

Territorial Package

March 2022
Bringing territoriality into Interreg



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Introduction

This Territorial Package presents the outcome of the work of Interact's informal Focus Group 'Territorial Agenda 2030 and Interreg' during 2021-2022. The Focus Group brought together representatives from cross-border, transnational and interregional Interreg programmes, representatives from the EU, national and regional level as well as other territorial actors.

The aim was to provide easy-to-read, easy-to-understand and easy-to-apply information and suggestions to Interreg practitioners on how to strengthen the territorial dimension in their European Territorial Cooperation programmes and projects.

The Territorial Package, developed in the context of Interact's work on [Bringing Territoriality into Interreg](#), can be read and used as a whole (this document) or fiche by fiche ([available here](#)) depending on the specific interests and needs.

The Territorial Package covers through its eight fiches:

- Overall aspects and the reasoning behind this package like why territoriality (Fiche 1), what territoriality is all about (Fiche 2) or how does a truly territorial project look like (Fiche 3)
- The linkage between the Territorial Agenda 2030 as a strategic framework and Interreg (Fiche 4) and the role of functional areas as living labs for territoriality (Fiche 5)
- Operational aspects of programme implementation promoting territorial projects and relevant territorial partnerships throughout the programme and the project life cycles (Fiches 6 and 7) with a focus on project selection (Fiche 8)

Fiche #1 – Why territoriality?

Why should we care about territoriality?

We all live in cities, towns or villages, in urban agglomerations or in the countryside – we are residents and citizens. What immediately matters for us is the quality of life in the place where we live. Just imagine the hospital closest to you is 50km away, but you could also go to the hospital on the other side of the border only five kilometres away. Or imagine you could jump on the tram and in one ride across the border river go to your neighbouring city for shopping, public services etc. Many policies matter in that regard.

At the same time, we do lots of things having an impact beyond our immediate surroundings. We travel for work and leisure, we consume for our daily needs, for our hobbies ... All aspects of our lives can be translated into territorial patterns and our activities have an impact on territories. We can look at it from the perspective of individuals, of local and regional residents, or as European citizens. Depending on the perspective expectations and concerns will differ but in all aspects of our life territorial perspectives matter: If not for us it matters for policymakers and authorities planning the infrastructure and for businesses responding to our demands. That's why we should care about the territory we live in.

Care about scarce resources and need for a 'wise use':

To start with, a territory is first and foremost a surface, land which can be used in different possibly conflicting ways, e.g., as arable soil for agriculture. However, land and arable soil, but also ecosystems of a critical size are increasingly scarce resources. According to data of the European Environmental Agency (EEA) in the period from 2000 to 2018 about 12 800 km² have been changed from arable land and farmland into so-called artificial surfaces, i.e., settlement areas, transport infrastructure etc. It means that within only 18 years almost five times the surface area of Luxembourg has been converted, covered, and mostly sealed.

At the same time, we have raising expectations and requirements regarding infrastructure. Thus, we face increasing conflicts in land use. Territoriality should support the 'wise use of scarce resources.' It requires a holistic approach when establishing management schemes, including ecological and biological factors, but also social, institutional, economic and cultural aspects. The holistic perspective is the essence for all spatially relevant disciplines.

Need to think across administrative borders

Policymakers and administrations are still used to think within or along local, regional and national borders. The best solution might though be found on the other side of the border. Government as well as governance challenges have changed significantly over the past decades. But administrative borders are still often an impediment for efficient and effective responses to challenges and needs. Just to name a few examples where

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coordination across borders and shared planning is required to be efficient and effective:

- infrastructure and public amenities in a cross-border conurbation
- water management in a shared river basin
- Trans-European Networks for Transport or Energy (TEN-T, TEN-E)

Why does Interreg care about territoriality?

The examples illustrate that challenges and needs should be understood in a territorial context. They demonstrate the complexity in planning since effective and efficient solutions cannot be developed within the administrative borders of a municipality or region. An increasing number of issues requires multilevel governance and the view on larger functional areas.

This territorial context is not new to Interreg, just the opposite. Interreg, or rather European Territorial Cooperation, offers manifold opportunities for projects in a small or wider territorial context across borders or new types of partnership to tackle these territorial challenges and needs (see *Fiche #3 A truly territorial project – Some examples*). And we all know: The partnership requirement in Interreg which makes you work across borders is a simple and effective incentive to venture into new governance approaches for a common territorial challenge or need! But is the territorial context, the territorial dimension strong enough in the Interreg programmes and projects?

Why does Interact care about territoriality?

May be in some cases, cooperation supported by Interreg misses a clearly territorial dimension by going more into the sectoral cooperation and support side or by developing solutions which are rather disconnected from the place where they have been developed. To overcome and reinforce the territorial dimension of Interreg, Interact started back in 2020 to work on '[Bringing territoriality into Interreg](#)'. Besides a number of events and guiding material, Interact developed together with an informal Focus Group consisting of programme representatives as well as territorial actors on the local, regional and national level, the so called 'Territorial Package' of which this is the very first fiche.

This **Territorial Package** consists of a set of fiches of which this very one is the first one:

- Fiche #1: Why territoriality?
- Fiche #2: Territoriality – What is it all about?
- Fiche #3: A truly territorial project – Some examples
- Fiche #4: Interreg and the Territorial Agenda 2030
- Fiche #5: Functional areas as living labs for territoriality
- Fiche #6: Programme and project life cycle – Promoting territorial projects
- Fiche #7: Programme and project life cycle – Promoting territorial partnerships
- Fiche #8: Programme life cycle – Focus: Project selection

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This Territorial Package is meant to support primarily the Interreg practitioners in their everyday work. But it also provides information and inspiration for other territorial actors, especially in the fiches on more strategic aspects like e.g., linking the Territorial Agenda 2030 and Interreg.

Acknowledgement: *This series of fiches is based on the extensive work and exchange within Interact's Focus Group 'Territorial Agenda 2030 and Interreg' especially during 2021. We would like to thank all its members for their valuable contribution and especially Linda Talve, Christophe Ebermann and Nicolas Singer.*

Fiche #2 – Territoriality – What is it all about?

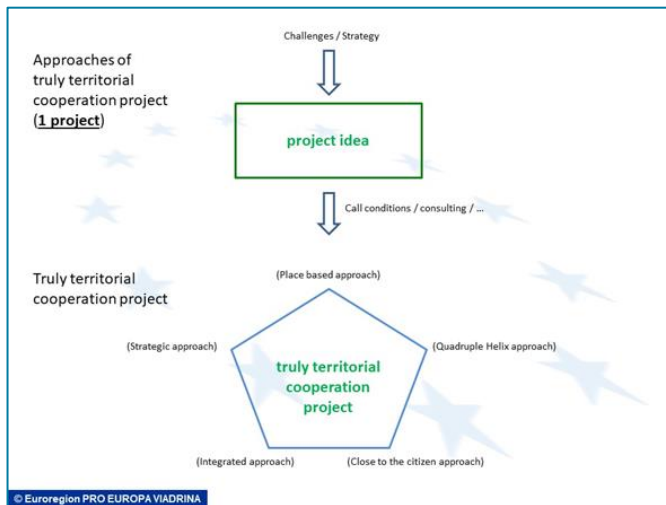
What do we mean with ‘territorial’ and isn’t any Interreg project anyway a territorial one?

Each programming period seems to have its key words and own mantra. For 2014-2020 it was *thematic concentration* and *result orientation*. And for 2021-2027 it is *territoriality* and *functional areas*. But what is this territoriality all about? And isn’t any Interreg project automatically a territorial project? If not, what makes a project ‘territorial’?

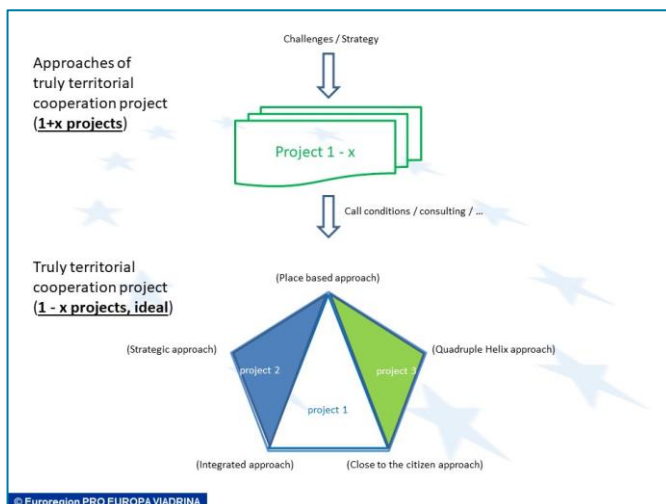
A truly territorial cooperation project combines five different approaches:

To start with a possible misunderstanding. A truly territorial cooperation project is not the opposite of a truly sectoral cooperation project. But it is rather the combination of both: a project which gives a territorial dimension to a sectoral intervention, or which uses a sectoral intervention to create a territorial impact. Hence the starting point for a truly territorial Interreg project are regions and cities, sea basins, macro-regions, functional areas etc. across borders facing similar challenges or having similar development opportunities. While the starting point for a primarily sectoral project is the specific sector in question.

