without imposing limitations, ensuring they comprehensively capture the quality and achievements of Interreg programmes.

The most popular 7 Interreg common indicators include: RCO87: Organisations cooperating across borders, RCO116: Jointly developed solutions, RCO84: Pilot actions developed and implemented jointly, RCO83: Strategies and action plans jointly developed, RCO81: Participation in joint actions across borders, RCR104: Solutions taken up or upscaled, RCR84: Organisations cooperating post-project, RCR79: Joint strategies and action plans taken up.

5. **Moderately used Interreg common indicators:** Some indicators are moderately used, appearing between 27 and 90 times across 24 to 46 programmes. Although less representative of Interreg's overall outputs, these indicators provide valuable insights into activities relevant to 35–50% of programmes. To improve their use, further discussions are needed in 2025 to clarify challenges, including their applicability and barriers to adoption.

Moderately used Interreg common indicators include: RCO85: Participations in joint training schemes, RCO115: Public events jointly organized across borders, RCO117: Solutions identified for legal/administrative obstacles, RCR85: Participations in actions post-project, RCR81: Completion of joint training schemes, RCR82: Legal/administrative obstacles alleviated or resolved.

6. **Interreg common indicators with limited use:** Some indicators are used rarely, appearing only 5 to 13 times across 3 to 12 programmes. While important for specific contexts, their limited applicability as common indicators demand reconsideration of their role in the framework.

Interreg common indicators with limited use include: RCO90: Projects for innovation networks across borders, RCO82: Participations in horizontal principles actions, RCO86: Joint administrative or legal agreements signed, RCO118: Organisations cooperating for MLG of MRSs, RCO120: Projects supporting urban-rural linkages, RCR83: Persons covered by joint agreements signed.

7. **Future Interreg common indicators – programme-specific indicator (PSI):** The PSI "Organisations with increased institutional capacities due to participation in cooperation activities across borders" has proven effective in some transnational/interregional programmes. While well-defined and aligned with existing indicators like RCO84 (pilot actions) and RCO87 (organisations cooperating across borders), challenges remain, particularly around data collection through surveys. Despite these issues, there is strong agreement among programmes that standardising and refining this PSI would enhance its utility as a common indicator. Moving forward, efforts should focus on harmonising this indicator across all Interreg programmes including cross-border, transnational and interregional taking into account their specificities.
8. **Pairing of related outputs and result indicators:** The 2021 - 2027 framework effectively pairs output and result indicators when clear links exist and are well-documented, such as RCO85 (joint training schemes) and RCR81 (training completions), which simplify reporting. Challenges arise when outputs lack corresponding results indicators, like RCO84 (pilot actions), or when rigid distinctions between outputs and results complicate reporting. Misalignments also occur due to inconsistent quantitative data and unclear numbering of related indicators.
9. **Engaging and valuable learning exercise.** The group recognise that the experiences of defining the common Interreg indicator for 21-27, of defining the programmes' performance methodology documents and in applying the indicators with the selected projects has led to

an important learning. The experience with the Interreg common indicators can provide an important building block for the future reform of cohesion policy towards payments based on deliverables (milestones and targets).

- 10. Continue discussions on indicators:** Interreg programmes have agreed to continue discussions on both common and programme-specific indicators that were previously proposed by the group members in the fiche. Facilitated by Interact and Evaluation and European Semester Unit, these discussions will focus on ensuring alignment with upcoming regulations, addressing the implications of performance-based and other emerging approaches, and fostering a comprehensive understanding of indicator systems to enhance monitoring and evaluation practices.

Annex 1: Overview of 21-27 common Interreg indicators. The most popular 7 indicators

This annex offers a comprehensive analysis of the seven most commonly used indicators, namely:

Common output indicators

- RCO116: Jointly developed solutions
- RCO84: Pilot actions developed and implemented jointly
- RCO87: Organizations cooperating across-borders
- RCO83: Strategies & action plans jointly developed

Common result indicators

- RCR104: Solutions taken up or up-scaled
- RCR79: Joint strategies and action plans taken up
- RCR84: Organizations cooperating post-project

Programme specific indicator

- PSI: Organisations with increased institutional capacities due to their participation in cooperation activities across-borders.

The analysis applied three sources of evidence to assess the utility and relevance of indicators, as detailed below:

- **Cohesion Open Data:** This source provided a foundation of quantitative insights through secondary data analysis. The dataset includes common indicators employed by various programmes, categorized by strand (e.g., cross-border, transnational, or interregional cooperation) and by specific objective. This structured information allowed for an analysis of how these indicators perform across different POs/SOs.
- **Fiche** filled in from 33 programmes' representatives of the informal working group on indicators: These fiches summarise the feedback received from members of the informal working group, representing a key primary data source. The group members provided insights into the practical challenges and opportunities related to indicator use. This input reflects the practical application and interpretation of indicators, offering a qualitative complement to the quantitative data from the Cohesion Open Data.
- **Online survey:** Feedback received from 33 programmes' representatives in an online survey further enriched the analysis. Among other aspects, the survey assessed the usefulness and relevance of indicators using the RACER criteria (relevance, accuracy, comparability, ease of use, and reliability). This survey-based primary data analysis offered valuable insights helping to triangulate findings from the other two sources.

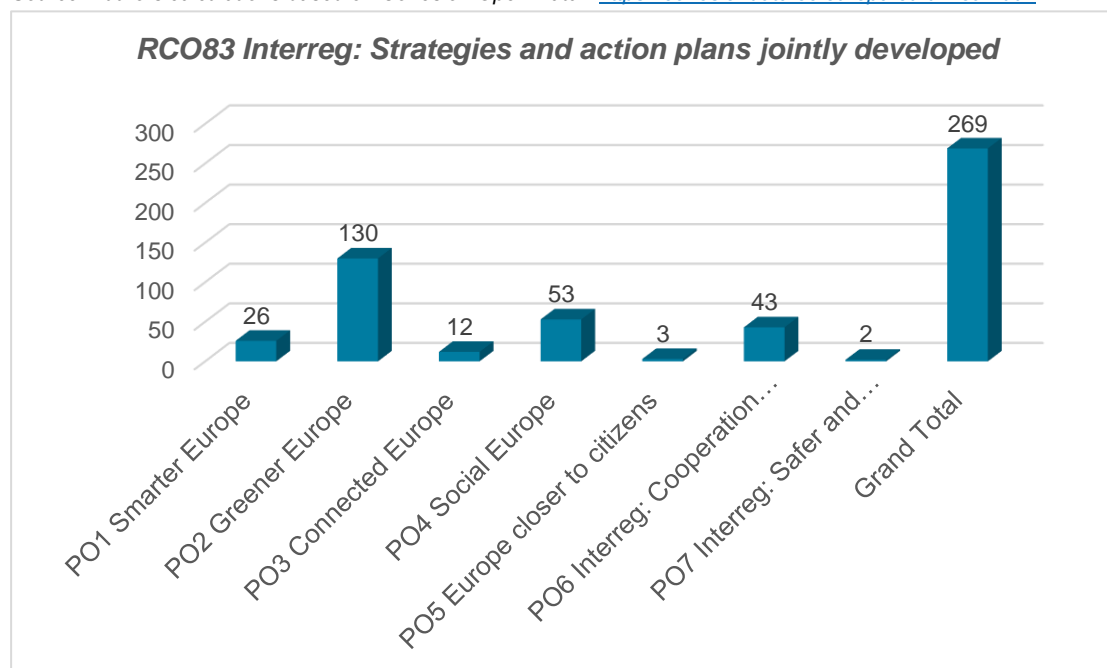
Together, these three sources provided a robust evidence base, integrating both quantitative and qualitative perspectives to comprehensively assess indicator effectiveness and relevance.

The analysis of each of the 7 indicators is finalised by outlining the main discussion points and identifying the necessary follow-up actions.

RCO83: Strategies & action plans jointly developed

| Interreg Strand | RCO83 - # of uses |
|--|-------------------|
| CB | 187 |
| PO1 Smarter Europe | 10 |
| PO2 Greener Europe | 87 |
| PO3 Connected Europe | 9 |
| PO4 Social Europe | 40 |
| PO5 Europe closer to citizens | 2 |
| PO6 Interreg: Cooperation Governance | 37 |
| PO7 Interreg: Safer and more secure Europe | 2 |
| IR | 1 |
| PO6 Interreg: Cooperation Governance | 1 |
| OR | 19 |
| PO1 Smarter Europe | 4 |
| PO2 Greener Europe | 9 |
| PO3 Connected Europe | 1 |
| PO4 Social Europe | 3 |
| PO5 Europe closer to citizens | 1 |
| PO6 Interreg: Cooperation Governance | 1 |
| TN | 62 |
| PO1 Smarter Europe | 12 |
| PO2 Greener Europe | 34 |
| PO3 Connected Europe | 2 |
| PO4 Social Europe | 10 |
| PO6 Interreg: Cooperation Governance | 4 |
| Grand Total | 269 |

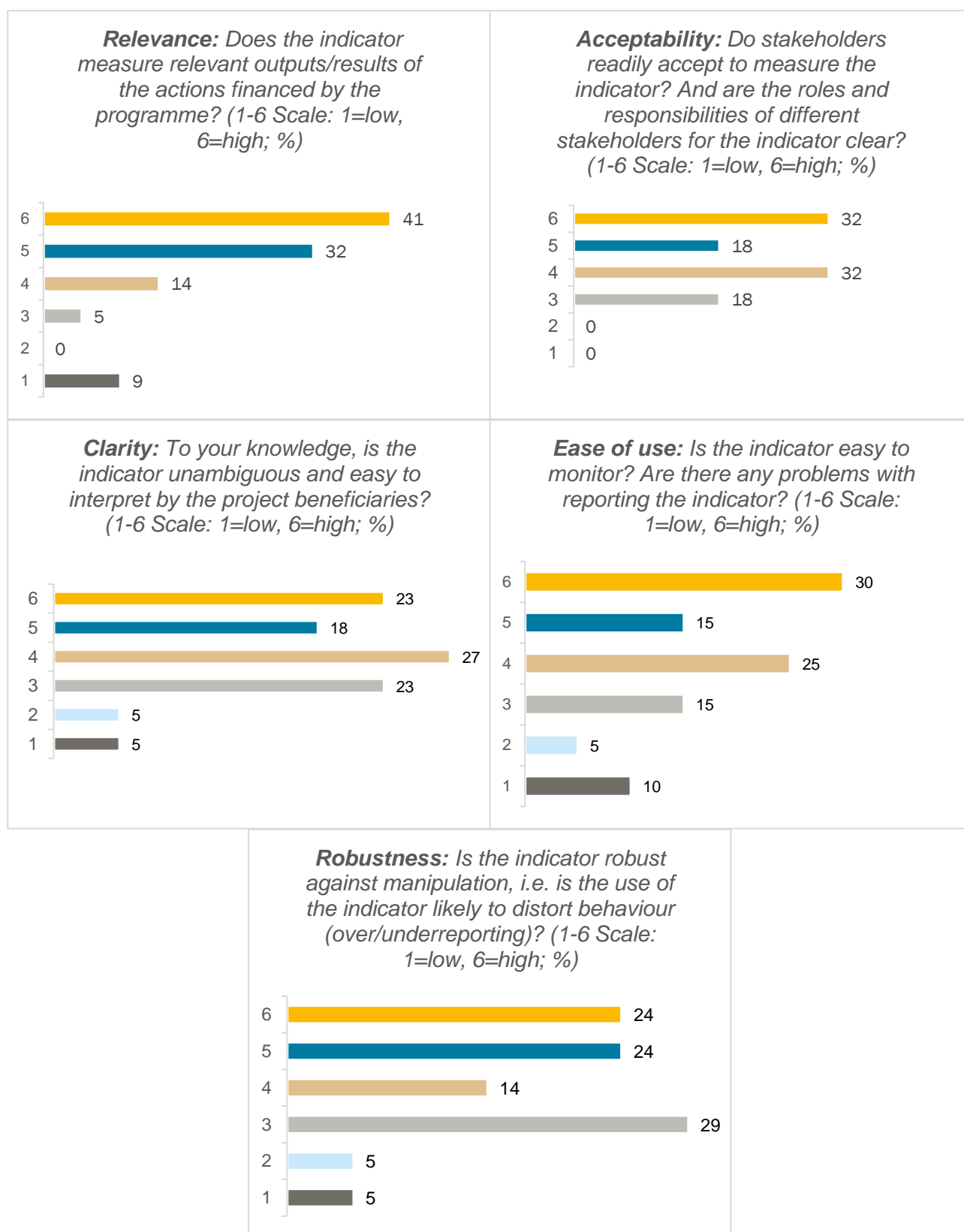
Source: Authors calculations based on Cohesion Open Data - <https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/d/xi3a-zddk>



| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Programming | In use for (10): SOs: 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 3.1, 4.2, 4.9 (PEACE+), ISO1, ISO2, all [CE, DRP (except for ISO1)]. |
| Definition & interpretation issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More precise explanation of key terms (i.e., linking it to MRS dimension) or to SO theme (3). • Handling if several topics covered (relate to 'dominant one') (3). • Clarification regarding 'jointly developed' (drafted together) (3). • Action plan also on basis of an already existing strategy (4). |
| Calculation approach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on data from 2014-2020 (average project budget, cost per strategy etc.). • Assumption on strategies per project (either general or differentiated per SO). |
| Challenges with target setting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimations of type of output (if several RCOs on offer), cost per output and success rate per project and first time of perceived as challenging. • First time small-scale projects in TN programmes. |
| Reasons for not using it | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choice of RCO 116 (solutions) as more open option covering also this (1). • Not showing the investment component (2). • Notion of 'joint' in TN context (1). |
| Guidance to applicants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority encountered no difficulties up to now. |
| Challenges | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusion with other documents such as guidelines (1). • Counting format: rather count as one with regional specifications instead of several regional ones (1). |
| Contracting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In some cases, target revision necessary but not considered a major issue by the majority. |
| Project monitoring | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some programmes provide clear-cut definition about the character of the expected output. |
| Validation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme introduced internal benchmarking system and coordination procedure (1). |
| Counting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Either no difficulties (5) or too early to say (4). • Need for clear demarcation line to RCO 116 (1). |
| Communication on results | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eventually not suitable for direct communication with national policy-makers: owing to negative connotation of terms 'strategy' and 'action plans' perceived as risk (1). |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Any proposed amendments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider that that revision/ update of existing strategies to be considered under this indicator. • Rename the indicator to something like 'Jointly developed and utilized evidence and placed-based tools for territorial development' or similar variations (1). • Link it to a result indicator measuring the implementation of the strategy or action plan by the partners who developed it; follow-up to the strategy/action plan over a reasonable period of time after the end of the project or even during the implementation period of a longer-term project (1). |
| Additional comments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The indicator does not capture other type of strategies documents such as master plans (in environment sector it is more common to develop master plans compared to strategies)/ policy papers etc. and there is no other Interreg common output indicator that can be used (1). • Opting for strategies as target unit alone may prioritize quantity over quality (1). |
| Conclusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fit for wide uptake and wide coverage: used across POs 1, 2, 3 and 4, ISOs. • Some clarifications to EC definition putting it in context of programme / SO. • Target setting based on 2014-20 period. • No major difficulties in verification of outputs expected. • For counting: half expects / experienced no difficulties, for half too early. |

Source: Authors elaboration from the programme fiche results



Source: Authors elaboration from the online programme survey results

Main discussion points

The discussion on RCO83 emphasized its suitability for broad uptake and coverage across multiple policy objectives (POs 1, 2, 3, and 4) and ISOs. Participants noted the need for some clarifications to the EC definition to better contextualize it within specific programmes and strategic objectives. The target setting for this indicator should be based on data from the 2014-2020 period. While no major difficulties in verifying outputs are anticipated, the ease of counting varies, with half of the programmes expecting no difficulties and the other half finding it too early to determine.

