

Territorial instruments

What instruments and approaches are important in the next period?

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Interreg

What has happened so far



Key messages

From the harvesting report confirmed in the Territoriality event in May

1. Support the **territorial place-based approach** as a core policy
2. In the current shape **PO5 and ITI are not tailored to transnational Interreg programmes**, as the focus is strongly on grassroot activities. Territorial instruments falling under PO5 could be used by TN but only if they are not linked to PO5.
3. The **cross-sectoral integrated approach of PO5 provides flexibility** to work on regions' actual needs.
4. **Build trust between actors at all levels** (multi-level governance) and support building sustainable partnerships (encourage to work with EGTCs + Euregios and existing LEADER & LAG)
5. **Simplify processes**, strategy building in particular and enhance the use of SCO's.

Key messages

Additional conclusions from the Territoriality event in May

1. Programmes want to use territorial tools but **need practical “how-to” support**, especially on setting up CLLD (e.g., forming/servicing LAGs, legal frameworks), working with ISO1, and on starting PO5 in different contexts.
2. **Flexibility, simplification, and capacity-building are make-or-break across instruments:** Territorial instruments work best when rules are clear, cost options simpler, procedures lighter, and easy to understand for all stakeholders.
3. **Territoriality shouldn’t be one-size-fits-all:** some instruments fit cross-border better than transnational; programmes should treat territoriality as a horizontal principle, leverage Macro-regional/Sea-basin strategies.

Let's hear from the European Commission

Where do Territoriality, ISO1 and Citizen engagement currently stand in the draft MFF?

What else is happening at the European Commission besides the Interreg plan?

Olivier Baudelet, DG REGIO



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im Bundesamt für Bauwesen
und Raumordnung



RURAL AND ECONOMICALLY WEAKER REGIONS IN INTERREG B FROM 2000 TO 2025

JENS KURNOL

01 October 2025

EUROPEAN COOPERATION OF RURAL AND ECONOMICALLY WEAKER REGIONS

- Interreg is more spatially inclusive than other programmes
 - Yes, there are more rural and economically weaker regions taking part in Interreg than in Horizon and I 3
- Transnational programmes are more inclusive than Europe-wide programmes
 - Yes, and Interreg Europe is doing well, too.
- Involvement of rural and lagging regions in Interreg B has decreased over time
 - differs considerably between programme periods

BBSR-Analysen KOMPAKT 12/2024

European cooperation of rural and economically weaker regions

Climate adaptation, sustainable redevelopment, mobility in rural areas. When German municipalities and regions cooperate with European partners, an inspiring exchange of knowledge often takes place. Rural and economically weaker regions in particular benefit from this exchange but face difficulties, as their capacities for project work are limited.

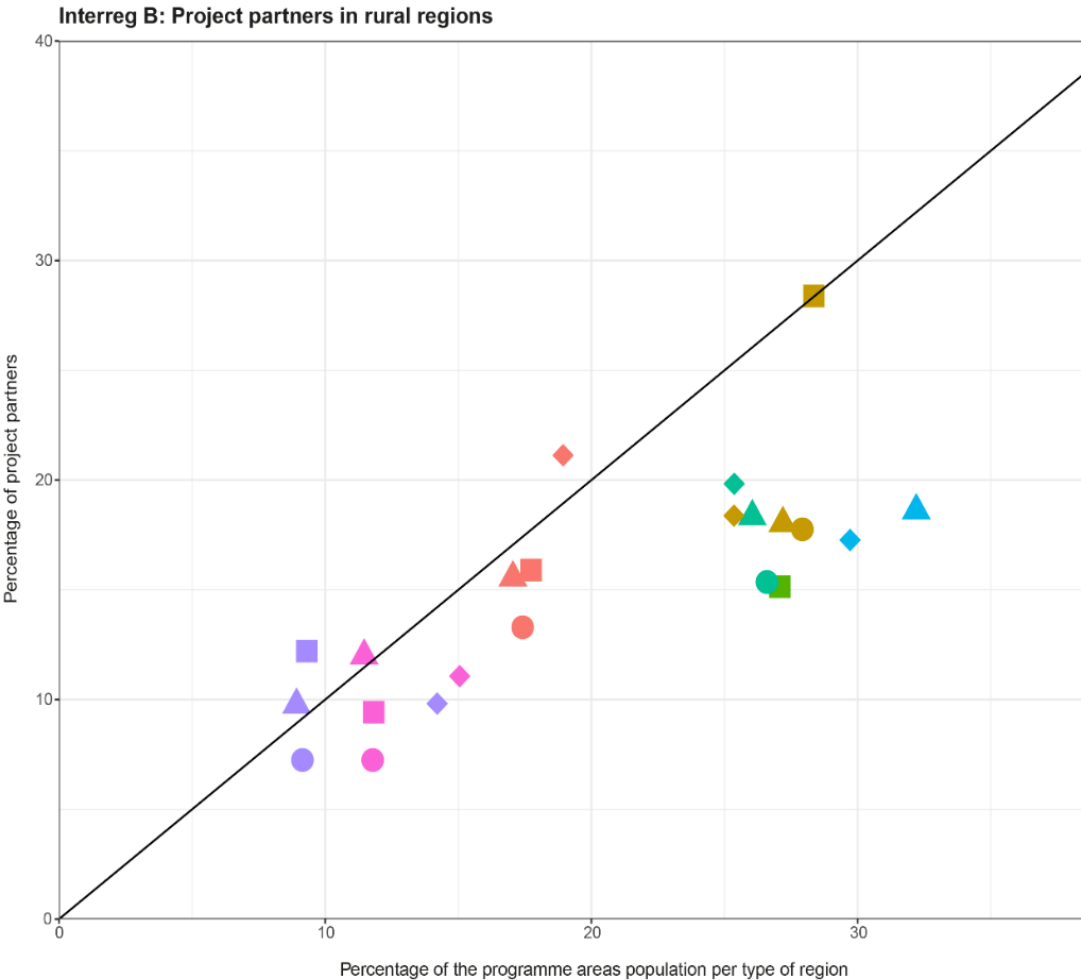
Interreg B, a European funding programme, enables transnational cooperation, for example in the Alpine Space Programme or Baltic Sea Region. This paper investigates for the period 2000-2020 how Interreg B programmes integrate rural and economically weaker regions into European cooperation. It analyses whether transnational programmes, due to their geographical focus, offer better opportunities for participation in these regions, compared to the Europe-wide programmes "Interreg Europe", "Horizon 2020" and "Interregional Innovation Investments" (I3).

