

2028-2034 Programming Process

Phases and activities

April 2026

Phase 1: Strategic Launch and Visioning

This stage is about aligning the “political will” across the different countries and regions involved.

- **Joint Programming Committee:** Setting up the decision-making body (representatives from all participating countries) that will oversee the development of the programme.
- **Programming Team (Task Force):** Set up in the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat (internal, external, or hybrid) and agree on the working approach and timeline.
- **Agreement on the Vision & Mission:** A high-level agreement on what the programme wants to achieve. This involves deciding whether to focus on continuity (building on 2021-2027) or to pivot toward new challenges.
- **Agreement on the Roles and Responsibilities:** Deciding on the location of the Managing Authority and Joint Secretariat.
- **Agreement on the Programme Area:** Continuation with the same area or making changes to the current one (2021-2027).
- **Territorial Analysis (Socio-Economic Profile):**
 - Use of the “border profiles” prepared by ESPON (a comprehensive, harmonised data, maps and analyses for cross-border and transnational regions within the EU and EFTA).
 - External experts or the Joint Secretariat/Managing Authority (in-house) conduct an analysis of the programme areas’ strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT).

Phase 2: Thematic Scoping & Consultation

Once the analysis is completed, the programme must narrow its focus to specific EU Policy Objectives.

- **Selection of Policy Objectives and Interreg Specific Objectives:** Deciding which of the main EU objectives (e.g. *Smarter Europe*, *Greener Europe*) the programme will fund.
- **Intervention Strategy:** Draft it based on an analysis of territorial needs and gaps in the area covered. Identify measures for cooperation and explain how these measures are expected to contribute to the policy objectives and Interreg specific objectives.
- **Decide on the use of Performance-Based Approaches.**
- **Stakeholder Consultations:** How to select stakeholders, involve them and reflect their input to ensure the proposed strategy reflects actual needs.

Phase 3: Operational Framework & Budgeting

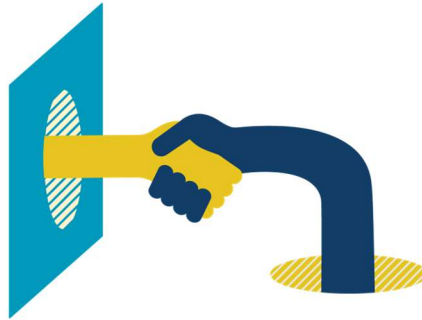
This phase moves from “what we want to do” to “how we will do it”.

- **Financial Allocation:**
 - Negotiating how much money each country will contribute to the programme from its envelope.
 - Negotiating how much of the total budget goes to each measure.
- **Define Financial Technical Implementation:**
 - Designing the programme’s financial flow considering the milestones and targets.
 - Deciding on the use of Simplified Cost Options.
- **Arrangements for Effective Implementation and Monitoring of the Interreg Plan** including roles and responsibilities of the authorities.
- **Environmental Assessments:** Conducting a Strategic Environmental Assessment to ensure the programme’s planned activities do not significantly harm the environment.
- **Programme’s Approach to Horizontal Principles**, do no significant harm principle, etc.

Phase 4: Finalisation and Submission

The final stretch involves translating the strategy into the official *Interreg Chapter* template.

- **Final Public Consultation:** Presenting the near-final draft to the public for one last round of feedback.
- **National Approval Processes:** Each participating country must formally approve the document through their respective ministries or cabinets.
- **Submission to the European Commission:** The process of drafting and including in the Interreg Chapter
- **Approval by the European Commission (negotiations):** After submission, the Commission may return with "observations" (questions or requests for changes). The Managing Authority must address these before the Commission issues the final Implementing Decision.



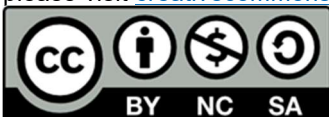
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Furthermore, understanding and knowledge evolves throughout the programming period. If you spot a something out of date or inconsistent, please contact us at communication@interact.eu

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