



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Neighbourhood Programmes 2004-2006 Electronic Newsletter

Issue 1 –December 2004

Introduction

Welcome to the first Neighbourhood Programmes newsletter. This newsletter is a development of the INTERREG-Tacis newsletter which has appeared in the last few years to inform interested parties about the improvements in co-ordination of the two instruments.

So, why the change in name? Well, as many of you will be aware, the Commission has begun to address how co-operation along the external borders of the European Union should be supported in the next programming period (2007-2013). The Commission Communication “Paving the Way for a New Neighbourhood Instrument” of 1 July 2003 ([click here](#)) set out a two-stage approach to improving co-operation possibilities. For the future, the Commission proposed to examine ways of creating a single instrument which could operate both inside and outside the Union in equal measure. However, the Commission also recognised that it was not realistic to simply propose this for 2007 onwards without addressing the current situation. So, for 2004-2006, the Commission introduced the concept of Neighbourhood Programmes, based on the existing INTERREG programmes along the border. These are explained in greater detail below.

This newsletter is for your benefit. The aim is to keep you fully informed about progress with these Programmes. If you have any comments, then please let us know. Our address is Regio-territorial-cooperation@cec.eu.int

What are Neighbourhood Programmes?

In 2002, the Commission began to reflect on how, after enlargement, an overarching policy approach to the EU’s neighbouring countries could be developed. The result was the Wider Europe Communication of March 2003.

A key element of the Communication was the idea of a specific Instrument which would support cross-border co-operation along the external borders of the Union, and which would not suffer the co-ordination difficulties faced by existing programmes trying to combine funding from INTERREG, Phare, Tacis, CARDS and MEDA. This concept was developed into a Neighbourhood Communication which set out a two stage process for introducing such an Instrument.

The first stage concerns the 2004-2006 period and involves the development of Neighbourhood Programmes as a half-way step in the process. These build on current INTERREG programmes and include the following key features:

- the programmes enable funding to be allocated on both sides of the external border;
- the programme's priorities take account of necessary objectives and activities on both sides of the border;
- the rules governing the programme's management and committee structures ensure a balanced membership from both sides of the border, and include appropriate Commission representation. A single application procedure and joint decision making for project selection will operate, covering both sides of the border.

The total volume of funding provided by the European Union for these programmes over the period 2004-06 is €955 million, representing €700m from INTERREG, €75m from Tacis, €45m from CARDS, €45m from Meda, and €90m from PHARE. Additional co-financing will also be provided by national, regional and local levels as appropriate. It is clear that the funding available is rather unbalanced. Nevertheless, this the most funding ever made available for co-operation along the external borders of the Union, and it is crucial that the best possible use is made of the funds over the next few years, in order to demonstrate the viability of these actions for the future.

When will they start working?

Now! Each Neighbourhood Programme must be formally approved by the Commission, with this approval also fixing the amount of European Union funding for the Member State parts of each programme. A separate financing agreement with each non-Member State is then signed in order to allow the Commission to release funding to the programme for use in the non-Member State concerned.

There has been a great deal of work during 2004 among the various countries concerned in drawing up programme documents, agreeing priorities for co-operation and organising management structures. These "background" procedures are now ready, for the most part, and calls for projects will soon be launched for several programmes.

Many of the Neighbourhood Programmes have already been signed, and the financing agreements with the non-Member States are in the process of being signed. For exact details on the latest state of play, please visit the appropriate programme's website – see the table below for hyperlinks.

What about the "second stage" - after 2007?

From 2007, the Commission has developed its thinking since the initial Communication in 2003, and has now proposed that external border co-operation actions will be supported through two key instruments: the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) and the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA). The first of these will support action at the Union's borders in the East and in the Mediterranean, while the IPA will support action at the Union's borders with candidate and potential candidate countries.

The Commission is proposing that cross-border programmes under both instruments will have a Structural Fund-type structure, being multi-annual, with project selection decentralised to the participating countries, and likely to be managed on a shared management basis. They will be able to support the same mix of economic and social cohesion actions and external affairs issues as the Neighbourhood Programmes for 2004-2006, with the exact choice of topics to be decided by the programme partners themselves.