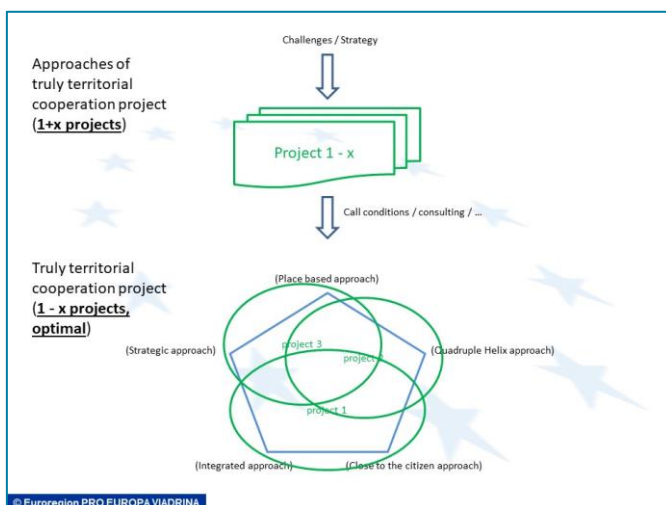
Furthermore, a truly territorial cooperation project combines five different approaches. It does not mean that the project has to address all approaches to be ranked as a truly territorial one. It is also not necessarily one single project representing a truly territorial approach. But it can be a set of complementary projects each contributing to some of the approaches hereby together providing a clear-cut contribution to a territorial strategy thus co-developing a territorial approach.



In some cases, one single project covering all five approaches of a truly territorial project is sufficient to tackle a specific territorial challenge.



In some cases, a specific territorial challenge needs a set of clearly delimited projects as solution. Each project is strong in one or several of the approaches, and together the projects address the five approaches in a complementary way.



In some cases, the territorial challenge can be tackled through a set of (partly) overlapping projects as long as they, again, complement each other with regard to the five approaches of a truly territorial project.

The five approaches can also be translated into some [leading questions](#) which programmes can use during project consultations [to guide the applicants towards a truly territorial project](#). The place-based and the integrated approach are the key elements of territorial projects. These two approaches are the key ingredients and implicitly foster developments along the building blocks of the remaining three approaches.

- **Place-based approach:** The place-based approach is essential since it anchors the intervention to a specific place. From a territorial perspective it is key that the project is centred on needs, challenges or opportunities in a given territory. Hence, a place-based project focuses on issues and themes which are of high relevance to the territory in question, like regions or cities. [Or ask yourself which are the challenges or opportunities the regions and cities in a given area have in common? And, based on these commonalities, which regions and cities need to be involved to tackle the issue?](#)
- **Integrated approach:** From a territorial perspective, it is key that the project looks at the challenge or opportunity from different (sectoral) perspectives and these different (sectoral) perspectives become part of the project. Hence, that the project takes into consideration the different relevant dimensions of regional development (economic, social, environmental). Naturally, the integration of different sectors needs to be reflected in the project partnership (see below *Quadruple Helix approach*). [Or ask yourself which sectors need to be involved to develop the territory in the way you intend to?](#)
- **Quadruple Helix approach:** The helix approach comes from the innovation field and addresses an interactive process involving different actors. While the Triple Helix had been based on interactions between university, industry and government, for the Quadruple helix the concept had been brought closer to spaces by adding “civil society” and the “media- and culture-based public”. The helix approach is widely recognised as an overarching quality feature in projects. In the discourse on territoriality the obvious anchor for the helix is a strong involvement of local and regional authorities and partners to anchor the policy to the ground. In practice it means that the project involves (e.g., through its partnership) actors from different levels, namely local and regional actors, civil society and NGOs, academia and SMEs. [Hence, ask yourself who needs to be involved and to contribute to make the project a success?](#)
- **Close to the citizen approach:** Policymaking has an impact on the ground, i.e. on the people living in a specific territory. To work closely to the citizens means to address issues having impact on the quality of life of these citizens. The rationale of interventions should be transparent and to the extent possible policymaking should include participatory elements or it should make serious efforts to engage and inform the citizens affected by the interventions and the policymaking. In the best case the project deals with issues of high relevance to the citizens. [You could also ask if and how the citizens will benefit directly from the project?](#)

- **Strategic approach:** The place-based approach, the integrated approach, the quadruple helix approach, and the participation of citizens will not materialise without a sound strategy. But there is more to it. Territorial work often means to combine (and compromise) different overarching (territorial and sectoral) strategies plus strategies developed at different levels of government. The project, although developing and implementing projects on the ground, contributes to the implementation of overarching regional strategies (from local to macro-regional). Hence, ask if the project is designed in a way that not only the participating project partners benefit from it, but that it helps to achieve also aims and goals laid down on the (macro-)regional level.

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Fiche #3 – A truly territorial project – Some examples

How does a truly territorial cooperation project look like in reality?

While concepts and definitions are a nice starting point, they often become clear only if applied in everyday life. In the Interreg context this would mean, in the cooperation on the ground happening among the partnership of an Interreg project. In this fiche, we use real Interreg projects as showcases for territoriality really happening on the ground – along the aspects and criteria outlined in the other fiches (esp. #2 and #8). The projects presented here should be taken as examples – there are many more out there – and as inspiration for more truly territorial Interreg projects!

Features of a primarily spatially (territorially) relevant project

The starting point are for example cross-border functional areas or cities or regions with similar challenges (including urban districts, rural municipalities, etc.). Actors are local and regional authorities, local organisations, NGOs, associations, the civil society, but also companies and scientists. They work integratively: based on the challenge, relevant sectors (e.g., transport, environment, economy) are involved, and solutions are worked out advancing a region both economically and sustainably. Results should support the implementation of regional strategies hence projects should be set up and implemented in accordance with regional strategies and actors.

Some examples of truly territorial projects

Please find below a few examples of projects which could serve as best practices how the different aspects of a truly territorial project are reflected in a real cooperation project. As mentioned in Fiche #2 *Territoriality – What is it all about?* and as you can also see below, it does not mean that every single project has to respond to all five approaches of a truly territorial project – but the more approaches covered, the better.

FIRSTLY, the project is built on a **place-based approach**. This would mean:

- The project focuses on issues and themes which are of high relevance for the territory in question, like regions or cities.
- The project's activities are specific for the programme area or the territories involved and the project can contribute to creating a relevance for the programme area: what makes it specific for my programme area or could it be done elsewhere?
- The project addresses common territorial challenges or a joint asset of the programme area – there is a real need for the project (well justified, reasonable, well explained).
- It has a relevance for the programme area, e.g., by its intervention logic linked resp. corresponding to [Territorial Agenda 2030](#) priorities relevant for the programme area (see *fiche #4 Interreg and the Territorial Agenda 2030*).
- The project is created in a territorial context (through the planned activities and involved partners).
- It will (contribute to) reduce (regional) disparities.

- (CBC project) It addresses problems which are “there”, tangible on the ground affecting the quality of life.

Place-based approach: The **Valga-Valka twin town centre and recreational area projects** (both Interreg Estonia-Latvia Programme, [LINK 1](#) and [LINK 2](#)) ensure a place-based approach. As overarching objective, the projects tackle the issue of population shrinkage caused by inhabitants moving to the capitals, in this case from Valga to Tallinn and from Valka to Riga. It seeks ways to increase the attractiveness of the former united and now divided cities at the border through joint development and refurbishment of the twin town centre. The aim is to retain and attract new inhabitants and to strengthen the image and identity of Valga-Valka as a joint town.

