

## Post 2027 | Consultation Report

# 2. Synergies and cooperation

14 January 2025

## Improving synergies among Interreg and other funds and policies

This report is part of Interact's [Post 2027 Consultation reports](#). This report additionally refers to the following subject specific reports:

- 2a Capitalisation (Capitalisation in Interreg – towards greater impact)
- 2b MRS and SBS (Interreg, EU macro-regional and Sea basin strategies – frameworks unlocking mutual benefits)

### Overview

The current Interreg regulation preamble emphasises synergies and complementarities between different strands. Efforts are already underway to foster cooperation between transnational and cross-border programmes in shared geographical areas.

Looking ahead to post-2027<sup>1</sup>, there's a pressing need for increased efforts to enhance effectiveness and territorial impact. Interreg, as a key component of Cohesion Policy, is uniquely positioned to address territorial interdependencies and minimise the "border effect" in functional border areas. Its success hinges on considering the territorial dimension of investments, coordinating funds and policies at various levels, and creating a holistic strategy that unites competitiveness, cohesion, and other EU policies. While some Interreg programmes are initially engaging with initiatives aligned to other EU funds (such as IJG, Horizon Europe, and Just Transition), there is a growing recognition that programmes should work strategically and pursue collaboration ties for synergy development. Current Interreg experiences can offer valuable insights into ensuring better alignment and cooperation among these funds, avoiding overlaps, but there's still significant room for improvement in fostering

---

<sup>1</sup> European Commission: Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, *Forging a sustainable future together – Cohesion for a competitive and inclusive Europe – Report of the High-Level Group on the Future of Cohesion Policy, February 2024*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2024, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2776/974536> and *Inforegio - Ninth Report on Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion* (europa.eu)

complementarities and synergies for future funding efficiency. These experiences highlight both the potential and the challenges in ensuring better coordination among various funding mechanisms.

Given this landscape and the challenges ahead, a critical question emerges: How can Interreg programmes most efficiently and effectively leverage their unique position to enhance synergies across EU funds and maximise the territorial impact of funding in the post-2027 period?

## Methodology

The information serving basis for this document has been collected through various events and activities:

- Interreg survey (August-September 2024),
- Interreg Knowledge Fair 2024 surveys and sessions<sup>2</sup> (March 2024).
- Interact facilitated networks and events, such as the MedLab Annual Meeting (June 2024), the Network meeting of Heads of MA/JS and Communication officers of Interreg transnational programmes (October 2024), and the Network of Interreg transnational programmes supporting the implementation of the MRS. Capitalisation workshops were organised by Interact (November 2023, May 2024, October 2024) and by national authorities (France November 2023, October 2024, Italy July 2024), and a Cooperation actions workshop (July 2024).
- Synergies and Cooperation Discussion Paper (based on the previous events and surveys) publication (November 2024) for programmes to check before the Harvesting event session.
- Harvesting Event Sessions on Synergies and Cooperation (November 2024). In preparation for the event, a Discussion Paper on Synergies and Cooperation was published to allow programmes to review its content in advance. During the event, two dedicated sessions were held to discuss the key messages outlined in the paper. Participants engaged in the following activities to provide their input:
  - Relevance Assessment: Participants voted on the relevance of each key message to their respective programmes.
  - Implementation Preferences: For each key message, participants indicated whether it should be incorporated into regulations or guidance documents as:
    - a) Mandatory Requirement
    - b) Recommendation
    - c) Voluntary Option

---

<sup>2</sup> “Cooperation and synergies with other EU funds and instruments” and “Having more impact: Stronger cooperation between CBC and TN”, “The future of IJG cooperation actions”

- Free-Text Feedback: Participants were given the opportunity to submit written comments to elaborate on or supplement their responses.

The insights and opinions gathered through these methods are summarized and presented in Annex 1.

## What is working

- The benefits of working in synergies are clear. Significant knowledge and experiences have already been gathered, and **capitalisation approaches and thematic clusters** have been designed and implemented as one of the main ways to ensure synergies (e.g. Interreg Central Europe past call for projects aims to coordinate Interreg and Horizon 2020 partners to transfer project results into practical applications in the Central European region. Additionally, the programme will test improving synergies between transnational and cross-border projects through a dedicated call, “capitalisation through coordination”, to tackle disparities and negative effects of national and inner borders on functional linkages among central European regions. The Interreg Northern Periphery and Arctic programme (NPA) is a partnership between the Interreg Aurora, Interreg NPA and ENI programmes designed to enhance visibility, improve coordination, and create synergies. Both programmes NPA and Aurora, have designed a joint call for [Clustering projects](#) to be launched in the autumn of 2025. The [Multi-programme Coordination Mechanism](#) Action Plan (2024-2025)<sup>3</sup> was approved by seven Interreg programme monitoring committees to jointly identify, communicate, transfer and advocate the best results on sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean. In the [Baltic Sea Region project platforms](#), projects from Interreg Baltic Sea Region and other funding programmes from a similar thematic field can join forces. [Interreg Europe’s Policy Learning Platform](#) was established to boost EU-wide policy learning and capitalisation on practices from regional development policies. Interact support through facilitating thematic and policy working groups on the different policy objectives (Smarter Europe, [Greener Europe](#), [More Social Europe](#) and Better Governance) to foster knowledge exchange and strengthen the collection and communication of Interreg results and impacts within EU policies. (Please see the annex to this discussion paper for more detailed inputs by Interreg).
- **Collaboration with other Interreg programmes on administrative aspects and improving operational efficiency** in daily practice (e.g. Interreg France-Wallonia: Adoption of operational best practices from nearby programmes, like Interreg Flanders-Netherlands, IPA Hungary-Serbia: Collaboration in drafting key documents (e.g., subsidy contracts) and sharing management structures with other programmes sharing the same MA Hungary-Slovakia, Hungary-Croatia, NEXT Hungary-Romania-Slovakia-Ukraine programme. Interreg ALCOTRA (France-Italy): Benchmarking

---

<sup>3</sup> The mechanism also foresees shared terms of reference. The involved programmes are Interreg EuroMed, Interreg NextMed, Italy-Croatia, Italy-France Maritime, Greece-Cyprus, Italy-Malta, and Italy-Tunisia, with IPA South Adriatic and IPA Adriatic-Ionian as observers, and support from Interact.

best practices from other French Interreg programmes for small-scale projects and operational tools, particularly territorial instruments<sup>4</sup>.