Points to reflect on:

- Strategies and action plans might be considered rather an interim deliverable than a result.

Conclusion and further actions

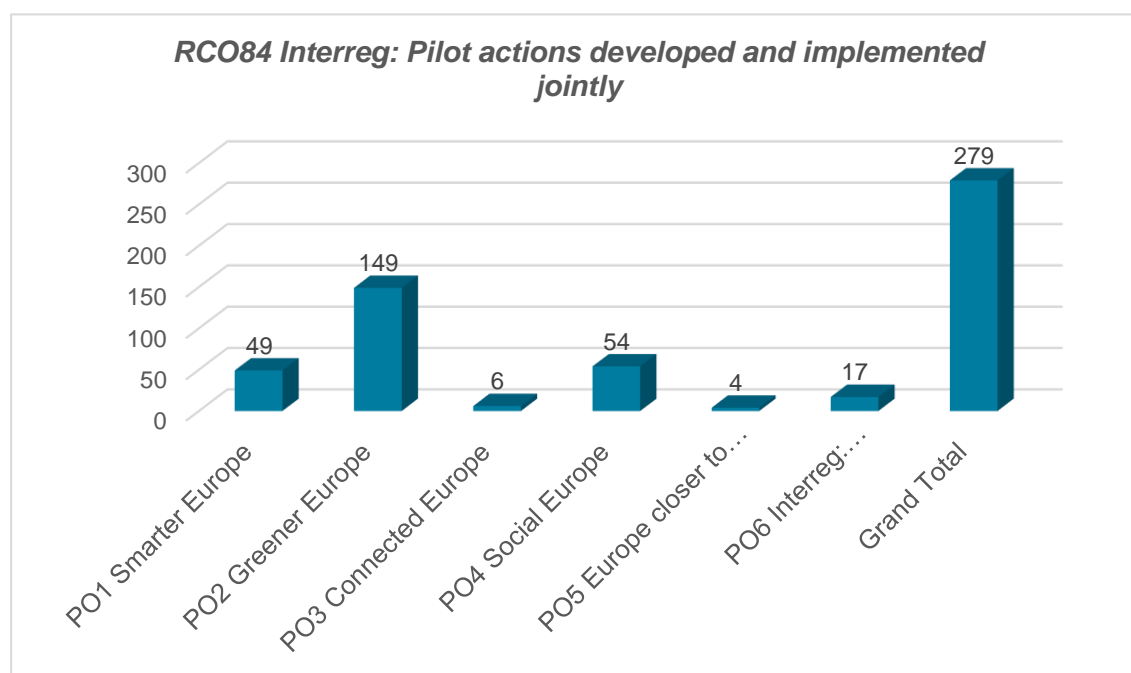
RCO83 is widely applicable and adaptable, making it a valuable indicator across various programmes. To enhance its effectiveness, it is important to provide clear contextual definitions and set realistic targets based on previous data. Future discussions should focus on refining these definitions and ensuring a standardized approach to counting and verification to maintain consistency and reliability across different programmes.

It might be good to develop a shared understanding across programmes:

- which types of documents can be / have been labelled as strategies and actions plans
- how to work with existing strategies that are adjusted to the context of a specific territory and/or lead to dedicated action plans for a specific territory (CBC) or specific territories (TNC).

RCO84: Pilot actions developed and implemented jointly

| Interreg Strand | RCO84 - # of uses |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| CB | 181 |
| PO1 Smarter Europe | 27 |
| PO2 Greener Europe | 93 |
| PO3 Connected Europe | 4 |
| PO4 Social Europe | 42 |
| PO5 Europe closer to citizens | 4 |
| PO6 Interreg: Cooperation | |
| Governance | 11 |
| IR | 1 |
| PO6 Interreg: Cooperation | |
| Governance | 1 |
| OR | 10 |
| PO1 Smarter Europe | 1 |
| PO2 Greener Europe | 9 |
| TN | 89 |
| PO1 Smarter Europe | 21 |
| PO2 Greener Europe | 49 |
| PO3 Connected Europe | 2 |
| PO4 Social Europe | 12 |
| PO6 Interreg: Cooperation | |
| Governance | 5 |
| Grand Total | 281 |

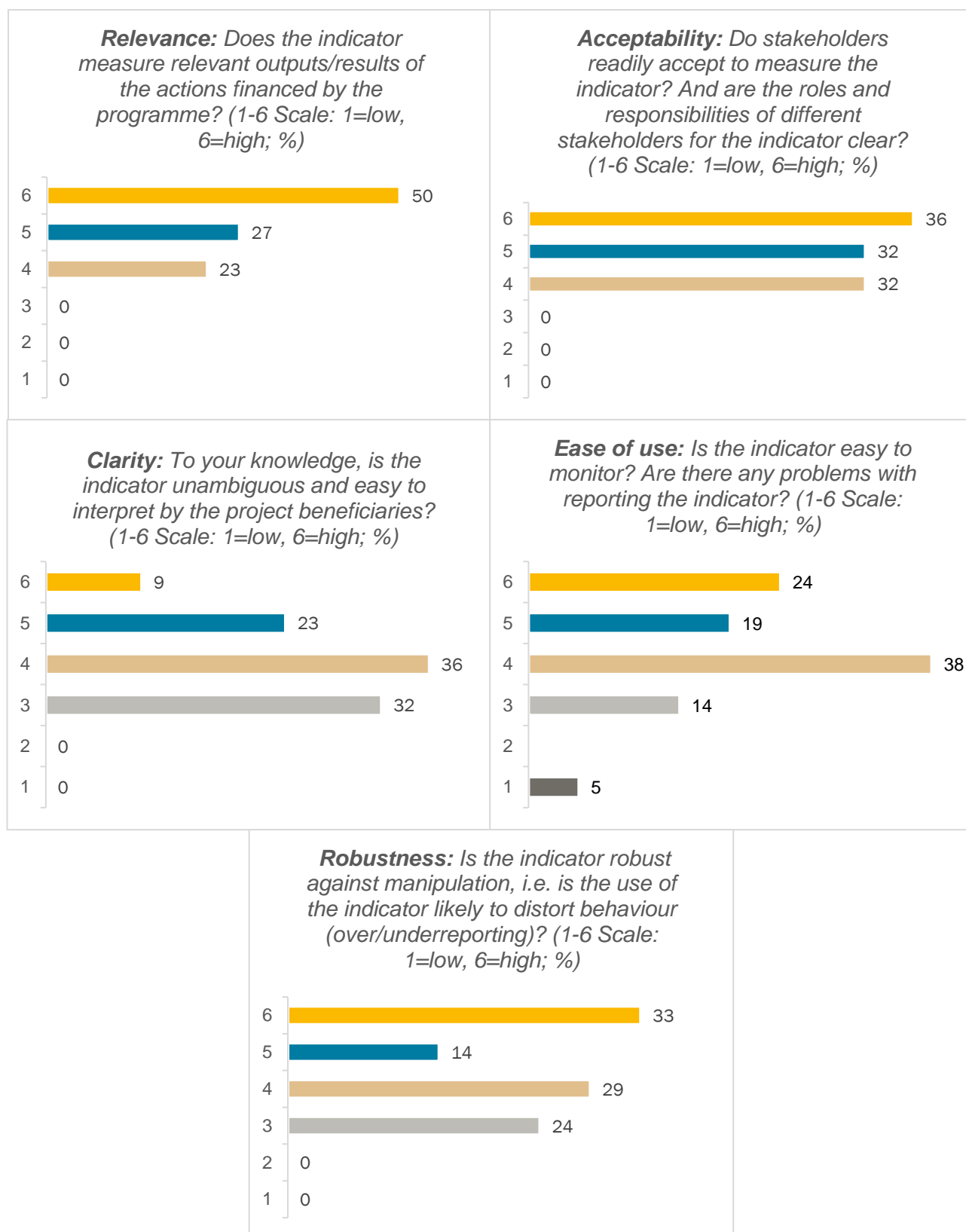


Source: Authors calculations based on Cohesion Open Data - <https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/d/xi3a-zddk>

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Programming | In use for (19 out 22): 1.2, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2., 2.3, 2.4, 2.5., 2.6, 2.7, 2.8.,3.1, 3.2., 4.1., 4.2, 4.6, ISO1 |
| Definition & interpretation issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many programmes adhered to the official definition provided by the EC staff working document. • A few programmes made minor adaptations to reflect specific objectives (SOs) or internal requirements from the 2014-2020 period. • Several programmes provided detailed clarifications on what constitutes a pilot action. |
| Calculation approach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes often relied on assumptions and professional judgement due to the lack of concrete data. This included estimating targets based on previous projects, historical data, and expectations at the programming stage. |
| Challenges with target setting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some programmes faced challenges due to the late start of the programme, the introduction of new elements (e.g., PO5, direct support to SMEs), and the unreliability of targets from previous periods. • Several programmes reported no specific challenges or found the process straightforward. |
| Reasons for not using it | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not fit in IL. • Due to a diversified budget, thematic focus, infrastructure components, and time constraints, this was challenging for social innovation projects. |
| Guidance to applicants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No significant interpretation issues because of proactive guidance (resolved through existing guidance documents, factsheets, and explanatory sessions). • Applicants misunderstood how to count pilot actions, such as assuming multiple counts for the same tool tested in different areas or confusing small-scale investments with pilot actions. |
| Challenges | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many programmes indicated they had not faced significant challenges with applicants regarding calculation issues. • Some programmes did encounter specific challenges, such as clarifying whether to count pilot actions based on the number of territories/sites or the distinct characteristics of the pilot actions. |
| Contracting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to amend or change applicants' targets limited due to projects being in early stages or ongoing without significant issues. • Some programmes mentioned that adjustments to target values were necessary during the contracting phase, especially when applicants had misinterpreted or incorrectly set their targets initially. • Through clear communication and guidance during the contracting phase, adjustments were easily managed. |
| Project monitoring | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes are generally at an early stage. • Several programmes have prepared templates, methodologies, and guidance documents for monitoring indicators. |

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Establish a validation system | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT platforms that evolved from previous programming periods to facilitate reporting and assessment. • The practical implementation and effectiveness of these validation systems will be assessed with the submission of final progress reports, typically due in early 2025. • Some programmes are still in preparation or early stages. |
| Counting or double-counting issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of programmes have not encountered difficulties with counting or double-counting pilot actions so far (still early or awaiting the first project reports for submission). |
| Communication on results | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many programmes emphasize communicating achievements through project stories and qualitative evidence of benefits to target groups. • Utilization of Communication Channels (as social media, publications, events, and dedicated sections on programme websites). |
| Any proposed amendments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many programmes see no need for amendments to the indicator. • Indicator definitions satisfactory - no urgent or widespread calls for amendments. Ensure on clarity in interpretation and possibly refining common practices related to target setting and reporting. |
| Conclusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCO84 is generally perceived positively as a clear and practical measure of project outputs. • There was a specific suggestion to consider linking RCO84 with other related indicators like RCO116 and RCR104. |

Source: Authors elaboration from the programmes; fiche results



Source: Authors elaboration from the online programme survey results

Main discussion points

The primary finding was the varying methods used to count this indicator across different Interreg programmes. Some programmes calculate the number of times the same pilot action is tested across various territories or by different beneficiaries, while others count the pilot action only once it is developed. Some programmes make a distinction in counting if the context/territory matters – one approach that is adjusted to different territories is counted several times. In contrast to an approach that is tested in a more or less similar manner across several territories – then it is counted as one pilot action. This inconsistency in counting practices highlighted the eventual need for a more standardized approach. Additionally, there were suggestions to link RCO84 with related indicators RCO116 and RCO104 to enhance coherence and impact across different project stages and activities.

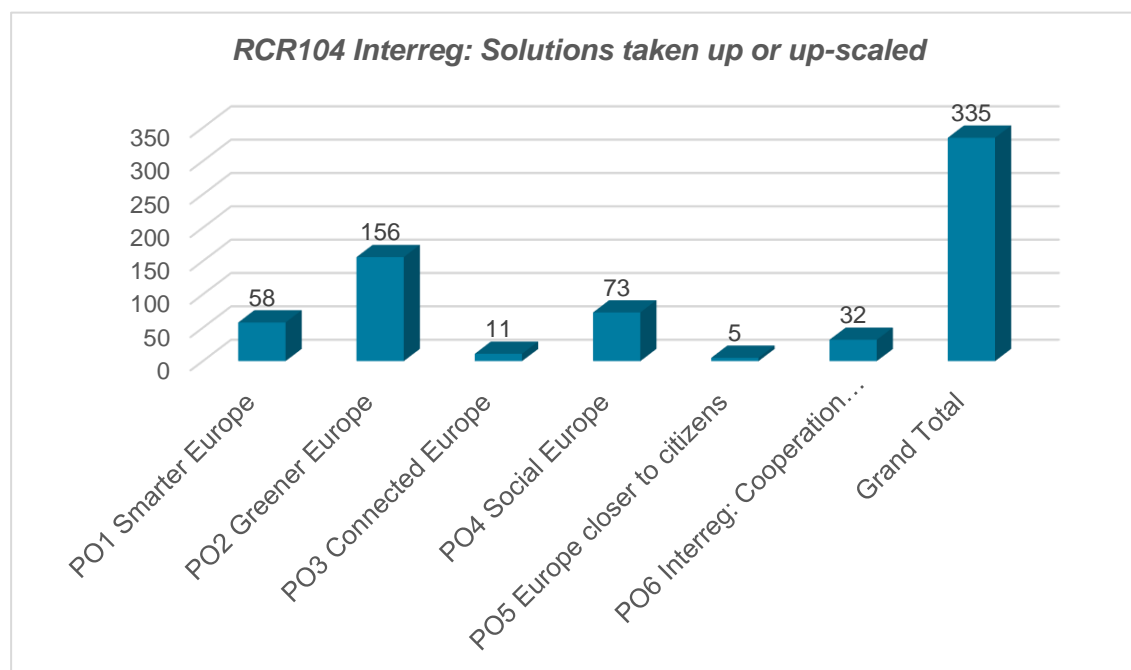
Conclusion and further actions

RCO84 is generally viewed positively as a clear and practical measure of project outputs. However, to improve consistency, a more coherent approach to counting pilot actions is needed. This involves further discussions on current practices and how to simplify and harmonize the counting process.

Additionally, the quantitative links between different indicators (RCO84, RCO116, and RCO104) should be revisited to ensure transparency and coherence. It might be useful to see if there could be a shared understanding of the relation between the CI on 'pilot actions' and 'solutions', i.e., if a pilot action is used to test and if the test is successful it might lead to a 'solution' or if the solution is found and turned into a pilot action: an alignment of the use of terms across programmes might be beneficial.

