10. Data in Interreg

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Data in Interreg, opportunities for more with less effort

This report is one of the [Post 2027 Consultation reports](#).

Overview

It was noted during the consultation that data collection and use within Interreg, and EU funding more widely, is fragmented and inefficient. Given how quickly data has become a technological determinist, there is an opportunity that reviewing the context of data in Interreg, and ideally in the wider EU context, could both reduce the administrative burden, and promote greater openness and transparency.

The entire project and programme life-cycle takes place through data entered into a few dozen monitoring and reporting systems. However, despite the regulatory establishment of the systems, the functions and flows of data are not calibrated or established with best practices or templates.

Methodology

The content of this report was collected from feedback from several project groups within Interreg, such as the User Group representing all programmes using the Joint Electronic Monitoring System (Jems), the IT-tools and monitoring systems network, the Interreg Data Exchange platform (INDEX) team, as well as the keep.eu 3.0 group. Additionally, sectoral events, including one on the requirements of Article 36 of the Interreg regulation, provided key input. The text of this report was taken to the Harvesting event and supported by the discussions made during the one-hour drop-in session.

Data in Interreg, is working, but there is an opportunity to improve

Future monitoring system

Despite having 86 programmes hosted in different organisations and countries, the majority of programmes are supported by a singular monitoring system, **Jems.** Developed by Interact, but co-created with Interreg programmes, Jems is built on the harmonised and simplified agreements achieved by HIT (Harmonised Implementation Tools).

A jointly developed community system is seen as the most economical way to build a monitoring system. In addition to direct procurement savings, it also facilitates and enables greater harmonisation of programme procedures, which in turn reduces the administrative burden on applicants, as well as others involved in the management of Interreg programmes (i.e, Auditors and Controllers).

The current monitoring system was designed for continued use into the next period, so significant changes to the basic premise of managing programmes and projects would threaten this, and mean another significant investment of time, money and resources would be needed. While the system will need an update for the new period generally, further changes to the regulatory environment will require additional updates to meet any new requirements. This could either be done individually by each programme, or centrally by Interact, subject to resources and other constraints.

Interreg at the forefront of common indicators

The close collaboration between Interact, Interreg and the European Semester Unit (ESU) on the use of Indicators in Interreg has been a powerful collaboration. In spite of the specificities of Interreg, 90% of the indicators used in the 2021-2027 period are common. This would enable a data-based collation of 90% of Interreg work.

Most of the indicators work well, but a few need to be adjusted in the period ahead. The close collaboration between Interreg evaluation officers facilitated by Interact and supported by ESU is welcome and is key to making these revisions successful[1].

The use of common indicators, and the positive approach to them is a symbolic representation of the cooperation mindset. Programmes are not seeking to build islands but to build a community of shared knowledge, transferrable solutions, and best practices.

Interreg data management

In spite of the common monitoring system, and a common reporting tool (SFC), **data movements** are not efficient or streamlined. There is strong potential to improve this in the future period and achieve both a reduction in the burden on programmes, as well as improving the accuracy and reliability of data on Interreg, which is hosted on platforms such as keep.eu, Kohesio and the Open Data Platform.

In this context, Interact is also exploring a new BI dashboard tool, Index, which is in an experimental phase during the current period. The tool enables automated data exchange and visualisation across programmes, from the application phase onward. This approach presents a learning opportunity to assess how automated, real-time data integration might support more efficient fund management, help prevent duplicate funding, and foster stronger synergies between programmes. The insights gained

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[1] See Stock taking of common Interreg indicators in 2021-2027

through the Index's experimental use guide considerations for more integrated data solutions in future periods.

In particular, having a more foresighted approach to reporting and transmitting data would be advantageous for all. While in general continuity is preferred, it was suggested that **two data movements per annum** would reduce the overall burden of transmitting data to the various places it is required. Doing this would enable a stronger focus on what should be transmitted at this point and reduce the need for more frequent, disparate calls for information and updates.

In planning for two larger data movements, it could also be possible to be more holistic in considering what is needed to be reported at all. For instance, fields that are not relevant, already recorded or retrievable from other registers should not need to be inputted.

More **automated data transmissions, built on clear templates**, with harmonised and standardised field titles and more, could also further reduce complexity and ensure a more regular understanding of what has been achieved in real-time. This would also address another challenge, of ensuring data is always available in an open and machine-readable format without additional administrative burden.

Such a standardised transmission would enable databases like **keep.eu** to pick up the reported data and quickly provide more updated information for those who should know what is being funded. In this way, keep.eu would be able to provide a timely overview of implementation, in calls (as required by Art 49, 2 CPR) as well as of contracted partners. There would also be the opportunity to consider other such data (i.e. EU funding volume committed to projects) to ensure that there is reliable data on the implementation of programmes. This overview would enable programmes, national authorities, and the Commission to benchmark the implementation of Interreg programmes, and understand the reality of implementation.

Such a forward-looking approach would naturally use **basic data transmission and management tools**, such as ETL (Extract, Transform and Load) systems, as well as APIs from monitoring systems such as Jems.

A data-based vision for the future

Whilst being aware of administrative and technical limitations, it is possible to have future Interreg programmes using forward looking monitoring software designed for multi-period use, to provide better quality and more reliable data.

This would create a singular overview of where Interreg is in implementation, with 86 programmes updating the picture every six months, alongside more automated live data exchange built on simple harmonised templates. This would enable the programmes to understand their timeline in the context of programmes around them.

It would also enable the wider Interreg community to be able to point to its local contribution, in a wider context of where all of Interreg is working locally, and in the context of wider efforts on the policy priorities of the European Union.

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