The Commission adopted proposed regulations for these two instruments on 29 September. The texts can be found [here for the ENPI](#), and here for the IPA. Both regulations are currently under discussion in the Council.

Co-operation among Member States will continue to be covered under the Structural Funds via the proposed new Territorial Co-operation Objective. A summary of the Commission's proposals for the future of regional policy can be found [here](#).

Neighbourhood Programme websites and contacts

Remember: for all programme information, application procedures and project details, contact the programme secretariats, not the Commission!

Programme	Website	Commission contact
Cross-border programmes		
South-East Finland	www.kaakkoissuomen-interreg.fi	Aiga Berçe
Karelia	www.karjala-interreg.fi	Aiga Berçe
Nord	www.interregnord.com	Ann-Kerstin Myleus
Estonia/Latvia/Russia	www.bsrinterreg.net/3a	Aiga Berçe
Latvia/Lithuania/Belarus	www.bsrinterreg.net/3a	Aiga Berçe
Lithuania/Poland/Kaliningrad		Agata Kosin
Poland/Belarus/Ukraine	www.interreg.gov.pl	Agata Kosin
Hungary/Slovakia/Ukraine		Peter Fischer
Hungary/Romania/Serbia & Montenegro		Fausta Corda
Slovenia/Hungary/Croatia	www.gov.si/arr/4eu-p/1p-8-interreg-c-new-a.html	Moray Gilland
Italy/Adriatic	www.regione.abruzzo.it/interadriatico/italiano/index.asp	Claudio Caruso
Italy/Albania	interreg.rete.puglia.it	Claudio Caruso
Greece/Albania	www.interreg.gr/en/	Christina Karaitidi
Greece/FYROM	www.interreg.gr/en/	Christina Karaitidi
Romania/Ukraine		To be confirmed
Romania/Moldova		To be confirmed
Bulgaria/Serbia & Montenegro		To be confirmed
Bulgaria/FYROM		To be confirmed
Spain/Morocco	www.igae.minhac.es/Fondos/Interreg3/interreg32.htm	Armando Miranda Cardoso
Gibraltar/Morocco	www.gibraltar.gov.gi	Maud Carlsson
Transnational programmes		
CADSES	www.cadses.net	Moray Gilland
Baltic Sea Region	www.bsrinterreg.net	Niels Bjerring Hansen
Archimed	www.interreg.gr/en/	Fausta Corda
Western Mediterranean	www.interreg-medocc.org	Claudio Caruso

Upcoming meetings

The Commission is planning a series of seminars in the Western Balkans at the beginning of 2005 in order to publicise the Neighbourhood Programmes and to provide an opportunity for networking among potential project partners. This follows a successful series of similar events in Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova this autumn. More details will follow.

The Polish authorities are holding an “International seminar on Neighbourhood Programmes” on 27-28 January in Warsaw. The target audience is programme authorities for Neighbourhood Programmes along the Eastern and South-Eastern borders of the European Union. More information is available at www.interact-eu.net/4107/0/0/582273.

If programme authorities wish to advertise programme-specific events in this newsletter, then please send details to the Regio-territorial-cooperation@cec.eu.int.

The Final Tacis CBC SPF call – March 2004

The Tacis cross-border co-operation small project facility will end this year, as the funding allocated to it will be part of the Tacis funds allocated to the Neighbourhood Programmes from now on. The final call for projects closed in March, but the signing of contracts has been delayed due to some of the beneficiary countries not signing the necessary financing agreement.

The financing agreements have now either been signed or are on the point of being signed and the contracting should be completed in the near future. Once this is done, a list of projects will be included in a future Neighbourhood Programme newsletter for information.

Distribution

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For all subscription enquiries, please contact Regio-territorial-cooperation@cec.eu.int, indicating “Neighbourhood Programmes newsletter” in the subject of your message.

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