



European Policies
Research Centre

Civil Society and Civic Engagement in Interreg

**Irene McMaster, Nathalie
Wergles and Heidi Vironen**

15 November 2023

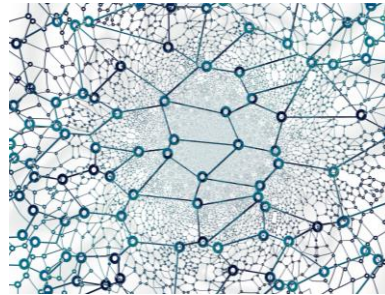


CIVIL SOCIETY AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN INTERREG



Context

- Past experience
- 2021-27 Regulations
- Opportunities



Map

- Keep.eu
- Questionnaire
- Focus group
- Interviews



Observations

- Barriers and successes
- Good practice





Advantages

- Accountability and transparency
- Quality
- Inclusion
- Empowerment
- Investment/engagement in success/issues
- Facilitates implementation
- New ideas/solutions
- Improved understanding of issues
- Learning and knowledgesharing
- Contribution to communication
- Contribution to capitalisation

Challenges

- Time and resource intensive
- Builds expectations which may not be realistic
- Challenging to ensure balance and representativeness and avoid conflict of interest
- Requires skills, expertise and capacity
- Variations in skills languages and capacities within the programme area



Three horizontal bars are positioned at the top left of the slide: a dark blue bar, a light blue bar, and a yellow bar.

DEFINITION

“Civic engagement refers to the active engagement of (organised and unorganised) civil society in decision-making that concerns issues of public interest.”

- *difficult to define (difference between CE on project and programme level)*
- *take into account differentiation between public engagement and more targeted civil society engagement*
- *mindful of the different contexts*

Pillars/Levels of Engagement

Information

- initial level of participation
- One way provision of information

Consultation

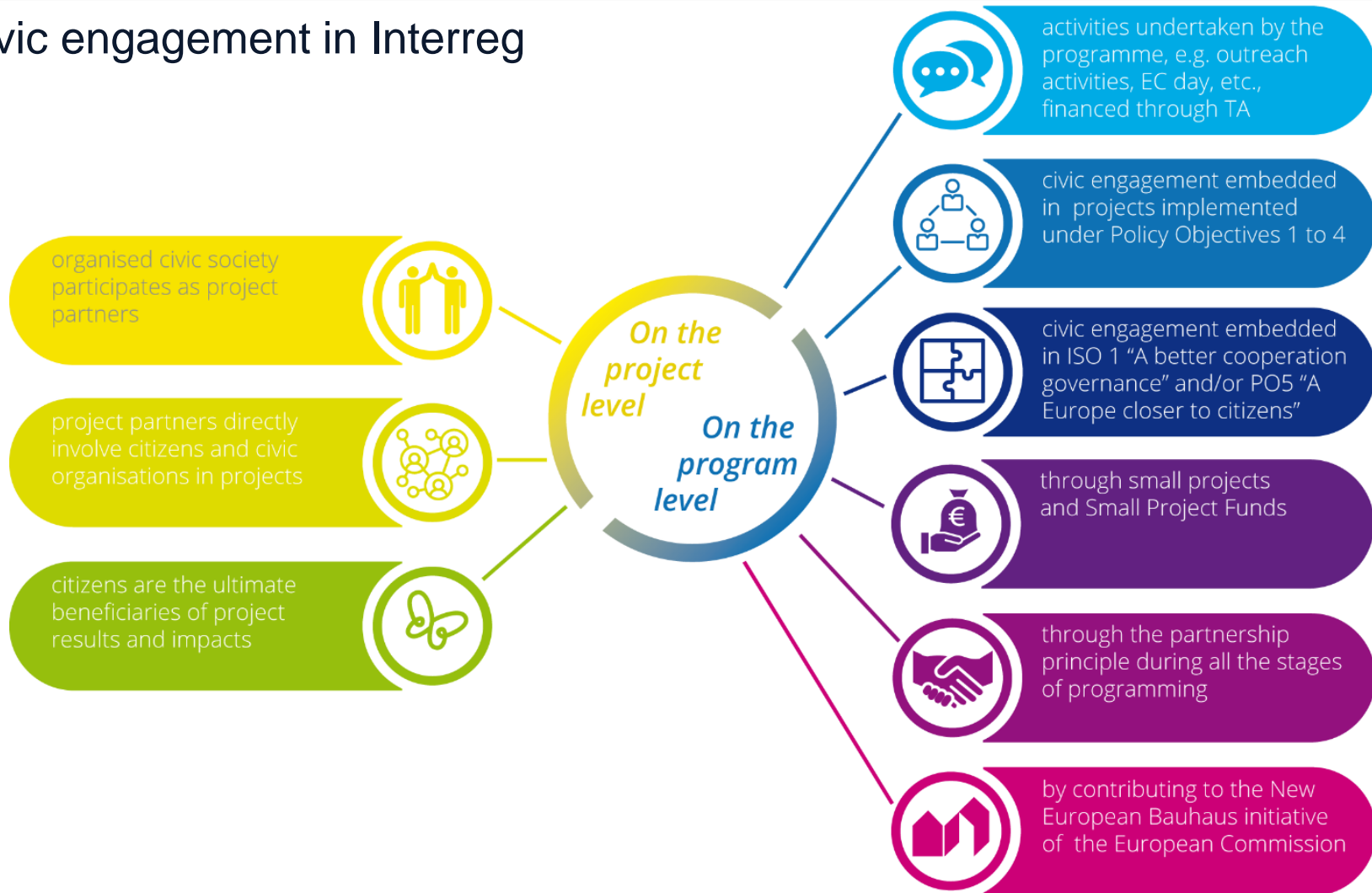
- Two way relationship
- Requires information and feedback on outcomes