- **Networking events (e.g. IKF), study visits, joint communication Campaigns (e. SLAM, European Cooperation Day) and knowledge exchanges** are ensured under Interact's services.
- **Sharing of information during project selection** is facilitated to minimise overlaps, avoid duplication, and align strategic goals (e.g. Interreg NEXT Poland-Ukraine with other Interreg Next programmes; sharing practical experiences and administrative approaches during project selection e.g. Interreg Germany-Denmark exchanging evaluations with other national ERDF funds. Interreg Baltic Sea Region and Interreg Estonia-Latvia are already using Index.eu to prevent overlap in project selection, ensuring complementary projects across programmes.
- In parallel, the **project's and partners' own initiative** is naturally developing and existing, led by the project partners. However, there is a potential for doing more and better. (e.g. In the field of energy transition and the role of local communities in the decarbonisation of energy with [CREATORS](#) from H2020 and Interreg North Sea's project [COPPER](#) )
- **EU Macro-Regional Strategies (MRS) and Sea Basin Strategies (SBS)** show to be a valuable opportunity to foster synergies across various funding programmes, particularly Interreg, by providing strategic frameworks that align regional challenges and opportunities. Their added value lies in guiding cross-border cooperation, enhancing policy alignment, and engaging stakeholders beyond traditional Interreg beneficiary groups. By addressing shared challenges and pooling resources across sectors and territories, MRS/SBS amplifies the impact of cooperation efforts. (Please see the annex to this discussion paper for more detailed inputs by Interreg).
- **Synergies between Interreg and the Investments for Jobs and Growth (IJG)** programmes have been challenging, but recent efforts show progress. While Interreg Europe inherently aligns with the Investment for Jobs and Growth goal, other Interreg programmes also show maturity and are trying to improve integration with Regional Operational Programmes (ROPs). For example, Interreg Baltic Sea Region (BSR) platforms invite IJG partners and engage with the Baltic ESF Managing Authorities to promote collaboration. Similarly, the Interreg Atlantic Area facilitates a network of Managing Authorities from both programmes. A key case is the Prespes cross-border cooperation (CBC) and sustainable development actions around Prespes Lake, supported by Interreg Greece-North Macedonia (2014-2027), IPA funds, ROP Western Macedonia, and national funding. Joint operations have been planned to improve the border crossing and promote regional development.
- During this programming period, Interact has accompanied, facilitated, and animated **geographical networks** to improve synergies and transnational and cross-border collaboration in the same area. The networks are the following: [Atlantic Area](#), [Baltic Sea](#), [Central and South East Europe](#), [Mediterranean \(MedLab\)](#) and [North West Europe area](#) to start. As for the MedLab, it also supports programme self-initiatives for synergies such as Multiprogramme Coordination Mechanism and EUSAIR Action Lab. While all these networks share the same overall goal, they each use different

---

<sup>4</sup> Supported by the French Cohesion and Territorial Agency "ANCT"

approaches, engage with different kinds of stakeholders, and carry out activities tailored to the specific needs of the programme's geography. Additionally, the timing of their efforts varies across regions. Flexibility and adaptability have been crucial for the smooth functioning of these networks.

- A key focus is on fostering regional cooperation and synergy between [Interreg IPA and IPA-IPA](#) programmes, allowing them to tackle shared challenges, share knowledge, and promote sustainable development aligned with EU standards
- Interact, in close cooperation with Interreg programmes, has been developing tools for synergies. In addition to publications on the topic that provide practical suggestions, the data exchange platform **Index.eu** has been developed. Index.eu enables automated data exchange across programmes in a shared geographical area. It helps programmes monitor partner engagement in applications and projects and spot potential synergies early on across shared territories. There are currently three pilot initiatives implemented, allowing live data exchange between programmes in the Baltic Sea Region, the Mediterranean area, and across IPA programmes.

### What is missing and needs improving

1. Improved **harmonisation and simplification** of administrative processes to enable easier collaboration across EU funds. More substantial harmonisation of methodological questions, particularly involving the responsible Directorates-General of the European Commission.
2. Appropriate **resource allocation** to boost and implement work in synergies across programmes/funds and projects. Extra time for building substantial complementarities. Increased technical assistance for synergy-related activities.
3. More substantial **capacity building**: supporting a robust knowledge-sharing framework across programmes, more exchanges and mutual learning initiatives, e.g. capacity-building initiatives for staff working on synergies or training programmes on synergy creation, management, monitoring and evaluation.
4. Better **use of tools and platforms**, like Index.eu, keep.eu and/or other platforms. Improved data collection and analysis tools for assessing synergy impacts.
5. **Conceptual clarity**: More harmonised and unambiguous definitions for terms like “synergies”, “embedding”, and “capitalisation”, in addition to supporting a common understanding of key concepts behind these terms across all relevant stakeholders.
6. **Roles and responsibilities** for Interreg stakeholders and definition of governance to enhance synergies are not sufficiently explicit:
  - some refer to the need for better work specification between strands, particularly across Interreg A and B programmes;
  - defined roles for member state representatives in the programmes, Managing Authorities and Joint Secretariats; as European Commission, who supports the programming, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of EU funding programmes

- enhance the role of project partners for on-ground synergy creation and implementation.
  - Interact remaining as a facilitator for cross-programme synergies and collaboration.
7. **Missing Interreg's visibility on the impact** and relevance to contributing to the generic EU policies. Interreg is not “seen” by other funds.
  8. There is a need for a more **strategic approach** to creating synergies across all funds/programmes, not only Interreg. If working in synergies with other EU funds/programmes and projects (in Interreg and beyond) would become valuable, the Commission and EU legislators need to develop a more integrated and strategic approach to EU funding, starting from the programming, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation processes.
  9. Need to explore further linkages between **Interreg programmes and local/regional strategies**.
  10. Exploiting existing **strategic territorial frameworks MRS and SBS**. Continued efforts are needed to strengthen MRS/SBS's strategic efforts to realise these frameworks fully and build more synergies. This means stepping up their role as active governance platforms, increasing their visibility, and driving more targeted thematic collaboration with funding programmes in the geographical area. By evolving into dynamic governance platforms, MRS/SBS can drive greater policy integration, support project capitalisation, and ensure that results are embedded in regional strategies, leading to long-term investment and impact. However, MRS/SBS are not fully exploiting opportunities offered by EU funds and Interreg programmes beyond transnational Interreg programmes overlapping with the territories of the MRS or SBS.

## What would be your vision for the future?

### Integrating Synergy Efforts into Long-Term Strategic Planning and Programme Collaboration.

For Post-2027, linking synergy efforts should be considered a **long-term planning** process and an integral part of the programme strategy. Currently, some Interreg programmes see working in synergies with others as an opportunity, and they are exploring ways to create synergies with other EU programmes, funds, or initiatives, all aimed at enhancing territorial cooperation and cohesion. These synergies often occur across programmes, funds, and projects. While the potential for Interreg projects to naturally discover synergies with other funded initiatives should continue, it is clear that fostering these connections **cannot remain solely Interreg's responsibility**.

Therefore, **Interreg's recognition and visibility for supporting synergies should increase**.

Therefore, most programmes favour including a reference or list of programmes, funds, or institutions in an Interreg guidance document but prefer that such collaboration be voluntary rather than mandatory.

However, most programmes support referencing Interreg in other funds, policies, and regulations. It is seen as an enhancement for increased collaboration across EU funds/programmes. **MRS and SBS can be further exploited for more synergies and resource streamlining for territorial benefit**. To do so, MRS/SBS would need to promote these frameworks as a joint long-term vision for geographical areas,

fostering stronger political ownership and aligning this vision with future collaboration with Interreg and other EU funds and programmes. MRS/SBS stakeholders could assume their active role in further intensifying structured dialogues with various funds/programmes, reinforcing collaboration on projects to create synergies, and ensuring the policy-level uptake, sustainability, and visibility of project results by highlighting Interreg contributions in their communication activities. The transnational Interreg programmes overlapping with the territories of the MRS are well recognised and have a unique role; the full potential of other Interreg programmes is not exploited.

Putting the **territory on focus**, the supporting **role of Interreg**, and **better coordination with IJG programmes**.

### **Practical Implementation & Support for Synergies.**

Working on synergies within the programmes makes sense, but it is not easy and **requires appropriate resources**. Providing additional **incentives** such as appropriate allocation, dedicated staff, awards and recognition, along with **more guidance and tools, capacity building**, and other relevant measures, could significantly contribute to synergies for more effective and efficient use of EU funding.