The analysis indicates that rural and economically weaker regions are more involved in Interreg programmes than in excellence-focused programmes such as "Horizon" and I3. Differences between transnational and interregional Interreg programmes show that transnational programmes can respond better to policy priorities. However, some Interreg B programmes do not fully utilise the potential to increase the involvement of rural regions. In future, these programmes should increasingly focus on spatially inclusive cooperation.

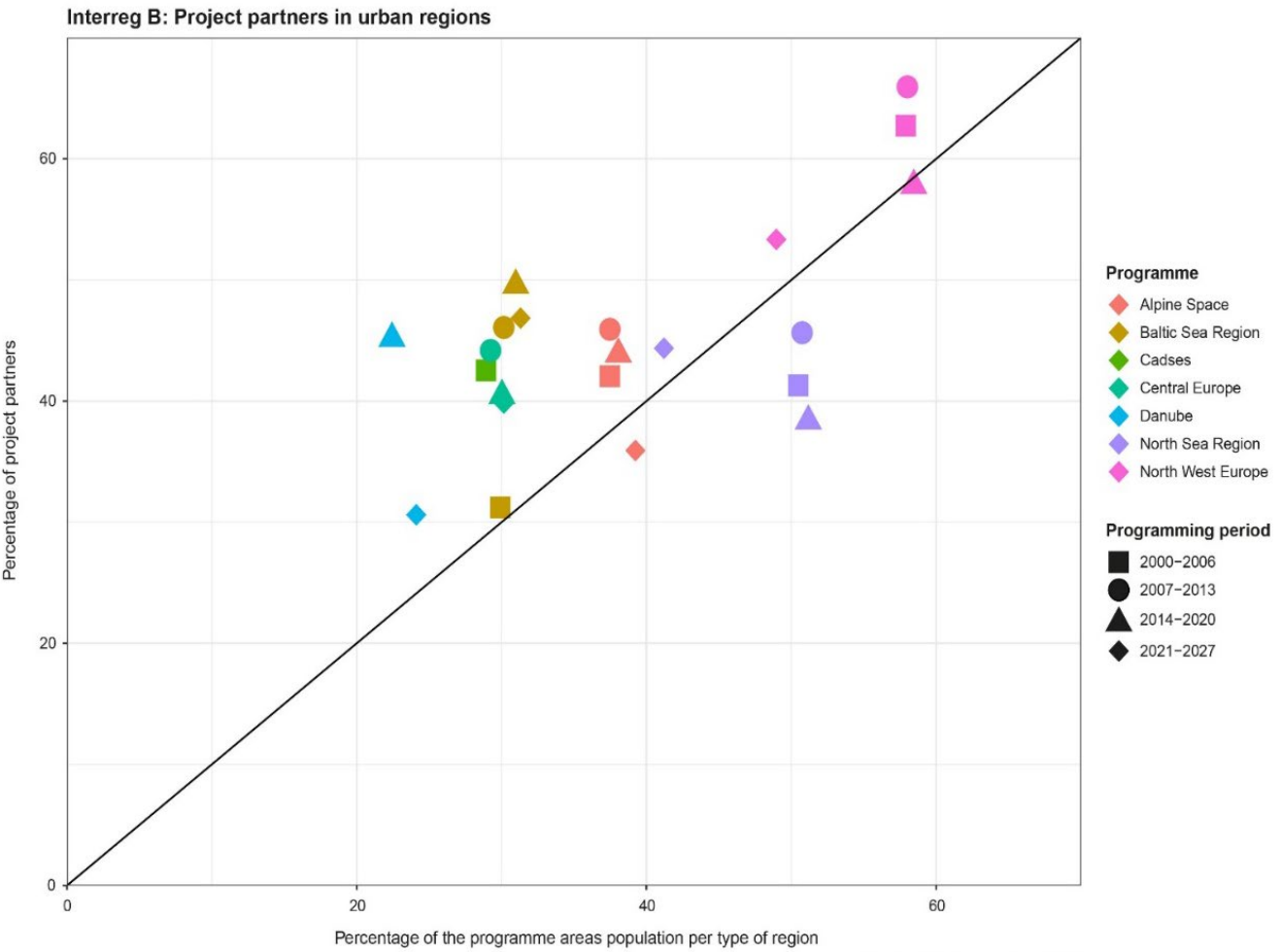
Analysis of participation in Interreg B and other EU programmes

