

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 | Knowledge management and capitalisation in Interreg

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

Capitalisation in Interreg is a continuous, integrated process that organises, analyses, and promotes the (re)use of knowledge and results generated by programmes and projects. It strengthens learning, enhances policy relevance, and supports a strategic reuse of investments made with EU funds. It is a long-term building process aimed at enhancing the visibility, value, and legacy of what has already been achieved.

In the 2021–2027 period, capitalisation is defined as a programme-level strategic effort to:

- Identify and organise valuable outputs and lessons from projects;
- Enable synergies between projects and themes;
- Activate the reuse and transfer of results by supporting thematic communities, targeted calls, and stakeholder engagement.

Capitalisation is no longer seen as an optional or post-project activity – it is an embedded part of programme planning and delivery, aiming at long-term impact and contribution to policy processes.

Capitalisation can happen at multiple levels:

- **Project level:** reuse, transfer and further development of project outcomes;
- **Programme level:** analysis and clustering of results, thematic actions;
- **Territorial level:** aligning outcomes with specific territorial challenges;
- **Inter-programme level:** joint capitalisation efforts across Interreg strands;
- **With other initiatives:** linking with other EU funds e.g. Horizon Europe, mainstream ERDF/ESF, or national instruments.

2. Why are we discussing it?

Capitalisation has become essential in the 2021-2027 period for demonstrating the relevance and impact of Interreg investments. With greater attention to performance, thematic concentration, and policy reach, programmes are expected to:

- Maximise the use of past and ongoing project results;
- Connect Interreg outcomes to wider EU policy agendas;
- Improve coordination across thematic and geographical areas;
- Build capacities for evidence-based policymaking.

Stakeholders increasingly recognise capitalisation as a strategic asset—one that demands systematic planning, dedicated resources, and strong coordination across programme bodies.

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

- Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 on Interreg outlines programme responsibilities regarding communication, evaluation, and coordination, which underpin capitalisation efforts. *NB The term “capitalisation” is specifically mentioned as a prerogative of the Interreg C programmes (Interregional cooperation).*
- Common Provisions Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 encourages result orientation, synergies across funds, and dissemination of outcomes.
- Complementary guidance and tools are provided by Interact to support harmonised and effective capitalisation.

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

Capitalisation in the 2021–2027 period presents a set of evolving and context-specific challenges that programmes must address to implement it successfully and meaningfully. These are not only technical or procedural challenges but also cultural and strategic.

- **Changing the mindset**

Although capitalisation is increasingly recognised in Interreg regulations and practices, it still faces hesitation across stakeholders. It is often seen as an afterthought, a luxury, or a additional burden. This mindset hinders its potential. Promoting a culture where learning, reuse, and long-term impact are central requires sustained internal advocacy, training, and showcasing of success stories.

- **Aligning programme ambitions with partner capacity**

Many programme strategies focus on systemic impact and policy relevance, while beneficiaries (often local or small-scale) may lack the capacity or mandate to influence policy or upscale results. This mismatch can lead to unrealistic expectations. Programmes must design capitalisation pathways that reflect both ambition and operationality.

- **Communication and outreach constraints**

Interreg remains complex and often inaccessible to external audiences. Without clear, compelling communication, it is difficult to engage stakeholders beyond the Interreg community, such as local governments, private actors, or national institutions. Simplifying language and emphasising the value of results is essential to reach wider audiences.

- **Resource limitations**

Effective capitalisation requires dedicated staff, expertise, and budget. This is particularly difficult for smaller programmes or those with limited internal capacity. Ensuring sufficient human and financial resources – within both Joint Secretariats and projects – is key to enable capitalisation as a structured activity.

- **Identifying what to capitalise**

Programmes often struggle with choosing which results are worth scaling or reusing. Not all deliverables are equally relevant or transferable. Developing criteria (e.g., policy relevance, replicability, evidence of impact) and processes to identify these outputs is crucial.