Several programmes emphasise **capitalising on previous project results to foster synergies**. Including **capitalisation as part of the project cycle** can ease this process.

### **Conceptual and diversity of roles clarity.**

**Conceptual clarity and defining roles and responsibilities for guidance.** Concepts<sup>5</sup> for synergies, capitalisation, and embedding are all related, but there are key differences **that programmes need to clarify**.

**Define roles and responsibilities** for supporting synergies between all Interreg programmes' governance stakeholders and programme bodies, including MAs, JSs, MC), the European Commission, and existing strategic territorial frameworks, like MRS/SBS. A definition and division of responsibilities across Interreg strands might improve efficiency. Interreg programmes should strengthen the **partnership role** within synergies with other programmes and funds, accompanying the partners' knowledge of the policy, topics, and territory.

---

<sup>5</sup> **Synergies in Interreg:** Working together makes things better. When programs or funds team up, they can do more than they could alone by sharing what they have and working as one. **Capitalization in Interreg:** Learning from success. It's about taking good ideas from one project and sharing them so others can use them too. This means gathering information about what worked well and telling others about it. **Embedding in Interreg:** Making good ideas stick. When a project comes up with something useful, embedding means making that idea a regular part of how things are done in regions, countries, or the EU. This helps the good ideas continue to help people even after the project ends.

## **No one size fits all.**

Programme specificity should be considered. Most programmes call for **flexibility**, while all acknowledge synergies are essential for more efficient and effective cooperation. **Although** there is no unanimity on the range of synergies that should appear or not in future regulation or in guidance documents, there seems to be a **slight preference for non-binding and guidance and more incentives over a mandatory approach.**

## **Key messages ranked per programmes' level of relevance**

Working in synergy is happening in various ways, but there's room for improvement. Interreg programs highlight different territorial specificities, so a one-size-fits-all solution is not effective. To enhance synergy, we need to rethink our methods and aim for win-win outcomes.

1. Synergies require appropriate financial and human resources.
2. Clarification concerning the roles and responsibilities of programme bodies and the EC is required.
3. More significant strategic thinking on synergies is required during programming at the EC and programme levels.
4. Conceptual clarification of terms such as synergies, capitalisation and embedding are required.
5. Interreg should be referenced in other funds' regulations and vice versa.
6. Project partnerships can be further leveraged to foster synergies.
7. Providing non-financial incentives would enhance synergies.
8. Clarification concerning roles and responsibilities between strands is required.
9. Coordination between Interreg and IJG could better address territorial challenges.
10. MRS and SBS are frameworks to exploit synergies

Recommendations over mandatory approaches are generally preferred; however, the opinion is more balanced when discussing appropriate financial and human resources to support synergies. Significant strategic thinking during programming at the EC and programme levels. And clarification of terminology, as well as concerning the roles and responsibilities of programme bodies and the EC.

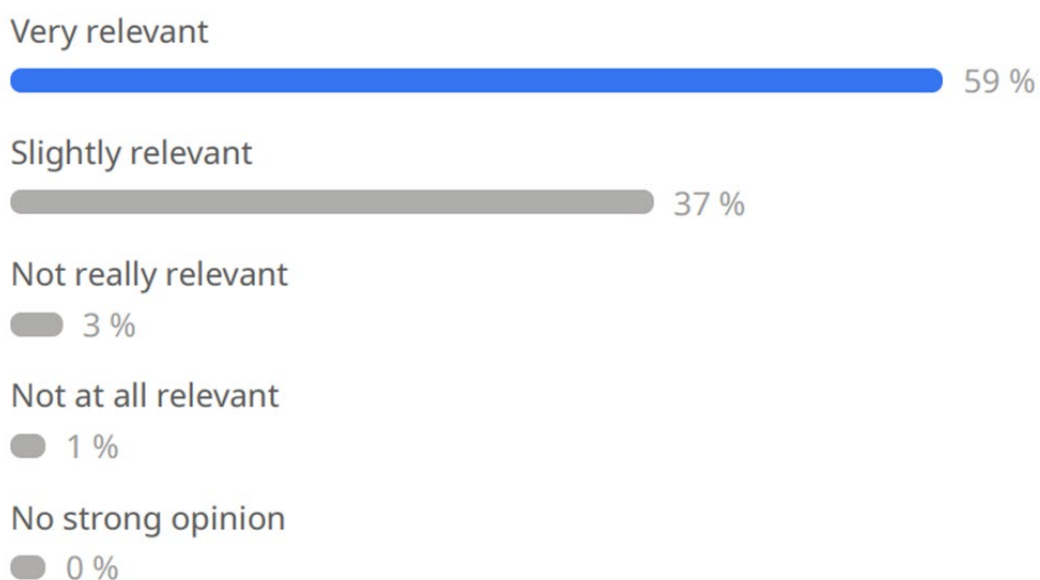


## Annex 1

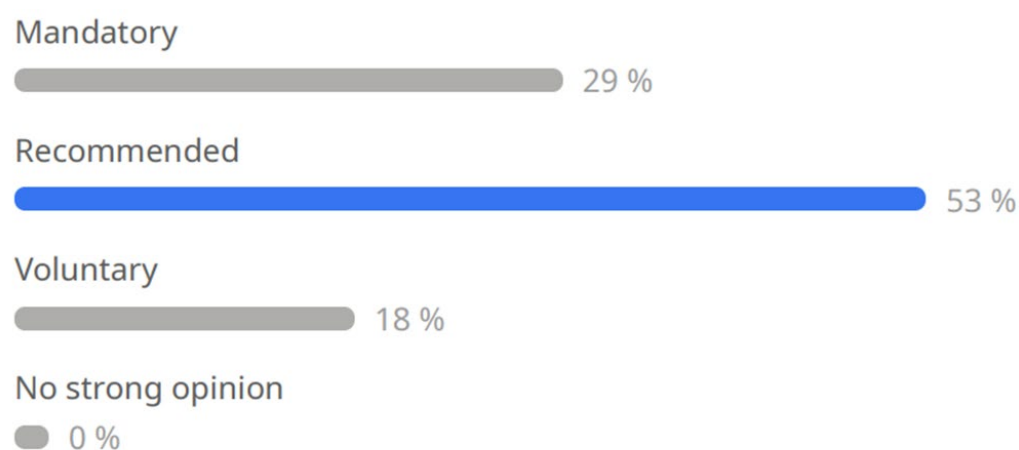
Polls conducted at the Harvesting event

### Message 1: There should be a reference to Interreg in other funds' regulations and vice versa

How relevant is this key message to your programme? (101 responses)