RCR104: Solutions taken up or up-scaled

| Interreg Strand | RCR104 - # of uses |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| CB | 234 |
| PO1 Smarter Europe | 33 |
| PO2 Greener Europe | 104 |
| PO3 Connected Europe | 9 |
| PO4 Social Europe | 61 |
| PO5 Europe closer to citizens | 5 |
| PO6 Interreg: Cooperation | |
| Governance | 22 |
| OR | 5 |
| PO1 Smarter Europe | 2 |
| PO2 Greener Europe | 3 |
| TN | 99 |
| PO1 Smarter Europe | 23 |
| PO2 Greener Europe | 52 |
| PO3 Connected Europe | 2 |
| PO4 Social Europe | 12 |
| PO6 Interreg: Cooperation | |
| Governance | 10 |
| Grand Total | 338 |

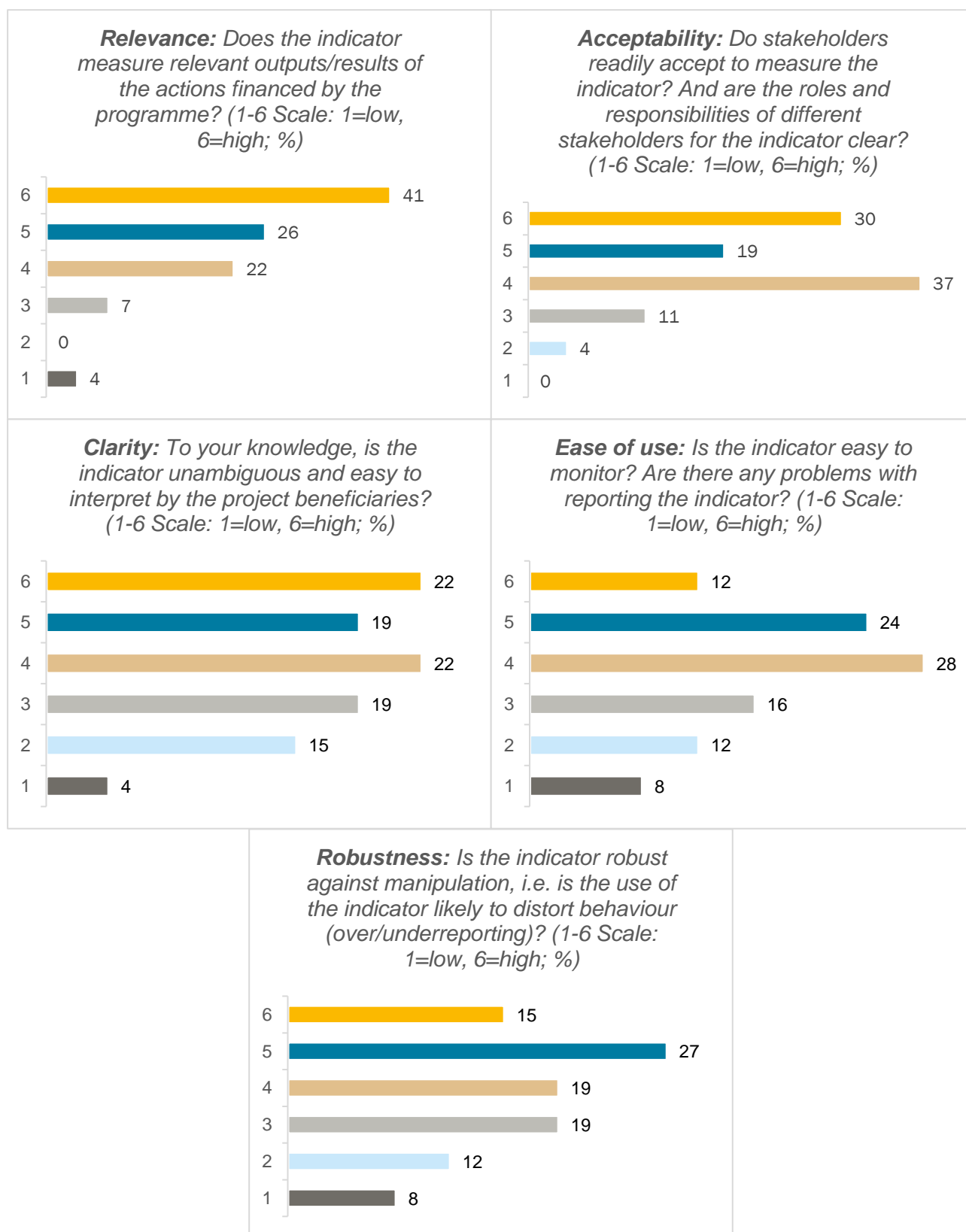


Source: Authors calculations based on Cohesion Open Data - <https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/d/xi3a-zddk>

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Programming | In use for (21): SOs 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.4., 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 4.6, 5.2, ISO1, all (4). |
| Definition & interpretation issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarification on terms 'taken-up or up-scaled (4) - e.g., organisation not using it before or expanding its use. • Definition what 'solution means (1). • Clarification that organisation adopting does not have to be PP (1). • Specific sub-components related to 1) SSPs and regular projects. • Hint to corresponding RCO 84 (4) or RCO 116 (1). • No difficulties /easy to understand (9). |
| Calculation approach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based mainly on data from 2014-2020 – average project size and numbers (2). • Link to targets for RCO 84 or 116 (1:1 or 1:0.5) (8) or RCO 87 (1:0.3) (1). • Generic assumptions such as 1 per project and 20% of small-scale projects (SSPs) (3). |
| Challenges with target setting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimations perceived as challenging (4) – in particular for new elements such as SSPs (1). • Not perceived as challenging (9). |
| Reasons for not using it | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure of the programme, a diversified budget, most SOs with an infrastructure component (i.e., hard investment projects), time pressure, N+3 (no time to launch one call for pilot actions/solutions than another for the uptake/up-scale in a programme period) (1). • RCR does not match RCO 116 – specific RI has been developed (1). |
| Guidance to applicants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No difficulties up to now (6). • For some difficult to switch to take-up and/or up-scaling – they stick to detailing output (2) or think it is automatically met (1). • Difficulties similar as for RCO 116. |
| Calculation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No or minor difficulties (10). • Some projects counted organisations instead of solutions (1). • Some use same as for RCO 116 – perceived as overly optimistic. |
| Contracting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No particular challenges or minor ones (6). • Revision of linked RCO leads to revision of RCR (2), other problems encountered (3). |
| Project monitoring | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific template on follow-up for applicants provided (1). • Specific instructions for applicants per indicator (1). • Durability visit (1). • Too early to say (5). |
| Validation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No difficulties (6) and clear-cut criteria developed (4). • Quantitative indicators bear the risk of 'achievements on paper' instead of actual achievements (1). |
| Counting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too early to say (9). • No difficulties or not expected (5). |

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No issues due to clear link to RCO (1). |
| Communication on results | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggregate per OS used in communication (1). • Long-term use could be presented through testimonials (1). |
| Any proposed amendments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring developments up to one year after the project completion is not feasible, therefore we would suggest removing from the definition the reference to this time-frame (1). • It would make more sense to count the number of institutions which are taking up the solutions than the uptake of the solution as such (1). • Rather counting number of scale-ups than of solutions; This adjustment would ensure that the project will focus not only on developing solutions but also on promoting them. Multiple counting would be possible (1). |
| Additional comments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concrete indicator, showing that tangible things are done in cross-border cooperation (1). |
| Conclusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fit for wide uptake and wide coverage: used across POs 1,2, 3 and 4, 5 and ISOs. • Some clarifications to EC definition putting it in context of programme / SO. • Target setting based on 2014-20 and link to corresponding RCOs (84, 116). • No major difficulties in verification of outputs expected. • For counting: one quarter expects / experienced no difficulties, for three quarters too early. |

Source: Authors elaboration from the programmes' fiche results



Source: Authors elaboration from the online programme survey results

Main discussion points

A major discussion point addressed whether Interreg programmes should count only the solutions taken up or rather count the number of organizations adopting these solutions. The latter option would show a far higher turnout in particular in the context of transnational programmes.

There was a focus on the link between solutions and capacity building, emphasizing how the uptake of solutions by organizations leads to enhanced capacities. For some programmes using also the programme-specific indicator on capacity-building this might lead to more difficult choices for applicants and programme management. Other programmes considered increased capacity as a pre-requirement for the achievements indicated by RCR 104.

Conclusion and further actions

RCR104 is suitable for wide uptake and coverage, being used across multiple policy objectives and ISOs. Clarifications to the EC definition are needed to contextualize it within specific programmes and strategic objectives. In practice target setting had been based on data from the 2014-2020 period. The quantitative links to corresponding RCOs (84 and 116) show a wide variety across the programmes (from 1:1 to 1: 0.3). No major difficulties in verifying outputs are expected. While one-quarter of programmes anticipate no difficulties in counting, for three-quarters it is still too early to assess.

To move forward, it is essential to maintain the flexibility of Interreg indicators while simplifying and harmonizing their use. Developing a clearer intervention logic is also crucial. This logic should describe Interreg's activities comprehensively, focusing not only on indicators but also on intervention pathways to better capture the programme's quality and impact.

Programme specific indicator

Organisations with increased institutional capacities due to their participation in cooperation activities across-borders

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Programming | In use for (5 out of 22): SOs 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 3.1, 3.2, ISO6.6, All SOs except SO 4,1, Priority 4. |
| Definition & interpretation issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The indicator was developed by several transnational programmes and was further adjusted to address programme needs. No difficulties /easy to understand. The indicator is linked to both RCO87 and RCO84. |
| Calculation approach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumptions on qualitative and quantitative analysis based on data from previous programming period. Linked to targets for RCO 118 (1). |
| Guidance to applicants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No difficulties up to now (3). Factsheets were prepared and additional guidance was provided to the project partners (2). |
| Calculation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No or minor difficulties (3). Projects either set high values or did not count external organisations (1). Difficulties to understand the link between Output and Result (1). |
| Contracting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No particular challenges or minor ones (5). |
| Project monitoring | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicator reporting module and/or specific survey within the partnership on follow-up for applicants provided (2). No practical implementation yet (3). |
| Validation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quite a firm validation system put in place (3). To be created soon (2). |
| Counting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a risk of double counting at programme level, especially in the case of large organisations as for example universities, different departments are "hiding" behind the organisation's name. However, those departments increase their institutional capacity within different contexts. How to decide at which level not to count organisations appearing more than once on the list? (2). No difficulties encountered (1). Not started yet (2). |
| Communication on results | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aggregated at programme level and used in communication activities/social media channels (3). Promote achievements in a thematic session of the programme website (1). Project stories (2). A dedicated section on the landing page of the project websites showing the target values for all indicators per project (1). No experience yet (1). |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Any proposed amendments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is still too early to take conclusions (1). • No (1). |
| Additional comments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was no common indicator that could capture the dimension of increased institutional capacity. |

Source: Authors elaboration from the programmes' fiche results

Main discussion points

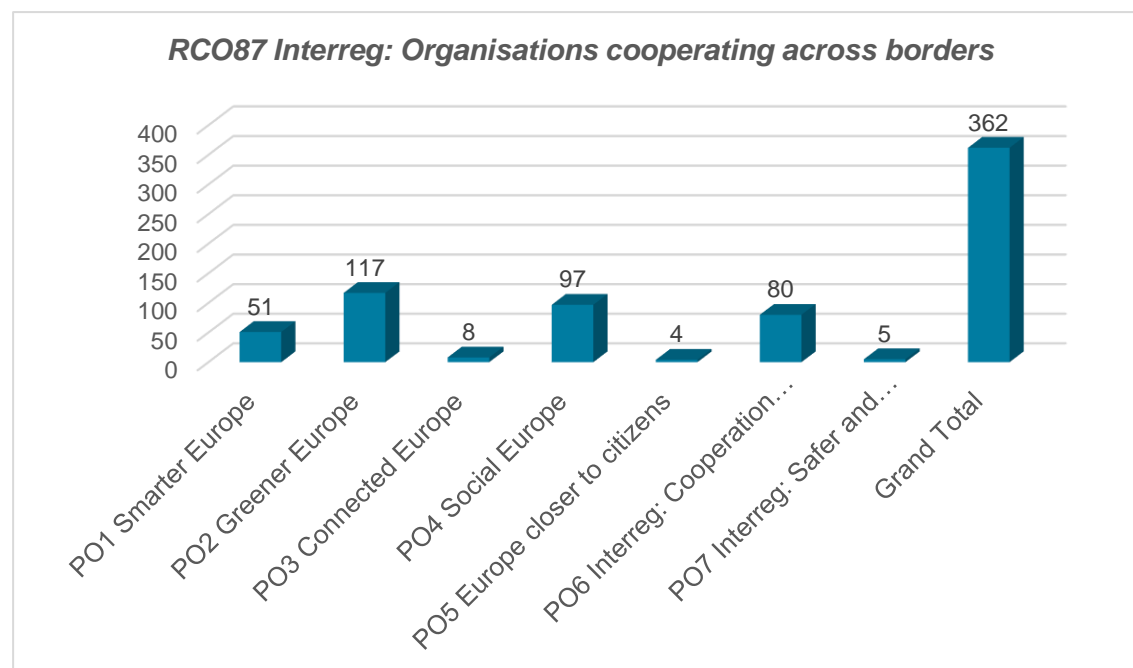
The indicator PSI is well-defined, making it clear what it measures and what it does not. It is very suitable for application in interregional and transnational programmes. However, there is currently no common indicator that fully captures the dimension of increased institutional capacity. As this indicator is relatively new, it is still early to draw definitive conclusions about its effectiveness.

Conclusion and further actions

This **PSI** was developed by several transnational programmes and has been adjusted to meet specific programme needs. It is considered easy to understand and poses no major difficulties in its application. The indicator is linked to both RCO87 and RCO84. The group of programmes using it agrees that it would be beneficial if PSI became a common Interreg indicator, despite the challenges posed by the required survey. Moving forward, the focus should be on standardizing this indicator across programmes to enhance its effectiveness and utility and make it an Interreg common indicator.