<https://estlat.eu/en/we-support/valga-valka-central-urban-area>

The **SmartEdge** project (Interreg Europe, [LINK](#)) addresses the potential for greenhouse gas emission reductions in smaller cities (‘edge cities’) within metropolitan areas. It gathers metropolitan areas from seven countries: Akershus, Barcelona, Brandenburg, Ilfov, Krakow, Milano and Stockholm. Edge cities are an integral part of the existing metropolitan fabric. Through smart urban planning (e.g., intelligent building, intelligent transport), they can play a crucial role in the low carbon economy by being laboratories for smart, green and economic solutions.

<https://www.interregeurope.eu/smartedge/>

The **Arrival Regions** project (Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE, [LINK](#)) is to enhance the capacities of decision-makers in nine rural areas previously subject to declining and ageing populations to successfully integrate young non-EU nationals into social life and employment to stabilise their demography. It thereby addresses the topic of demographic change and depopulation through place-based approaches, by testing and implementing social inclusion approaches in a participatory way in rural territories less used to such approaches. The project truly incorporates the Territorial Agenda 2030 principles as it has a clear strategic territorial focus, is breaking silos and leads to an improved governance through testing innovative solutions.

<https://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/Arrival-Regions.html>

SECONDLY, the project is built on an **integrated approach**. This would mean ...

- The project looks at the given challenge or opportunity from different (sectoral) perspectives and these different (sectoral) perspectives become part of the project.
- The project reflects and addresses the complexity, relation and integration of sectors and territory.

Integrated approach: Maritime spatial planning (MSP) by nature, aiming at balancing interests, addresses a vast number of sectors in an integrated way. The **NorthSEE** project (Interreg North Sea Region Programme, [LINK](#)) aiming at greater coherence in MSP processes and planning documents and developing recommendations for a multi-level MSP framework in the North Sea region looks especially at the three sectors of shipping, energy and environmental aspects.

<https://northsearegion.eu/northsee>

Another example is the **RegEnergy** project (Interreg North-West Europe Programme, [LINK](#)) taking an integrated view on renewable energy (RE). The project rests on three pillars:

1. Organising urban rural partnerships

The elaboration and implementation of optimal institutional and administrative arrangements - such as cooperation agreements between cities and countryside – is necessary to overcome administrative barriers preventing urban-rural cooperation for renewable energy.

2. Connecting producers and consumers

Producers of RE are increasingly diversified and decentralised. The development of infrastructure networks - such as networks for heat and pipelines for transport of biogas from rural to urban areas – is necessary to connect producers with consumers of renewable energy.

3. Smart solutions for renewable energy growth

The development of technological solutions – such as smart grids or storage capacities – is necessary to manage the intermittent character of electricity production coming from regional wind and photovoltaic installations.

<https://www.nweurope.eu/projects/project-search/regenergy-renewable-energy-regions/>

THIRDLY, the project partnership reflects a **Quadruple helix approach**. This would mean

...

- The project involves (e.g., through its partnership) actors from different levels, local and regional actors, civil society and NGOs, academia and SMEs.
- The project will be territorial and involves sectoral partners (involvement of local and regional authorities).
- The project involves the relevant actors needed to address the territorial challenge or joint asset and the objectives specified.
- All partners play a defined role in the partnership and the territory benefits from this cooperation.
- With respect to the project's objectives the project partnership is balanced with respect to the levels, sectors, territory and consists of complementary partners.

Quadruple helix approach: The project **RegEnergy** (Interreg North-West-Europe Programme, [LINK](#)) has gathered a partnership consisting of NGOs, local and regional authorities, energy producers and technology providers. Pilot actions in nine regions of North-West-Europe demonstrate efficient and viable solutions. All partners contribute with their capacities and knowledge. Solutions range from institutional and administrative arrangements as matchmaking between production and consumption areas to the use of new technologies combining industrial production processes with renewable energy generation.

<https://www.nweurope.eu/projects/project-search/regenergy-renewable-energy-regions/>

The **RESTART_4DANUBE** project (Interreg Danube, [LINK](#)) deals with urban regeneration and the productive use of cultural and creative industries (CCI) in that process. The number of urban regeneration (UR) initiatives promoted by European cities is rising. The new status quo is that UR strategies should encompass an integrated approach. Cities face challenges to develop a culture that generates public/private synergies to promote SMEs & stimulate creative urban communities. They need to tailor their UR policies to local specificities and assets and integrate local stakeholders. The project includes a quadruple helix partnership to develop new types of governance and public policies in an innovative approach combining tandems and follower cities.

<https://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/restart-4danube#>

FOURTHLY, what the project is dealing with is **close to the citizens**. This would mean ...

- that the project deals with issues of high relevance to the citizens.

Close to the citizens: The **Valga-Valka town centre projects** (Interreg Estonia-Latvia Programme, [LINK 1](#) and [LINK 2](#)) are directly focusing on the inhabitants of the twin town. The projects are tackling the issue of population shrinkage by uniting both towns' citizens and making them recognise Valga-Valka as a joint town through joint urban development of a multifunctional town centre at the border and by improving the physical connectivity.

<https://estlat.eu/en/we-support/valga-valka-central-urban-area>

The **Healthcross for Future project** (Interreg Austria-Czech Republic, [LINK](#)) is ensuring that residents living on both sides of the border in the divided city of Gmünd (Austria)/České Velenice (Czech Republic) have equal access to quality healthcare. Without the expanded hospital for shared use the nearest emergency centre on the Czech side of the border would be 18 km away, the nearest hospital over 60 km. The projects meet immediate citizens' need and as the project above seeks to increase the attractiveness of small towns in areas quite remote from larger cities. Maintaining public amenities and Services of General Interest in rural areas facing population shrinkage is one of the pressing territorial issues!

FIFTHLY and last but not least, the project is based on a **strategic approach**. This would mean ...

- The project, although developing and implementing projects on the ground, contribute to the implementation of regional strategies.
- The project clearly contributes to a wider strategy on one or more policy levels (EU / national / regional).
- The project has a policy relevance
- It has a relevance for the programme area, e.g., by its intervention logic linked resp. corresponding to Territorial Agenda 2030 priorities relevant for the programme area (see *Fiche #4 Interreg and the Territorial Agenda 2030*).

Strategic approach: The project **RegEnergy** (Interreg North-West-Europe Programme, [LINK](#)) seeks to contribute to local and regional renewable energy production strategies thus, at the same time contributing to one of the most challenging overarching policy goals for Europe: the shift from fossil energy production to sustainably produced energy from renewable sources. Results range from strategic alliances to practical demonstrators for new technologies.

<https://www.nweurope.eu/projects/project-search/regenergy-renewable-energy-regions/>

The **Islands of Innovation** project (Interreg Europe Programme, [LINK](#)) involves public authorities from seven island regions across Europe. These regions face similar challenges: loss of population, isolation, vulnerable environments and limited economic activity. But islands are also often more self-reliant, with strong community involvement that can provide resourceful environment for piloting innovations. Through investigating the best way to exploit these strengths, the project aims at improving the implementation of the Smart Specialisation Strategies in these regions so that they can keep the young, innovative and entrepreneurial people and maintain activities on the islands.

<https://www.interregeurope.eu/islandsofinnovation/>

The **Baltic Energy Areas – A Planning Perspective** project (Interreg Baltic Sea Region, [LINK](#)) brings together two perspectives: spatial planning as well as regional energy policy. It seeks to reconcile the needs of EU and national policies for an increase in the share of renewable energy with requirements and tools for territorial and spatial planning. Suitable areas for renewable energy installations such as wind parks, bio-energy units or solar panels need to be available. Spatial planners are tasked with making such space available. At the same time, they need to strike a balance between spatial claims for renewable energy with competing aims and land uses (e.g., nature protection, cultural landscapes, agriculture, tourism).

<https://www.balticenergyareas.eu/project>

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Fiche #4 – Interreg and the Territorial Agenda 2030

What is the link between the Territorial Agenda 2030 and Interreg (programmes and projects) and how can both support and benefit from each other?

The most obvious link between the Territorial Agenda 2030 (TA 2030) “*providing an action-oriented framework to promote territorial cohesion in Europe*” (www.territorialagenda.eu) and Interreg as one of the two goals of cohesion policy can be found in the TA 2030 itself. At least at two places the TA 2030 directly refers to Interreg:

(43) [Territorial priorities for Europe] Ensuring a sustainable future for all places and people in Europe requires actions based on: ... cooperation and coordination between places, levels of governments, policy sectors and societal groups to address complex issues and utilise diverse potential, including through EU Cohesion Policy, Rural Development Policy, Interreg, or other tools enhancing integrated territorial or local development.

