

Interreg Programme Management Handbook

Guide to the 2021-2027 period

The Interreg Programme Management Handbook comprises a series of factsheets. They can be read individually, or collectively, to understand the relevance of certain aspects of Interreg management. They cover the relevance, legal basis, key challenges and approaches to the given subject.

Factsheet | **Interreg Programme Bodies**

1. What is it? What is the definition of this work?

Interreg programmes are managed and supported by several different bodies responsible for administering the programme and assisting projects. A clear organisational structure ensures that programmes can achieve expected outcomes and funds are spent in the best way possible.

2. Why are we discussing it?

Setting up properly functioning managing and implementation bodies is the basis for a successful programme implementation. Clear procedures, division of roles and responsibilities, and effective communication between the bodies are crucial for the smooth co-operation towards programme implementation.

Behind every Interreg programme there are different authorities responsible for carrying out specific tasks and ensuring that the programme runs smoothly.

Strategic Bodies

European Commission (EC)

The European Commission (EC) is the executive body of the European Union. The EC is responsible for implementing decisions, proposing legislations and managing the day-to-day business of the EU. The Commission is divided into several departments and services. The departments are known as Directorate-Generals (DGs). They work with the Member states, regions and other stakeholders to assess needs, finance investments and evaluate the results from a long-term EU perspective. Normally, each Interreg programme has a desk officer in the DG Regio who follows the programme implementation and who usually sits in the MC in the advisory role.

Member States (MS)

The Member States (MS) play a key role in the implementation of the 2021-2027 Interreg programmes. They have, in addition to their obvious physical role, both an operational role and a strategic role to fulfil; operational, for example through the designation of national authorities, an obligatory part of the description of management and control system. The MS designate the different authorities that will set up the Managing Authority (MA), body of accounting function and Audit Authority (AA), and also agree upon and outline the communication and cooperation procedures between them. The strategic role of Member States is through the involvement in the Monitoring Committee (MC) and, where applicable, the

Steering Committee (SC)¹, where MS act as the main decision body in the programme and, by doing so, not only have the power to make decisions to which projects the funds should be allocated, but also have the final decision on rules and procedures for the programme.

Each Member State is, according to [Art. 72 \(1\) CPR](#), also ultimately responsible for all activities carried out and all funds spent in its own territory – by projects, controllers and all other authorities.

Management and Implementation Bodies

Monitoring Committee (MC)

- Composed of MS representatives from the programme area.
- Responsible for selection of projects and allocation of funds.
- The MC may set up a Steering Committee that acts under its responsibility for selection of projects

Managing Authority (MA)

- Has legal and operational responsibility for the programme
- Ensures the effective and efficient implementation of the programme
- Ensures that projects are approved, delivered and monitored in accordance with agreed criteria
- Establishes systems and procedures
- Handles formal communications with MS and EC
- Reports programme progress to the EC

Joint Secretariat (JS)

- Tasks are often delegated from the MA
- Responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the programme
- Responsible for project generation, development and implementation activities
- Checks and verifies project progress reports
- Handles communications with the lead partners
- Can be supported by the contact points (info points)

Audit Authority (AA)

- Ensures that audits are carried out on the management and control system, on an appropriate sample of operations (projects)², and on the accounts.
- Ensures that audit work takes account of internationally accepted audit standards
- Draws up an audit strategy for the programmes
- Draws up an audit opinion and reports audit findings to the EC and MA
- Shall transmit system audit reports to the EC
- Shall be functionally independent from bodies or persons responsible for management verifications

¹ [Art. 22 \(2\) Interreg Regulation](#)

² Art. 49 (1) [Interreg Regulation](#)

Group of Auditors (GoA)

- Not all Interreg programmes have this body
- Consists of AA and members from each country participating in the programme
- Assists AA
- Organises and performs audits and reports findings to the AA

Controllers³

- Perform management verifications and control on project expenditure
- Must be designated and functionally independent⁴

Contact Points (CPs)

- Assists JS in the participating countries and usually serves as a first contact for project partners
- Assists JS in the project development (and sometimes in implementation) in the participating regions

3. What are the Legal references and basis for this topic?

Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 (IR) — on specific provisions for the European territorial cooperation goal (Interreg)

- Article 16 – Preparation and submission of Interreg programmes
- Article 45 – Interreg programme authorities
- Article 46 – Functions of the managing authority
- Article 47 – The accounting function
- Article 48 – Functions of the audit authority
- Article 49 – Audit of operations

Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 (CPR) — common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund

- Article 38 – Monitoring Committee
- Article 39 – Composition of the monitoring committee
- Article 40 – Functions of the monitoring committee
- Article 69 – Responsibilities of Member States
- Article 70 – Commission powers and responsibilities
- Article 71 – Programme authorities
- Article 72 – Functions of the managing authority
- Article 73 – Selection of operations by the managing authority.
- Article 74 – Programme management by the managing authority.
- Article 75 – Support of the work of the monitoring committee by the managing authority.
- Article 77 – Functions of the audit authority

³ [Art. 46 \(3\) Interreg Regulation](#)

⁴ [Art. 46 \(8\) Interreg Regulation](#)

4. What are the challenges, key considerations and frequently asked questions?

Many programmes structure the roles of each body differently. Therefore, certain tasks can be fulfilled by different bodies in different programmes which can be beneficial as it adapts to the local reality. However, it may also pose some challenges as these variations make programmes operate differently. This may cause some misunderstandings particularly from stakeholders outside Interreg in what relates to roles and responsibilities from the different bodies.