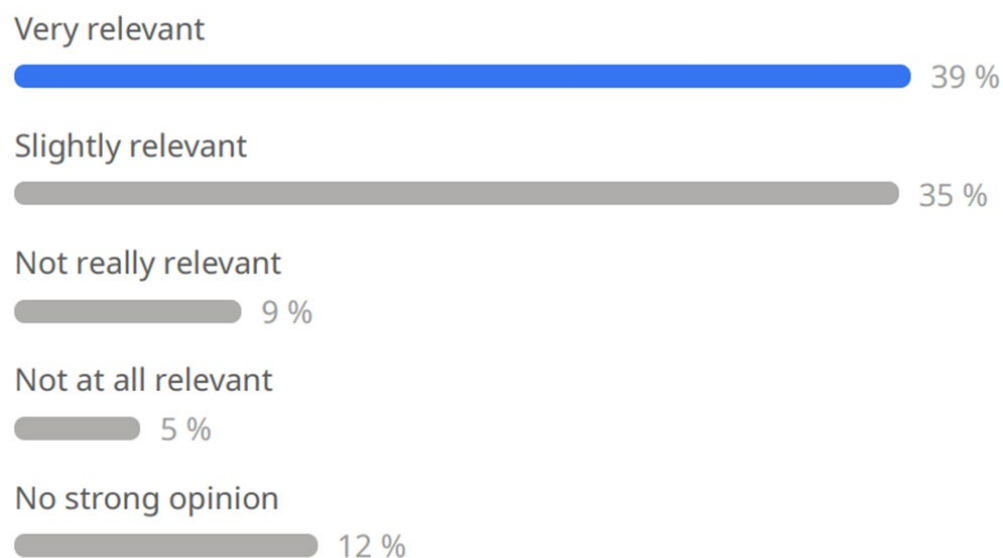


How should this key message be reflected in regulations/guidance documents? (101 responses)