(51) [Territorial priorities for Europe – A Just Europe – Integration Beyond Borders, Easier living and working across national borders] Territorial and maritime cooperation between places in different countries helps make better use of development potential and address common challenges. Joining forces beyond borders, including Interreg programmes and projects, can create critical mass for development and promote synergies while diminishing economic, social and environmental fragmentation and negative externalities. ... We will take action to embed stable cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation in macro-regional, national, regional and local development strategies. Examples of stable approaches that facilitate cooperation between administrative areas beyond single projects include strategic Interreg cooperation, ...”

But is this reference sufficient to show the direct link between the TA 2030 and Interreg? Is it backed up also by the overarching principles, themes and priorities of the TA 2030 matching those of the Interreg programmes (and projects) in 2021-2027? A simple comparison provided in the below tables clearly illustrates that the TA 2030 and Interreg share in fact more or less the same priorities.

The tables with the thematic correspondences between the TA 2030 and Interreg in 2021-2027 are complemented with some straightforward suggestions what the TA 2030 can give to Interreg programmes and projects and vice-versa.

At the end of this fiche, you can find some simple slides which are freely available to be integrated into e.g., a presentation to a programme’s Monitoring Committee when discussing and reviewing the territorial dimension of the programme, its projects and their link and contribution to the TA 2030.

TA 2030 Principles and Priorities & Interreg Policy and Specific Objectives 2021-2027

TA 2030	INTERREG Main correspond- ing PO/SO or ISO (not exhaustive)	Territorial aspects (examples)	Cooperation aspects (examples)
Overarching principles			
<p>Overarching principles of the TA 2030 where Interreg might contribute:</p> <p>Facilitating policy synergies and coordination: Facilitate coordination and cooperation between places, sectoral policies and between groups of society.</p> <p>Inspiring, disseminating innovation and good practice. The Territorial Agenda supports the development of experimental and innovative approaches to integrated territorial development in diverse territorial contexts.</p> <p>Network-based exchange of knowledge and dissemination of good practices increases the chance of broader, more lasting impact beyond specific localities.</p> <p>Practical implementation meets strategic expertise: Transnational or supra-region networks can pool expertise that is needed to stimulate local initiatives. This brings together strategic expertise and local knowledge in a mutually beneficial way.</p>	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficient land use • Territorial cohesion (ETCI) at cross-border, transnational, inter- and intra-regional and European level (with Member States and neighbouring county contributions to territorial cohesion) • Support to sustainable development (sustainable in all its dimensions: environmental, economic, social) • Territorially sensitive or place-based approaches • Cooperation between territories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-level approach and the distribution of roles and responsibilities across different governance tiers. Vertical, multi-level coordination between national, regional and local administrations. Multi-level governance • Strengthened horizontal coordination and cooperative dynamics, especially at the local level; specific challenges related to defining intervention areas and functional spaces, integrating territorial analyses, and utilising territorial knowledge (incl. mapping) • Capacity-building is a crucial component in territorial approaches, especially at the local level • Coordinated sector policy territorial impacts and coherence • Cooperation between territories

TA 2030	INTERREG Main correspond- ing PO/SO or ISO (not exhaustive)	Territorial aspects (examples)	Cooperation aspects (examples)
TA 2030 Priority: A JUST EUROPE - that offers future perspectives for all places and people			
A BALANCED EUROPE - Better balanced territorial development utilising Europe's diversity	All <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Particularly ISO 1 since overarching governance is crucial! • Role of transport infrastructure as key enabling factor (PO 3, SO 3.2, mobility)) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of specific geographical contexts • Polycentrism • Strengthening secondary and tertiary cities to contain suburbanisation growth of agglomeration areas • The role of small and medium cities • Closing socio-economic disparities • Protecting and valorising natural heritage • Balanced settlement structure and provision of public services • Territorial Impact Assessment (TIA) as ex-ante assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-level governance models for specific types of territories (mountain areas, islands etc.) • Closer strategic coordination and coherence between economic development and spatial planning systems • Cooperative approaches among territories with similar challenges and settings to increase impact as well as expand the portfolio of possible solutions • City networks • Rural-urban cooperation • Shared standards in valorising natural and cultural assets • Shared models for services of general economic interest
	PO 4	Social fragmentation and its spatial implications across all levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local networks and skills development • Sharing efficient and effective approaches
FUNCTIONAL REGIONS - Convergent local and regional development, less inequality between places	Potentially all, particularly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PO 5 • PO 3 (SO 3.2) • PO 4 (SO 4.6, role of tourism in remote areas) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linkages and flows of people, resources and policies between cities, towns and rural areas • Cross-border conurbations and their catchment areas • Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperation across administrative boundaries is the key ingredient for functional regions! • Integrated multi-level governance approaches • Shared mapping of flows and mobility patterns to develop better policies • Cross-border ITI
INTEGRATION BEYOND BORDERS - Easier living and working across national borders	ISO 1 ISO 2 PO 1 (SO 1.5, Digital connectivity) PO 3 Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-border infrastructure • Cross-border workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed stable cross-border transnational and interregional cooperation in macro-regional, national, regional and local development strategies • Stable cross-border cooperation consultation mechanisms • Institution-building for coordination of national sector policies between countries and to diminish existing obstacles to cooperation • Conventions or treaties, committing partners to cooperation • Link with broader, established networks (e.g., Alpine Soil partnership linked to European Soil Partnership)

TA 2030	INTERREG Main correspond- ing PO/SO or ISO (not exhaustive)	Territorial aspects (examples)	Cooperation aspects (examples)
TA 2030 Priority: A GREEN EUROPE - that protects common livelihoods and shapes societal transition			
HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT - Better ecological livelihoods, climate-neutral and resilient towns, cities and regions	PO 2 (in particular SOs 2.1 to 2.7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint river management (Water Framework Directive) • Sustainable water management • Cross-border natural assets, mountain ranges, wildlife corridors • Resilience of all places to climate change • Biodiversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared strategy development • Shared management of natural assets and resources • Green infrastructure networks in spatial planning • Global, transnational municipal networks (e.g., Cities for Climate Protection program) • Fostering participative approaches
CIRCULAR ECONOMY - Strong and sustainable local economies in a globalised world	PO 2 (SO 2.6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-use of land towards zero net land consumption • Efficient and effective systems for collection and storage facilities, re-use and recycling infrastructure – biowaste and water • Regional value chains • Rural-urban relationship – agri-food system; biofuel • Bioeconomy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficient use of land through shared infrastructure • Fostering cooperation for regional economic cycles • Fostering cross-sectoral perspectives in strategy-building • Integrating public and private sector contributions
SUSTAINABLE CONNECTIONS - Sustainable digital and physical connectivity of places	PO 1 (SOs 1.2 and 1.5) PO 2 (SO 2.8) PO 3 ISO 2 (Border crossing management and mobility)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport and digital infrastructure are key enabling technologies and driving forces of spatial/territorial development, e.g., high-speed internet and mobile telephone networks are a priority for sustainability as well as balanced polycentric development (balanced Europe) • European transport and energy infrastructure networks as territorial networks (TEN-T) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links between regional planning and the development of Trans-European Networks • Sustainable urban mobility – functional areas • Multilevel and transnational governance models • Shared development of innovative applications of technology

What can Interreg give to the TA 2030 and what can the TA 2030 give to Interreg?

It is not about a hierarchical relationship between an overarching strategic framework (as top manager) giving orders to and using the lower level (Interreg projects) to get its work done, with this lower level (projects) being coordinated by a mid-management level (Interreg programmes). It is – in the very sense of Interreg – about cooperation, about joining forces to achieve something bigger together.

The above illustrated thematic correspondence between the TA 2030 and Interreg programmes (and hence projects) in 2021-2027 is a good starting point and a strong argument that Interreg can play a crucial role in the implementation of the TA 2030. However, although Interreg can play a crucial role, neither Interreg (programmes nor projects) nor a at this point relatively small number of [TA 2030 Pilot Actions](#) will be able

'to do the job' of implementing the TA 2030. Many of the issues addressed rather require an active involvement of EU Member States with regard to their legislations.

