

Congratulations!

# **You're a new Interreg MC member**

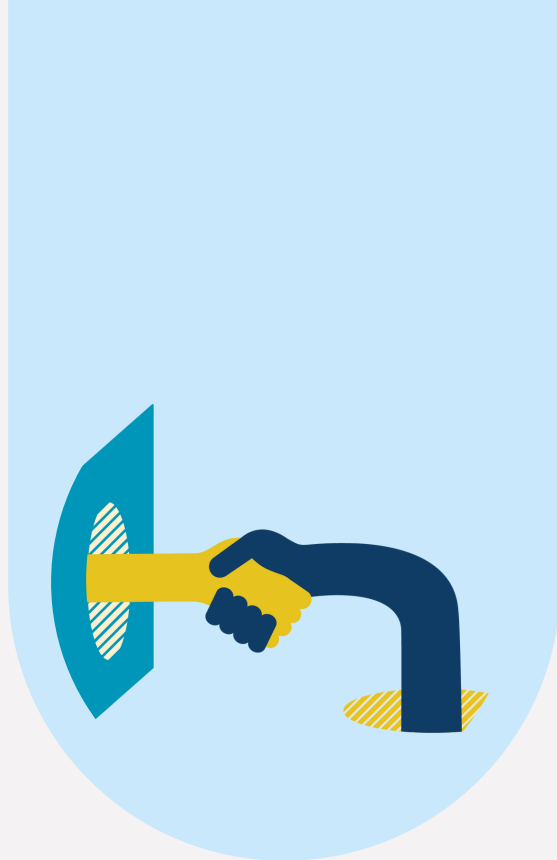
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Introduction guide



# Purpose of the document

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**Congratulations!** You're a new member of an Interreg monitoring committee (MC).

Whether you are new to the world of Interreg or are an “old hand”, in this role you will be a key part of the governance of the programme and, as such, an important figure in promoting cooperation in your programme area.

The purpose of this guidance is to provide an overview of your role, based on the regulatory requirements. Please note, while the core elements will be the same for MC members of all Interreg programmes, each programme has specific ways of working, which you will have to familiarise yourself with too.

# The what, why, when, who and how

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## What?

The MC is a committee to monitor the implementation of your Interreg programme.

Its main functions are as follows:

- Project selection;
- Programme monitoring;
- Oversight of programme communication and evaluation;
- Approval of programme changes and the final programme implementation report.

## Why?

Its purpose is to review all issues that affect the programme's progress towards achieving its objectives and ensure good governance of the programme.

## When?

It should be established within three months of the approval of the Interreg programme (starting from the date of notification of the Commission's approval). It should meet at least once per year. In practice, most MCs meet more regularly.

### Steering committees

The MC can select projects directly. Or it may delegate this function to a subgroup of the MC called the "Steering Committee". As such, you may be both a member of the MC and the Steering Committee.

The membership of the Steering Committee should take into account the same principles as for membership of the MC in general. The Steering Committee should also have its own Rules of Procedure.

# The what, why, when, who and how

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## Who?

There should be balanced representation of the following groups:

- Relevant authorities, including intermediate bodies;
- Bodies jointly set up in the whole programme area:
  - Regional, local, urban and other public authorities;
  - Economic and social partners;
  - Representatives of civil society;
  - Research organisations and universities.
- All Member States must be represented; and, where applicable, by the third countries, partner countries, and overseas countries and territories participating in that programme;
- Representatives of the Commission will participate in an advisory capacity.

## How?

Each MC needs to have its own Rules of Procedure, which set out how the MC operates. These should include voting rights and provisions for avoiding conflict of interest.

### Other working groups

Programmes can also choose to set up other sub-groups or working groups, for instance for:

- Overseeing evaluation;
- Reviewing audit findings and other key risks.

The reasons for setting up sub-groups include to enable:

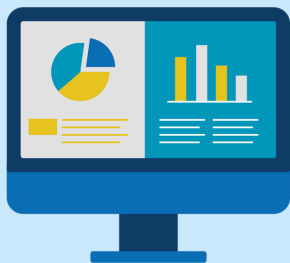
- Involvement of staff within MC organisations with specific skills or expertise;
- In-depth discussion of topics which there otherwise wouldn't be time for.

# Main functions

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## Project selection

- The MC is responsible for selecting projects in accordance with the programme's strategy and objectives;
- The MC should approve and apply the criteria and procedures for selecting these projects;
- The MC can delegate this function to one or more Steering Committees;
- The criteria and guidelines should follow the requirements of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059, Article 22;
- The MC can also be involved in the approval of project modifications, especially when the proposed change impacts on the original reasons for selecting the project.



## Programme monitoring

### What is programme monitoring?

- In simple terms, monitoring is comparing expected progress, with actual performance, and taking appropriate measures when there is a difference between the two;
- The MC is responsible for monitoring the programme, supported by the Managing Authority or Joint Secretariat (MA/JS).