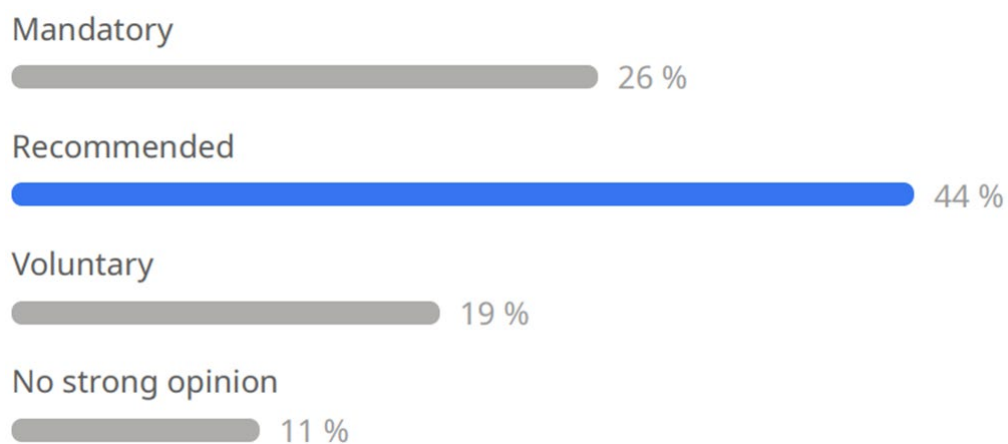


**Message 2: MRS and SBS are frameworks to exploit synergies.**

**How relevant is this key message to your programme? (98 responses)**

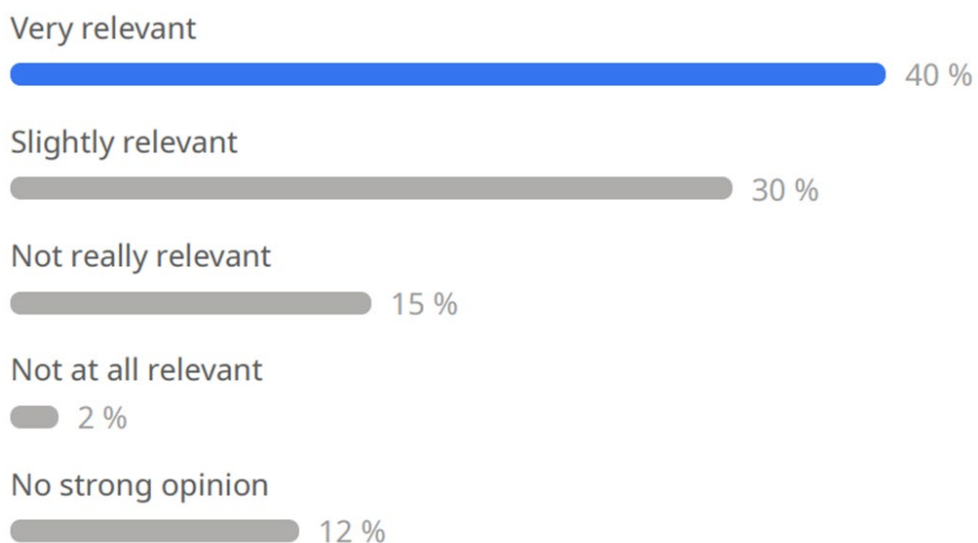


**How should this key message be reflected in regulations/guidance documents? (101 responses)**

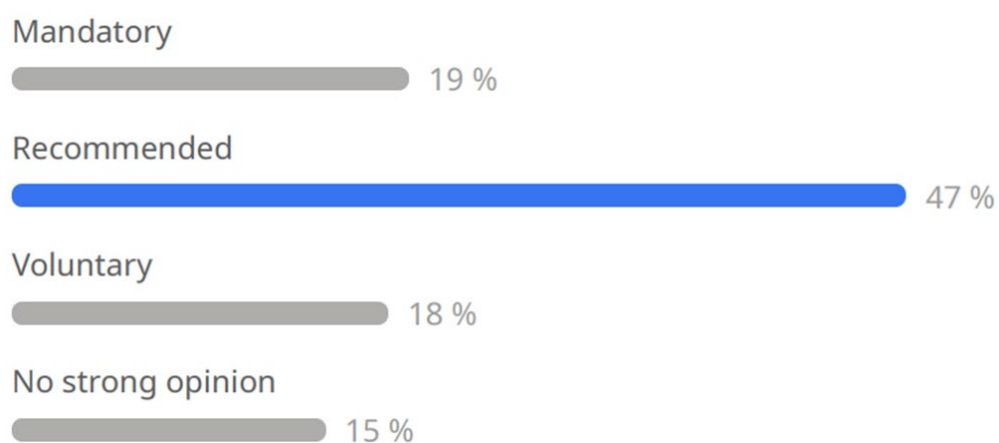


**Message 3: Coordination between Interreg and IJG could better address territorial challenges.**

**How relevant is this key message to your programme?** (99 responses)

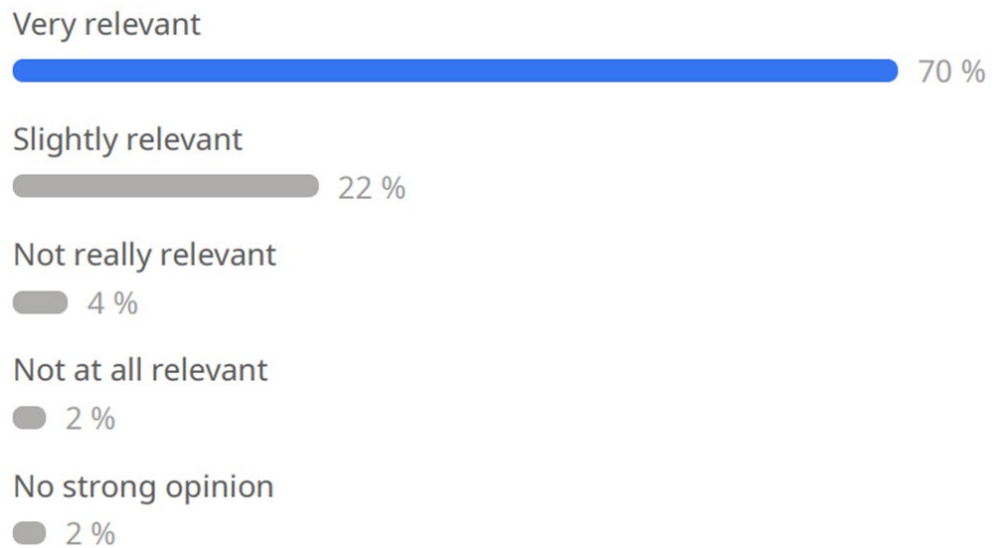


**Results of Slido polling: How should this key message be reflected in regulations/guidance documents?** (99 responses)

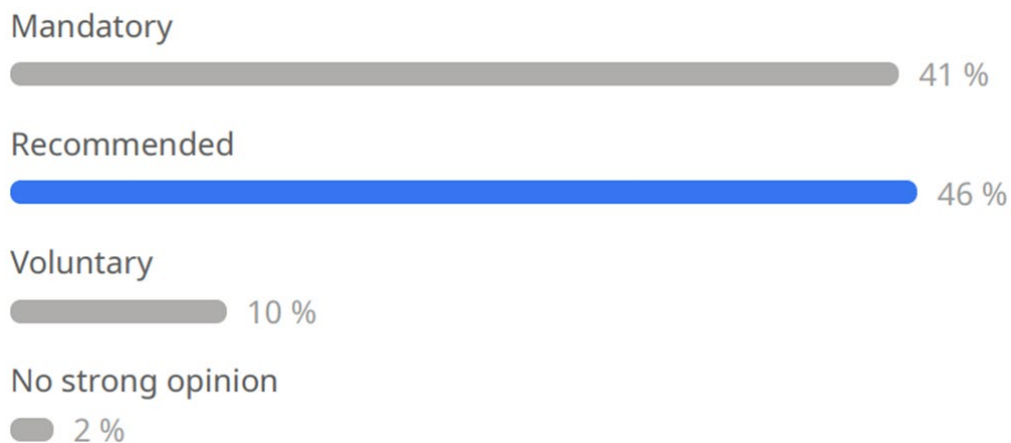


**Message 4: Greater strategic thinking on synergies is required during programming at the level of the EC and programmes.**

**How relevant is this key message to your programme? (99 responses)**



**How should this key message be reflected in regulations/guidance documents? (99 responses)**



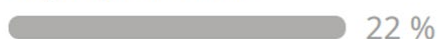
**Message 5: Conceptual clarification of terms such as synergies, capitalisation and embedding is required.**