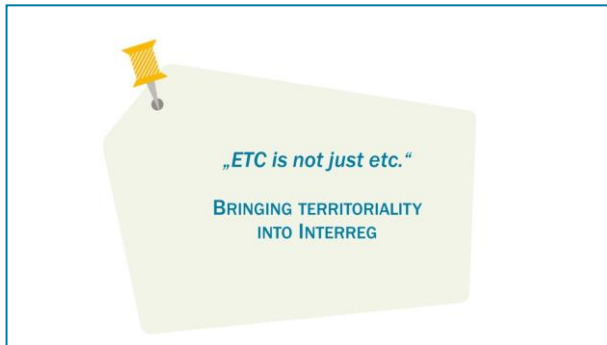
At the same time, Interreg programmes and projects can benefit from linking their activities directly to the TA 2030, its priorities and Pilot Actions. Especially the latter play a crucial role as they are somewhat comparable to Interreg projects. The core of Interreg, i.e., supporting, demonstrating, testing, learning and exchanging knowledge and experience is very similar to the core of the TA 2030 Pilot Actions – hence both go hand-in-hand.

So, the question is: What does linking to each other and joining forces give to Interreg programmes and their projects? Some answers ... You might have more?!

- The TA 2030 and especially its priorities and Pilot Actions provide inspiration to programmes when planning and drafting future calls for proposals and to projects when considering potential project ideas.
- Interreg programmes could be the connecting link and bring together TA 2030 (Pilot Action) actors and the ones implementing Interreg cooperation actions. TA 2030 (Pilot Action) actors could vice versa introduce Interreg actors to new actors in the field of planning as well as local and regional development.
- Hereby, TA 2030 Pilot Actions could possibly help attracting so far missing actors to Interreg cooperation (programmes and projects).
- Linking programmes and projects to the TA 2030 (e.g., labelling) could increase the visibility of programme and project results (also beyond the Interreg community) and hereby reach a higher political attention, leading to a better sustainability after project and programme end.
- Interreg projects could take up results from TA 2030 Pilot Actions and capitalise on them through new projects. Or the other way round, Interreg projects could also lead to new TA 2030 Pilot Actions.

Presentation slides free to use

In addition to this fiche, we have prepared some simple slides which are freely available [HERE](#) to be integrated into e.g., a presentation to a programme's Monitoring Committee when discussing and reviewing the territorial dimension of the programme, its projects and their link and contribution to the TA 2030.



Territorial Agenda 2030

- An overarching policy document for territorial development and cohesion in Europe
- Agreed and implemented by the EU Member States
- Pilot Actions = joint initiatives to investigate, develop and test solutions and practices for common challenges

Territorial Agenda 2030

Vision → **Priorities** → **Implementation**

- Vision:** TA 2030 "provides an action-oriented framework to promote territorial cohesion in Europe: a future for all places" (https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/areas/territorial-cohesion)
- Priorities:**
 - A Just Europe (Balanced Europe: Functional Regions; Integration Beyond Borders)
 - A Green Europe (Healthy Environment, Circular Economy, Sustainable Connections)
- Implementation:**
 - Through: TA 2030 Pilot Actions (partnerships) inspiring informal multilevel cooperation between Member States, sub-national authorities, the EC, EP, CoR, EESC, EIB and other relevant players.
 - What: "pilot actions demonstrate, test and develop practices ... learning and sharing best practices"

Interreg 2021-2027

Vision → **Priorities** → **Implementation**

- Vision:** Interreg 2021-2027 as European TERRITORIAL Cooperation. "is one of the two goals of cohesion policy and provides a framework for the implementation of joint actions and policy exchanges between national, regional and local actors from different Member States." (Inforegio website)
- Priorities:**
 - Policy Objectives (A more competitive and smarter Europe; A greener, low-carbon and resilient Europe; A more connected Europe; A more social and inclusive Europe; A Europe closer to citizens)
 - Interreg Specific Objectives (A better cooperation governance; A safer and more secure Europe)
- Implementation:**
 - Through: Programmes and projects
 - What: "joint actions and policy exchanges between national, regional and local actors from different Member States." (Inforegio website)

TA 2030 and Interreg 2021-2027

Vision → **Priorities** → **Implementation**

- Vision:** TA 2030 and Interreg ... are both about territorial cohesion in Europe!
- Priorities:** TA 2030 Priorities and Interreg POs and SOs ... are to large extent the same!
- Implementation:** TA 2030 Pilot Actions and Interreg programmes and projects ... are very similar as both are about joining forces and building partnerships (across borders) leading to joint actions, testing and developing practices, learning and sharing best practices to achieve territorial cohesion in Europe!

How can programmes bring territoriality into Interreg?

1. Raise awareness about territoriality in Interreg among MC members, programme partners and beneficiaries.
2. Consider territorial aspects in the
 - programme life-cycle (esp. regular review, evaluation, capitalisation)
 - project life-cycle (esp. guidance to applicants, application assessment, capitalisation)
3. Build and communicate territorial narratives on programme and European level

Interact support

Bringing territoriality into Interreg
Presentations and event recordings, video testimonials and publications regarding territoriality, functional areas, and PO 5 ([LINK](#)).

Territorial Agenda 2030 and Interreg
Presentations, event recordings and video testimonials regarding the Territorial Agenda 2030 and its Pilot Actions and the link between the TA 2030 and Interreg ([LINK](#)).

Acknowledgement: This series of fiches is based on the extensive work and exchange within Interact's Focus Group 'Territorial Agenda 2030 and Interreg' especially during 2021. We would like to thank all its members for their valuable contribution. In addition, our thanks goes to many other colleagues providing their input, e.g., from DG REGIO, and for this specific fiche, we would like to acknowledge input and inspiration by a presentation by Sina Redlich, Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development, Germany,

and the publication by the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community (BMI) (Germany), Department H III 3 "European Spatial Development / Territorial Cohesion" (publisher), [Implementing the Territorial Agenda 2030, Examples for a territorial approach in policy design and delivery](#), Berlin, November 2020.

Fiche #5 – Functional areas as living labs for territoriality

Linking Interreg programmes and functional areas

Each programming period seems to have its key words and mantra. For 2014-2020 it was thematic concentration and result orientation. For 2021-2027 it is territoriality and functional areas. What are these functional areas all about and how are they linked to Interreg programmes (and projects)?

Territory and Functional Areas

When going through the legal texts for the 2021-2027 period, you will quickly notice that concepts of “territorial”, “place-based” and “integrated” approaches appear in both strategic and operational provisions of the regulations: in some places - explicitly, in others - in-between the lines. You will also spot multiple references to “functional areas”, and different tools like “integrated territorial investments”, “community-led local development”, “integrated territorial and thematic plans”, etc.

What is a “functional area”? What is behind “integrated development”?

*A functional area is a bounded space or geographical area formed by a set of **linkages**, **interactions** and **interdependencies**, which are defined by a certain function (e.g., education, health, employment, leisure activities).*

Functional relations define the boundaries of a functional area. This could include:

- **Linkages** (e.g., in the sense of transport links, rivers, cultural ties and heritage, mountain ranges as linking natural element albeit being a barrier from the perspective of interactions)
- **Interdependencies** (e.g., in economic supply functions of all kinds or in industrial production areas or between science hubs with institutions specialised in specific research and innovation strands or in river systems and river basins depending on the river, confluences, geomorphology and ground water systems)
- **Interactions** (e.g., commuter flows between cities and hinterland, trade flows, cross-border institution-building, supply chains)

The exact delimitation of a functional area depends on the significance or density of the linkages and/or interdependencies and/or interactions. This applies to cross-border as well as transnational areas. For transnational cooperation with not necessarily adjacent cooperation areas, functionalities can be found especially from joint characteristics, joint challenges and development potentials.

The perspective on functional areas is a way to look at territories! The concept of functional areas supports a comprehensive view on territories, their specificities and the interrelationships between different policy fields. It aims at new approaches to governance since there are many policy fields where approaches confined to

administrative boundaries are neither supportive nor effective or efficient for policy development.

The use of functional areas is not a must but a new perspective potentially contributing to more effective programming and implementation!

Link between programme strategy and functional areas

The programming process starts with the diagnosis of the programme area, a certain territory, and identification of the existing linkages, interactions and interdependencies within it and beyond. In this process but also later during programme implementation, a programme can identify certain areas, known as **functional areas**, which perform certain functions (e.g., main education centers, employment areas, social activities, health care).

In the best case functional areas could act as “strategic catalyst” in programming and implementation. Functional areas can be defined or subject of projects in all Policy and Specific Objectives (SO) including the Interreg-specific Objectives (ISO).

