

# Enhancing cooperation programmes beyond 2027: What can programmes do to be ready for the future?

**EU Neighbours in action: Knowledge across borders | 19-20 May 2026**

## Overview

The session focused on the future of cooperation programmes, with particular emphasis on post-2027 developments. The session provided space for programmes to share experiences from previous programming periods and contribute their needs and expectations for the future. It included a panel discussion where participants heard key messages from experts and EC representatives on the future of territorial cooperation and learned from their experience and perspectives.

## Methodology

The session was conducted in an interactive format combining a short introductory presentation providing updates on post-2027 developments, a panel discussion with experts, EC representatives and programmes, and an interactive activity with participants through guided questions and feedback collection.

## Key discussion points

The panel discussion focused on preparations for the post-2027 programming period, including the latest developments in regulations, policy priorities, timelines, and expected changes. The session also highlighted the importance of stakeholder and civil society involvement in programme development and implementation. Panellists emphasized the added value of territorial cooperation in building long-term partnerships and addressing shared regional challenges. Programmes reflected on lessons learned from the 2014–2020 and 2021–2027 periods. During the interactive activity, programmes identified the main challenges related to programming, which were collected and attached to this report as Annex 1.

## Main takeaways

Clear demand for capacity building and increased opportunities for exchange, reflecting a strong interest in learning from peers and sharing experiences across programmes;  
Further clarity on Global Europe and how territorial cooperation will be positioned within it is needed;  
The performance framework is seen as a key challenge and programmes need further support;  
Measuring cooperation results becomes difficult when trying to capture qualitative effects (like trust-building, cooperation dynamics, or emotions).

## Follow-up actions / next steps

Interact to follow legal developments, look at how to enable further exchange, and provide support where needed. Programmes to integrate lessons learned into future programme design processes.

## Session team

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## Annex 1 Challenges in the programming - overview

### Strategic launch

TOPICS	VOTES
Setting up of Programming Committees / Task Forces + Selection of right representatives	8
Effective application of partnership principle	6
Agreement on the programme territory / bringing in new territories	6
Territorial analysis – methodologies, data etc.	17
Agreement on governance structures such as MA / JS	0

### Thematic scoping and consultations

Selection of Policy objectives and defining the strategic focus	9
Building of the intervention logic and understanding the performance based approach (PBA)	22
Coordination and harmonization across programmes	9
Stakeholder consultations – engagement and usability of inputs	14

### Operational framework and budgeting

Designing the programme budget	9
Use of simplified cost options	12
Strategic environmental assessment and do no significant harm principle	4
Programme implementation procedures and approaches	15

### Finalisation and submission

National approval process	7
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Structure and limitations of the Interreg chapter	17
Negotiations with the European Commission	1
Financing Agreement	15

**Any other issues, what?**

- How the national controllers will adapt themselves to the new PBA
- Clear understanding of PBA
- Clear principles for the application of procurement in IPA countries
- Bottom-up approach in IPA–IPA countries for the drafting of the Guidelines for Applicants
- Rules on the application of procurement procedures
- Costing guidelines
- How to improve operational agreements in IPA–IPA programmes
- Stable TA budget to continue working
- Audit still requires heavy-duty checks and balances - PBA at that level is questionable
- Allowing use of SCO in IPA–IPA projects
- Alignment between PBA and SCOs approval by AA/EC
- Capacity of the programme stakeholders