

Cooperation actions

Open discussion: **What are the key elements for successful cooperation action and how to transfer them post 2027**

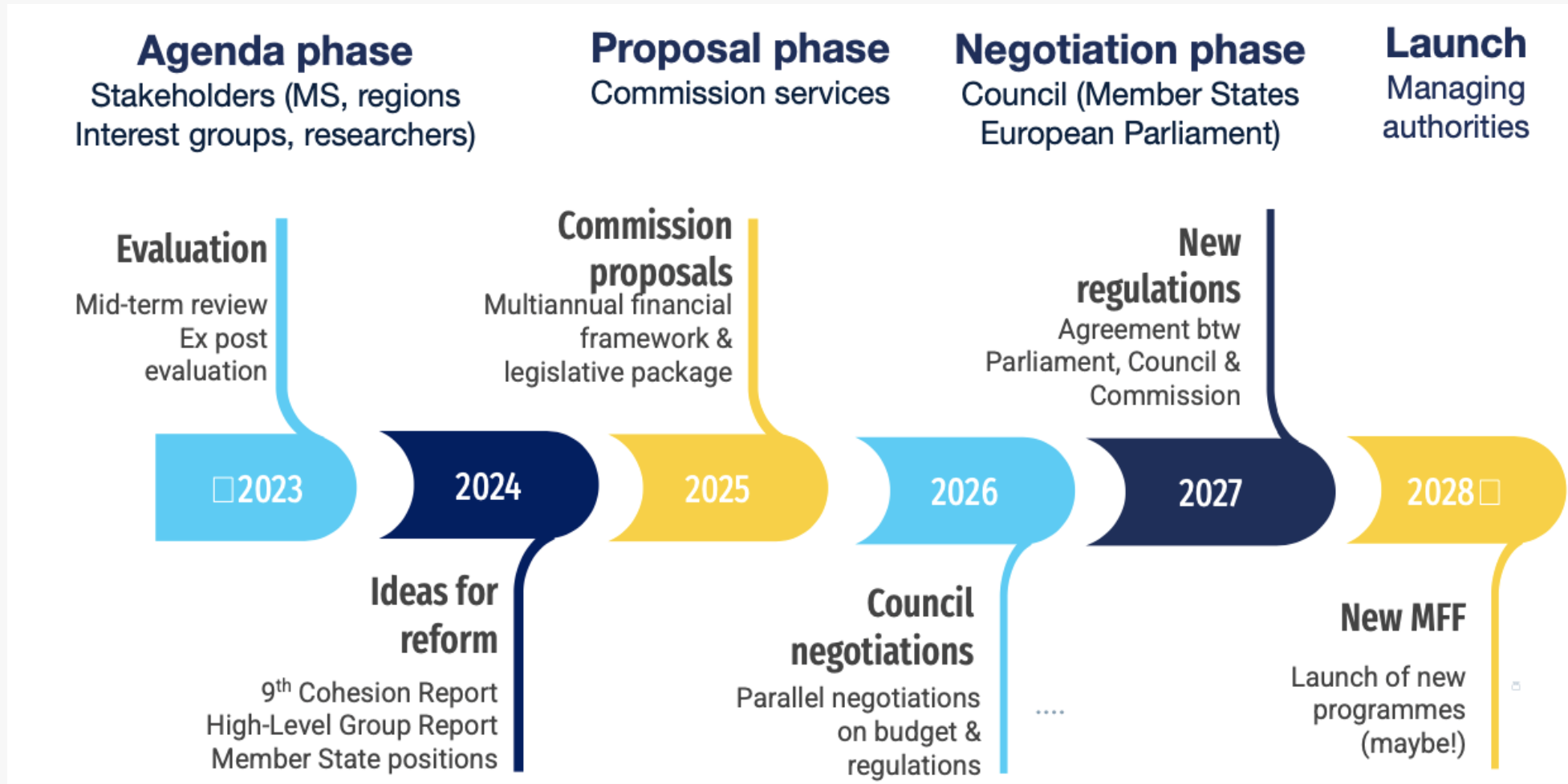
Stoyan Kanatov, Ilze Ciganska | Interact | 06.06.2025