by
Dr. Philipp Gareis
Jule Krolikowski
Jens Kurnol
Sina Redlich

2000 – 2025 APPROVED: RURAL VS URBAN

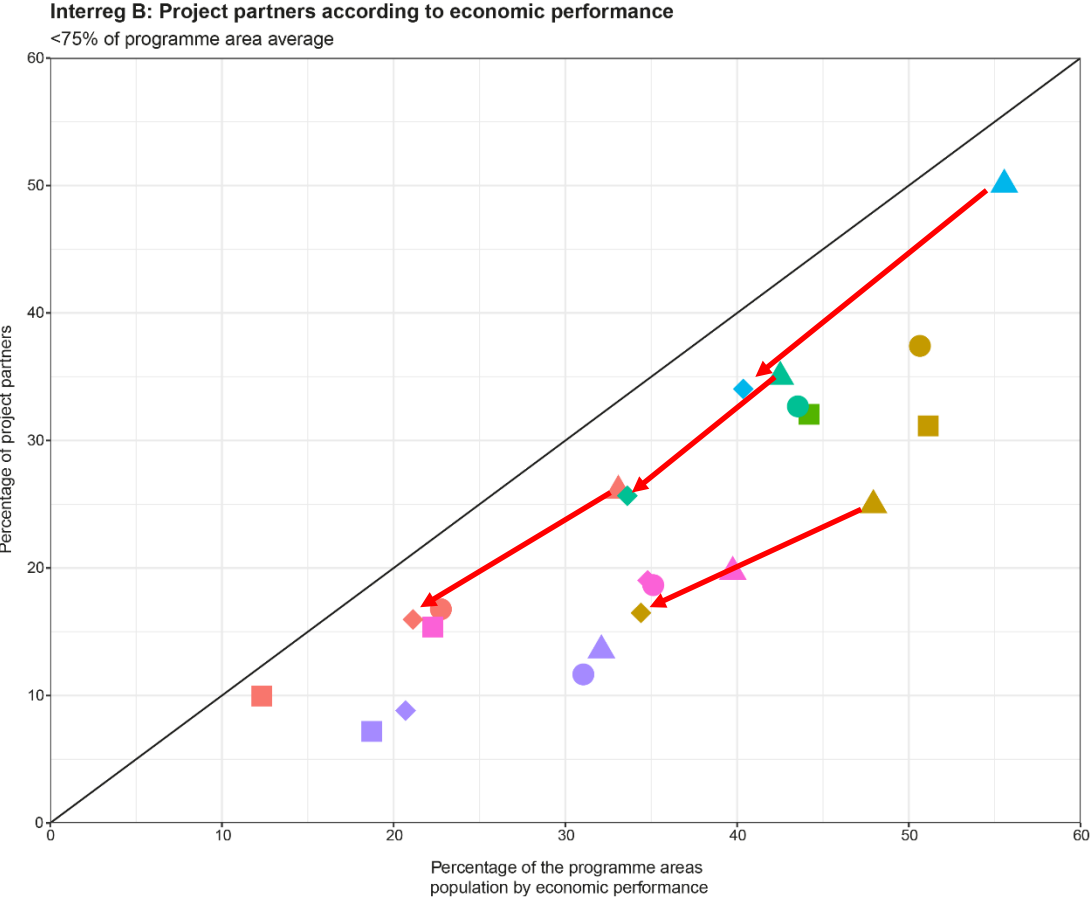


Own depiction based on keep

