

Citizen's summary of the 2016 annual implementation report of the Interact III 2014-2020 programme

What is the Interact III cooperation programme (Interact III) about?

The European Union cohesion policy has made substantial amounts of financial support available in the 2014-2020 programming period, most of which is used to finance national and regional programmes under the Investment for Growth and Jobs goal. In addition, a smaller amount is available for the second goal of the cohesion policy; namely, European Territorial Cooperation (ETC, also called Interreg).

Interreg is a key instrument in addressing the common challenges and obstacles existing at border regions and transnational cooperation areas, in sharing experiences, and in elaborating common development strategies within the EU cohesion policy. Interact III is one of these Interreg programmes.

Compared to national or regional programmes, Interreg programmes operate in a more complex multi-national environment. Furthermore, their budget is usually smaller that make their results less tangible and visible. In order to enhance their effectiveness and efficiency, new and simplified programme management approaches are necessary and there is a great deal of lessons that Interreg programmes can learn from each other.

And this is exactly where Interact III supports the other Interreg programmes. The overall objective of our programme is therefore to exchange experience and identify and transfer good practises in implementing territorial cooperation. In doing so, we focus on improving three specific areas:

- The management and control capacity of Interreg programmes;
- Interreg's capacity in capturing and communicating programme results;
- The capacity to implement innovative approaches to cooperation (e.g. through European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation, macro-regional strategies and cooperation with national or regional programmes).

Interact has four decentralised offices around Europe in Turku (Finland), Valencia (Spain), Viborg (Denmark) and Vienna (Austria) that are in charge of providing the above-mentioned support to our target groups. Our management bodies (Managing Authority and interact Secretariat, Certifying Authority and Audit Authority) are based in Bratislava, Slovakia.

What did we do in 2016?

Implementation of our programme started on 1 January 2016 and until the end of the year we delivered to our target groups – the bodies responsible for managing Interreg programmes:

- 72 events (from tailor-made advisory services on specific issues through trainings, seminars, workshops and network meetings and conferences);
- 46 tools (including guidance material such as handbooks and studies, document templates, online information, databases, monitoring system software, training and promotional videos, EU-wide promotional campaigns, etc.).

We also operate 12 online communities where Interreg programme managers can seek answers for their operational or more strategic issues, share experiences and good practises.

Some examples

Here are some examples of Interact outputs from 2016:

- **Training and other events:** Organising seminars, workshops, trainings and other events represents the core of Interact's work. In 2016 we organised several events, addressing a diverse range of areas and issues relevant for the Interreg community, e.g. how to develop the evaluation plan of Interreg programmes (Evaluation Plan workshop, 11-12 February, Thessaloniki) or network meetings for programme bodies to facilitate exchange of experiences and good practises (Certifying Authority network meeting, 15 March, Barcelona).
- **Interreg Project Management and Project Finance camps:** These are several-days-long training events for those colleagues of programme bodies who directly work with and support beneficiaries in implementing their projects (e.g. Project Management Camp, 8-10 March, Prague). These trainings therefore not only focus on project life cycle or project financial flows but also on soft skills (e.g. presentation and facilitation) to improve the way these colleagues work with the projects.
- **eMS monitoring system:** Interact has developed and is continuously further developing a complete monitoring system called eMS. Based on legal requirements, each Interreg programme is obliged to use such a monitoring system – an IT system that facilitates for project owners to apply for funding and submit reports, etc. On the other hand, programme bodies use these systems to monitor projects, to share data with each other and with the European Commission. eMS is available off-the-shelf and comes free for Interreg programmes. In 2016, we published several software updates and organised meetings for users of the system.
- **European Cooperation Day 2016:** EC Day is a communication campaign that aims at introducing what Interreg programmes do and what impact European cooperation can have on the life of citizens, by organising local promotional events all over Europe. As in each year, Interact coordinated the campaign, supported the programmes organising events and also organised the kick-off event in Bratislava, Slovakia on 15 September 2016.

- **KEEP:** A huge, constantly updated, searchable database of territorial cooperation projects and beneficiaries that is freely accessible online for everyone. In 2016 – apart from adding new projects – we improved the user interface and the search functionality and added several new thematic maps.

What about spending?

The total spending of our beneficiaries and programme bodies is expected to be approximately EUR 4,3 million once all financial reports are received.

Do you need further information?

Should you need further information about Interact III, please don't hesitate to visit our [website](#) or get in touch with us at interact@interact-eu.net.