RCO 87: Organisations cooperating across-borders

| Interreg Strand | RCO87 - # of uses |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| CB | 274 |
| PO1 Smarter Europe | 31 |
| PO2 Greener Europe | 71 |
| PO3 Connected Europe | 7 |
| PO4 Social Europe | 89 |
| PO5 Europe closer to citizens | 4 |
| PO6 Interreg: Cooperation Governance | 67 |
| PO7 Interreg: Safer and more secure | |
| Europe | 5 |
| IR | 1 |
| PO6 Interreg: Cooperation Governance | 1 |
| OR | 19 |
| PO1 Smarter Europe | 2 |
| PO2 Greener Europe | 8 |
| PO4 Social Europe | 4 |
| PO6 Interreg: Cooperation Governance | 4 |
| PO7 Interreg: Safer and more secure | |
| Europe | 1 |
| TN | 77 |
| PO1 Smarter Europe | 19 |
| PO2 Greener Europe | 40 |
| PO3 Connected Europe | 2 |
| PO4 Social Europe | 6 |
| PO6 Interreg: Cooperation Governance | 10 |
| Grand Total | 371 |

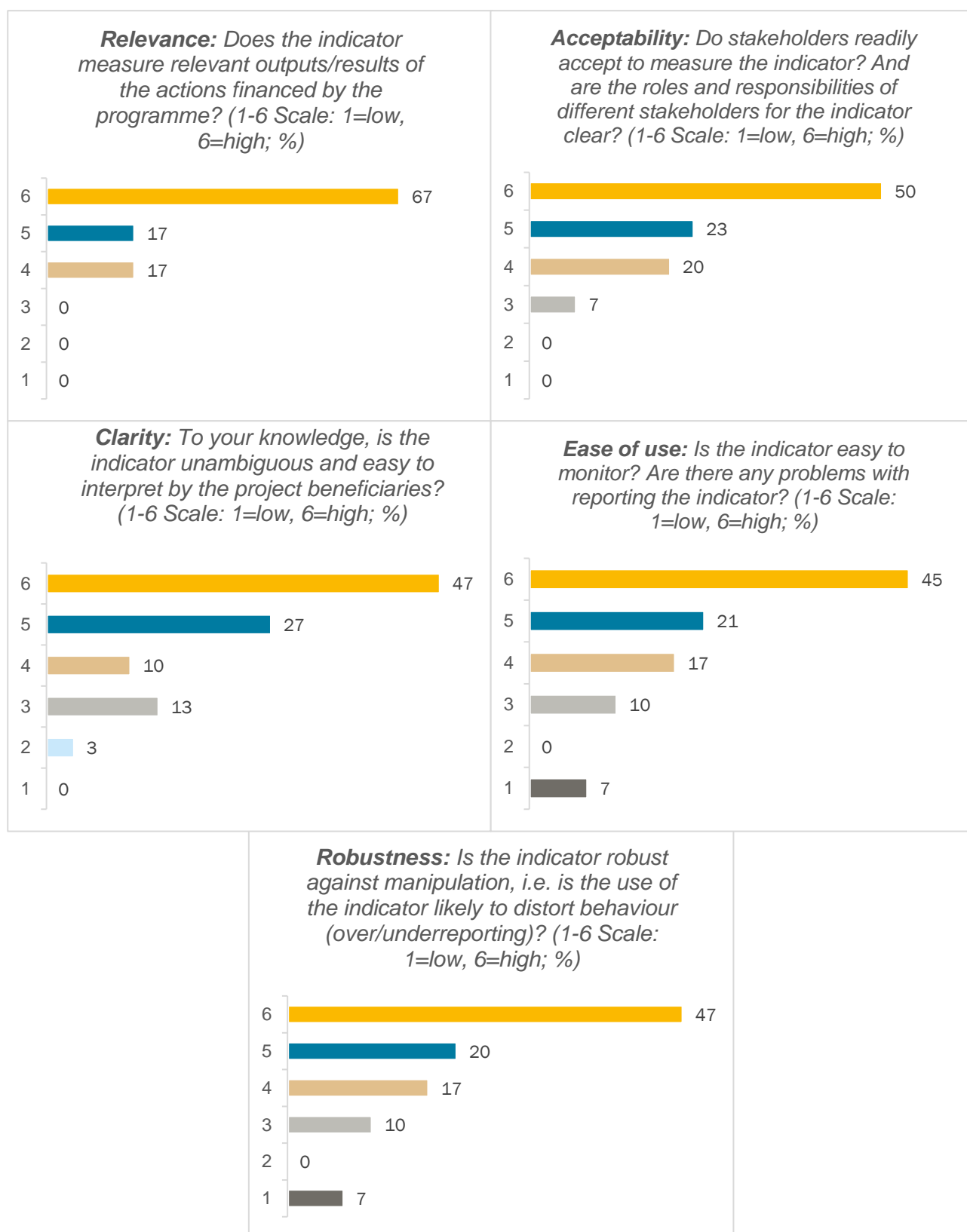


Source: Authors calculations based on Cohesion Open Data - <https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/d/xi3a-zddk>

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Programming | In use for (23 out of 27): SOs: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 3.2, 4.1, 4.5, 4.6, 5.1, ISO 1, all (4). |
| Definition & interpretation issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of EC definition (9); no difficulties with interpretation (9). • More precise explanation what to do if organisations drop out (1). • Narrower definition (without associated) (3); those in partnership agreement (1). • Explanation on role of associated organisations (1); wider approach based on stakeholders (1). • Quality requirement: Intent to start sustainable cooperation must be clear (1); clarification regarding expectations related to active involvement (1). |
| Calculation approach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on data from 2014-2020 (average budget & partner numbers (3; 4; 8; 9; 15 up to 28) per project, average cost for participation in a project etc.). • Assumption: 70% of unique organisations (1); in other cases, 80% (2) – considering eventually. double counting. |
| Challenges with target setting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No particular challenges (9). • Considering the avoidance of double counting in calculations (4). • Estimations for newly introduced small-scale projects (1). |
| Reasons for not using it | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempt to keep the overall no of indicators used very low & RCO87 does not capture the actions listed for each specific objective (1). • RCO87 does not capture the unique characteristics of Interreg (1). • N/A (2). |
| Guidance to applicants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No difficulties encountered up to now (11). • Too early to say (3). |
| Challenges | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes other organisations beyond partnership & associated counted (2). • Identifying legal entities that count as organisation (1). • Handling of participation in several projects (1). |
| Contracting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No challenges (6). • Revision in few cases (6) (reasons see under challenges in guidance to applicants). • Many revisions required (1). • Too early to say (2). |
| Project monitoring | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not yet any reports received - too early to say (7). • No particular problem (2). |
| Validation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signature of partnership agreement (PA) as key evidence (3); FA as key evidence (1). • System description is work in progress (3); methodology on all indicators developed (1). • Clearance procedure for indicators values in place (1). |

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easily validated (1). |
| Counting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge: Avoiding / high risk of double counting (6); necessitates decision under which SO to count (3). • Too early to say (5). • No difficulties up to now (5). • Recommendation for beneficiaries to use unique identifier available in monitoring system (1). • Considering eventually. own calculation system next to JEMS (1). |
| Communication on results | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presented on website and during programme events (2). • Used since number achieved is quite impressive (1). • Aggregation per SO (1). • Outputs are used more in "storytelling" during the project implementation (1). • Maybe best communicating no of organisations taking part in cooperation and supplement it with some testimonials reflecting on cooperation, i.e., not on the project topic but on the added value of cooperation. |
| Any proposed amendments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check double counting at SO not at programme level (4). • Rename highlighting Interreg achievements: 'No of partnerships established to enhance the European territorial cooperation. • Pair it with indicator that says more on implementation (1); skip it for lack of AV beyond partner count (1). |
| Conclusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fit for wide uptake and wide coverage: used across all POs and ISOs. Eliminating / avoiding double counting is perceived as a challenge by visible no of programmes. |

Source: Authors elaboration from the programmes' fiche results



Source: Authors elaboration from the online programme survey results

Main discussion points

- **Uptake and definition clarity:** 23 out of 27 programmes use the indicator; Most programmes adhered to the European Commission's guidance, experiencing minimal difficulties in interpretation. However, questions arose regarding counting organizations that drop out before or during project implementation.
- **Diverse approaches to definitions:**
 - Three programmes applied a narrower definition, excluding associated organizations contrary to the guidance document.
 - One programme requested clarification on associated organizations' roles, while another adopted a broader definition that included additional stakeholders.
- **Calculation challenges:** Many programmes based their calculations on data from the previous funding period, reporting an average of 3 to 28 partners per project. **Double counting emerged as a significant concern**, with programmes assuming 70-80% of organizations counted were unique.
- **Target setting:** Most programmes reported no major challenges in setting targets for this indicator, although the issue of double counting persisted. Clear guidance on handling organizations involved in multiple projects was requested.
- **Legal identity issues:** Participants noted difficulties in identifying the legal identities of organizations that participated in several projects, complicating tracking and verification.
- **Validation and unique identifiers:** Validation often relied on partnership agreements and financial information, but the absence of a unique identifier in the monitoring system (JEMS) complicated accurate reporting.
- **Communicating results:** Programmes primarily used standard communication channels such as websites and social media, emphasizing cooperation rather than merely the number of participating organizations.
- **Quality of cooperation:** Discussions recognized that while current indicators measure quantity, they do not assess the quality of cooperation. Suggestions for additional indicators or surveys to capture qualitative outcomes were made.

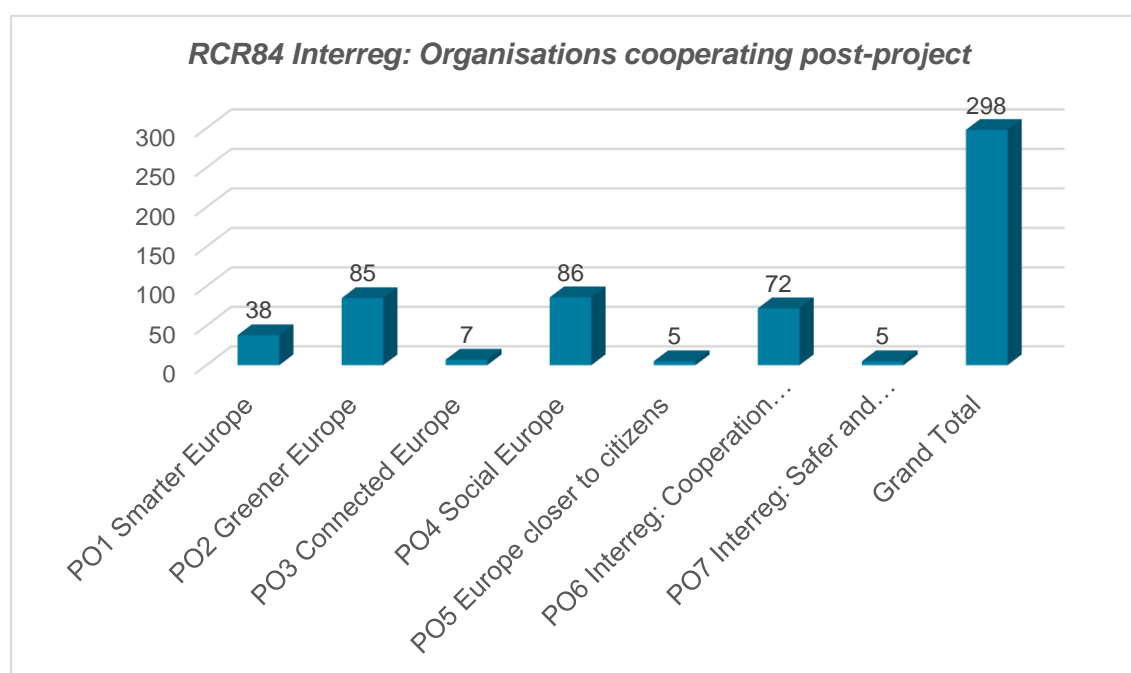
Conclusion and further actions

RCO87 is an important indicator for measuring cross-border cooperation among organizations. However, challenges related to double counting and the need for clearer definitions were prominent. To enhance its effectiveness, the following actions are recommended:

- **Clarification of definitions:** Provide standardized definitions for "organizations cooperating across-borders," including criteria for associated organizations and stakeholders.
- **Guidance on counting organizations:** Develop clear guidelines on counting organizations, especially those involved in multiple projects, to reduce instances of double counting: counting on SO level not at programme level, how to count departments of universities, etc
- **Implementation of unique identifiers:** Explore the feasibility of integrating unique identifiers for organizations within the monitoring system (e.g. JEMS) to streamline tracking and
- **Balancing quantitative and qualitative aspects:** Aim for a balance between quantitative reporting and qualitative assessment, ensuring both dimensions are captured without overwhelming programmes.

RCR84: Organizations cooperating post-project

| Interreg Strand | RCO84 - # of uses |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| CB | 181 |
| PO1 Smarter Europe | 27 |
| PO2 Greener Europe | 93 |
| PO3 Connected Europe | 4 |
| PO4 Social Europe | 42 |
| PO5 Europe closer to citizens | 4 |
| PO6 Interreg: Cooperation Governance | 11 |
| IR | 1 |
| PO6 Interreg: Cooperation Governance | 1 |
| OR | 10 |
| PO1 Smarter Europe | 1 |
| PO2 Greener Europe | 9 |
| TN | 89 |
| PO1 Smarter Europe | 21 |
| PO2 Greener Europe | 49 |
| PO3 Connected Europe | 2 |
| PO4 Social Europe | 12 |
| PO6 Interreg: Cooperation Governance | 5 |
| Grand Total | 281 |



Source: Authors calculations based on Cohesion Open Data - <https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/d/xi3a-zddk>

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Programming | In use for (19): SOs: ISO 1 (9), ISO 2 (1), all SOs (3), 1.3, 2.1, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.5, 4.6 (5). |
| Definition & interpretation issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of EC definition acc. to fiche (10). • Clarification on type of document expected (3). • Clarification that sustained cooperation without formal agreement is o.k. • Contextualised for EUSDR (1). • Clarification: link to RCO 87 (4), specific expectation regarding scope, time frame and evidence of cooperation (4). |
| Calculation approach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-defined ratio (percentage) between RCO 87 and this RCR – (range from 1:1; 1:0.8; 1:0.7 1:0.5; 1:0.4 with 0.5 (50%) being quite popular) (6). • Based on data from 2014-2020 (average project budget, cost per strategy etc.) (2). • Concise calculation based on scope of support for MRS (2). |
| Challenges with target setting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority saw no particular difficulties (9). • Estimations perceived as challenging (2). |
| Reasons for not using it | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not capture the actions listed for each specific objective (1). • Not adapted to the IE rationale (1). • Due to technical reasons related to data collection after project completion (1). • Not used. We have paired the output indicator organisations cooperating across-borders with the programme-specific indicator on organisations with increased institutional capacity (1). |
| Guidance to applicants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority encountered no difficulties up to now (8). • Too early to say (2). |
| Challenges | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns related to formalised cooperation raised (not related to indicator as such) (1). • Sometimes additional organisations counted (beyond LP + PPs) (1). |
| Contracting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too early to say (3). • In few cases target revision (2). • In several cases revision required (1). |
| Project monitoring | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too early to say (3). • Too early but not expecting difficulties (3). |
| Validation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No difficulties (3). • Programme uses specific guidance document and/or monitoring tools (2). • Specific document in development (3). |
| Counting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same risk for double counting as for RCO 87; handled at programme level (3). • Too early to say (3). • Specific explanation for beneficiaries provided (1). • Encouraging beneficiaries to use identification code in monitoring system enabling automated checks (1). |

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No challenges expected owing to small number of projects in related PO/ISO (1). |
| Communication on results | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly communicated to MC and in various channels (8). • Part of MRS support monitoring – not widely communicated as such (1). • Too early to say (3). |
| Any proposed amendments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To monitor developments up to one year after the project end does not seem to be necessary as per definition the project is able to report on the planned cooperation upon completion (3). • Proposed to count informal cooperation too (1). • Proposed to consider double counting at SO level instead of programme level (3). • Renaming it into 'No of joint initiatives successfully implemented as a result of established partnerships.' |
| Additional comments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited added value compared to RCO 87 (1). • Better instead of focusing only on quantitative achievement to look into substance, pass the "aim for high, but it's o.k. to fail" approach if explanation for failure is provided. |
| Conclusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solid uptake across the POs; very often used for ISO 1. • Frequently used in par together with RCO 87 (as planned) – but wide range in ratios pre-set by the programmes. • Eliminating double counting perceived as extra burden for programmes. • No other major difficulties experienced / expected in use. |

Source: Authors elaboration from the programmes' fiche results

Main discussion points

- **Uptake and utilisation:** Nineteen programmes are currently using the RCR84 indicator, with some programmes providing additional clarifications on how cooperation should continue following project completion. Several programmes chose not to utilize the indicator due to its limited relevance to specific objectives or the perceived burden associated with post-project data collection. Others paired it with programme-specific indicators to enhance its relevance.
- **Documentation requirements:** There were varied perspectives on the formality of documentation required for ongoing cooperation. Three programmes reported that they do not mandate formal agreements post-project, as initial agreements were established during the application process.
- **Contextualization for macro-regional strategies:** Some programmes have tailored the indicator to align with macro-regional strategies, detailing the scope and timeframe of cooperation expected after project completion.
- **Estimation of cooperation rates:** Discussions highlighted differing methods for calculating post-project cooperation rates, with about half of the programmes estimating that 50% of organizations would continue their collaboration after the project ends.