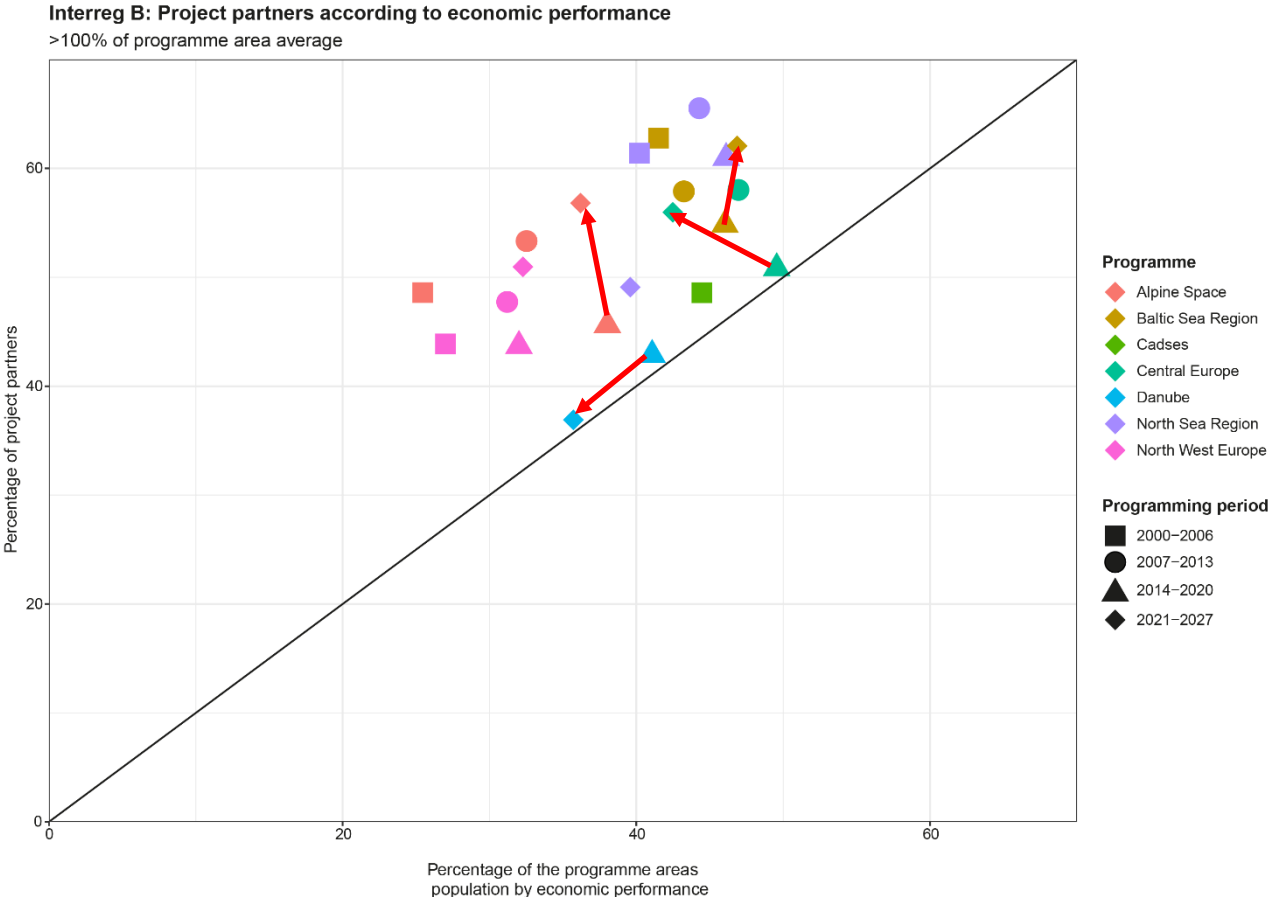


Own depiction based on keep (2023)

2000 – 2025 APPROVED: ECONOMICALLY WEAKER VS STRONGER



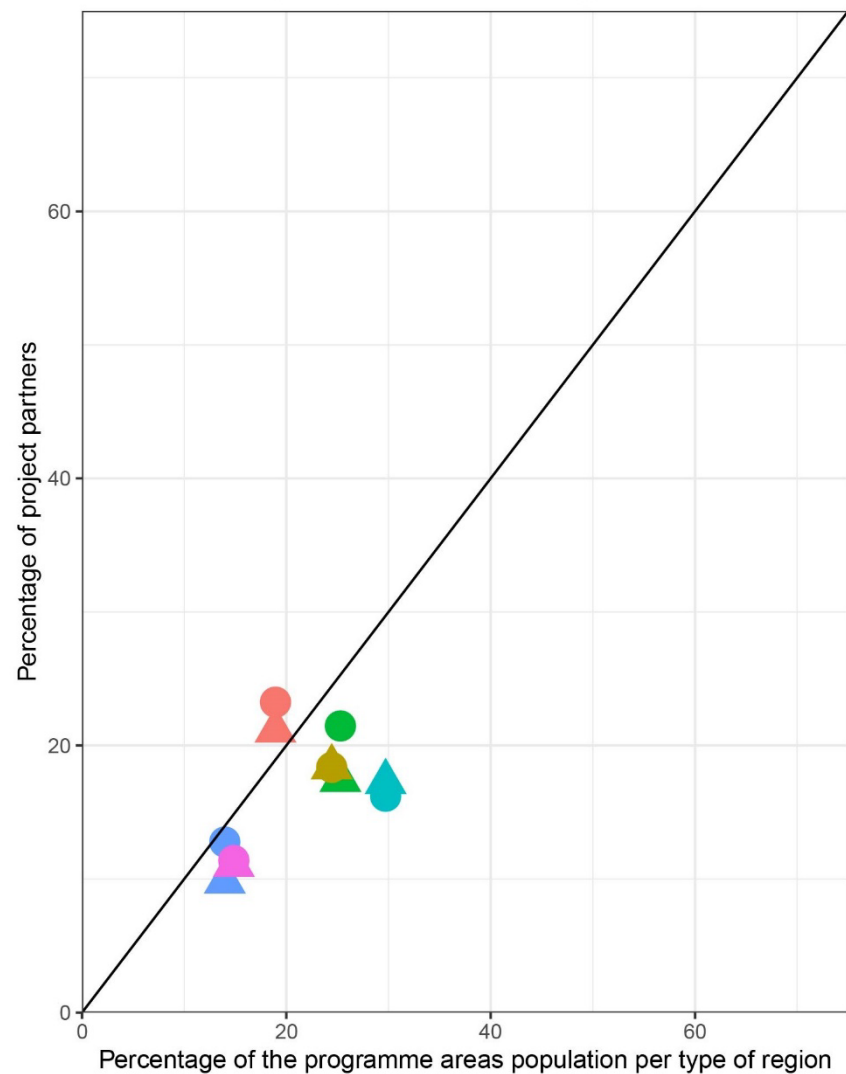
Own depiction based on keep (2023)