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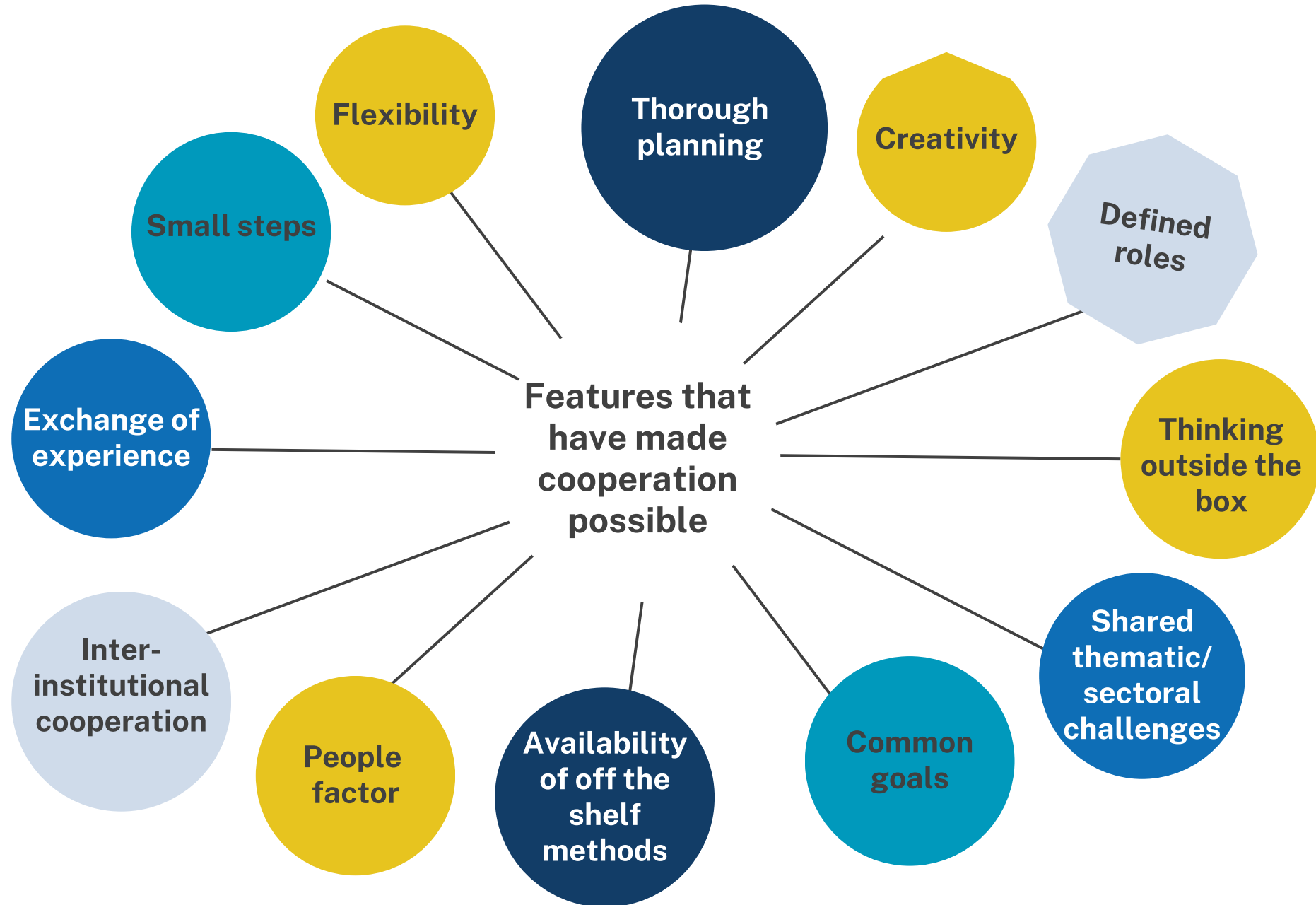
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What is foreseen with regulative preparations?



