

6th Contact Point (NCP) network meeting

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Joining forces in evaluation

Update on evaluation pilots
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Objective

The **primary objective** of this comprehensive reflection process is to support the launch of impact evaluations and facilitate the exchange on evaluation perspectives and methods. The ultimate outcome of this exercise is to contribute to shaping the future.

Why joining forces ...

Enhanced cooperation and synergy: promote closer cooperation among Interreg programmes, foster the identification of shared challenges and the creation of synergies, strengthen the impact of Interreg cooperation;

Efficient evaluation design: streamline evaluation questions & data collection, share evaluation methodologies, align efforts;

Effective voice of Interreg: comparable voices that are more easily understood and heard.

Main Principles

This exercise adopts a **bottom-up approach**, allowing participating Interreg programmes to collaboratively select topics for exchange, reflection, and development. It is tailored **to address the specific needs, relevance, and interests of each participating** programme, with multiple pilots running in parallel based on these interests.

Interact will facilitate exchanges within these pilots **and engage external experts to support the development of methodologies**, such as approaches and impact pathways.

Through our collective efforts, we hope to **achieve greater visibility and impact.**



Exemplary topics

We started the exchange by focusing on three different topics, aligned with the interests of the programmes. It was recommended that a minimum of **three to four programmes collaborate on each selected topic.**

Harmonised approach to capture & highlight the added value of Interreg

Evaluation spotlight on sustainable tourism as very popular topic in many programmes

Mediterranean area: 7 programmes looking into some topics together related the area

IPA programmes shared approach to evaluating the contribution to the accession dimension(s)

TN programmes and their three common messages

4 TN programmes on territories of MRS: How are the programmes adding value to the MRS and vice versa?

ISO1
Key points to evaluate governance achievements taking a more holistic perspective (going beyond sector perspectives)

?

Possible scenarios



Brief exchange

- 2-3 online meetings
Exchange of basic information
- Generate new ideas and inspiration
- No common approach required



Exchange

- 4-6 online meetings
- Detailed exchange of information
- Gain inspiration from other programs
- Agree on common evaluation questions



Common Approach

- 8-10 online meetings
- Develop and agree on a common approach
- Jointly develop an impact pathway
- Exchange methods and data
- Share common findings



Harmonized approach to capture & highlight the added value of Interreg



Status quo

Enhance the shared understanding of Interreg's added value by developing a robust methodology to effectively demonstrate its impact.

Analysis

Review the 2014-2020 impact evaluations of Interreg programmes to analyse how added value was defined.

Common definition

Started to build a common framework by developing a common definition of added value in Interreg

Key elements

Identified key elements contributing to Interreg's added value.

Impact pathways

Developed together possible impact pathways

Tentative approach

Define evaluation questions to be integrated in the upcoming impact evaluations

Tentative approach

?Come up with common messages?

Our meetings so far

More information can be found in the presentations of the various meetings:

5 March 2024

**Interreg Knowledge Fair,
Riga**

Introduced the pilot
approach

8 June 2024

Online

Established a common
understanding and working
agreement

6 November 2024

Online

Proposed key elements,
and developed a working
definition

17 December 2024

Online

Finalised and agreed upon
the key elements and
definition of added value.

Our meetings so far

More information can be found in the presentations of the various meetings:

3 April 2025

Online

Input from external expert (Evaluation Helpdesk) + introduction of impact pathways

16-17 June 2025

Vienna

Development of impact pathways + reflect on possible evaluation questions

November 2025

Online

Introduce impact pathways to a wider group and discuss next steps

2026

Online

Finalise impact pathways, agree on evaluation questions and methodology

Common working definition of added value

Added value refers to the unique benefits and impact that cross-border, transnational, and interregional cooperation brings, which could not be achieved without the Interreg programme's support.

