

Cooperation Actions in Action: How Ideas Lead to Impact



6-7 May 2026

Centre Universitaire Méditerranéen
65 Promenade des Anglais
Nice | France





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Outlines

The 2021–2027 programming period has introduced **new challenges and opportunities for regions to extend cooperation beyond borders**, driven by growing interdependencies and the need for stronger territorial synergies. These developments are reflected in the Investment for Jobs and Growth (IGJ) goal, which now requires Member States to plan and implement **cooperation actions under each specific objective** (Regulation (EU) No 2021/1060, Article 22(3)(d)(vi)). As a result, cooperation is no longer confined to dedicated territorial programmes but has become a **systemic requirement across mainstream funding instruments**.

While the ambition to cooperate beyond borders is not new, **turning cooperation ideas into tangible results has consistently proven difficult**. Cooperation actions demand more than political will: they require robust partnerships, operational know-how, and the ability to navigate regulatory and administrative constraints across different programme contexts. In practice, many stakeholders operate within familiar partnership structures and have limited opportunities to exchange experiences beyond their immediate networks. This often restricts learning, slows down implementation, and prevents the identification of solutions that could make cooperation actions more effective.

This event is designed as a **practical exchange platform** for Managing Authorities and programme practitioners working with cooperation actions under the IGJ objective. It focuses on the full implementation cycle, from early design choices and partnership building to delivery, sustainability, and impact. Rather than promoting idealised examples, the event creates space for **critical reflection, peer learning, and honest discussion** of what works, what does not, and why.

The 1.5-day format combines structured dialogue, peer-to-peer exchange, and a **study visit**, enabling participants to complement learning with real implementation experience. Moreover, macro-regional and sea basin strategies are used as **reference frameworks** to situate cooperation actions within wider territorial dynamics and to support more strategic and coherent approaches. The overall emphasis is on **realism, transferability, and informed decision-making, supporting participants** in moving from cooperation as a planned obligation to cooperation as a functional and impactful practice.

Objectives

The objective of the event is to increase participants' capacity to **design and implement cooperation actions with greater clarity, confidence, and operational realism**. The focus is on strengthening decision-making in situations where regulatory provisions allow flexibility but practical guidance is limited or fragmented.

The event seeks to reduce uncertainty around cooperation actions by clarifying how key implementation choices are made in practice, particularly in relation to **partner selection, governance structures, regulatory interpretation, and resource allocation**. Participants are expected to gain a clearer understanding of where discretion exists, where constraints are real, and how others have navigated similar situations.



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Another objective is to enable participants to **position cooperation actions strategically**, rather than treating them as isolated or experimental measures. This includes improving their ability to assess relevance, added value, and alignment with broader territorial frameworks, including **macro-regional and sea basin strategies**, where appropriate.

Finally, the event aims to support participants in identifying **transferable approaches** that can be adapted within their own programme contexts. By the end of the event, participants should be better equipped to move from exploratory discussions to concrete next steps, reducing fragmentation and shortening the learning curve for future cooperation actions.

The event will also use the opportunity to produce **short video testimonies** based on a **peer-interview approach**, where participants interview other participants about their experience with cooperation actions; further information for those interested in taking part will be provided as part of the application process.

Ultimately, the objective is for participants to leave with greater clarity and confidence in designing cooperation actions that are **realistic and compliant**, and that are capable of delivering **tangible results**. By encouraging honest exchange and critical reflection, the event seeks to contribute to **reduced fragmentation, shorter learning curves**, and more **coherent cooperation practices** across IGJ programmes.



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Day One

Wednesday, 06 May 2026

13.30 – 14.00

Registration and Welcome Coffee / Tea

14.00 – 14.30

Opening & framing the challenge

Interact, the European Commission and the host organisation

- Purpose of the event: bridging the implementation gaps
- Positioning cooperation actions within CPR Art. 22(3)(d)(vi)
- How the event is structured and how participants are expected to engage

14.30 – 15.30

Cooperation actions: From regulation to reality

Format: Interactive plenary with guided discussion

- What cooperation actions are (and what they are not)
- Typical implementation models across programmes - hunt for examples
- Where programmes most often fail: design, partners, governance, financing
- Role of macro-regional and sea basin strategies as structuring frameworks

Objectives of the session: This session aims to strip cooperation actions down to their essentials. No theory for theory's sake - only what actually matters in the course of implementation.