Own depiction based on keep (2023)

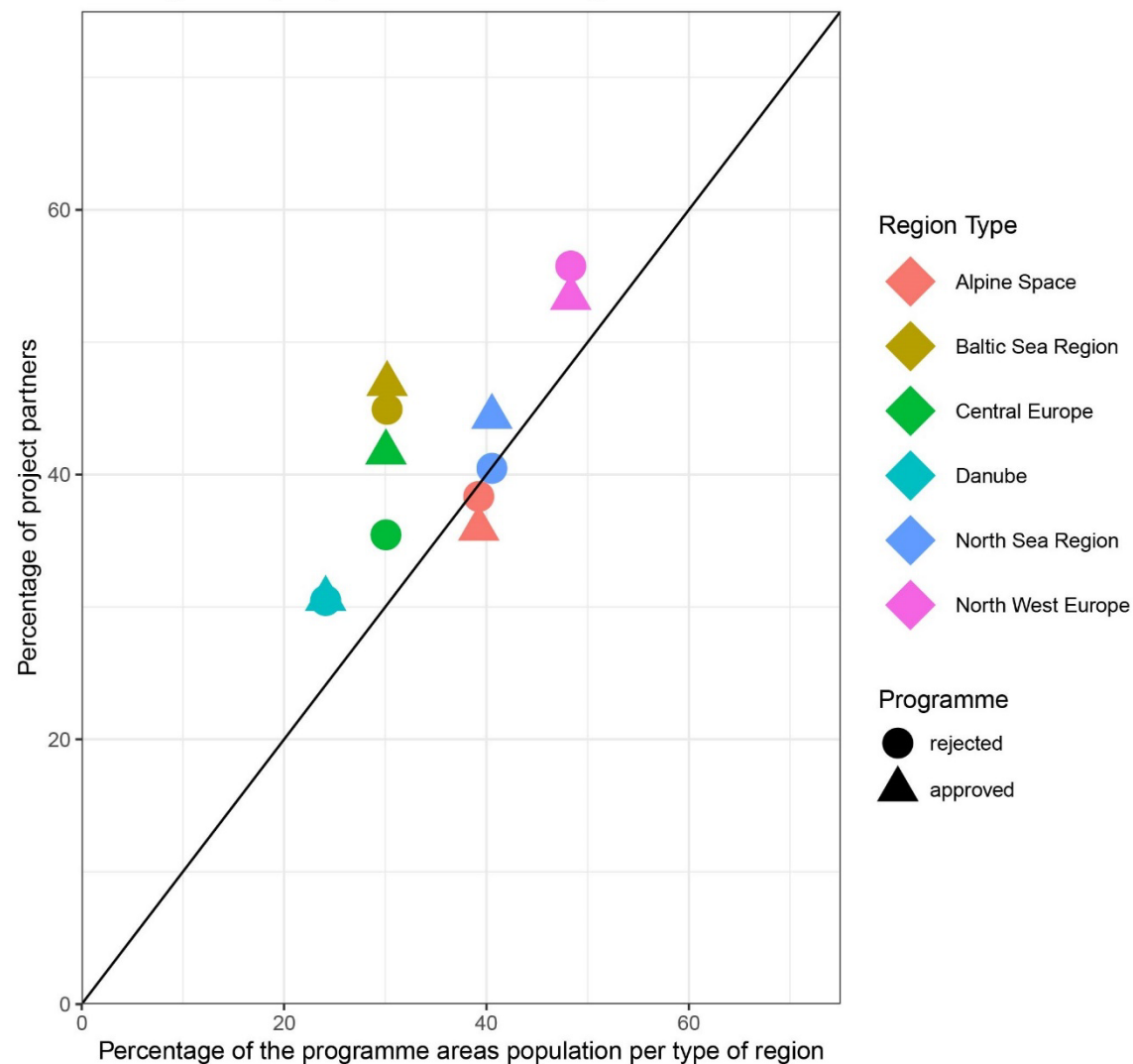
2021 – 2027 REJECTED OR APPROVED: RURAL VS URBAN

Interreg B: Project partners in rural regions



Own depiction based on data from Interreg B programme areas (regions equal NUTS-3 regions)