**How relevant is this key message to your programme?** (89 responses)

Very relevant



Slightly relevant



Not really relevant



Not at all relevant



No strong opinion



**How should this key message be reflected in regulations/guidance documents?** (88 responses)

Mandatory



Recommended



Voluntary



No strong opinion



**Message 6: Clarification concerning roles and responsibilities of programme bodies and the EC is required.**

**How relevant is this key message to your programme? (89 responses)**

Very relevant



Slightly relevant



Not really relevant



Not at all relevant



No strong opinion



**How should this key message be reflected in regulations/guidance documents? (88 responses)**

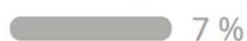
Mandatory



Recommended



Voluntary

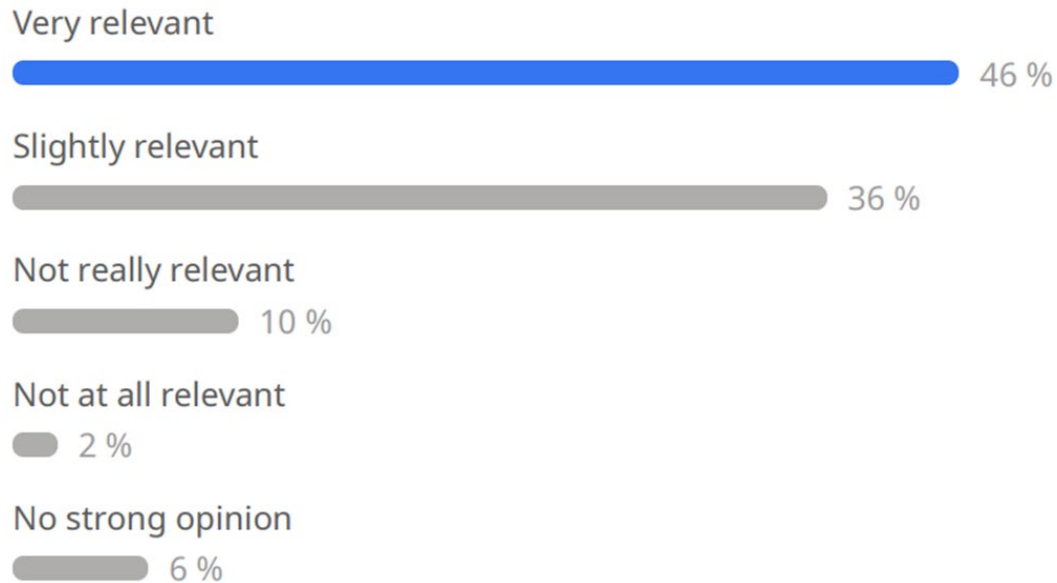


No strong opinion

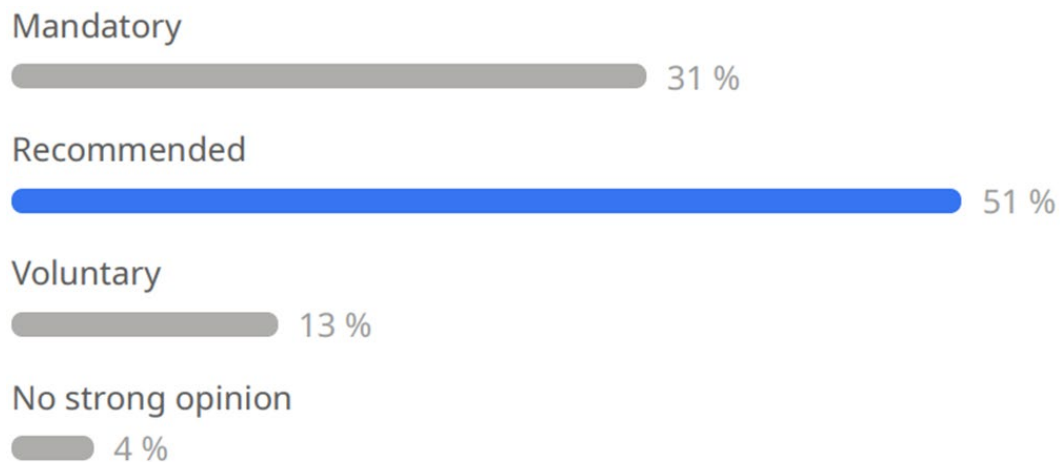


**Message 7: Clarification concerning roles and responsibilities between strands is required.**

**How relevant is this key message to your programme?** (89 responses)

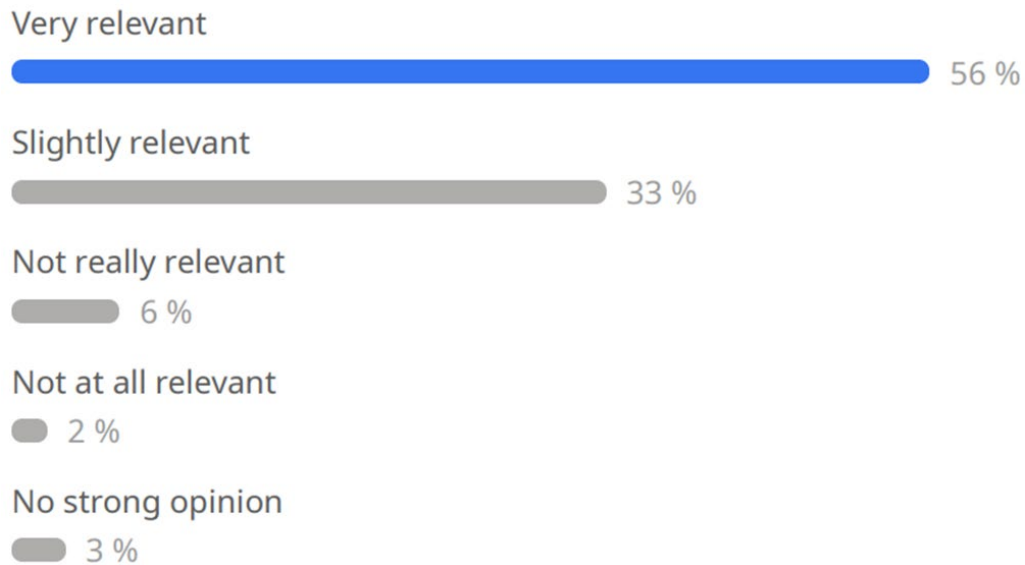


**How should this key message be reflected in regulations/guidance documents?** (88 responses)

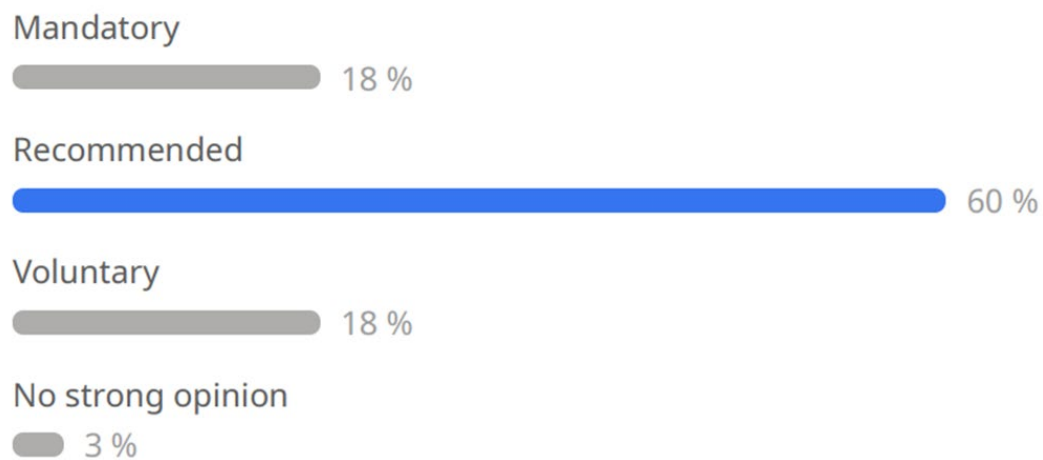


**Message 8: Project partnerships can be further leveraged to foster synergies.**

**How relevant is this key message to your programme?** (89 responses)



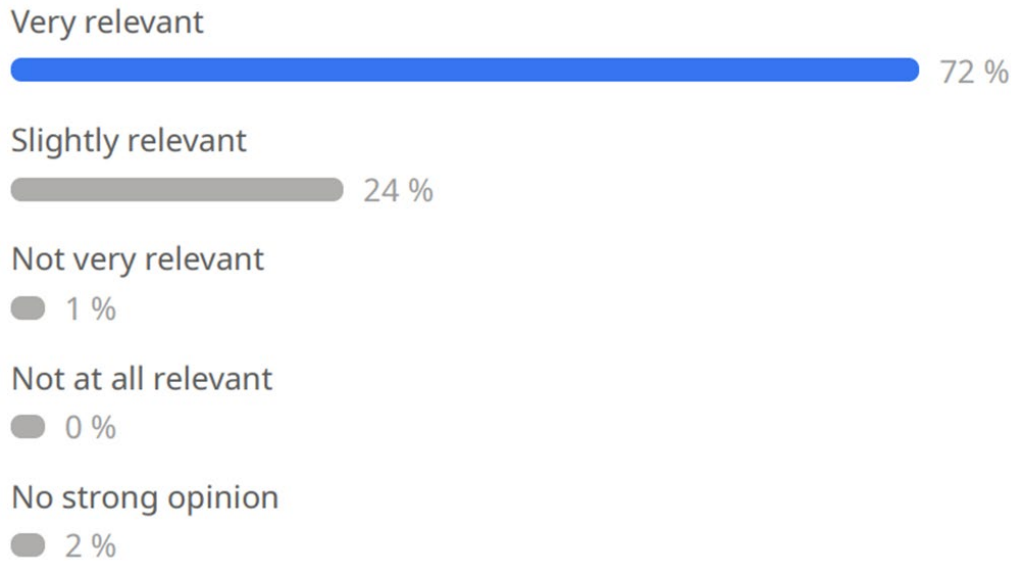
**How should this key message be reflected in regulations/guidance documents?** (88 responses)