- **Data collection challenges:** While some programmes encountered issues in data collection for the indicator, others reported that data collection was manageable without significant difficulties.
- **Guidance for applicants:** Most programmes reported no major issues with the guidance provided to applicants, though a few indicated it was too early for a thorough evaluation.
- **Proposals for improvement:** Participants suggested renaming the indicator to better reflect the quality of partnerships and focusing on qualitative outcomes rather than solely quantitative targets.
- **Concerns about double counting:** Issues regarding double counting of organizations were raised, with some programmes implementing unique identifiers or monitoring tools to mitigate this risk. Programmes that had not yet faced these challenges anticipated they might arise during the initial rounds of final project reporting.

Conclusion and further actions

The RCR84 indicator is broadly regarded as a useful tool for tracking organizational cooperation post-project, yet several challenges related to documentation, data collection, and potential double counting persist. To enhance the effectiveness of this indicator, the following actions are recommended:

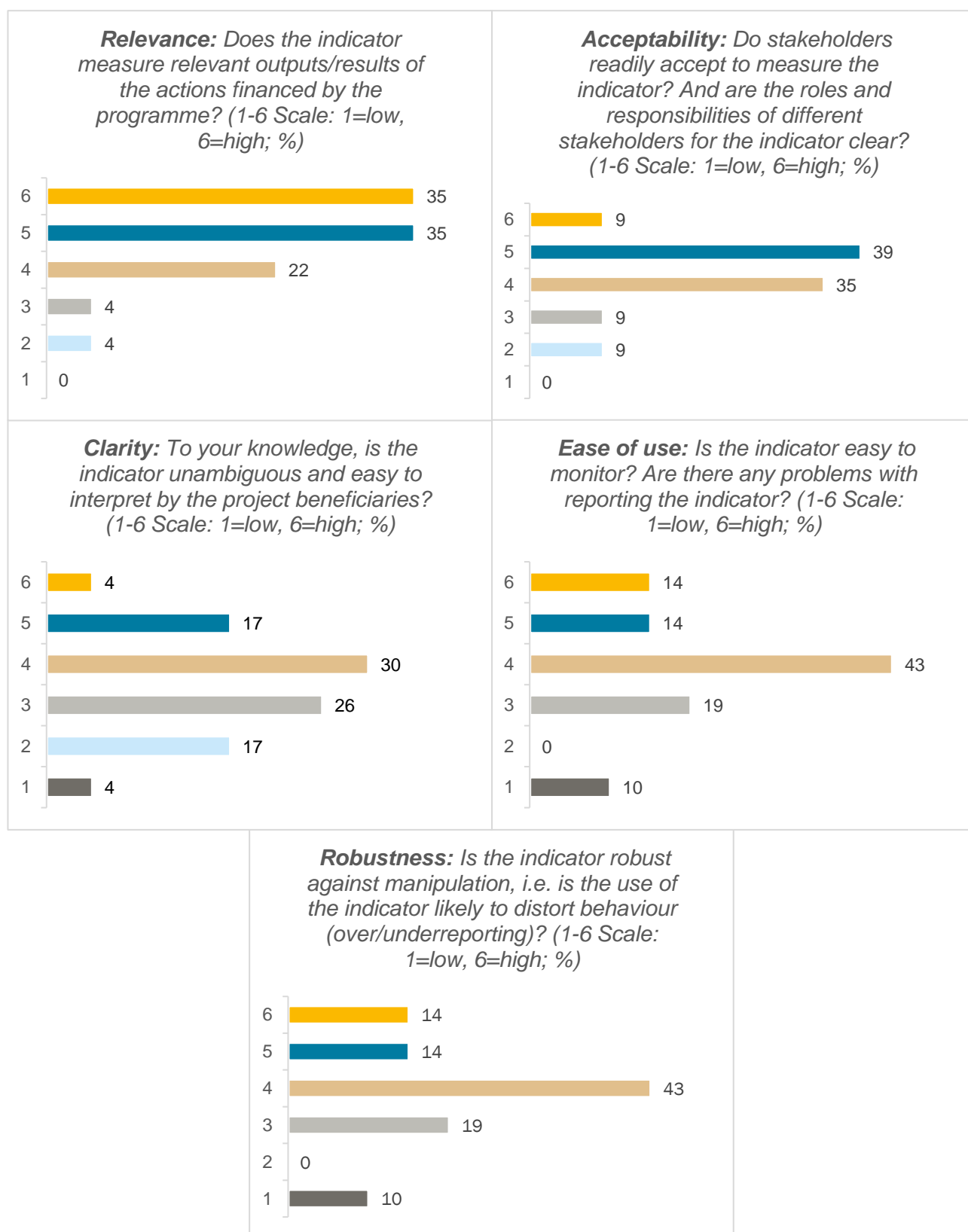
1. **Guidance on counting organizations:** Develop clear guidelines on counting organizations, especially those involved in multiple projects, to reduce instances of double counting: counting on SO level not at programme level, how to count departments of universities, etc.
2. **Clarification of documentation requirements:** Provide clear guidelines on acceptable forms of documentation for ongoing cooperation post-project, considering alternatives to formal agreements, such as reports or pre-existing cooperation agreements.
3. **Simplification of data collection processes:** Encourage programmes to simplify the process of collecting post-project indicators, potentially by establishing agreements before project completion or allowing flexibility in timing for data collection.

RCO116: Jointly developed solutions

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Programming | Widely used in PO1 + PO2 and sometimes in PO4, PO5 and ISO6.1 |
| Definition & interpretation issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following SWD definition, sometimes with SO specific elements (N=12/23) • No specific difficulties (N=8/23) |
| Calculation approach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target values based on budget available, expected average cost per project and assumptions on number of solutions per project • In most programmes each project is assumed to generate at least 1 solution (as high as 4 per project in 1 programme.) |
| Challenges with target setting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11/12 reported no specific difficulties, used past monitoring data and adapted it. |
| Reasons for not using it | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linking solutions with previous joint actions seen as restrictive (N=9/23) • Preference for other indicators (RCO84, RCO117, RCO87) |
| Guidance to applicants | |
| Challenges | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 programmes report no specific difficulties (yet) or describe their indicator factsheets • Other programmes report issues with lack of common understanding of "solutions" or disinterest of projects generally |
| Contracting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six programmes reported some or a significant need to revisit the projects' proposed target setting linked to the use of this indicator |
| Project monitoring | |
| Validation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 programmes reported no experience to date or that validation systems are still being established • 6 programmes described (some in detail) the evidence required for validation |
| Counting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six programmes reported some or a significant need to revisit the projects' proposed target setting linked to the use of this indicator; • Need to distinguish confusion between pilot actions vs solutions (1), and not linked to administrative and legal obstacles (2). |
| Communication on results | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most communication will focus on the project specific thematic narratives and achievements as these are more easily understood • Indicators will be used by SO and to report to Monitoring Committees |
| Any proposed amendments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most replies were silent, waiting for more practical experience or expressed a preference to keep it as is. • One programme proposed differentiation based on type of solution (IT, governance, territorial development, etc.) |

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for a clearer definition regarding the connection between RCO84 and RCO116. |
| Additional comments | <p>3 programmes replied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 programme suggests breaking link with RCO84; • Another programme suggests the reverse. • "A very concrete indicator, showing that tangible things are done in CBC". |

Source: Authors elaboration from the programmes' fiche results



Source: Authors elaboration from the online programme survey results

Main discussion points

- **Usage and adoption:** The RCO116 indicator is widely used, especially in Priority 1 and 2, and less so in Priorities 4, 5, and Interreg Objective 6.1. Of the 23 programmes, most (12) follow the provided definition, sometimes linking it to specific objectives.
- **Target setting:** Target values are typically based on available budgets and assumptions that each project would generate at least one solution, with some estimating up to four solutions per project. Most programmes (11 of 12) found no difficulty setting targets.
- **Challenges with definitions:** Some programmes expressed concerns about restrictive definitions, particularly linking solutions to previous joint actions. Additionally, there was confusion between "pilot actions" and "solutions," as they are distinct but sometimes seen as overlapping.
- **Evidence collection:** Programmes are still refining their processes for collecting evidence to validate the indicator's values. Six programmes noted challenges in this area, including the need to clarify what qualifies as a solution.
- **Communication and complexity:** Concerns were raised about communicating the abstract concept of "jointly developed solutions" to external audiences. Some proposed splitting the indicator into categories (e.g., IT solutions, governance improvements), while others argued that over-specification would complicate reporting.
- **Joint development focus:** The collaborative aspect of "jointly developed" solutions is seen as central to the Interreg mission, emphasizing cross-border cooperation.

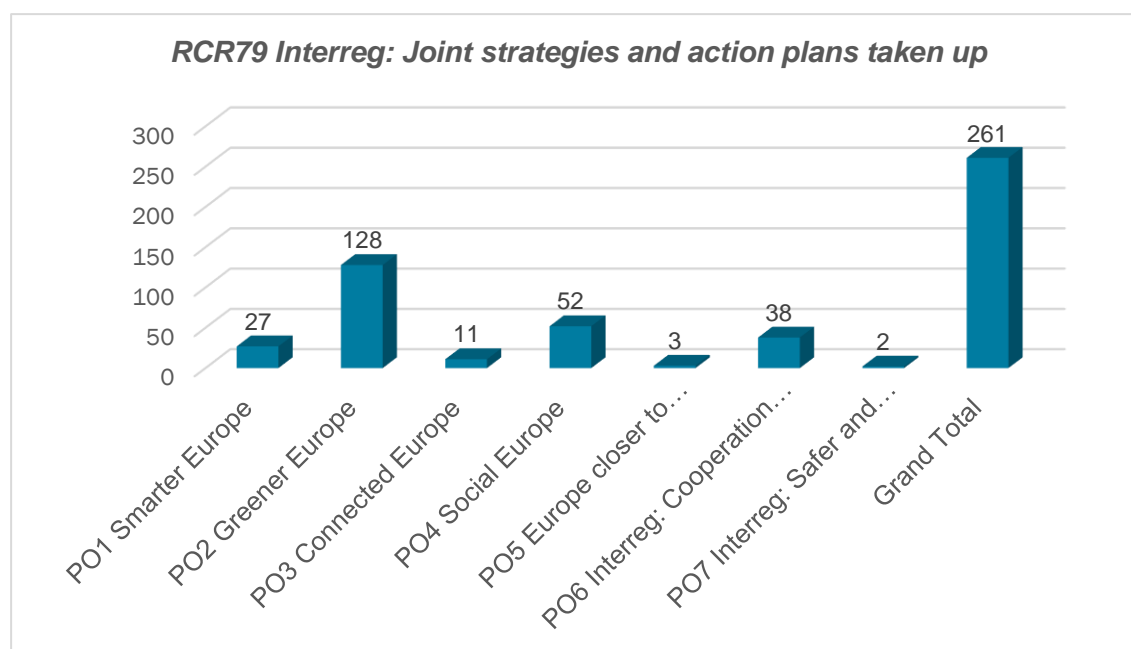
Conclusion and further actions

While RCO116 is widely adopted, challenges remain in defining and communicating "jointly developed solutions" clearly. The following actions are recommended:

1. **Clarify definitions:** Further clarify the distinction between pilot actions and jointly developed solutions to avoid confusion.
2. **Improve communication:** Simplify the communication of the indicator's impact by developing standard types of solutions and using clear, relatable examples (storytelling).
3. **Refine evidence collection:** Establish clearer guidelines on evidence collection for validating the indicator's values, including concrete examples of acceptable documentation.
4. **Maintain flexibility:** Retain the broad definition of "jointly developed solutions" to capture the diverse nature of projects, while ensuring a focus on the collaborative nature of solutions.

RCR79: Joint strategies and action plans taken up

| Interreg Strand | RCR79 - # of uses |
|--|-------------------|
| CB | 173 |
| PO1 Smarter Europe | 11 |
| PO2 Greener Europe | 80 |
| PO3 Connected Europe | 8 |
| PO4 Social Europe | 38 |
| PO5 Europe closer to citizens | 2 |
| PO6 Interreg: Cooperation Governance | 32 |
| PO7 Interreg: Safer and more secure Europe | 2 |
| IR | 1 |
| PO6 Interreg: Cooperation Governance | 1 |
| OR | 22 |
| PO1 Smarter Europe | 4 |
| PO2 Greener Europe | 11 |
| PO3 Connected Europe | 1 |
| PO4 Social Europe | 4 |
| PO5 Europe closer to citizens | 1 |
| PO6 Interreg: Cooperation Governance | 1 |
| TN | 65 |
| PO1 Smarter Europe | 12 |
| PO2 Greener Europe | 37 |
| PO3 Connected Europe | 2 |
| PO4 Social Europe | 10 |
| PO6 Interreg: Cooperation Governance | 4 |
| Grand Total | 261 |