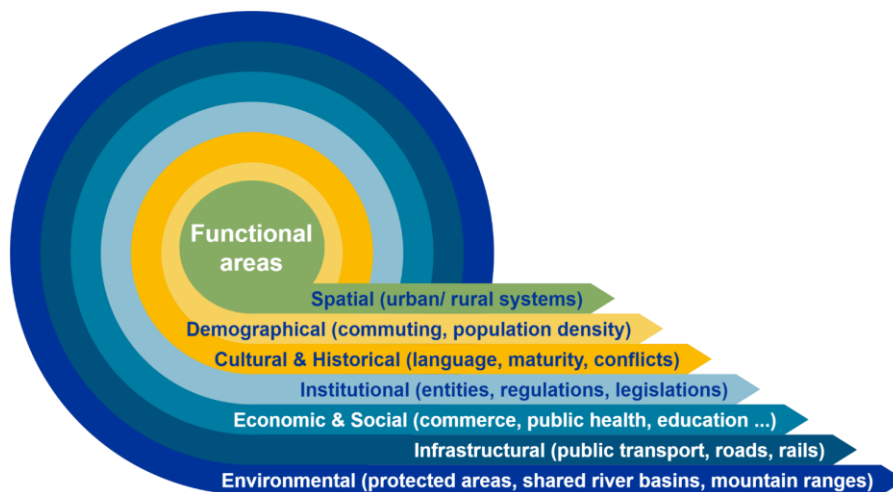
- Functional areas for each Policy Objective (PO) might look differently:
 - ✓ for PO 1 it might be a cross-border regional innovation system encompassing a number of universities and RDTI facilities and economic clusters highlighting smart specialisation, synergies and complementarities.
 - ✓ for PO 2 it might be a cross-border or transnational river system and its manifold functions as nature reserve, waterway, source of hydro-electric power and the need to contain flood risks.
 - ✓ for PO 4 it could be a cross-border Functional Urban Area and its specific challenges and obstacles linked to a cross-border labour market.
- Functional areas such as a cross-border Functional Urban Area (FUA) might be a key element to shape programme-specific approaches in several POs. Policies of relevance for the FUA might range from RDTI clusters (PO 1), adaptation to climate change or circular economy (PO 2), development of green urban transport (PO 3), active labour market policy for marginalised groups (PO 4) to integrated development approaches such as smart city development under PO 5.
- Governance is a key aspect for all types of functional areas. Work for functional areas usually means to work across administrative borders and to join forces across sectoral silos. The Interreg-specific Objective “better cooperation governance” (ISO 1) is open to this type of projects.

In the context of Interreg, which is about territorial cooperation and development, functional areas should stretch across borders or countries and should not be located only within one country. It is also possible that a functional area goes beyond the programme area, which is no problem for project generation and implementation since eligibility of funding is no longer connected to the location. In transnational programmes approaches such as policy-learning and shared capacity-building or the development of new governance models for functional areas across several countries might be interesting themes for truly territorial projects.

Finally, since the concept of functional areas is a versatile approach, it is possible that there is more than one functional area within a single programme (area). Having identified functional areas within the programme area during the programming process, an Interreg programme should include them in its Interreg Programme (IP).

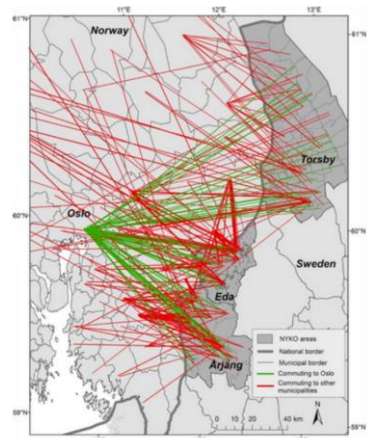
The notion of functional areas is not connected to regulatory obligations, i.e., strictly from the regulations' perspective, programmes are not obliged to provide support to functional areas. However, if a programme looks at its territory objectively, wants to implement the programme effectively and in the most efficient way and with the highest impact, then functional areas are a "must" in the programme area. It is about objectively understanding the territory, identifying common needs and assets, and providing support along those needs and assets.

There are many dimensions to the functional areas:



How could a functional area look like? How to identify a functional area in my programme?

There are plenty of [resources](#) available with examples of functional areas. Below you will find a couple of examples of functional areas.



Commuting in a Swedish (Swedish Värmland County: Torsby, Eda and Arjäänd) - Norwegian context

- A long history of flows of people, goods and services; similarity of languages, societal structures, cultural values.
- Institutional cooperation - a border service that handles questions from citizens and companies about mobility across the border (Grensetjänsten).
- Reasons for commuting:
 - employment (mainly from Sweden to Norway);
 - tourism and leisure activities, shopping (Norway to Sweden).



Galicia - Northern Portugal

- High social, economic and cultural interrelations between both regions; "sea-related economies".
- Similar language, weather, culture, landscape, natural environment, gastronomy; both are peripheral areas.
- Institutional cooperation - an EGTC Galicia - Norte Portugal.
- Reasons for commuting:
 - commercial and trade;
 - leisure and tourism.



Helsinki - Tallinn cross-border region

- Spatial, cultural, historical and linguistic proximity.
- Strong economic bonds; dynamic ICT, start-up environment; technologically sophisticated public services; "entrepreneurial knowledge region".
- Institutional cooperation - twin cities since 1991, Helsinki-Tallinn EUREGIO.
- Reasons for commuting:
 - employment (from Tallinn to Helsinki mainly);
 - leisure and tourism, culture.

Sources: (Example 1) [Link](#) (Example 2) [Link](#) (Example 3): [Link](#)

How to link a functional area and your programme?

An obvious challenge is to put that into practice sitting in front of the map of your programme area. What could be meaningful approaches to functional areas in my programme?

The following table presents a tentative overview on Policy Objectives, criteria for the delimitation of functional areas and possible strategy elements, which could be fostered in cooperation projects and hence by your programme.

PO	Exemplary key elements of functional areas	Exemplary criteria for delimitation of functional areas (administrative borders as proxy)	Examples of related strategy elements (towards integrated territorial strategies)
PO 1	Regional innovation systems and their main hubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mix of statistical criteria (e.g. those employed in RDTI) and knowledge about hubs Cluster mapping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RDTI infrastructure Education and skills development Enabling infrastructure (transport, ICT) Cluster development
PO 2	Cross-border / Transnational river systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> River(s) and main confluents Geomorphology Ground water systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature protection Water management Flood protection Water tourism
	Cross-border / Transnational Natura 2000 areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defined Natura 2000 areas and key visitor flows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management Visitor guidance Awareness-raising and local acceptance Nature tourism development based on sustainable transport and smart last mile approaches
	Sea basins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geomorphology Defined hinterland zone (e.g. xy km) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protection of vulnerable coastal zones Maritime Protected Areas Integrated Maritime Spatial Planning Integrated coastal zone management Waste management
PO 3	TEN-T corridors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TEN-T corridor and main secondary feeder road / rail systems Major cities along those connections Commuter and transport flows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficient land use Industrial development Economic development Sustainable transport strategies Tailored last mile solutions
PO 4	Functional Urban Areas (FUAs)	E.g., OECD definition based on population density and commuter flows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active labour market policies Education and employment for marginalised groups
PO 5	Sea basins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geomorphology Defined hinterland zone (e.g. xy km) 	Integrated multi-sectoral strategy based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature and maritime protection Blue economy development Waste management and circular economy Coastal tourism and integrated port development Skill development for youth
	Functional Urban Area	E.g., OECD definition or a European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) (such as the EGTC Eurometropole Lille-Kotrijk-Tournai) or urban-rural functional area	Integrated multi-sectoral strategy for sustainable urban development based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spatial planning Transport planning Circular economy development

Link between functional areas and integrated territorial strategies

The concepts of functional areas and integrated territorial development are closely related. They invite you to look at the place first, to consider involving multiple actors from different levels and in case of Interreg to look across borders. The aim is the territorial development based on an integrated strategy. Integrated means multi-sectoral. Sectoral policies shape the development path of territories. There are obvious interrelations between sectoral policies: e.g., between workplaces and transport systems or labour market policies and the education systems.

The major challenge for integrated development is to support the development of a coordinated set of policies. A key point is to build or to strengthen horizontal (i.e., across sectors) and vertical coordination mechanisms (across tiers of government and administration) in the sense of multilevel governance.

When it comes to integrated territorial strategies, it is useful to look into the principles of the **place-based approach**. The [Barca Report](#) (2009) made the approach quite popular: the underlying key idea is that policies happen in a territory.