15.30 – 16.00

Coffee/Tea break

16.00 – 17.15

Peer exchange labs: Different maturity stages

Format: Parallel facilitated groups (rotation)

Facilitation by Interact and participants

- **Group 1: Early-stage planning** - from idea to first cooperation action
- **Group 2: Ongoing actions** - managing partners, rules, and expectations
- **Group 3: Advanced cases** - sustainability, scaling, and impact

Objectives of the session: Not all programmes are at the same stage - and pretending they are, kills learning. This session uses difference as an asset.

17.15 – 17.30

Wrap-up of Day 1

Harvesting key insights and introduction to Day 2

Interact



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Day Two

Thursday, 07 May 2026

09.30 – 10.00

Registration and Welcome Coffee / Tea

10.00 – 10.15

Welcome back & Day 2 orientation

Interact

10.15 – 11.30

Turning experience into transferable models

Format: Structured plenary and group work

- What elements are transferable across programmes?
- What depends on context and cannot be copied?
- How macro-regional strategies can support replication
- How to avoid “one-off” cooperation actions

Objectives of the session: To map practical elements in cooperation actions implementations.

11.30 – 12.30

Designing your next cooperation action

Format: Facilitated discussion in shaping up a future Interact learning tool

Facilitation by Interact and participants

- Identify one concrete cooperation challenge at home
- What is the best way to define partners, scope, and added value
- Identify regulatory and administrative constraints
- Define first implementation steps

Objectives of the session: To co-create the future learning tool to be prepared by Interact.

12.30 – 12.45

Plenary wrap up: From ideas to action

Format: Event plenary conclusions with commitments for future actions.

- Key takeaways from the event
- What participants will take back to their programmes
- Next steps and available support (Interact, peers, networks)

Objectives of the session: Joint conclusions and next steps.

12.45 – 13.30

Lunch break

14.00 – 16.30

Study visit

- Presentation of the host project
- Governance and partnership setup
- Financing and regulatory solutions
- Concrete outcomes and lessons learned



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- Q&A with implementers

Objectives of the session: Participants see a real example with tangible results. The aim is not promotion, but honest reflection on what worked and what didn't.