- **Engaging stakeholders meaningfully**

Beneficiaries, Monitoring Committees, and National Contact Points are not always aware of their role in capitalisation. Their involvement is essential, especially in defining focus areas, creating buy-in, and supporting visibility and reuse. Their participation should be strategically guided and resourced.

- **Attracting new users and re-users**

Capitalisation also requires outreach to actors who were not originally involved in projects. Finding and mobilising these new “takers” – especially those beyond Interreg, such as national or regional authorities, mainstream ERDF/ESF actors, or private sector – is often challenging. Programmes must scope demand, tailor outreach, and promote the benefits of reusing results.

5. How are they addressed?

To tackle these challenges, Interreg programmes – supported by Interact – have adopted a variety of structured and flexible approaches that are increasingly embedded in programme strategy and delivery:

- **Structured capitalisation plans**

Many programmes now develop a capitalisation strategy or action plan, often aligned with call schedules and programme objectives. These plans guide programme teams, provide guidance for beneficiaries, and help integrate capitalisation into the overall programme architecture.

- **Capitalisation calls and thematic communities**

Dedicated calls for capitalisation, as well as clustering of projects into thematic groups or communities, enable structured peer exchange and collective value generation. These mechanisms allow synergies to emerge and create visibility beyond individual project outputs.

- **Dedicated communication actions**

Communication is integral to capitalisation. Programmes increasingly support beneficiaries in communicating high-quality results, while also promoting visibility and legacy at programme level. This includes storytelling, capitalisation publications, adequate databases, and tailored events.

- **Investing in internal expertise**

Programmes are assigning staff with thematic responsibilities or capitalisation portfolios. This builds institutional memory and ensures there is internal capacity to identify, promote, and support the reuse of results. In many cases, JS staff are also supporting the creation of communities or mentoring networks.

- **Engaging Monitoring Committees and NCPs**

Involving Monitoring Committees and National Contact Points from the start ensures information about programme action and results is relayed and helps connect capitalisation to broader policy agendas. These actors can also act as multipliers or gatekeepers to wider systems (e.g. national or regional policies).

- **Piloting and flexibility**

There is no single model for capitalisation, neither is capitalisation a “one-size-fits-all” exercise. Programmes experiment with a range of tools – from capitalisation sections in application forms to thematic capitalisation events or result libraries. What matters is consistency, adaptability, and commitment to knowledge sharing and improvement.

6. How does it work in practice?

1. Take stock and organise results

Programmes collect, structure, and assess the knowledge generated by projects. This can involve databases, result libraries and mapping exercises. Clear selection criteria help identify which results are relevant for transfer or reuse – this includes impact, replicability, and policy relevance.

Practical tools and methods:

- Creating structured project result repositories (+ KEEP.eu, thematic portals)
- Programme staff supporting screening of deliverables and tracking impact
- Capitalisation sections in project reports and evaluations

2. Create synergies between projects

Thematic clusters, communities of practice, or result-oriented calls can bring together projects with similar themes, territories, or goals. This builds coherence and amplifies results.

Practical tools and methods:

- Capitalisation calls, e.g. aimed at transferring results, expanding project's reach deeper or to new territories, beneficiaries, sectors...
- Thematic platforms, clustering around priority thematic objectives
- Peer review sessions, joint publications, cross-project thematic events

3. Activate reuse of results

The ultimate goal of capitalisation is to activate reuse – by other projects, in other places, or in other policy instruments. This includes embedding results into local/regional policies, securing follow-up funding, or using them as reference in new project applications.

Practical tools and methods:

- Small-scale follow-up projects or spin-offs
- Embedding results in mainstream policies (ERDF/ESF)
- Capitalisation mentoring schemes, matchmaking with new users
- Events focused on uptake by policymakers or sector actors

Capitalisation in practice is not a one-off activity. It is a building process, requiring time, commitment, and collaboration. It breaks down institutional silos, connects the dots between actions, and helps Interreg live up to its potential as an engine of lasting territorial change.

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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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