A place-based policy is a long-term strategy aimed at tackling persistent underutilisation of potential and reducing persistent social exclusion in specific places through external interventions and multilevel governance. It promotes the supply of integrated goods and services tailored to contexts, and it triggers institutional changes. (Barca Report, 2009, p. VII)

Place-based development policy (cf. Barca Report, p. 5) rests on:

- *a long-term development strategy whose objective is to reduce [...] inefficiency and inequality [...] in specific places,*
- *through the production of bundles of integrated, place-tailored public goods and services designed and implemented [...] through participatory political institutions, and by establishing linkages with other places; and*
- *promoted from outside the place by a system of multilevel governance [...].*

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Fiche #6 – Programme and project life cycle – Promoting territorial projects

Where and how to embed and ensure the territorial dimension in the programme and the project life cycles?

To make a programme having real territorial impact by **promoting territorial projects**, it is important to embed the territorial dimension throughout the whole programme and project life cycles. Hereby, the territorial dimension becomes an integrated part of your day-to-day programme management and your co-financed projects.

Below you can find a rather extensive, but not necessarily exhaustive, list of suggestions on where and how to embed the territorial dimension into the programme and project life cycles to promote territorial projects. These suggestions should not be seen as an additional layer of administrative requirements, but as a menu of small practical steps how you can make your day-to-day programme implementation (more) territorial.

Which of the below suggestions you can implement and take advantage of (at this point of time) depends on where in the programme life cycle you are now? And it depends, of course, also on which processes you already have in place.

At programme level ...

During programming (in preparation of a new programming period)

Firstly, define ...

- What are my territorial challenges?
- Who are the territorial stakeholders in my programme area (e.g., local and regional authorities, associations of municipalities, regional planning agencies, development agencies, regional chambers, etc.)?
- Which relevant territorial strategies on the regional and national level already exist?

Secondly, design the programme (especially its intervention logic, the foreseen interventions, possibly pre-defined strategic projects, etc.) **in a way that the programme ...**

- Highlights territorial challenges and specific needs of territories and encourages a territorial perspective.
- Illustrates territorial features such as cross-border functional areas, similar territories across transnational programme areas etc.
- Encourages types of actions targeted to specific territories (urban, rural, peripheral, metropolitan, ...).

Thirdly, when building the programme procedures and the approach to guidance (of future beneficiaries) consider the territorial focus as transversal topic, meaning ...

- Consider the institutional setting and the capacity of the territories in question in your awareness-raising and guidance (e.g., small rural municipalities compared to cities).
- Provide illustrative examples how overarching strategy topics and specific objectives can frame the actions on related challenges for specific territories.
- Communicate the territorial approach/focus of your programme (especially if somewhat neglected in the past).
- Pinpoint topics and objectives addressed by the programme where a territorial approach is particularly rewarding (e.g. renewable energy production, circular economy, tourism and culture, mobility and governance).
- Create and agree on selection criteria and/or procedures ensuring that a part of the selected projects has an explicit or implicit territorial focus.
- Consider small or small-scale projects to lower entrance barriers for territorial actors.
- Address territories directly when formulating types of activities (e.g., development and implementation of urban and rural strategies for circular economy approaches).
- Design the intervention logic, indicators and selection criteria in a way allowing to measure and capture important results relevant to actors in cities and regions.

During phasing in and implementation of the programme

As part of the programme progress monitoring by the Monitoring Committee ...

- Pay special attention if the programme through its selected projects as a whole responds to the identified territorial challenges.
- Include a review according to types of territories (which ones are addressed; where are partner organisations located; are certain regions not taking part at all, while others are overrepresented). Invite territorial stakeholders to have a say in the review.
- Decide on groups of projects revealing a territorial narrative (preparation for the programme evaluation).

If major deficiencies are identified, the Monitoring Committee could/should consider

...

- Adjusting potentially inadequate approaches to project selection and/or adding relevant selection criteria.
- Adjusting its own decision taking (processes) in case territoriality was not considered relevant in the past.

At project level ...

When it comes to the projects to be supported ([project life cycle](#)) ...

- [Overall](#): Keep in mind that a truly territorial dimension and impact in some cases can be reached through a single project, but in some cases only through several complementary projects (for more details see Fiche #2 *Territoriality – What is it all about?*).
- [During project generation](#): Programme manuals and guidance should support territorial intelligence in projects! Thus, applicants should be encouraged to design the project (its intervention logic and foreseen activities) in a way that ...
 - It is placed firmly in a territorial context/the starting point is a shared (cross-border/transnational) regional issue.
 - It responds to a specific territorial challenge and has it in its objectives.
 - It puts sectoral approaches into a territorial frame.
 - It allows to share or to jointly develop solutions for territorial challenges and has it in its objectives.
 - It is built on a clear link between the territory (programme or project area), a vision for this territory and a strategy how to achieve this vision for the given territory.
 - Planned activities and results reflect the geographical context and an understanding of territorial challenges.
 - (For transnational programmes) The interventions on its territory are in relation to neighbouring territories (territorial systems).
 - (For cross-border cooperation programmes) It will address issues resulting from the existence of borders or (for transnational programmes) which are typical for certain territories (e.g., mountainous).
- [During project assessment](#): Assessment and preparation of selection should ensure that ...
 - The information on the selection communicated to the applicants highlights one or the other territorial anchor point(s) particularly relevant for the programme area.
 - Judgement is based on sound knowledge of territories and their needs and the relevant legislation (national, regional, local).
 - Divergent assessments on territorially relevant aspects among those involved in the assessment are duly discussed and a common understanding is reached.
 - Assessment procedures allow for clarification with the applicant before submission to the Monitoring/Steering Committee in order to avoid lengthy discussions in the committee without having sufficient information on territorial challenges or trends.

- During [funding decisions](#): When taking funding decisions ...
 - Initial information to Monitoring/Steering Committee members prior to selection takes note of territorial aspects in the projects presented for selection.
 - Proceedings should allow that the Monitoring/Steering Committee members representing territories are encouraged to provide supportive information on the territorial context as well as the relevant national and regional strategies (NB! avoid conflict of interest).
 - If not, the Monitoring/Steering Committee could/should consider ...
 - Adjusting potentially inadequate approaches to selection and/or adding relevant selection criteria.
 - Adjusting its own decision taking (processes) in case territoriality was not considered relevant in the past.
- During [project implementation](#): During project implementation (progress reporting and monitoring) ...
 - The reporting templates and requirements should allow monitoring if and how the project contributes to the territorially relevant objectives of the programme.
 - Reflection rounds between the project partnership and the programme management should leave room to discuss the quality of results in relation to territorial challenges and developments.
 - Programme management could try to cluster projects and actively support complementarities between projects (while they are still up and running in order to maximise effect and synergies).
- During [project closure and in view of sustainability](#): Upon project closure ...
 - It should be checked if the project addressed successfully territorial challenges.
 - Provisions for and/or commitment to follow-up on territorial issues should be agreed.
 - Incentives to participate in territorial capitalisation activities supported by the programme should be provided.
 - Finally, the project should ensure that it is sustainable by ensuring institutional remainder of territorial solutions after project closure.

Finally back to the programme level

During programme (operational and impact) evaluations

As part of the operational evaluation look if programme management procedures ...

- Were set up and are/were implemented in a way supporting the programme's territorial focus and impact. Or what could/should be done differently.

As part of the impact evaluation proof if the programme has/had a territorial impact, e.g.,

- Develop evaluation questions including a territorial dimension, e.g., if projects responded to specific territorial challenges, or show value added of blending territorial and sectoral approaches.
- When developing impact models, consider specific territories and their needs.
- Highlight areas where cross-border obstacles impede actual results and positive developments.

During programme closure (and) in view of sustainability

If the programme had a territorial impact (identified through evaluation), ensure that it is sustainable by ensuring ...

- A strengthened territorial perception of the Monitoring Committee.
- An agreement on focal types of territories for a follow-up.
- Targeted capitalisation activities with a territorial focus.

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Fiche #7 – Programme and project life cycle – Promoting territorial partnerships

Where and how to embed and ensure the territorial dimension in the programme and project life cycles?

To make a programme having real territorial impact by **promoting territorial partnerships**, it is important to embed the territorial dimension throughout the whole programme and project life cycles. Hereby, the territorial dimension becomes an integrated part of your day-to-day programme management and your co-financed projects.

Below you can find a rather extensive, but not necessarily exhaustive, list of suggestions on where and how to embed the territorial dimension into the programme and project life cycles to promote territorial partnerships. These suggestions should not be seen as an additional layer of administrative requirements, but as small practical steps how you can make your day-to-day programme implementation (more) territorial.