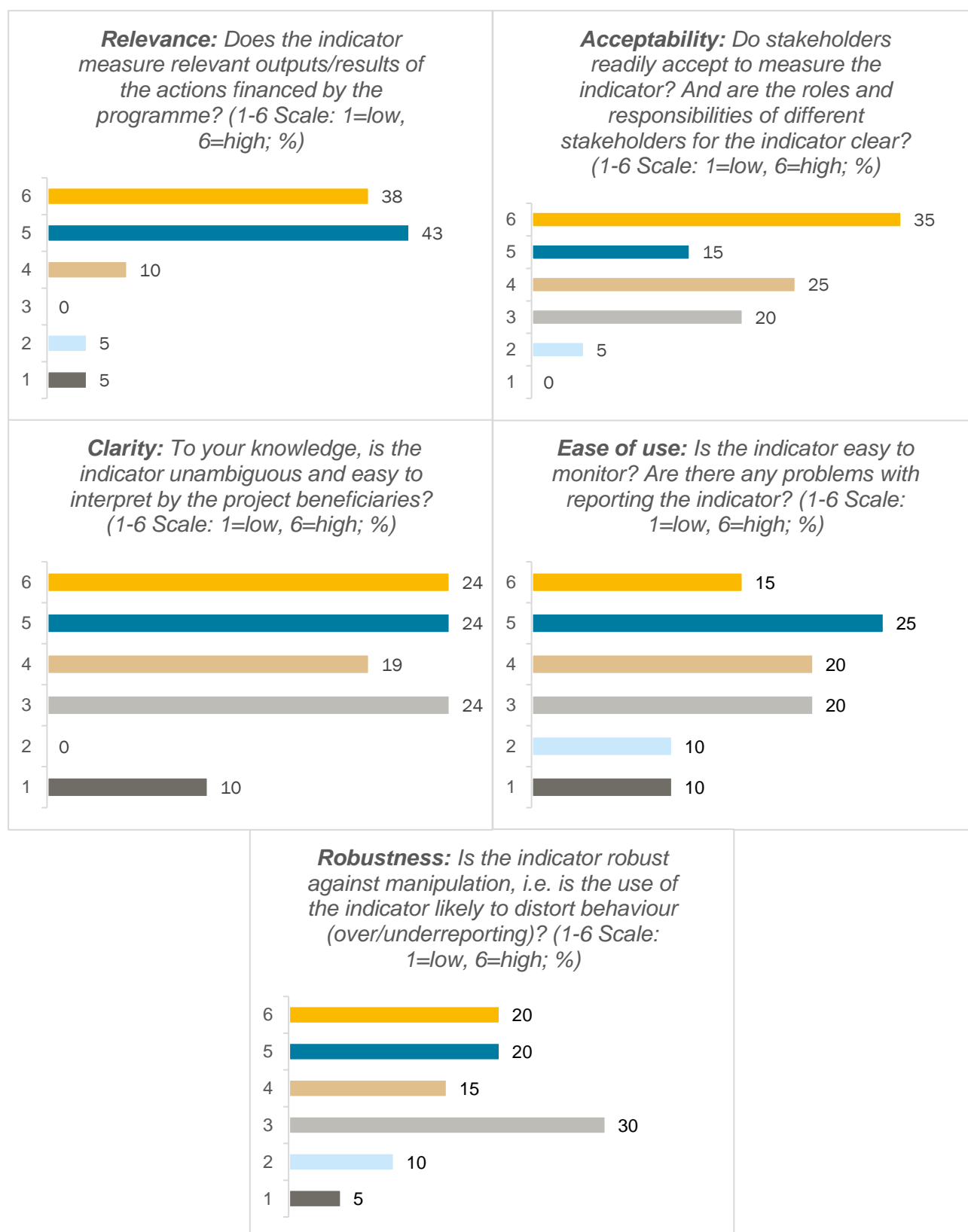


Source: Authors calculations based on Cohesion Open Data - <https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/d/xi3a-zddk>

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Programming | In use for (19): SOs: 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 (8), 2.5, 2.6, 2.7 (5), 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.6, 4.9 (PEACE+), ISO1, ISO2, ISO6.2, ISO6.3, ISO6.6, all. |
| Definition & interpretation issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several programmes reported no difficulties encountered, in part because there is a clear link to the output indicator RCO83 (6). • Practical definition of 'taken up' (1). • Definition of 'strategy' and 'action plan' (1). |
| Calculation approach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on data from 2014-2020 (3). • Linked to targets for RCO83 (1:0.5 (4), 1:0.75, 1:0.8, 1:1 (2)). • No differentiation by PO/SO; number of results is the same and defined by per M EUR allocated. |
| Challenges with target setting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of 2014-2020 data was noted by some programmes as not being very reliable, e.g., due to final 14-20 data not being available when targets were set. • Target setting challenging due to interpretation issues making estimation challenging (3). |
| Reasons for not using it | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicator too broad/abstract and programme wanted to take a more focused approach (3). • Focus on tangible actions prioritized (e.g., pilot actions) over tools/documents (enablers) (5). • RCO116 seen as already covering this indicator (programme assumes that any solutions produced should also be taken up). • RCR 104 chosen instead. |
| Guidance to applicants | • No interpretation (8) or calculation (9) issues encountered so far. |
| Challenges | • Some clarification needed around interpretation of e.g., 'take up' (3) and output-result link (1). |
| Contracting | • No particular challenges/very minor issues (6) or too early to tell (4). |
| Project monitoring | • Too early to assess (6). |
| Validation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific platform/tool created and in use (3). • Platform/tool adapted from 2014-2020 (2) and requires higher effort (1). • No particular challenges (3) or too early to tell (3). • Systems designed to avoid double counting (1) and have multiple verifications (1). |
| Counting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No particular challenges (3) or too early to tell (4). • Double counting an issue due to design of data systems (1). • Strategies/communication in place to avoid double counting issues (2). |
| Communication on results | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too early to reflect on experience (4). • Communication on results via e.g., website (5), events/campaigns (3), newsletters (2). |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Any proposed amendments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Count # of institutions adopting the strategy/action plan (1) / need to better measure the implementation of the strategy (2). • Drop the indicator and use RCR104 with RCO83 instead (1). |
| Additional comments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambiguity around time frame (post- project completion) makes data collection difficult; what is the duration for a strategy to be 'taken up'? (2) |
| Conclusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fit for wide uptake and wide coverage: used across POs 1,2, 3, 4 and ISOs. • Some clarifications for EC definition on time frame/measurement of 'taken up'. • Target setting often linked to RCO83 or based on 2014-2020. • No major difficulties in verification of outputs expected, but too early to tell. • For counting: 30% experienced no difficulties, 40% too early to tell. |

Source: Authors elaboration from the programmes' fiche results



Source: Authors elaboration from the online programme survey results

Main discussion points

- **Usage and adoption:** The indicator is broadly applicable and effective in guiding programmes, especially in PO1 and PO2, where it helps measure the uptake of strategies. Its link with R83 simplifies its use, leading to wider adoption.
- **Definition and clarity issues:** Stakeholders raised concerns about the unclear definitions of the terms "taken up," "strategy," and "action plan." The complexity in interpreting these terms has created inconsistencies in their application.
- **Diverse interpretations:** There were mixed opinions on the interpretation of the RCR79 indicator. Some found it too broad or abstract, preferring a focus on tangible actions rather than enabling tools or documents. Others appreciated the flexibility it provides.
- **Use of alternative indicators:** Some programmes have chosen to use different indicators, such as RCO116 or RCO104, which they feel are better suited to capturing the results of their projects. These alternatives are believed to more accurately reflect the scope of joint strategies.
- **Need for clearer guidance:** Respondents highlighted the need for more precise guidance on interpreting the indicators, particularly regarding the concept of "take up."
- **Institutional focus:** Some suggestions included shifting the focus from counting strategies to counting the number of institutions adopting these strategies. This could provide a clearer measure of real-world impact.

Conclusion and further actions

More guidance is required to provide clarity on these terms, ensuring that they are uniformly understood across different regions and programmes "taken up," "strategy," and "action plan."

Create a detailed manual or guidelines on how to interpret and apply RCR79, particularly focusing on the concept of "take up."

The RCR79 indicator has proven useful across various CBC programmes but would benefit from clearer definitions, improved data reliability, and more specific guidance on its application.

Flexibility in interpretation is valuable, but consistency in understanding is needed to enhance the indicator's effectiveness. Continuous dialogue and refinement are essential for maintaining the indicator's relevance and impact.

Annex 2: Fiche: template, working method and proposed indicators

Template

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Programme | Name |
| | Strand (A, B, C, D) |
| Description | Indicator Code |
| | Indicator Name |
| Indicator used | SO: please list all SOs, where you use this indicator |
| Programming | Definition: which definition did you use internally? |
| | Interpretation: how did you interpret the indicator? Any difficulties with the definition? |
| | Assumptions: what key assumptions (per SOs) did you use for calculating the target? How did you calculate it? |
| | Calculation issues when programming and setting targets: what were the challenges you are facing with the calculations and target setting (per SOs)? |
| Guidance to applicants | Interpretation: Do applicants raise any interpretation difficulties? |
| | Calculation issues when guiding applicants: do you face any challenges with the applicants? |
| Contracting | Frequent need to amend/ change applicants' targets: did you often need to change the target values provided by the applicants? |
| Project monitoring | Clear-cut and valid evidence for delivery of output / result: did you manage to define the evidence for the output and result delivery? Does it work in practice? |
| | Establish a firm validation system: was it easy/difficult to establish a validation system? Why? |
| | Counting or double-counting issues: Do you face any difficulties with the counting? Which one? Why? |
| Communication on results | Use in communication on programme achievements among programme stakeholders: how do you communicate the programme achievements? |
| Any proposed amendments | If you think the indicator needs to be amended, please indicate what should be changed? |
| Additional comments | What else would you like to mention about this indicator? |








Working method

Programme representatives were invited to a dotting exercise, to mark with green dots indicators they frequently used and valued them, and with red dots indicators for which they encountered significant challenges. In the "Uptake by programmes" column, we complemented this feedback with data from the Cohesion Open Data platform. This addition aims to enhance the validity and reliability of the analysis by providing insights into how widely each indicator is utilized across Interreg programmes. Furthermore, this combined information allowed us to identify uptake trends and the seven most popular Interreg common indicators.

Common output indicators. Dotting exercise (IKF Riga, March 2024)

| Interreg Indicators | Result dotting | Uptake by programmes | Comment |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| RCO 115: Public events across borders jointly organized | I ■■■ ■■■ | 67 | Priority |
| RCO 116: Jointly developed solutions | ■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■ | 290 | Top priority for discussion! |
| RCO 117 - Solutions for legal or administrative obstacles across-borders identified | I ■■■ ■■■ | 27 | Obstacles key policy issues? |
| RCO 118 - Organisations cooperating for the multi-level governance of macroregional strategies | - - | 4 | Low priority |
| RCO 120 - Projects supporting cooperation across-borders to develop urban-rural linkages | - ■■■ ■■■ | 4 | Low priority – cancel? |
| RCO 82 - Participations in joint actions promoting gender equality, equal opportunities and social inclusion | - ■■■ ■■■ I | 9 | Low priority – cancel? |
| RCO 83 - Strategies and action plans jointly developed | ■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■ - | 269 | High uptake but all clear? |
| RCO 84 - Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects | ■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■ I | 279 | Top priority! |
| RCO 85 - Participations in joint training schemes | ■■■ II ■■■ II | 79 | Priority |
| RCO 86 - Joint administrative or legal agreements signed | ■■■ ■■■ I | 6 | Low priority – cancel? |
| RCO 87 - Organisations cooperating across-borders | ■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■ | 362 | Top priority! |
| RCO 90 - Projects for innovation networks across-borders | - ■■■ ■■■ | 13 | Low priority |

Common result indicators

| Interreg Indicators | Result dotting | Uptake by programmes | Comment |
|--|---|----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| RCR 104 - Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations |  | 335 | Top priority! |
| RCR 79 - Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations |  | 261 | Top priority! |
| RCR 81 - Completion of joint training schemes |  | 77 | Priority but less need for discussion |
| RCR 82 - Legal or administrative obstacles across-borders alleviated or resolved |  | 27 | Low priority |
| RCO 83 - Strategies and action plans jointly developed |  | 5 | Low priority – cancel? |
| RCO 84 - Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects |  | 298 | Top priority! |
| RCO 85 - Participations in joint training schemes |  | 93 | Priority |

Following this first step, in May the working group was established and the members were asked to provide feedback in the fiche on the following Interreg common indicators, as well as on programme-specific indicators.

Common output indicators: RCO83, RCO84, RCO87, RCO116.

Common result indicators: RCR79, RCR84, RCR104.

Programme specific indicators: PSI: Organisations with increased institutional capacities due to their participation in cooperation activities across-borders.

Proposed common and programme specific indicators

In addition to the seven most popular Interreg common indicators, the group was invited to share any other common output and result indicators they would like to discuss with their peers. They were also encouraged to propose programme-specific indicators, either those they believe could be upgraded to common indicators or those they would like to review with the group. These additional indicators have not yet been discussed and are scheduled for consideration in 2025.

Common output indicators

- RCO 07 - Research organizations participating in joint research projects
- RCO 76 - Integrated projects for territorial development
- RCO 81 - Participations in joint actions across-borders
- RCO 82 - Participations in joint actions promoting gender equality, equal opportunities and social inclusion
- RCO 85 - Participations in joint training schemes

- RCO 115 - Public events across-borders jointly organised
- RCO117 - Solutions identified for legal/admin. obstacles
- RCO118 - Organisations cooperating for the multi-level governance of macroregional strategies
- RCO120 - Projects supporting cooperation across-borders to develop urban-rural linkages

Common result indicators

- RCR 82 - Legal or administrative obstacles across-borders alleviated or resolved

Programme specific indicators proposed by Interreg programmes

- Organisations with increased institutional capacities due to their participation in cooperation activities across-borders
- Policy instruments addressed
- People with increased capacity due to their participation in the Platform activities
- Organisations with increased capacity due to their participation in interregional cooperation
- Tools implemented for mitigating pollution
- Interregional policy learning events organised
- Good practices identified
- Policy instruments improved thanks to the projects
- Funds influenced
- Population benefiting from protection measures against climate related natural disaster
- Tools implemented for mitigating pollution
- Investments in education, training and life-long learning services
- Population living within the area covered by the tools implemented for mitigating pollution

33 programmes provided their feedback in the fiche or in the working group discussions:

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Interreg Adrion | Interreg Euro - MED | Interreg Lithuania - Poland |
| Interreg Alpenrhein-Bodensee-Hochrhein | Interreg Europe | Interreg Next Black Sea Basin |
| Interreg Alpine Space | Interreg Flanders - Netherlands | Interreg Next Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine |
| Interreg Atlantic Area | Interreg Hungary - Croatia | Interreg Next Romania-Moldavia |
| Interreg Baltic Sea | Interreg Hungary - Slovakia | Interreg Next Romania-Ukraine |
| Interreg Central Baltic | Interreg IPA Bulgaria - North Macedonia | Interreg North Sea |
| Interreg Central Europe | Interreg IPA Bulgaria - Serbia | Interreg PEACE |
| Interreg Czechia - Poland | Interreg IPA CBC Bulgaria - Turkey | Interreg Poland - Slovakia |
| Interreg Danube | Interreg IPA Hungary - Serbia | Interreg Poland-Saxony |
| Interreg Deutschland - Netherlands | Interreg IPA Romania - Serbia | Interreg Romania - Bulgaria |
| Interreg Estonia - Latvia | Interreg Italy - Croatia | Interreg South Baltic |

Annex 3: Online survey questionnaire and list of the participating Interreg programmes

The Evaluation Unit of DG REGIO, in collaboration with Interact, conducted an online survey to assess the use and performance of Interreg common indicators during the 2021-2027 programming period. The primary objective was to gather feedback on the relevance, challenges, and effectiveness of these indicators to refine the system for the next generation of Interreg programmes after 2027. The online survey aimed to determine which indicators should be retained, modified, or removed, as well as whether additional indicators are necessary.