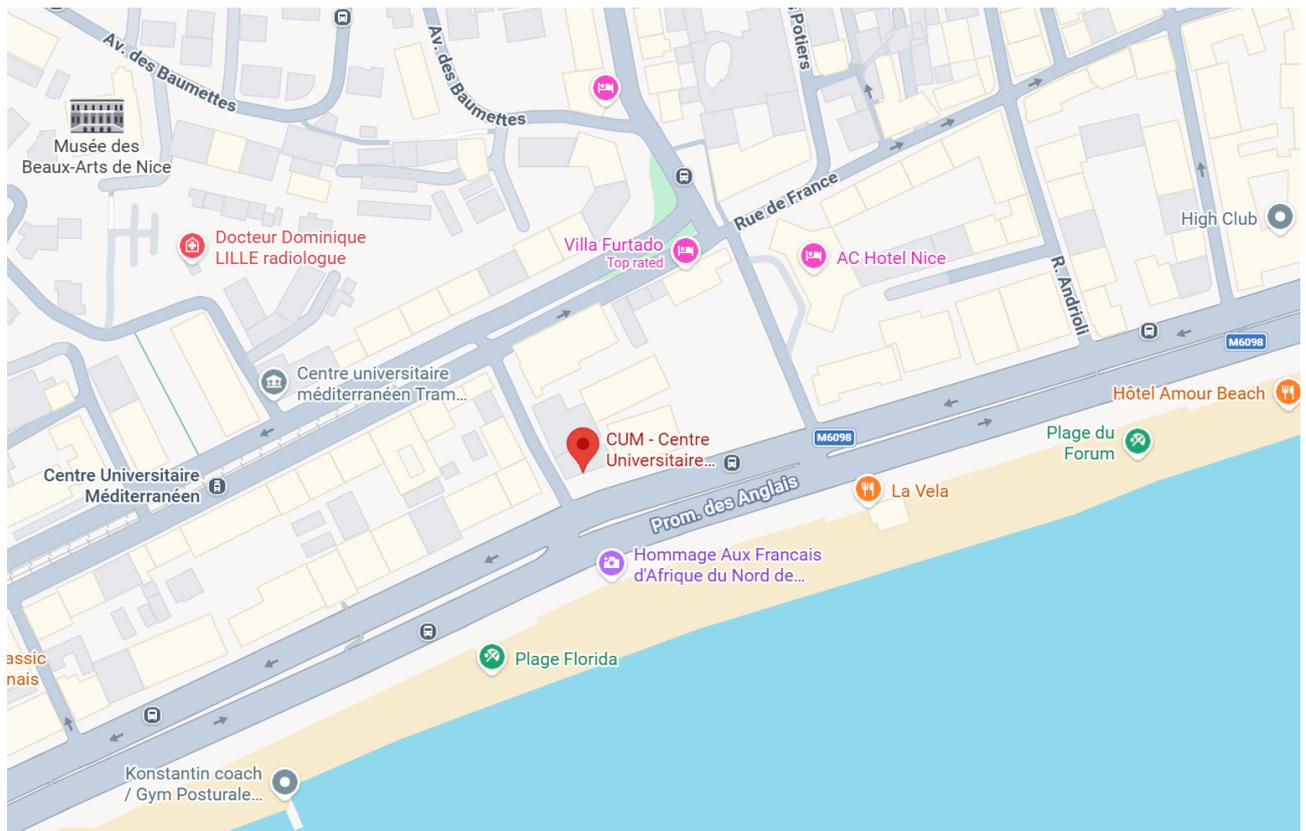
16.30 – 17.00

Final remarks and event closure

Practicalities

Venue

Centre Universitaire Méditerranéen,
65 Promenade des Anglais, 06000 Nice, France



Travel

By Plane

Nice Airport (NCE) is about 20 minutes from the CUM by Tramway (L2 Direction Port Lympia) from “Airport Terminal 1 or 2” to “Centre Universitaire Méditerranéen”. You can buy your ticket at ticket vending machines for 1.70€ one-way.



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By Train

Nice's main train station is Nice-Ville Station. You can book your ticket here. From Nice Ville, you can walk 10 min to take the Tramway (L2 Direction Airport or L3 Direction Saint-Isidore/CADAM) from "Jean Médecin" (underground station) to "Centre Universitaire Méditerranéen".

Study visit

Located in the city of Nice.

Key features:

- strong thematic relevance in relation to sustainable urban development, territorial innovation, smart cities and resilience
- close connection with the academic and research environment, offering valuable insights into governance models, technology transfer and capacity-building
- availability of laboratories, collaborative platforms, innovation spaces and concrete projects related to technologies for territorial and environmental development

Peer-to-Peer Video Interviews: Sharing the Real Story

As part of the event, Interact will organize **peer-to-peer video interviews** where participants with cooperation actions experience can share their insights directly with fellow practitioners. These **voluntary, short interviews will be recorded on-site and later produced as promotional videos**.

The format is simple: **experienced participants interview other participants** and get interviewed in return. The focus is on practical aspects, honest reflections, and what motivates people to engage in cooperation actions. Interested participants are invited to volunteer and will have the opportunity to promote their projects while contributing to a growing library of real-world testimonies that inspire and guide others taking their first steps in cooperation actions.

If you'd like to participate, please indicate your interest at stoyan.kanatov@interact.eu