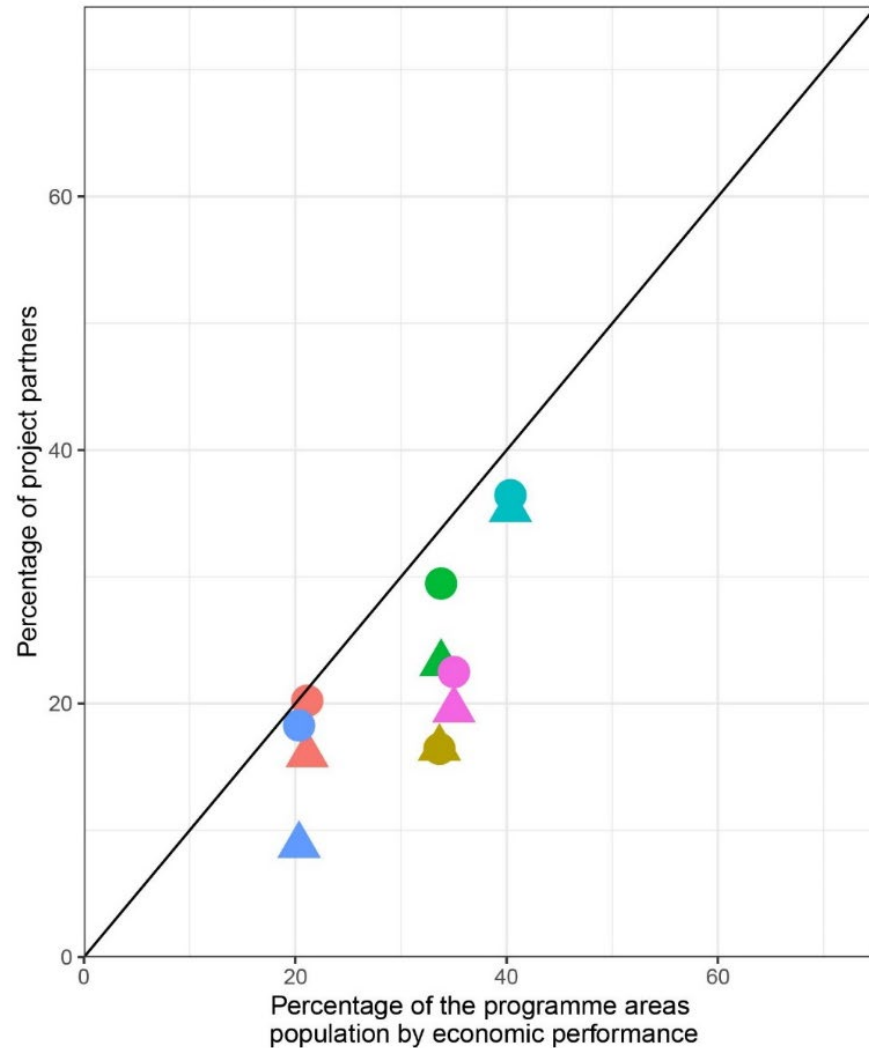
Interreg B: Project partners in urban regions



Own depiction based on data from Interreg B programme areas (regions equal NUTS-3 regions)

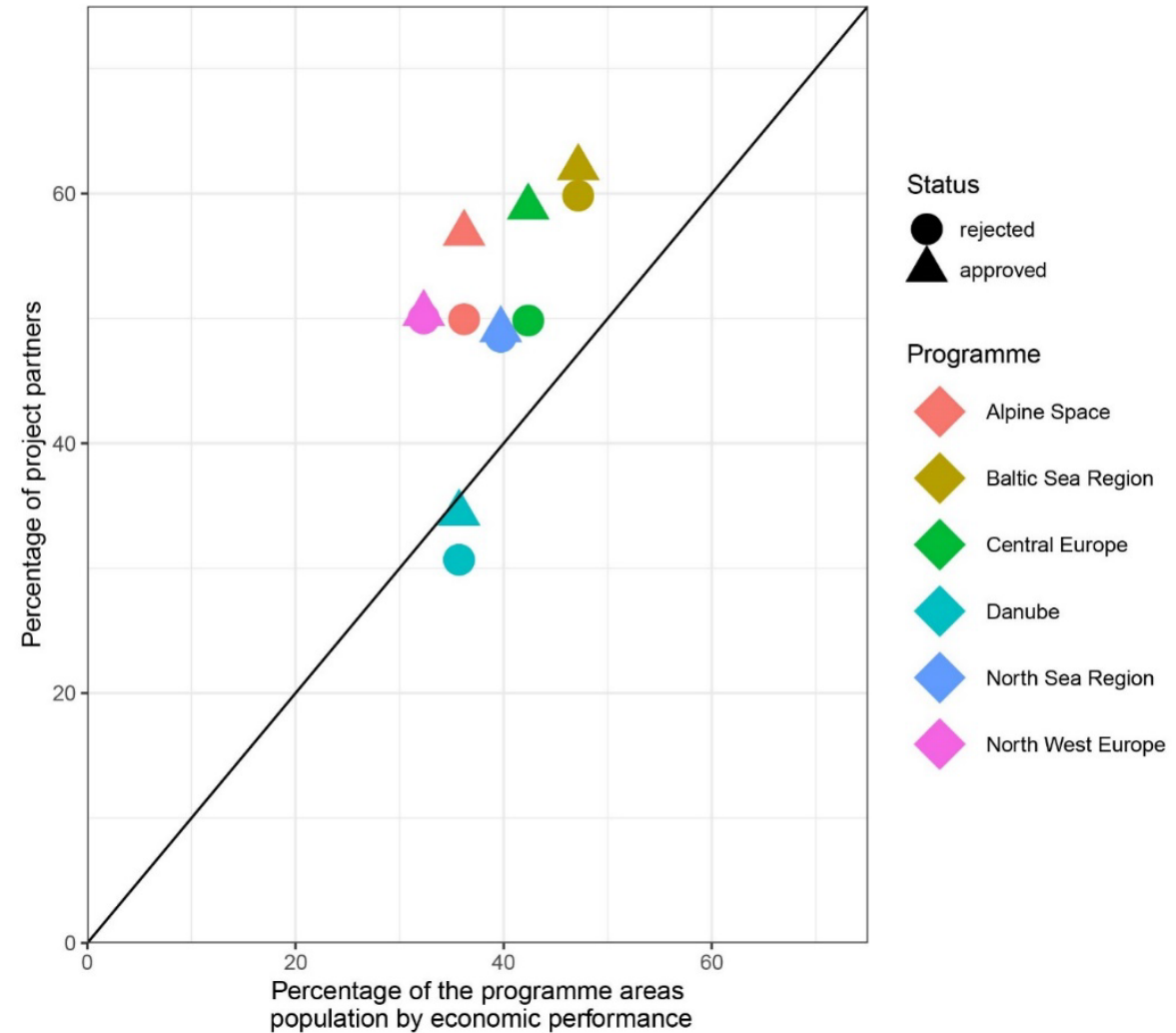
2021 – 2027: REJECTED OR APPROVED: WEAKER VS STRONGER