The online survey was conducted between July and October 2024, with one representative invited to participate from each programme. A total of 33 responses were received, providing a wealth of qualitative and quantitative data. Programme representatives provided feedback on over 140 indicators, offering a comprehensive basis for this analysis.

| Number | Questions | Answers | Logic |
|-----------------|---|------------------------------|-------|
| | | | |
| Title | 2021-2027 Interreg common indicators review | | |
| Intro text | <p>We need your valuable input to shape the future of Interreg common indicators!</p> <p>The Evaluation Unit of DG Regio, in collaboration with Interact, is conducting a survey to take stock of the Interreg common indicators' uses in the Interreg programmes. It aims at further improvement of the indicator system for the next generation of Interreg programmes post 2027. Your input will support us in assessing which indicators should be retained, modified, deleted, or if there is a need to add any additional common Interreg indicators for post-2027. Your practical experience and insights are vital to this process.</p> <p>Why does it matter?</p> <p>Interreg common indicators are the basis for showcasing the achievements of Interreg programmes, representing 95% of all indicators used in the 86 programmes. They allow us to aggregate data across all programmes, revealing important trends and successes. However, to enhance their effectiveness, we must review and refine them based on your practical experiences.</p> <p>How you can help?</p> <p>By participating in this survey, you will contribute to a comprehensive review that will inform the drafting of the future legal package by the Commission, expected by mid-2025. Your feedback will influence the next set of common indicators, ensuring they are practical, robust, and reflective of our common experiences.</p> | | |
| | A. Respondents | | |
| Multiple choice | 1. Which Interreg strand do you represent? | a. A b. B c. C d. D | |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Single choice | 2. What is your role? | a. MA b. JS c. Other | |
| Text field | 2.a If other, please specify | | |
| | B. Overall assessment of 21-27 Interreg common indicators | | |
| 1-6 Scale (1 Very negative to 6 Very positive) | 3. What is your opinion on the extended list of common indicators for 2021-2027, compared with previous programming periods? | | |
| Text field | 3.a Please provide details | | |
| Single choice | 4. Has your programme opted for ERDF/mainstream common indicators in addition to Interreg-specific common indicators? | a. Yes b. No | |
| Text field | 4.a If yes, why? | | |
| Single choice | 5. Are there any major operations/outputs/results in your programmes not covered by Interreg common indicators? | a. Yes b. No | |
| Text field | 5.a If yes, please specify and explain how you accounted for this? | | |
| Multiple choice | 6. For which stakeholders are the indicators most useful? | a. Managing Authority b. National Authority c. Joint Secretariat d. Monitoring Committee e. Controllers/Management verification f. Beneficiaries g. Others | |
| Text field | 6.a If other, please specify | | |
| Text field | 7. How would you further improve the current common indicators? (Any general recommendations are welcome, e.g., regarding definitions, guidance, etc.) | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| Single choice | 8. We would appreciate your feedback to learn! In general, did you encounter any challenges with the selected indicators? | a. Yes b. No | |
| Intro text | 8.a Please briefly identify the challenges encountered with Interreg common indicators at different stages of the programme life cycle: | | |
| Text field | 8.a.1 Programming | | |
| Text field | 8.a.2 Guidance to applicants | | |
| Text field | 8.a.3 Contracting | | |
| Text field | 8.a.4 Project monitoring | | |
| Text field | 8.a.5 Communication results | | |
| Text field | 8.a.6 Audit | | |
| Text field | 8.b If you have any specific challenge related to any specific indicator, please briefly name, provide the indicator code and the related challenge | | |
| C. Feedback on the common indicators used in your programmes | | | |
| Multiple choice | 9. Which Interreg common indicators do you use in your programmes? | RCO 81 - Participations in joint actions across-borders RCO 82 - Participations in joint actions promoting gender equality, equal opportunities and social inclusion RCO 83 - Strategies and action plans jointly developed RCO 84 - Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects RCO 85 - Participations in joint training schemes RCO 86 - Joint administrative or legal agreements signed RCO 87 - Organisations cooperating across-borders RCO 90 - Projects for innovation networks across-border s | |

| | | | |
|---------------|---|--|--|
| | | <p>RCO 115 - Public events across-borders jointly organised</p> <p>RCO 116 - Jointly developed solution</p> <p>RCO 117 - Solutions for legal or administrative obstacles across-borders identified</p> <p>RCO 118 - Organisations cooperating for the multi-level governance of macroregional strategies</p> <p>RCO 120 - Projects supporting cooperation across-borders to develop urban-rural linkages</p> <p>RCR 79 - Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations</p> <p>RCR 81 - Completion of joint training schemes</p> <p>RCR 82 - Legal or administrative obstacles across-borders alleviated or resolved</p> <p>RCR 83 - Persons covered by joint administrative or legal agreements signed</p> <p>RCR 84 - Organisations cooperating across-borders after project completion</p> <p>RCR 85 - Participations in joint actions across-borders after project completion</p> <p>RCR 104 - Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations</p> | |
| Single choice | 10. Did you find it easy to find indicator pairs you are using with a direct quantitative link between output (=RCO) and result (=RCR)? | <p>a. Yes</p> <p>b. No</p> | |
| Text field | 10.a Please indicate the ones where it was easy to come up with pairs and shortly explain why. | | |
| Intro text | 11. For each common indicator selected in question 9, please rank the indicator according to the following criteria: | | |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|-----------------|--|
| 1-6 Scale (1=low, 6=high) | 11.a.1 Relevance: Does the indicator measure relevant outputs/results of the actions financed by the programme? | | |
| Text field | 11.a.2 Optional feedback | | |
| 1-6 Scale (1=low, 6=high) | 11.b.1 Acceptability: Do stakeholders readily accept to measure the indicator? And are the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders for the indicator clear? | | |
| Text field | 11.b.2 Optional feedback | | |
| 1-6 Scale (1=low, 6=high) | 11.c.1 Clarity: To your knowledge, is the indicator unambiguous and easy to interpret by the project beneficiaries? | | |
| Text field | 11.c.2 Optional feedback | | |
| 1-6 Scale (1=low, 6=high) | 11.d.1 Ease of use: Is the indicator easy to monitor? Are there any problems with reporting the indicator? | | |
| Text field | 11.d.2 Optional feedback | | |
| 1-6 Scale (1=low, 6=high) | 11.e.1 Robustness: Is the indicator robust against manipulation, i.e., is the use of the indicator likely to distort behaviour (over/underreporting)? | | |
| Text field | 11.e.2 Optional feedback | | |
| Single choice | 12. For each common indicator selected in question 9, is the indicator used in all specific objectives? | a. Yes b. No | |
| Text field | 12.a Optional feedback | | |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Single choice | 13. For each common indicator selected in question 9, did you use unit costs when calculating the indicator target? | a. Yes b. No | |
| Single choice | 13.a For this indicator, were different unit costs used in different specific objectives to calculate targets? | a. Yes b. No | |
| Text field | 13.b What were the assumptions made when calculating the unit cost of target values? | | |
| D. Programme specific indicators | | | |
| Single choice | 14. Does your programme use any programme specific indicators? | a. Yes b. No | |
| | 15.a If yes: | | |
| Text field | i. Why have you chosen programme-specific output/result indicators over common indicators? | | |
| Text field | ii. Are there other common output/result indicators not included in your programme that could nonetheless sufficiently cover the type of intervention of your programme? If so, can you provide the common indicator code? | | |
| Single choice | iii. Does the monitoring of the programme specific indicator(s) require: | a. More b. Less c. The same effort as common indicators? | |
| Text field | For the above answer iii, please provide details. | | |

| | | | |
|-----------------|--|--|--|
| Multiple choice | 15. Which of the topics below would you find most interesting to set up an additional common indicator? Please indicate max. 3 preferences and/ or propose your own. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Capacity increase at organisations b. Tools implemented for mitigating pollution c. Joint actions (investments, constructions, etc) in education, training and life-long learning services d. Population benefiting from protection measures against climate related natural disasters (flood, wildfire, other) (a composite indicator of RCR 35, RCR 36 and RCR 37) e. Population benefitting from better ecosystem services (biodiversity, green corridors, improved ecological status, etc.) | |
| Text field | | f. Own proposal | |

List of the Interreg programmes participating in the online survey

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Interreg Atlantic Area | Interreg Germany/Sachsen - Czech Republic | |
| Interreg AURORA | Interreg IPA Adriatic-Ionian | |
| Interreg Austria - Hungary | Interreg IPA CBC Bulgaria - North Macedonia | |
| Interreg Austria-Czechia | Interreg IPA CBC Bulgaria - Serbia | |
| Interreg Austria-Germany/Bavaria | Interreg IPA CBC Bulgaria - Türkiye | |
| Interreg Baltic Sea | Interreg IPA South Adriatic | |
| Interreg Germany - Denmark | Interreg Italy - Austria | |
| Interreg Belgium-France (Wallonie-Vlaanderen-France) | Interreg Italy-Croatia | |
| Interreg Central Europe | Interreg Lithuania-Poland | |
| Interreg Czech Republic - Poland | Interreg Mediterranean | |
| Interreg TN Danube | Interreg TN Northern Periphery and Arctic | |
| Interreg Finland-Estonia-Latvia-Sweden (Central Baltic) | Interreg North Sea | |
| Interreg Estonia - Latvia | Interreg Romania - Bulgaria | |
| Interreg Europe | Interreg Slovenia-Austria | |
| Interreg Flanders-The Netherland | Interreg Spain - Portugal (Madeira - Acores - Canarias (MAC)) | |
| Interreg France - Germany - Switzerland (Rhin Superieur) | Interreg Sweden - Denmark - Norway (Oresund - Kattegat - Skagerrak) | |
| Interreg Germany - Denmark | | |

Annex 4: Interreg common output/result indicators used by strand and by Policy Objectives

Interreg common output indicators used by strand

| Interreg common output indicators | CB | IR | OR | TN | Total |
|--|-------------|----------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| RCO87 Interreg: Organisations cooperating across-border s | 274 | 1 | 19 | 77 | 371 |
| RCO116 Interreg: Jointly developed solutions | 207 | 1 | 5 | 80 | 293 |
| RCO84 Interreg: Pilot actions developed and implemented jointly | 181 | 1 | 10 | 89 | 281 |
| RCO83 Interreg: Strategies and action plans jointly developed | 187 | 1 | 19 | 62 | 269 |
| RCO81 Interreg: Participation in joint actions across-border s | 134 | 2 | 10 | 14 | 160 |
| RCO85 Interreg: Participations in joint training schemes | 59 | 2 | 5 | 14 | 80 |
| RCO115 Interreg: Public events across-borders jointly organised | 61 | | 3 | 4 | 68 |
| RCO117 Interreg: Solutions identified for legal/admin. obstacles | 26 | | | 1 | 27 |
| RCO90 Interreg: Projects for innovation networks across-border s | 12 | | | 1 | 13 |
| RCO82 Interreg: Participations in horizontal principles actions | 5 | | 1 | 3 | 9 |
| RCO86 Interreg: Joint administrative or legal agreements signed | 5 | | 1 | | 6 |
| RCO118 Interreg: Organisations cooperating for MLG of MRSs | | | | 4 | 4 |
| RCO120 Interreg: Projects supporting urban-rural linkages | 1 | | | 3 | 4 |
| Grand Total | 1152 | 8 | 73 | 352 | 1585 |

Source: Authors calculations based on Cohesion Open Data - <https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/d/xi3a-zddk>

Interreg common result indicators by strands

| Interreg common result indicators | CB | IR | OR | TN | Grand Total |
|---|------------|----------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| RCR104 Interreg: Solutions taken up or up-scaled | 234 | | 5 | 99 | 338 |
| RCR84 Interreg: Organisations cooperating post-project | 255 | | 19 | 33 | 307 |
| RCR79 Interreg: Joint strategies and action plans taken up | 173 | 1 | 22 | 65 | 261 |
| RCR85 Interreg: Participations in actions post-project | 80 | | 9 | 7 | 96 |
| RCR81 Interreg: Completion of joint training schemes | 57 | 2 | 5 | 14 | 78 |
| RCR82 Interreg: Legal/admin. obstacles alleviated or resolved | 26 | | | 1 | 27 |
| RCR83 Interreg: Persons covered by joint agreements signed | 4 | | 1 | | 5 |
| Grand Total | 829 | 3 | 61 | 219 | 1112 |

Source: Authors calculations based on Cohesion Open Data - <https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/d/xi3a-zddk>

Interreg common output/result indicators used by Policy Objectives

| Interreg common indicators | PO1 | PO2 | PO3 | PO4 | PO5 | PO6 | PO7 | Total |
|--|------------|-------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| OUTPUT | 205 | 639 | 42 | 381 | 17 | 286 | 15 | 1585 |
| RCO87 Interreg: Organisations cooperating across-borders | 52 | 119 | 9 | 99 | 4 | 82 | 6 | 371 |
| RCO116 Interreg: Jointly developed solutions | 47 | 133 | 9 | 68 | 5 | 31 | | 293 |
| RCO84 Interreg: Pilot actions developed and implemented jointly | 49 | 151 | 6 | 54 | 4 | 17 | | 281 |
| RCO83 Interreg: Strategies and action plans jointly developed | 26 | 130 | 12 | 53 | 3 | 43 | 2 | 269 |
| RCO81 Interreg: Participation in joint actions across-borders | 9 | 62 | 1 | 34 | | 50 | 4 | 160 |
| RCO85 Interreg: Participations in joint training schemes | 7 | 15 | 1 | 47 | | 8 | 2 | 80 |
| RCO115 Interreg: Public events across-border s jointly organised | 2 | 27 | 1 | 13 | | 25 | | 68 |
| RCO117 Interreg: Solutions identified for legal/admin. obstacles | | 1 | 2 | 4 | | 20 | | 27 |
| RCO90 Interreg: Projects for innovation networks across-borders | 13 | | | | | | | 13 |
| RCO82 Interreg: Participations in horizontal principles actions | | | | 8 | | 1 | | 9 |
| RCO86 Interreg: Joint administrative or legal agreements signed | | | | | 1 | 4 | 1 | 6 |
| RCO118 Interreg: Organisations cooperating for MLG of MRSs | | | | | | 4 | | 4 |
| RCO120 Interreg: Projects supporting urban-rural linkages | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | 4 |
| RESULT | 138 | 422 | 32 | 287 | 14 | 205 | 14 | 1112 |
| RCR104 Interreg: Solutions taken up or up-scaled | 58 | 159 | 11 | 73 | 5 | 32 | | 338 |
| RCR84 Interreg: Organisations cooperating post-project | 39 | 87 | 8 | 88 | 5 | 74 | 6 | 307 |
| RCR79 Interreg: Joint strategies and action plans taken up | 27 | 128 | 11 | 52 | 3 | 38 | 2 | 261 |
| RCR85 Interreg: Participations in actions post-project | 7 | 33 | | 23 | | 30 | 3 | 96 |
| RCR81 Interreg: Completion of joint training schemes | 7 | 14 | | 47 | | 8 | 2 | 78 |
| RCR82 Interreg: Legal/admin. obstacles alleviated or resolved | | 1 | 2 | 4 | | 20 | | 27 |
| RCR83 Interreg: Persons covered by joint agreements signed | | | | | 1 | 3 | 1 | 5 |
| Grand Total | 343 | 1061 | 74 | 668 | 31 | 491 | 29 | 2697 |

Source: Authors calculations based on Cohesion Open Data - <https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/d/xi3a-zddk>

Annex 5: ERDF indicators used by Interreg programmes

Full list of mainstream ERDF (investment) indicators used by Interreg programmes, arranged by strand and policy objective.