This added value is characterized by for example the formation and strengthening of sustainable cross-border/transnational/interregional partnerships, the testing, developing and/or rolling out of shared solutions to common challenges, and the promotion of knowledge exchange and innovation across borders, building capacity for sustainable development, addressing shared challenges jointly, and generating long-lasting socio-economic and environmental impacts.

Interreg programmes go beyond the scope of individual, local, regional, national or interregional actions and create synergies that generate lasting socio-economic and environmental impacts.

By enabling people and professionals to collaborate across borders, Interreg programmes reduce barriers and disparities, broaden perspectives, and strengthen regional cohesion, ultimately benefiting communities.

Key elements of the added value of Interreg programmes 1/3

Uniqueness and additional benefit of the programme

- **Unique achievements and outcomes:** The only way how Interreg projects, outputs, and accomplishments are possible is jointly through cooperation and collaboration. Interreg delivers unique results by enabling cross-border cooperation to deliver results that cannot be achieved through other mechanisms.
- **Lowering mental barriers:** Interreg reduces the negative impact of borders in terms of the spread of ideas and the use of services. It broadens the mental scope of people involved in the implementation of the projects and their target groups. In border areas this results in people having more actual possibilities (as consumer, job-seeker etc.)
- **Identity:** Interreg contributes significantly to the development of regional identities by promoting cross-border/transnational cooperation, facilitating the exchange of cultures, ideas and values, and supporting joint projects that strengthen regional characteristics and commonalities. By doing so, Interreg raises awareness of Europe's cultural diversity, promotes cohesion between regions, and fosters a stronger sense of belonging as part of a common European future.

Key elements of the added value of Interreg programmes 2/3

2. Strengthening partnerships

- **Enhancing partnership maturity:** Interreg fosters the development of long-term, cross-border/transnational/interregional partnerships that go beyond individual projects, creating lasting collaborations that would not have formed without Interreg support.
- **Improving cooperation quality:** Interreg programmes raise the quality and effectiveness of cross-border/transnational/interregional cooperation by establishing structures and practices for productive partnerships.
- **Strengthening long-term cooperation and governance:** By building institutional and governance capacities, Interreg programmes create a sustainable foundation for ongoing collaboration between regions, promoting forward-looking cross-border governance and strengthening cohesion across Europe.

Key elements of the added value of Interreg programmes 3/3

3. Tangible impacts of cooperation

- **Direct benefits for citizens/institutions:** Interreg brings concrete benefits to citizens and institutions on both sides of borders, from building mutual trust to improving the quality of life across borders.
- **Addressing crossborder/transnational/interregional challenges:** It enables solutions to common cross-border and transnational (CBC/TN) challenges that can be effectively tackled only in cooperation between countries facilitating collective approaches to shared issues.
- **Building capacity and innovation:** Interreg strengthens local and regional capacity by providing access to new skills, knowledge, and tools, while fostering innovation and knowledge exchange across borders.
- **Economic and regional synergies:** Interreg programmes drive economic growth, regional synergies, and sustainable development through joint efforts, resulting in broader regional benefits and enhanced competitiveness

CHECK OUT THE SUMMARY OF THE EVENT ON IMPACT PATHWAY

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Harmonized approach to capture & highlight the added value of Interreg

Summary of the impact pathways workshop, Vienna, 16-17 June 2025

I. Purpose and context

This workshop brought together Interreg programme representatives and evaluation experts to explore **how impact pathways can be used to better demonstrate the added value of cooperation within Interreg**. Impact pathways offer a structured approach to understanding how programme activities contribute to broader changes such as trust-building, network development, capacity building, and policy influence - areas that traditional monitoring systems often fail to capture meaningfully.

Cooperation works

All materials will be available on:
[Interact.eu/Library/6th Contact Point \(NCP\) network meeting](https://Interact.eu/Library/6th%20Contact%20Point%20(NCP)%20network%20meeting)

Want to discuss it? Join our MS Teams environment!
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Programme evaluation and indicators

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