### Useful questions to ask your MA/JS:

- What are the key targets and the milestones for the programme?
- What is the plan for achieving these?
- Are there the necessary resources?
- Is the programme on track to deliver this plan? Based on what information?
- What issues might affect full delivery? Is there a plan B?

# Main functions

## Programme communication

### What is programme communication?

- Activities conducted by the programme to raise awareness among different targets of funding opportunities and how Interreg funds have been spent;
- Communication is important from the point of view of transparency as well as promoting the value of cooperation.

### What is the MC's role?

- The MC must examine the implementation of communication and visibility actions.

### What does this mean in practice?

- The MC should be provided with regular updates on communication and visibility activities, and how these activities are reaching key target groups.



## Programme changes

### What are programme changes?

- These are changes to the Interreg Operational Programme document, approved by the Commission.

### What is the MC's role?

- Before programme changes are submitted by the programme to the Commission, they must first be approved by the Monitoring Committee.

### What does this mean in practice?

- Proposed changes are prepared by the MA/JS;
- Types of changes would include:
  - Changes to priorities;
  - Changes to indicators;
  - Changes to budget.
- Note that, in some circumstances, changes to budget below 10% per priority can be approved by the MC without additional approval by the Commission.

# Main functions

## Programme evaluation

### What is programme evaluation?

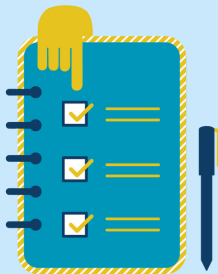
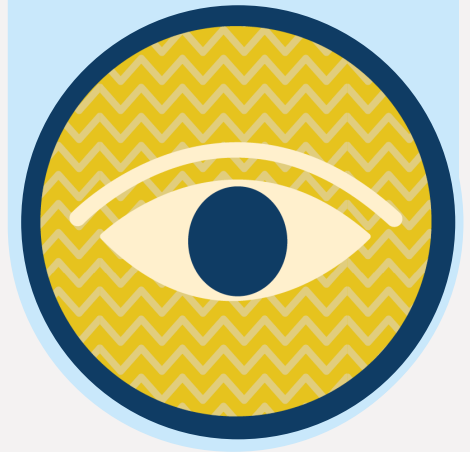
- An assessment of programme delivery and performance to answer questions such as:
  - What has worked?
  - What hasn't worked?
  - Why?

### What is the MC's role?

- The MC must:
  - Approve the Evaluation Plan. This is a strategic document that represents a plan for all evaluation activities to be delivered by the programme;
  - Examine progress in carrying out evaluations, and follow-up to findings.

### What does this mean in practice?

- The Evaluation Plan is prepared by the MA/JS for approval by the MC within 1 year of the Commission approving the programme;
- The MC should be provided with evaluation findings and be given details on how the MA/JS will respond to recommendations.



## Other functions

### Programme closure

- The MC must approve the final implementation report, before it is sent to the European Commission. This is a report that summarises the programme's achievement against final targets and explains any underperformance.

### Recoveries

- The MC has to define the responsibilities of project Lead Partners, in case they unduly receive funds that need to be returned.

# Insights from a current MC member

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We asked Hannah Nagler-Olsen to share her experience of being an MC member for the Baltic Sea, Germany-Denmark, and Interact programmes.

## **What do you find rewarding about being an Interreg MC member?**

For me Interreg is European cooperation on a local level, bringing European cooperation closer to citizens and businesses. The most rewarding thing about working with Interreg is to see how dedicated people are about the European project and turning challenges in border regions into strengths, both at project level and in the Monitoring Committees of the programmes. People with different backgrounds from different countries cooperating for a better Europe.

## **What do you find challenging about being an Interreg MC member?**

Sometimes it takes time to get into every detail of the programme and understand it. The cooperation both in terms of the programme but also in the monitoring committee has been built over many years, sometimes even decades. Therefore, some things may be difficult to understand or change because a decision has been made 5 years ago.

## **What advice would you have to someone who's just become an Interreg MC member for the first time?**

Be curious, for example, if there is anything that does not make sense, ask for an explanation. Be bold if you have an idea how to do it better. Many of us have worked with Interreg or as a MC member for several years but this does not mean we know better or have all the answers. And use the person who sits next to you at the meeting, try to get to know them. They are also a good help if you don't want to ask something in front of everyone – I use my neighbours on a regular basis and have a good working relationship to them.



# Further reading



If you would like to look more at the regulatory basis for your role, you can refer to the following articles of the Interreg regulation (Regulation (EU) 2021/1059)

## **Article 19**

- Programme amendments;
- Transfer of resources during programming period.

## **Article 22**

- Selection of projects;
- Projects fully or partly outside the programme area;
- Setting up a steering committee for the selection of projects.

## **Article 28**

- Rules of procedure.

## **Article 29**

- A composition of the Monitoring Committee.

## **Article 30**

- Functions of the Monitoring Committee (including evaluation and communication).

## **Article 37**

- Rules on the eligibility of expenditure.

## **Article 8 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060**

- Further information on the composition of the Monitoring Committee.

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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](mailto:communication@interact.eu)

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