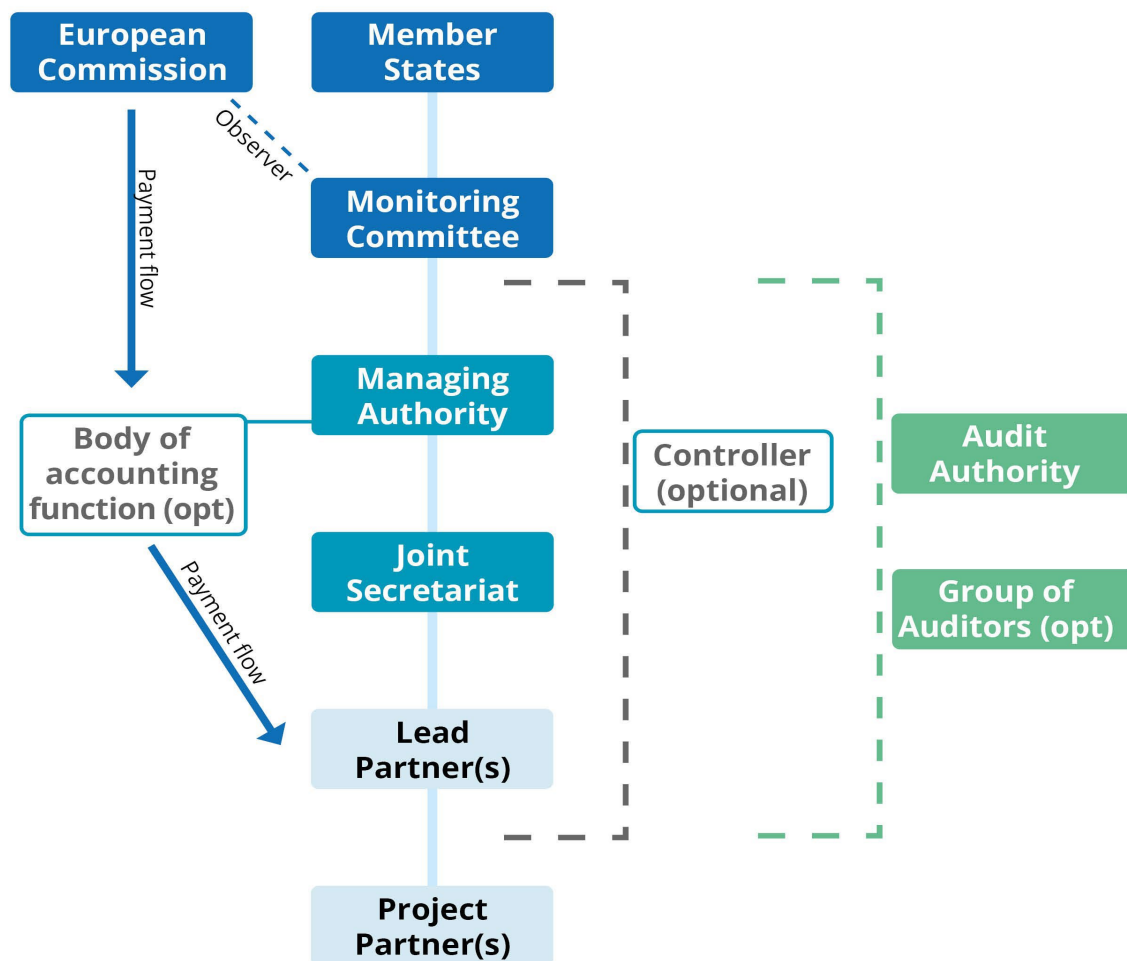
5. How are they addressed?

When referring to role and responsibilities in Interreg, it is the many ways in which programme bodies are configured, empowered and deployed. No single approach is used, as countries and regions find their own solutions to configure programmes. The programmes management and control system define these roles and the interfaces between them, which are therefore largely fixed for the period.

[Interact](#) events, for example, promote exchanges to ensure alignment on different [roles and responsibilities](#). This means enabling the sharing of experiences from those acting as a Managing Authority, as a Joint Secretariat, as a Monitoring Committee member, as a Controller, as an Audit Authority, or as a National Authority to better understand each other and develop smoother workflows.

6. How does it work in practice?

The below figure sets out the general shape of Interreg programmes in the 2021-2027 period. It includes the hierarchical layer of programme bodies.



7. Good practice examples, innovative approaches

Some additional information to support the understanding of Interreg Programme Bodies include:

- Interact's website page on [roles and responsibilities](#) which provides additional relevant information and tools on the topic.
- Interreg Europe [programme structure](#) information.
- [Interact Academy](#) courses, particularly Interreg Programme Introduction provides additional more in depth learning on the topic.
- Interreg North-West Europe [programme bodies](#) information

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

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