Q1: What **specific features
have made cooperation actions
successful in your experience?**

Summary
based on
participant
input



Q2: Making Cooperation Easier – What Needs to Change

- What would need to change in how projects are selected, managed or reported to make cooperation manageable?
- What kinds of support (guidance, platforms, facilitation) would help cooperation actions happen more easily?
- How to build stronger links for result transfer between regional/national and Interreg programmes?

CHALLENGE GRID

BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COOPERATION IN EU REGIONAL PROGRAMMES

Intitutional & Administrative	Mindset & Motivation	Strategic & Operational Gaps	Data & Evidence Challenges
<p>Administrative burden and time constraints</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligibility rules and funding limitations • Different systems; difficult to align procedures • Complex rules create fear of additional workload • Mainstream ERDF MAs focused on local issues only 	<p>not going beyond own task/ province/region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frustration: low engagement in cooperation • Fear of extra workload and discomfort outside regular duties • Prejudice that cooperation = “administrative tourism” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of follow-up after project ends • Gap between planning and execution • No ownership of tasks • Cooperation not leading to concrete results • Involving policymakers in practice, not just compliance <p>Bridging EU policies and real beneficiary needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of common data platforms between Interreg and mainstream programmes • Difficult harmonisation of data across countries and regions • Data chauvinism (guarding own data) • Involving policymakers in practice, not just compliance • Bridging EU policies and real beneficiary needs

**Summary
based on
participant
input**

Q2: Making Cooperation Easier – What Needs to Change

	ADMIN	INSTITUTIONAL	BEHAVIOURAL	STRATEGIC
Mandates & Structures	Complex rules, burden	ERDF MAs focus only local	No ownership of cooperation	Limited understanding among policymakers
Capacity & Resources	Time pressure, overload	Different systems, low flexibility	Fear of workload, reluctance	Lack of capacity for follow-up on results/ impact
Mindset & Engagement		Weak international mandate	Low motivation, silo mindset	Hard to show win-win
Information & Tools			Poor communication	No shared goals, unclear value

Summary of discussion – how to start building cooperation actions:

1. Starting small and concrete

Small, steps – do, don't just talk, choosing a specific, relatable topic that clearly links to regional needs

2. Being well prepared and engaging the right people

Identifying what's in it for the region: improve image, build trust, address actual challenges. Ensuring actions are realistic and targeted, not “exotic.” Involving those responsible for strategic planning early on.

3. Communicating and building trust

Maintaining transparent communication within the MA and with external partners. Fostering awareness and explain why cooperation matters.

Summary of discussion – how to start building cooperation actions:

4. Space for mutual learning and exchange

Inter-institutional cooperation matters. Using existing managing authorities networks, engage and enable possibilities for learning and exchange of experience for operational level, join as observers partner programme MC. Available support: coaching, expert and methodological support – Interact; peer2peer learning and support – Interreg Europe, administrative capacity building support – [EC PACE](#) programme (application DL- October, 2025).

What support is needed to enable cooperation in regional/national programmes?

From the European Commission

- **Clear expectations** for cooperation actions in ERDF/ESF+ programmes
- **Consistent follow-up & monitoring** of international cooperation efforts
- Supportive mechanisms, incl. higher co-financing rates and flexible rules for operations supporting cooperation actions
- Desk officers as promoters of cooperation – with a clear and unified message
- Do not overcomplicate during negotiations; allow flexibility, incl., budget
- Support multi-beneficiary models in, e.g. STEP, SME clusters
- Showcase practical examples of added value from cross- region cooperation
- Provide clearer guidance and ensure consistent follow-up

What support is needed to enable cooperation in regional/national programmes?

From Interact

- Collect & share good practices systematically at national level
- Consider support in national languages
- Help find partners and map macro-regional, international challenges
- Promote interactive tools for learning between Interreg and regional programmes
- Thematic networking possibilities for Interreg and regional programme managing authorities
- Be available for technical discussions and workshops
- Follow up with programmes on how cooperation is implemented
- Offer networking support (esp. in the preparatory phase)
- Design online trainings and thematic events for MAs
- Make Interact more visible and accessible to mainstream programmes

**Thank you for
being here!**