Interreg B: Project partners according to economic perform:
<75% of programme area average



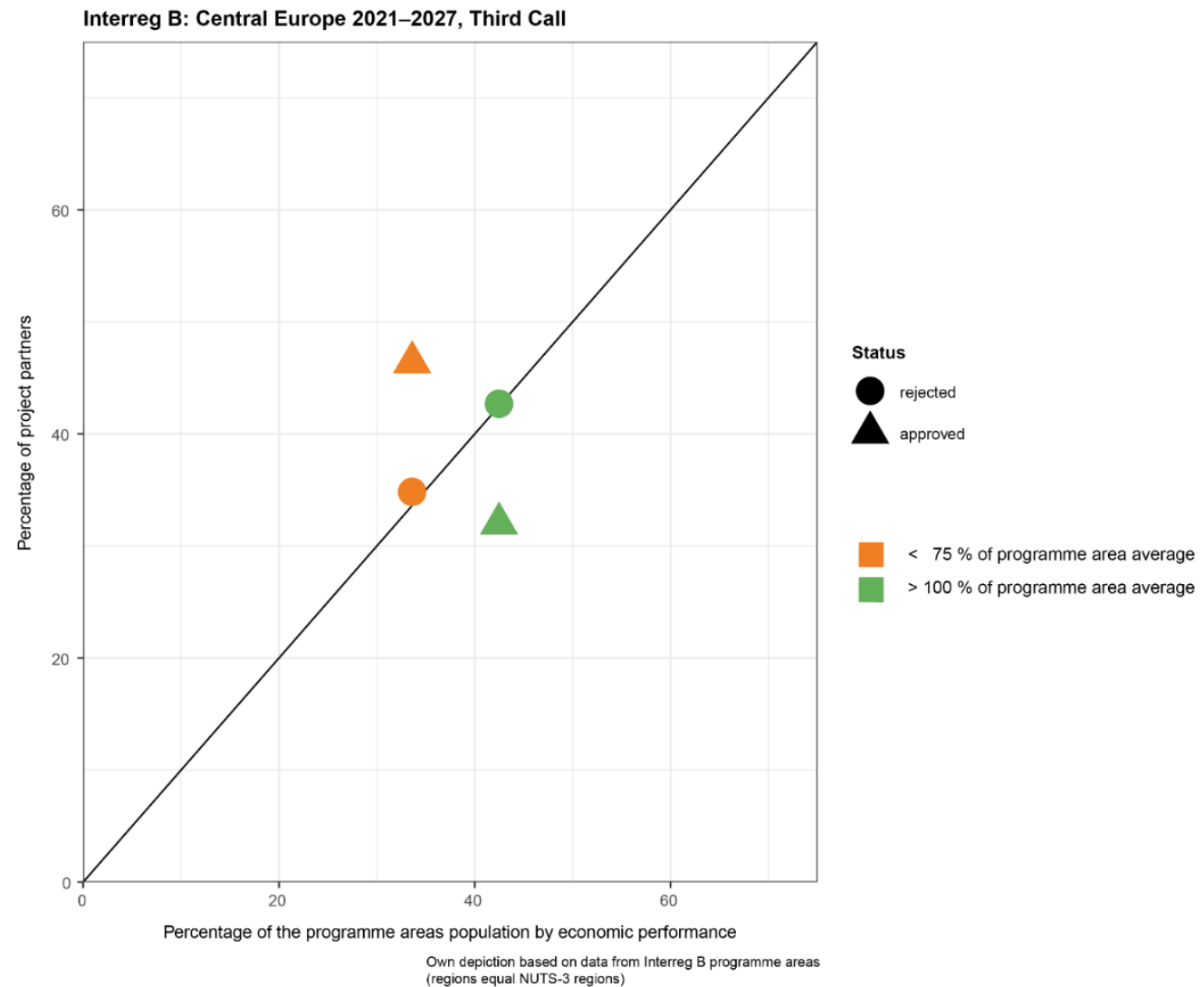
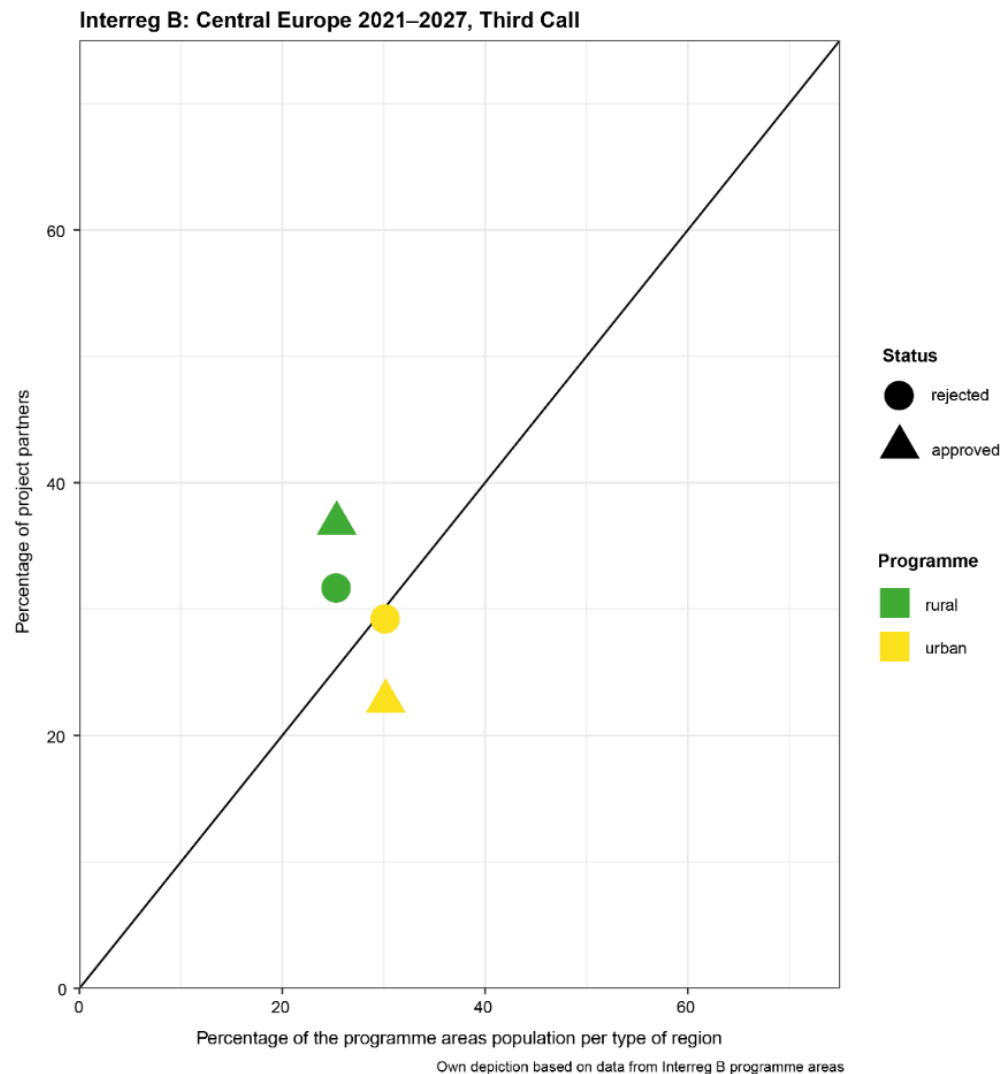
Own depiction based on data from Interreg B programme areas (regions equal NUTS-3 regions)