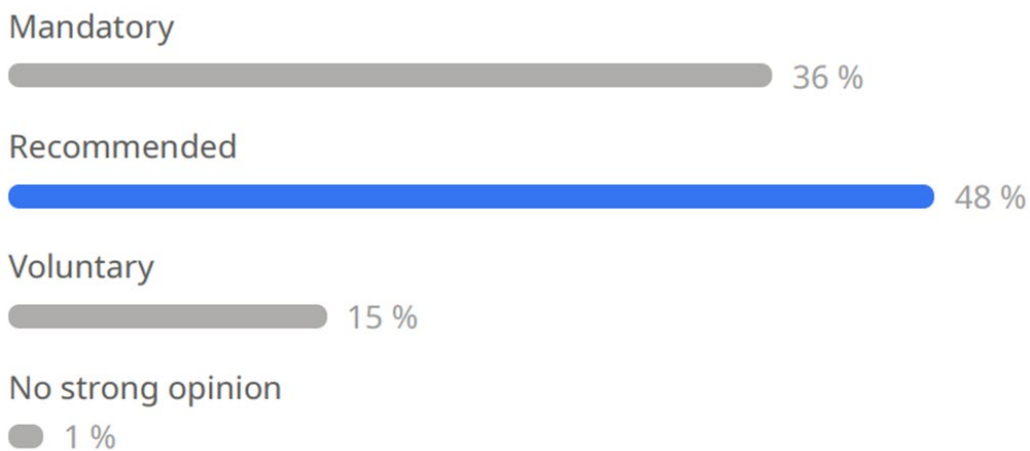


**Message 9: Synergies require appropriate financial and human resources.**

**How relevant is this key message to your programme? (87 responses)**



**How should this key message be reflected in regulations/guidance documents? (87 responses)**



**Message 10: Providing non-financial incentives would enhance synergies.**

**How relevant is this key message to your programme?** (88 responses)

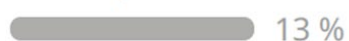
Very relevant



Slightly relevant



Not very relevant



Not at all relevant



No strong opinion



**How should this key message be reflected in regulations/guidance documents?** (88 responses)

Mandatory



Recommended



Voluntary



No strong opinion



## Comments submitted by programmes during the Synergies sessions at the Post-27 Harvesting Event

- “For synergies, we would suggest actions that move from concept to practice, otherwise misalignment between programmes will continue. Our programme is involved in a multiprogramming initiative. We want to continue and strengthen this. In this context, we would suggest a dedicated budget for each programme (a reserve fund) for common actions between Interreg programmes. E.g. the multi-programme proposes a joint call on sustainable tourism, but the timing difference between programmes makes this complicated (some programmes have allocated all funds / others not yet). A dedicated fund would help to address such issues. We would also suggest such a reserve fund for cooperation between Interreg and mainstream growth for jobs programmes (ERDF/ESF). The fund should be not just on the Interreg side, otherwise it will not work”.
- “We would suggest that projects are also allocated with a small budget specifically dedicated to joint actions with other programmes”.
- “Small programmes need more flexibility, less mandatory, demanded cooperation. Programmes are smart and projects are cooperative by their origin. The mainstream has to find and learn the Interreg values. The synergies can blossom in "out of the box" environment”.
- “The notion of references to Interreg in other regulations is important and should be considered together with a more strategic approach by the Commission in dealing with Interreg”.
- “Regional operational mainstream cohesion policy programmes should be recommended to include interregional and Interreg activities, and allocate a certain % for strategic projects/ Interreg programmes with Greece”.
- “The impact of visibility of Interreg’s impact is not well recognized in the context of synergy with other programmes”.
- “Involvement, role and responsibilities of programme bodies and the EC should address in particular the issue of coordination with centrally managed programmes (Horizon, Life, etc.). Such programme should be more engaged to search synergies with Interreg”.
- “Synergies among Interreg jig and directly managed programmes especially horizon Europe: procedures are not existing or difficult to know/use”.
- “Reservation of funds in ROPs for Specific Objective 1 (ISO1).

Financing infrastructures as capitalisation of Interreg project that include them (better as result of the first call in new programming period).

Streamlined bureaucracy: forecast in transferring funds in the two ROPs in the area where exist one or more Interreg cross-border programmes.

Specific and targeted call in Interreg cross-border programme (capitalisation).

Reserve of funds between 5-10% of total ROP resources.

Specific indicator for ROPs: n. of infrastructures financed in Interreg Programme.

If we want to have synergies between cross-border Interregs and regional operational programmes, it is impossible not to make synergies mandatory, especially for regional operational programs (ROPs) where one or more Interreg programs exist. The reason is actually trivial. If in the ROPs of two countries that have a common cross-border Interreg we do not impose mandatory synergies with the Interreg Programme, the result is that there is no effective cross-border synergy with similar results on both sides of the border. Let's think for example of synergies between ROPs and cross-border Interreg where the ROPs that insist on the Interreg area reserve targeted funds to finance infrastructure investment projects on the basis of Interreg project results. If both ROPs of neighbouring states do not activate the synergy, we will have the result of financing investments in only one state. The synergy is certainly there but it is incomplete when looking at the Interreg philosophy which aims to improve conditions on both sides of the border and in the programme area.

It is clear that we need incentives for synergies especially more resources for technical assistance to boost coordination and implementation”.

- “In areas where TN programmes share territory with MRS, such synergies shall be made/coordinated by the MRS support structure. So far too less happening. Alternatively, coordination of synergies shall be at EC”.
- “The specificity of Interreg Europe and how it relates to mainstream programmes should be pointed out and that’s why support to that programme should be strong as it has synergies at its heart. At CBC/transnational level synergies could be thought better (in relation with territorial specificities ) but we should also be cautious with MRS/SBS which add another level that is sometimes useful and sometimes just adding more complexity and administrative burden without major impact”.
- “MRS and SBS exist and should be further used to enhance synergies. It might not be the only way, but it is available right now and might be a convenient way to reach what is trying to be achieved”.
- “By developing visions and objectives for cross-border areas it can be possible to identify strategic cooperation areas. Project should have strong links to regional and national development strategies”.
- “In terms of MRS and transnational programmes: not all transnational programmes fit with a MRS”.
- “Perhaps create more clarity about the role of MRS/SBS when they are in place”.
- “MRS and SBS are not the only possible frameworks; it could be recommended (not mandatory) for overlapping programmes to include guidance text for their possible beneficiaries on which topic is focused on in which programmes”.
- “Regarding MRS it is important to work on the governance side particularly to ensure dialogue and exchanges with CBC programmes, which are not structured at least in our area”.
- “Multilevel governance is essential to implement coherent programs by developing new territorial approaches identifying homogeneous areas where to converge interventions”.
- “Create incentives near the IJG programmes. They feel comfortable in creating links with programmes as Horizon and Life. What do we need to do to make the point for the cooperation with Interreg? Something like ‘excellence deal’ for Interreg: a green pass”.
- “Youth unemployment, NEETs and youth should also be linked to the message related in Interreg and IJG programmes”.

- “What is not mandatory is highly unlikely to happen (especially when we want IJG programmes to cooperate)”.
- “Bare in mind the principle of subsidiarity. Regions know best in which programme which issue should be tackled”.
- “Cross-references in regulations: beware of just creating administrative ticking boxes. Synergies are about a working culture. Mandatory cooperation with other programmes in the phase of designing the programme might slow down the process without real impact. Everybody has to wait for the slowest one to respond to the synergy request”.
- “Proactively include synergies with regional and national strands (multi-level integrative approach)”.
- “Taking care of synergies is a joint responsibility for all (Programmes, EC, Member States, beneficiaries...) Create positive incentives for working on synergies rather than creating extra structures and instruments...Be careful with adding mandatory things to Regulation: every new obligation triggers a whole trail of controls and/or complexities”.
- “Most important is the 'why'. Synergies should be created to achieve clear objectives not only because the areas of certain programmes overlap”.
- “Interreg programmes need to have a very strong strategic vision in place as they are about cooperation and have limited financial and human resources”.
- “On programme level there should just be a role for MS to create synergies possibilities by making smart choices which topics should be served with which programmes”.
- “Using programme synergies and capitalisation etc. are relevant in the programming AND realisation phase of a programme”.
- “Framework & expectations of synergies shall be defined, and if expected, also mandatory to all relevant programmes. If this is not the case, synergies can be made on voluntary basis by programmes, for specific actions”.
- “More coherent offer through well-linked EU funds with clear profiles would help beneficiaries and enhance the delivery and visibility of cooperation programmes in their supporting role for EU policies”.
- “‘Keep it simple’ is better than over-regulating or over defining. Synergies, complementarities, embedding, are ‘working together’. No need to go for close definitions”.
- “Synergies are essential but should also be considered the differences between various types of programmes and initiatives; delivery mechanisms play an important role, depending on whether it is a shared management, direct or indirect management programme. Those delivery mechanisms can hinder cooperation and synergies. There should be less programmes and initiatives in order to be more focused and enabling synergies”.
- “Better definition of responsibilities within the Programme (National Authorities, Programme bodies)”.

