

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 | Programme Monitoring

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

Monitoring literally means to keep under systematic observation. In the context of Interreg, programme monitoring refers to all the activities carried out by different programme bodies to ensure that the programme achieves its intended objectives.

The overall responsibility for programme monitoring lies with the Monitoring Committee (MC). However, in practice, the MC will carry out its monitoring on the basis of input provided by many programme bodies, in particular the Managing Authority (MA) and Joint Secretariat (JS).

2. What are the legal references and basis for this topic?

Regulation (EU) 2021/1059, Article 30, 1 (a) states: “the monitoring committee shall examine the progress in programme implementation and in achieving the milestones and targets of the Interreg programme”. Article 30, 1 (b) continues: “the monitoring committee shall examine any issues that affect the performance of the Interreg programme and the measures taken to address these issues”.

As per Regulation (EU) 2021/1059, Article 46, 2 and Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 Article 75, the MC is to be supported in this by the MA and the JS.

3. What does programme monitoring cover? How does it work in practice?

Monitoring is the systematic and regular collection of information, along with occasional analysis, to check progress against plans and to identify - and potentially measure - changes over time. Programme monitoring entails the observation of inputs (financial inputs and programme activities) and output and results.

Inputs	Outputs and results
Financial inputs such as committing funds and reimbursing eligible claims	Achievement of output and result indicators
Activities such as launching calls for proposals, selecting and funding/contracting projects	

Monitoring the above requires data. The main source of data will be the programme monitoring system. The types of data gathered and analysed to support programme monitoring may include:

- Number of project applications in the pipeline or submitted
- Number of project applications contracted
- Value of project applications approved

- Output and result indicators committed
- Value of claims received
- Value of claims reimbursed
- Number of projects completed
- Number of output and result indicators achieved

Additional monitoring options of interest could include process monitoring for key stages in programme management. For example, this could involve tracking critical phases in the project life cycle, such as the time between application submission and contracting, the overall contracting timelines, etc.

Milestones and target-setting are also integral to monitoring. These can include targets approved by the Commission within the Interreg Programme document, for instance output and result indicator targets. They may also include targets not required by the Commission but defined by programmes for internal purposes, for instance internal targets related to the length of time between project approval and signing of the subsidy contract.

By comparing monitoring data with targets, programmes are able to judge whether implementation is proceeding as required. If monitoring data shows that progress is less than expected, programme bodies should try to identify what issues are impacting on implementation, and what actions should be taken to address them. Issues identified by programmes that impact implementation can be both internal and external to the programme.

4. What are common challenges? What are the novelties in the 2021-2027 period?

Main challenges associated with programme monitoring include:

- Ensuring access to accurate and up to date information
- Presentation of data to enable well-informed decision-making on behalf of programme managers and the MC
- Setting realistic targets and milestones
- Identifying issues affecting implementation, and agreeing what actions should be taken in response

In order to mitigate some of the challenges related to monitoring of output and result indicators, it is required that programmes prepare a so-called **methodology paper**. This is a new requirement for the 2021-2027 period. The intention of the methodology paper is for programmes to foresee and prevent issues related to target-setting and the verification of indicators.

Another main difference between monitoring in the 2021-2027 period compared to previous periods, is that now all output and results indicators fall within the **performance framework**. However, unlike the 2014-2020 programme, the regulation does not specify penalties for non-achievement of performance framework targets.

Linked to monitoring, there are also novelties to how **programme reporting** functions in the 2021-2027 period. Reporting frequency has increased compared to the previous period. Rather than reporting annually, financial data is now to be reported by programmes to the Commission four times a year. Progress towards indicator targets is to be reported to the Commission every 6 months (31 January and 31 July).

Finally, just as with previous programming periods, the 2021-2027 period places an even greater focus on result orientation than the period that preceded it. As such, it is clearly not enough for monitoring to focus on “how much” funding was spent but must also include “how” the funding was spent.

5. Further reading

The European Commission has prepared a [staff working document](#) which covers the topics including programme monitoring.

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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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Publisher | Interact programme
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