| Use of investment indicators by Strand/PO | # of indicators |
|--|-----------------|
| CB | 770 |
| PO1 Smarter Europe | 212 |
| RCO01 Firms: All firms | 37 |
| RCO02 Firms: Grant aided | 29 |
| RCO04 Firms: Advised | 31 |
| RCO05 Firms: New Enterprises | 1 |
| RCO06 RTDI: Researchers with improved infrastructure | 1 |
| RCO07 RTDI: ROs in joint research | 10 |
| RCO08 RTDI: Value of R+I equipment | 1 |
| RCO10 RTDI: Firms cooperating with Ros | 10 |
| RCO101 RTDI: SMEs investing in new skills | 2 |
| RCO14 Digital: Public institutions supported for Digital | 5 |
| RCO15 Firms: Capacity of incubation created | 1 |
| RCR02 Firms: Private investments | 4 |
| RCR03 RTDI: SMEs introducing product or process innovation | 25 |
| RCR04 RTDI: SMEs introducing marketing/organisation innovation | 4 |
| RCR05 RTDI: SMEs innovating in-house | 3 |
| RCR06 RTDI: Patent applications submitted | 1 |
| RCR08 RTDI: Publications from supported projects | 4 |
| RCR104 Interreg: Solutions taken up or up-scaled | 33 |
| RCR11 Digital: Users of new and upgraded public digital services | 5 |
| RCR12 Digital: Users of digital services by enterprises | 1 |
| RCR17 Firms: New enterprises surviving in the market | 1 |
| RCR25 Firms: SMEs with higher value added per employee | 1 |
| RCR97 Apprenticeships supported in SMEs | 1 |
| RCR98 RTDI: SMEs staff completing training | 1 |
| PO2 Greener Europe | 264 |
| RCO01 Firms: All firms | 24 |
| RCO02 Firms: Grant aided | 21 |
| RCO04 Firms: Advised | 9 |
| RCO107 Circular: Investments in separate waste collection | 1 |
| RCO121 Climate: Area covered by protection measures (other) | 2 |
| RCO122 Investments in disaster management (non climate) | 1 |
| RCO19 Energy: Public buildings with improved energy performance | 1 |
| RCO24 Climate: Investments in disaster management | 12 |
| RCO25 Climate: Flood protection newly built or consolidated | 1 |
| RCO26 Climate: Green infrastructure adapted to climate change | 8 |
| RCO27 Climate: Strategies addressing climate change adaptation | 1 |
| RCO28 Climate: Area covered by protection against wildfires | 2 |
| RCO30 Water: Length of pipes for public water supply | 1 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| RCO31 Water: Length of pipes for collection of waste water | 1 |
| RCO32 Water: New or upgraded capacity for waste water treatment | 1 |
| RCO36 Env: Green infrastructure (not related to climate change) | 11 |
| RCO37 Env: Surface of Natura 2000 sites | 7 |
| RCO38 Env: Surface area of rehabilitated land supported | 1 |
| RCO39 Env: Area covered by systems for monitoring air pollution | 1 |
| RCO58 Urban Trans: Dedicated cycling infrastructure supported | 1 |
| RCR01 Jobs created in supported entities | 1 |
| RCR02 Firms: Private investments | 4 |
| RCR03 RTDI: SMEs introducing product or process innovation | 11 |
| RCR06 RTDI: Patent applications submitted | 5 |
| RCR104 Interreg: Solutions taken up or up-scaled | 104 |
| RCR26 Energy: Annual primary energy consumption | 1 |
| RCR35 Climate: Population benefiting from flood protection | 5 |
| RCR36 Climate: Pop. benefiting from wildfire protection | 6 |
| RCR37 Climate: Pop protected from natural disaster (climate) | 4 |
| RCR41 Water: Population with improved water supply | 1 |
| RCR42 Water: Pop. connected to secondary waste water treatment | 2 |
| RCR50 Env: Population benefiting from measures for air quality | 1 |
| RCR52 Env: Rehabilitated land | 1 |
| RCR95 Env: Pop. with access to green infrastructure | 8 |
| RCR96 Env: Pop protected against natural risks (non climate) | 3 |
| PO3 Connected Europe | 40 |
| RCO01 Firms: All firms | 1 |
| RCO02 Firms: Grant aided | 1 |
| RCO04 Firms: Advised | 1 |
| RCO44 Road: Length of new or upgraded roads - non-TEN-T | 1 |
| RCO46 Road: Length of roads- non-TEN-T | 6 |
| RCO48 Rail: Length of new or upgraded rail - non-TEN-T | 1 |
| RCO50 Rail: Length of rail - non-TEN-T | 3 |
| RCO53 Rail: New or modernised railway stations and stops | 2 |
| RCO54 Multimodal: New or modernised intermodal connections | 2 |
| RCO58 Urban Trans: Dedicated cycling infrastructure supported | 1 |
| RCR104 Interreg: Solutions taken up or up-scaled | 9 |
| RCR55 Road: Annual users of roads | 3 |
| RCR56 Road: Time savings due to improved road infrastructures | 5 |
| RCR58 Rail Annual users railways | 4 |
| PO4 Social Europe | 186 |
| RCO01 Firms: All firms | 8 |
| RCO02 Firms: Grant aided | 5 |
| RCO04 Firms: Advised | 7 |
| RCO113 Integrated actions for inclusion of marginalised pop. | 2 |
| RCO14 Digital: Public institutions supported for Digital | 1 |
| RCO58 Urban Trans: Dedicated cycling infrastructure supported | 6 |
| RCO67 Education: Classroom capacity of education facilities | 3 |
| RCO69 Health: Capacity of health care facilities | 7 |
| RCO77 Number of cultural and tourism sites supported | 38 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| RCR03 RTDI: SMEs introducing product or process innovation | 2 |
| RCR104 Interreg: Solutions taken up or up-scaled | 61 |
| RCR67 Social Infra: Annual users of social housing | 1 |
| RCR71 Education: Annual users of education facilities | 2 |
| RCR72 Health: Annual users of e-health care services | 4 |
| RCR73 Health: Annual users of health care facilities | 7 |
| RCR77 Visitors of cultural and tourism sites | 32 |
| PO5 Europe closer to citizens | 46 |
| RCO01 Firms: All firms | 3 |
| RCO02 Firms: Grant aided | 2 |
| RCO04 Firms: Advised | 1 |
| RCO28 Climate: Area covered by protection against wildfires | 1 |
| RCO58 Urban Trans: Dedicated cycling infrastructure supported | 4 |
| RCO74 Population covered in integrated territorial development | 5 |
| RCO75 Strategies for integrated territorial development | 5 |
| RCO76 Integrated projects for territorial development | 6 |
| RCO77 Number of cultural and tourism sites supported | 4 |
| RCO80 Community-led local development strategies supported | 1 |
| RCR104 Interreg: Solutions taken up or up-scaled | 5 |
| RCR36 Climate: Pop. benefiting from wildfire protection | 1 |
| RCR64 Urban Trans: Annual users of cycling infrastructure | 4 |
| RCR77 Visitors of cultural and tourism sites | 4 |
| PO6 Interreg: Cooperation Governance | 22 |
| RCR104 Interreg: Solutions taken up or up-scaled | 22 |
| OR | 33 |
| PO1 Smarter Europe | 18 |
| RCO01 Firms: All firms | 3 |
| RCO02 Firms: Grant aided | 3 |
| RCO04 Firms: Advised | 1 |
| RCO07 RTDI: ROs in joint research | 3 |
| RCO10 RTDI: Firms cooperating with Ros | 1 |
| RCR01 Jobs created in supported entities | 1 |
| RCR02 Firms: Private investments | 1 |
| RCR03 RTDI: SMEs introducing product or process innovation | 1 |
| RCR08 RTDI: Publications from supported projects | 2 |
| RCR104 Interreg: Solutions taken up or up-scaled | 2 |
| PO2 Greener Europe | 10 |
| RCO24 Climate: Investments in disaster management | 2 |
| RCO34 Circular: Additional capacity for waste recycling | 1 |
| RCO37 Env: Surface of Natura 2000 sites | 1 |
| RCR104 Interreg: Solutions taken up or up-scaled | 3 |
| RCR37 Climate: Pop protected from natural disaster (climate) | 1 |
| RCR47 Circular: Waste recycled | 1 |
| RCR96 Env: Pop protected against natural risks (non climate) | 1 |
| PO4 Social Europe | 3 |
| RCO77 Number of cultural and tourism sites supported | 1 |
| RCR73 Health: Annual users of health care facilities | 1 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| RCR77 Visitors of cultural and tourism sites | 1 |
| PO5 Europe closer to citizens | 2 |
| RCO75 Strategies for integrated territorial development | 1 |
| RCO76 Integrated projects for territorial development | 1 |
| TN | 114 |
| PO1 Smarter Europe | 38 |
| RCO01 Firms: All firms | 3 |
| RCO02 Firms: Grant aided | 2 |
| RCO04 Firms: Advised | 1 |
| RCO05 Firms: New Enterprises | 1 |
| RCO07 RTDI: ROs in joint research | 1 |
| RCO10 RTDI: Firms cooperating with Ros | 1 |
| RCO14 Digital: Public institutions supported for Digital | 1 |
| RCR01 Jobs created in supported entities | 1 |
| RCR03 RTDI: SMEs introducing product or process innovation | 2 |
| RCR04 RTDI: SMEs introducing marketing/organisation innovation | 1 |
| RCR104 Interreg: Solutions taken up or up-scaled | 23 |
| RCR11 Digital: Users of new and upgraded public digital services | 1 |
| PO2 Greener Europe | 52 |
| RCR104 Interreg: Solutions taken up or up-scaled | 52 |
| PO3 Connected Europe | 2 |
| RCR104 Interreg: Solutions taken up or up-scaled | 2 |
| PO4 Social Europe | 12 |
| RCR104 Interreg: Solutions taken up or up-scaled | 12 |
| PO6 Interreg: Cooperation Governance | 10 |
| RCR104 Interreg: Solutions taken up or up-scaled | 10 |
| Grand Total | 917 |

Source: Authors calculations based on Cohesion Open Data - <https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/d/xi3a-zddk>

Use of other ERDF/CF indicators (investment indicators)

| Interreg Strand | # of investment indicators |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Cross-border | 770 |
| PO1 Smarter Europe | 212 |
| PO2 Greener Europe | 264 |
| PO3 Connected Europe | 40 |
| PO4 Social Europe | 186 |
| PO5 Europe closer to citizens | 46 |
| PO6 Interreg: Cooperation Governance | 22 |
| Outermost | 33 |
| PO1 Smarter Europe | 18 |
| PO2 Greener Europe | 10 |
| PO4 Social Europe | 3 |
| PO5 Europe closer to citizens | 2 |
| Transnational | 114 |
| PO1 Smarter Europe | 38 |
| PO2 Greener Europe | 52 |
| PO3 Connected Europe | 2 |
| PO4 Social Europe | 12 |
| PO6 Interreg: Cooperation Governance | 10 |
| Grand Total | 917 |

Source: Authors calculations based on Cohesion Open Data - <https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/d/xi3a-zddk>

The use of other ERDF/CF indicators, particularly investment-related indicators, is predominantly observed in cross-border (CBC) programmes. These indicators are primarily concentrated under Policy Objectives (PO) 1 and 2, which focus on a smarter and greener Europe, as well as PO4, addressing social inclusion and cohesion. This alignment reflects the targeted efforts of CB programmes to drive regional development through strategic investments in these key areas.

Overview table of use of mainstream ERDF and Interreg common indicators, by policy and specific objectives.

| Policy objective | Total indicators | Interreg common indicators | Common indicators | Interreg common indicator use % |
|---|------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| PO1 Smarter Europe | 553 | 343 | 210 | 62% |
| RSO1.1 Enhancing research and innovation | 265 | 172 | 93 | 65% |
| RSO1.2 Reaping the benefits of digitisation | 56 | 30 | 26 | 54% |
| RSO1.3 Growth and competitiveness of SMEs | 152 | 80 | 72 | 53% |
| RSO1.4 Skills for smart specialisation and transition | 76 | 59 | 17 | 78% |
| RSO1.5 Digital connectivity | 4 | 2 | 2 | 50% |

| | | | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| PO2 Greener Europe | 1228 | 1061 | 167 | 86% |
| RSO2.1 Energy efficiency | 90 | 79 | 11 | 88% |
| RSO2.2 Renewable energy | 79 | 68 | 11 | 86% |
| RSO2.3 Smart energy systems | 23 | 19 | 4 | 83% |
| RSO2.4 Climate change adaptation | 405 | 349 | 56 | 86% |
| RSO2.5 Sustainable water | 64 | 58 | 6 | 91% |
| RSO2.6 Circular economy | 187 | 148 | 39 | 79% |
| RSO2.7 Nature protection and biodiversity | 347 | 307 | 40 | 88% |
| RSO2.8 Sustainable urban mobility | 33 | 33 | 0 | 100% |
| PO3 Connected Europe | 105 | 74 | 31 | 70% |
| RSO3.1 Sustainable TEN-T | 2 | 2 | 0 | 100% |
| RSO3.2 Sustainable transport | 103 | 72 | 31 | 70% |
| PO4 Social Europe | 796 | 668 | 128 | 84% |
| ISO4.5 PEACE PLUS Shared Learning Together Education Programme | 2 | 2 | 0 | 100% |
| ISO4.6 PEACE PLUS Youth Programme | 2 | 2 | 0 | 100% |
| ISO4.7 PEACE PLUS Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing | 2 | 2 | 0 | 100% |
| ISO4.8 PEACE PLUS Rural regeneration and Social Inclusion | 3 | 1 | 2 | 33% |
| ISO4.9 PEACE PLUS Victims and Survivors | 2 | 2 | 0 | 100% |
| RSO4.1 Labour market infrastructure | 81 | 75 | 6 | 93% |
| RSO4.2 Education and training infrastructure | 187 | 180 | 7 | 96% |
| RSO4.3 Integration of marginalised communities | 24 | 22 | 2 | 92% |
| RSO4.5 Access to health care | 160 | 140 | 20 | 88% |
| RSO4.6 Culture and sustainable tourism | 333 | 242 | 91 | 73% |
| PO5 Europe closer to citizens | 74 | 31 | 43 | 42% |
| RSO5.2 Integrated development in rural and coastal areas | 74 | 31 | 43 | 42% |
| PO6 Interreg: Cooperation Governance | 491 | 491 | 0 | 100% |

| | | | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| ISO6.1 Institutional capacity of public authorities | 94 | 94 | 0 | 100% |
| ISO6.2 Legal and administrative cooperation | 144 | 144 | 0 | 100% |
| ISO6.3 People-to-people action for increased trust | 119 | 119 | 0 | 100% |
| ISO6.4 Institutional capacity to manage MRSs | 21 | 21 | 0 | 100% |
| ISO6.6 Other actions to support better cooperation governance | 113 | 113 | 0 | 100% |
| PO7 Interreg: Safer and more secure Europe | 29 | 29 | 0 | 100% |
| ISO7.1 Border management infrastructure | 12 | 12 | 0 | 100% |
| ISO7.2 Mobility and migration management | 9 | 9 | 0 | 100% |
| ISO7.3 Protection and integration of migrants (incl. refugees) | 2 | 2 | 0 | 100% |
| ISO7.4 Other actions for a safer and secure Europe | 6 | 6 | 0 | 100% |
| Grand Total | 3276 | 2697 | 579 | 82% |

Source: Authors calculations based on Cohesion Open Data - <https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/d/xi3a-zddk>