- “Concerning roles and responsibilities of programme bodies please do not formulate mandatory legal framework. Most of the programme structure work well and based on decades of experience, flexibility and own decision of programmes is essential”.
- “Is important to avoid overlaps and not only trying to create synergies. Programmes overlap their MC meetings! how will coordinate synergies among projects!they do not coordinate between them”.
- “Also focus on demand-side, I.e. fundraising demand-policies from consortia and projects.if financed, determine who will be responsible. MA/JS is supply side so not logical to coordinate the demand-side”.
- “Lack of controlling synergies (who?)”.
- “Capitalisation: for us it's important that projects think about it since the very beginning. Programs can help clustering, can fund capitalisation activities, but how to capitalise it's up to projects”.
- “Partnerships definitely play a role in promoting synergies. Should it be mandatory for projects to include synergy/capitalisation activities? OSIs are also potentially very good for creating synergies, capitalising, and contributing to policy improvements”.
- “Capacity is needed to find useful links between projects in development phase”.
- “We need instruments to finance projects with synergies between the Funds: how to choose the projects, How can we ensure that capitalisation of Interreg is made possible by other programmes, the funds have different approval procedures”.
- “Important to dedicated budget to allow Interreg programmes to do better coordination and build synergies between funds and programmes”.
- “Very important to give financial resources and the proper time to implement synergies. Who should the resources be given to? To MRS? To single programs? To national authorities? How should resources be spent? Probably not to finance single projects, but to finance capacity building, meetings among actors from different programs, and so on. Where beneficiaries are MAs, JS”.
- “Synergies of mainstream capitalising Interreg shall be put mandatory in regulations as a financial reserve for infrastructures to implement cooperation projects. If mandatory both states in a CBC will give this reserve. And indicators shall connect Interreg and mainstream (ex. number of Interreg calls capitalised with infrastructure investment)”.
- “Appropriate financial and human resources need to be accessible to programmes. Further resources are appreciated and linked together with non-financial incentives. Another option would be to require programmes to flag existing resources for potential synergies at the beginning of the programme”.
- “Resources in the programme bodies should be reorganized to have people dedicated to synergies and with a simplification in administrative and financial procedures this could be possible. IVY volunteers could also be engaged on synergies with ad hoc project”.
- “I agree with the point of using resources more efficiently. Especially if we go in P-BA direction we should have resources from control and audit that can be put towards results, capitalisation, synergies...”.

- “Concerning the data-exchange system. It should be possible to submit an application for 2 programs if it is to be really smart and the administrative effort is to remain manageable”.
- “Working in synergies requires time, an appropriate timetable needs to be taken into account. It would also require tools: specific objective? Call for proposals?”
- “About tools: an open library with manuals and relevant documents from all programs could help benchmarking activities and a better knowledge of each other. More networking activities among programs of the same geographic area should be fostered”.
- “Consider the possibility of having a pan-European tool to a) allow looking for partners and b) give finalized projects a "second life" (use of AI to offer catchy feedback? managed by Interact?)”
- “Use keep.eu better: With specific reference to Tools, we would like to see a greater use of the keep.eu platform (but not a creation of new databases / online tools). It is an important resource, with a huge amount of useful data. It should be used more systematically as a tool for Capitalisation/ Communication managers, but also for evaluators of project proposals (they should be given guidance, so that can use it to check on possible duplications between funding programmes)”.
- “Regarding synergies and capitalisation, my views would be: Do you want to scare Programmes? Put things in the Regulations as mandatory and complicated. Do you want some Programmes to do something but you do not care about that thing too much? Recommend it. Some may, some may not. Confusion will also hit. You want Programmes to do it? Then put it in the Regulation and guide them. Give financial resources, human resources, training and support. Take into account the specificities of countries and regions. Clarify concepts and roles”.
- “Suggestion to mention ISO1 as facilitator of synergies. It is where we fund our Arctic clustering projects. In terms of sharing applications between programmes, Interreg NPA and Aurora are already doing this”.
- “Please do not make up one website after the other (index, keep...) - the relevant information should be at one place”.
- “Tools:
  - improve and coordinate the existing ones if working
  - Indicators and evaluation
  - mrs and sbs are not Interreg stuff only
  - IA should be better exploited , for example in the Drafting of calls.”
- “Expand digital platforms on project content with an AI based chatbot for synergetic project development”.
- “Let’s make use of what we already have! Improve automatic feeding of data, visualisation, etc. but not create more tools that aren’t used”.
- “Non-financial incentives also for inter-programme cooperation and synergies”.
- “Mandatory budgets for liaison officer with other programmes: beware that it is not just extra TA, but earmarked budget which has to be used for that liaison officer”.

- “We have seen for many years that synergies through regulations doesn’t work so well (at least in the way it was designed so far)”.
- “We do not need more mandatory rules neither longer and more complex regulations”.
- “Our programme has many priorities and diversification of contents in a wide cooperation territory: there are multiple possibilities of synergies, very interesting and necessary. However, flexibility is vital and it is always better to make recommendations: there are already enough obligations. Important possibility in CBC of funding to coordinate and generate synergies”.
- “No need for very precise definitions of synergies and roles and responsibilities as it may limit the ability of a programme to find a set up which fits them but maybe not their neighbouring programme”.
- “Value for cooperation should be strongly stated in the regulation more than make it mandatory”.
- “Cooperation across programmes and funding sources is difficult to impose top-down. There needs to be some organic bottom-up demand/enthusiasm/rationale”.
- “Making anything mandatory will increase “tick the box” behaviour and decrease administrative simplification”.
- “If it is mandatory, a proportionate system needs to be put in place to take into account the different levels of capacities of smaller and bigger programmes”.
- “Cooperation between programmes and even between projects must be built from the bottom. It must be derived from common interests and common prerequisites”.
- “Looking for synergies must be driven by the idea of enabling different programmes and actors to work together and not create further obligations for administration and project implementation. Otherwise it goes against the aims of a place based approach (understood as a bottom-up logic) and simplification!”
- “Please remember that programmes have a different size and thus capacity for working with synergies and capitalisation - not only the “big efforts” are worth watching, the smaller approaches should be recognised as well”.
- “We suggest an expert group on synergies” with one representative from each programme, coordinated by Interact. “
- “What is missing and needs improvement - almost all 10 points have been discussed for consecutive programming periods. We are still at point of no or minimal improvement? --need somehow to incorporate them and move on”.
- “It’s very important less overlapping between periods”.
- “Let’s use synergies between Interreg Europe, URBACT and INTERACT”.
- “Creating synergies can take Time but save a Time and resources as well and increase impact”.
- “It is important to create meaningful, complementary synergies. Overlaps are to be avoided, projects should learn from each other”.
- “Achievement of synergies needs also time”.



**Disclaimer:** Cooperation can be complex, and while Interact's job is to make it easier, Interact cannot offer assurances on the accuracy of our pan-European information in any specific context.

Furthermore, understanding and knowledge evolves throughout the programming period. If you spot something out of date or inconsistent, please contact us at [communication@interact.eu](mailto:communication@interact.eu)

**Copyright:** This product is licensed under Creative Commons, under the 'Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International' license (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

You are permitted to share and adapt this work. You are required to attribute the work, indicating if changes were made. You are required to offer revised work on the same license basis. The material cannot be used for commercial purposes.

For more information about this license please visit [creativecommons.org](https://creativecommons.org)



**Publisher** Interact Programme

**Date** 14.01.2025

**Lead Author** Mercedes Acitores

**Contributing authors** Monika Balode, Ilze Ciganska, Nicolas Garnier, Phil Heaton, Guilherme Johnston, Stoyan Kanatov, Baiba Liepa, Besiana Ninka,

This report is part of Interact's [Post 2027 Consultation reports](#)

**Interact**



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**  
Interreg