Which of the below suggestions you can implement and take advantage of (at this point of time) depends on where in the programme life cycle you are now? And it depends, of course, also on which processes you already have in place.

At programme level

During programming (in preparation of a new programming period)

Design the programme (esp. potential beneficiaries) in a way that encourages territorial partnerships highlighting e.g., ...

- In types of action the need for a cross-sectoral approach and corresponding partnerships.
- In strategy sections of your programme illustrate the institutional specificities of certain territories and corresponding partnership requirements for successful territorial cooperation.
- In strategy sections of your programme document partnership models and approaches for functional area.
- In sections of your programme document on strategy and partnership-building promote quadruple helix partnerships including territorial partners.

Consider specific territories and related types of applicants in guidance, e.g., ...

- Target specific groups of particularly interesting applicants.
- Encourage multi-level partnerships for multi-level governance (in particular in ISO 1).

Create and agree on a selection approach regarding project partners and project partnership which will ensure e.g., ...

- A balance between a sectoral and a territorial approach and integrate both interests or show complementarity in this regard.
- That capacity of partners allows for policy outreach and territorial action.
- Partnerships credibly target citizens as an important target group, i.e., as the ones immediately touched by topics with local or regional relevance. Such projects are utmost important for the visibility of the programme; a positive example are sustainable urban development projects combining infrastructure, social and environmental measures.

During phasing in and implementation of the programme

As part of the programme progress monitoring by the Monitoring Committee pay attention not only to the programme progress looking at the co-financed projects (according to key performance indicators), but also pay attention to project partners and partnerships, e.g.,

- Check representation of partners having territorial capacity.
- Decide on consequences for future calls or communication activities, i.e. addressing specific groups of stakeholders.

If not, the Monitoring Committee could/should consider ...

- Adjusting potentially inadequate selection criteria regarding project partners/partnerships and/or adding relevant selection criteria.
- Adjusting its own decision taking (processes) with regard to project partners and partnerships.

At project level

When it comes to the projects to be supported ([project life cycle](#)) ...

- During [project generation](#): Applicants should be encouraged to choose project partners and compose the project consortium in a way that ...
 - It includes partners with the competence to guide territorial developments (policy outreach).
 - Project partners complement each other's strengths in terms of sectoral and territorial competences.
 - Activities and results at partner level and/or shared results at project level reveal potentialities for sustainable 'territorial intelligence'.
- During [project assessment](#): Assessment and preparation of selection should ensure that ...
 - Territorial relevance and competence of key partners in relation to the subject of the project and its objectives is duly assessed.
 - Potential complementarities and synergies between partners for territorial approaches to sectoral policies are taken into account.

- Partner's capacity to influence longer-term strategy-building is taken into account.
- During funding decisions: When taking funding decisions ...
 - Partners essential to trigger territorial developments should be clear to all Monitoring/Steering Committee members.
 - If not, the Monitoring/Steering Committee could/should consider ...
 - Adjusting potentially inadequate approaches to selection regarding project partners/partnerships and/or adding relevant selection criteria.
 - Adjusting its own decision taking (processes) with regard to project partners.
- During project implementation: During project implementation (progress reporting and monitoring) ...
 - Reporting and/or presentation of results should be sufficiently detailed to allow for an assessment of results at partner level from early on.
 - Particularly interesting territorial narratives provided by partners should be highlighted and supported by programme communication activities.
 - Programme management might use an overview on location of project partners in ongoing projects to plan dedicated capitalisation activities.
- During project closure and in view of sustainability: Upon project closure ...
 - Partner commitment to sustainable project results and follow-up should be agreed.
 - The programme management should collect evidence for territorial narratives at partner level to support capitalisation.

Finally, back to the programme level

During programme (operational and impact) evaluations

As part of the operational evaluation look if programme management procedures were set up and are/were implemented in a way that ...

- They supported the programme in selecting projects involving relevant actors needed to address the territorial challenge/joint asset (or what could/should be done differently).

As part of the impact evaluation proof if the programme has a territorial impact, e.g.,

- Develop evaluation questions including a territorial dimension, e.g., value added of territorial partnerships and institutional capacity-building.
- When developing impact models, consider key stakeholders for development and the policy outreach of partners of specific territories.
- Look for confirmation that territorial partners achieved visible results on the ground with inherent potential for longer-term impact.

During programme closure (and) in view of sustainability

If the programme had a territorial impact (identified through evaluation), make it sustainable by ensuring ...

- Institutional remainder of territorial solutions after programme closure (sustainable projects resulting from 'territorial' partnerships).
- Capitalisation activities seeking to build wider territorial partnerships.

Acknowledgement: *This series of fiches is based on the extensive work and exchange within Interact's Focus Group 'Territorial Agenda 2030 and Interreg' especially during 2021. We would like to thank all its members for their valuable contribution. In addition, our thanks goes to many other colleagues providing their input, e.g., from DG REGIO, and for this specific fiche, we would like to acknowledge input and inspiration especially by Sina Redlich, Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development, Germany.*

Fiche #8 – Programme life cycle – Focus: Project selection

Harmonised Implementation Tools (HIT) selection criteria ‘territorially’ interpreted

To turn the territorial dimension of your programme into reality, you need truly territorial projects (see *Fiche #3 A truly territorial project – Some examples*). As a general remark, especially important for the project selection, a truly territorial dimension and impact can be reached either through a single project, or through several complementary projects (see *Fiche #2 Territoriality – What is it all about?*). Tools to support or strengthen territorial elements in projects can be guidance but also a two-step application process could be quite useful. Upon receipt of a project concept note there is still room for discussion and improvement before submitting the full-fledged application.

But most important, there is no need to create another layer, additional criteria and/or additional administrative assessment steps to identify a truly territorial Interreg project in the project assessment and selection process. It is sufficient to interpret the already existing (HIT) selection criteria in a territorial way. This relates mostly to the two aspects of a) project relevance (how well is the need for the project justified) and b) partnership relevance (to what extent is the partnership composition relevant for the proposed project).

Project relevance – How well is the need for the project justified?

HIT selection criterion	Anchor points for a territorial interpretation
C.2.1. and C.2.2. The project addresses common territorial challenges of the programme or a joint asset of the programme area – there is a real need for the project (well justified, reasonable, well explained).	It has a relevance for the programme area, e.g., by its intervention logic linked resp. corresponding to Territorial Agenda 2030 Priorities relevant for the programme area (see <i>Fiche #4 – Interreg and the Territorial Agenda 2030</i>)
C.2.5. The project clearly contributes to a wider strategy on one or more policy levels (EU / national / regional).	The project’s activities are specific for the programme area or the territories involved in the proposal and could not be done elsewhere.
	Solutions proposed in the project take the specificities of territories in the programme area into account. The project is created in a territorial context (through the planned activities and involved partners).

	The project works towards an integrated territorial strategy and the empowerment of local actors.
	The contribution to wider strategies is also seen from a territorial perspective
	The project reflects the complexity of the given topic in the region, integrating different sectors and territorial views.
	The project will (contribute to) reduce (regional) disparities.
	(CBC project) It addresses problems which are “there”.
<p>Features of primarily spatially relevant projects: The starting point are cross-border or transnational territorial assets (e.g., mountain ranges, river basins), twin cities or functional urban areas stretching across borders or regions with similar challenges (including urban districts, rural municipalities, etc.). Actors are local and regional authorities, local organisations, NGOs, associations, the civil society, but also companies and scientists. They work in an integrative way, i.e., using an integrated (territorial) approach heading for coordination. Based on the challenge, relevant sectors (transport, environment, economy) are involved, and solutions are worked out advancing a region both economically and sustainably. Results should support the implementation of regional strategies.</p>	

Partnership relevance – To what extent is the partnership composition relevant for the proposed project?

HIT selection criterion	Anchor points for a territorial interpretation
C.3 The project involves the relevant actors needed to address the territorial challenge/joint asset and the objectives specified.	The partnership has the capacity to promote an integrated approach and territorial results: It involves sectoral partners next to territorial authorities (involvement of local and regional authorities).
	The partnership reflects the specificities of territorial administration and competences in all participating countries.
C.3 All partners play a defined role in the partnership and the territory benefits from this cooperation.	The partnership includes partners ensuring the outreach to relevant policymakers, citizens and integration of results into territorial strategies and plans (in case territorial authorities are not directly involved in the project)

<p>C.3 With respect to the project's objectives the project partnership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- is balanced with respect to the levels, sectors, territory- consists of partners that complement each other.	<p>The partnership demonstrates the communication capacity to promote a territorial approach.</p>
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