Interreg B: Project partners according to economic performance
over 100% of programme area average



Own depiction based on data from Interreg B programme areas (regions equal NUTS-3 regions)

2021 – 2027: CENTRAL EUROPE'S THIRD CALL – SUCCESS STORY



OPTIONS FOR TRANSNATIONAL PROGRAMMES TO BECOME MORE TERRITORIALLY INCLUSIVE

- Analysing: Where does the funding concentrate
- Programme design: Offering topics, calls and project formats accessible to lower capacity organisations
- Reaching out: Addressing anchor organisations in areas with low participation
- Reaching out: Establishing sub-regional contact points
- Require partnerships to involve partners from new areas
- Capitalise: requirement to transfer solutions to new areas in the programme
- Earmark funding for all types of regions



World café exercise



3 corners

Corner 1: Governance actions (ISO1)
 Corner 2: Citizen engagement and civil participation
 Corner 3: Cooperation for all regions



World café discussions

2 rounds of 20 min



Feedback of the different topics/corners

World café guiding questions

Corner 1: Governance actions (ISO1)

1. *What types of governance actions (e.g. trust-building, cross-border public services, coordination structures) should ISO1 explicitly support in the new framework?*
2. *How can ISO1 maintain flexibility while improving clarity (e.g. through guidance, indicators, or simplified project formats)?*

Corner 2: Citizen engagement and civil participation

1. *How to involve citizens in the Post27 context?*
2. *What opportunities & challenges does the draft regulation bring for P2P, CLLD?*

Corner 3: Cooperation for all regions

1. *How to reach out to all regions in the Post27 context?*
2. *What opportunities & challenges does the draft regulation bring for involving all regions into Interreg?*

Announcements & events

- Exchange on PO5, November 2025, Bulgaria
- Open call to support the setting up of cross-border coordination points under BRIDGEforEU (until 13 November 2025)
- Seminar on the implementation of the Partnership Principle in the candidate countries, 04 February 2026, organised by DG REGIO

Cooperation works

All materials will be available on:
Interact.eu/Library

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Territoriality

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