Engagement

- stakeholders given opportunity and resources to collaborate during all phases of policy cycle



Civic engagement in Interreg



ON THE PROJECT LEVEL

Keywords	Search results
“participatory”	252 projects
“public participation”	13 projects
“public engagement”	6 projects
“civic engagement”	15 projects
“civic participation”	8 projects
“Bürgerbeteiligung”	8 projects
“participación ciudadana”	7 projects
“participation citoyenne”	8 projects
“co-creation”	19 projects
“co-design”	99 projects
“citizen science”	30 projects
SUM	~450 projects

BUT:

- “Public participation and engagement” is understood very differently in projects
- Different levels of participation (information, consultation, engagement) and objectives (promotion of civic engagement as core focus, means of delivery, dissemination or capitalisation)

Keep.eu keyword search of 2014-2020 projects

- 
- Though PO 1-4
 - Simplification measures
 - Digital platforms
 - Facilitation and meetings
 - Communication and capitalisation

- PO 5 “ A Europe closer to citizens”
 - Selection of ISO 1 “A better cooperation governance”
- Small-scale projects and Small Project Funds



- 
- Activities financed through TA
 - Partnership principle
 - Informing programme development
 - Programme management arrangements
 - New European Bauhaus
 - Wider collaboration

MAXIMISING CIVIC AND CSO ROLE IN PROJECTS



Monitoring and mapping CSO engagement



Practical/administrative measures and steps



Simplification



Digital platforms



Facilitation and meetings



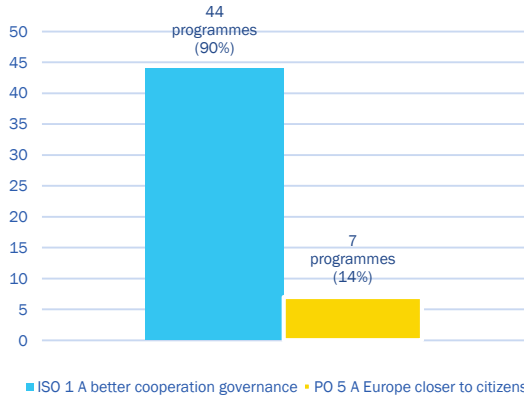
Small scale projects/small project fund



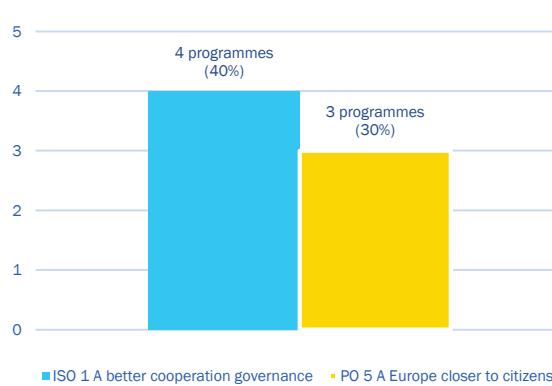
Communication and capitalisation support

MAXIMISING CIVIC AND CSO ORIENTED PROJECTS IN PROGRAMMES

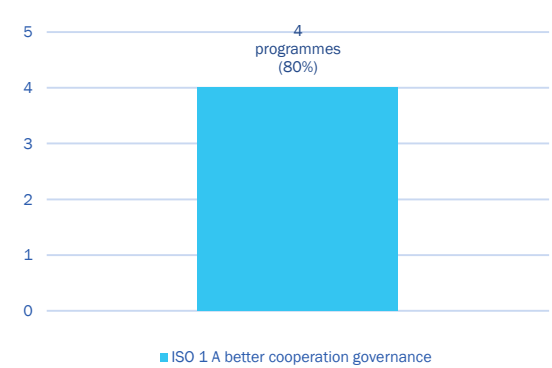
Cross-border cooperation



Cross-border cooperation (pre-accession)



Cross-border cooperation (neighbouring)



Transnational cooperation



Interregional cooperation

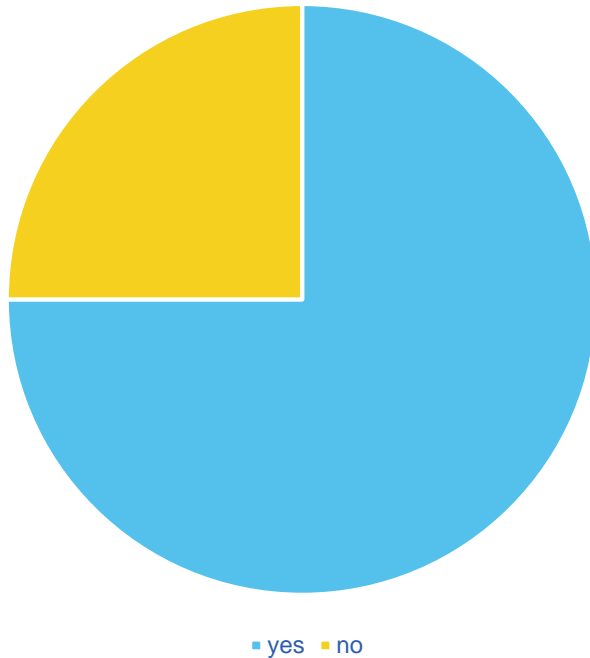


Number of programmes prioritising ISO 1 and PO5

MAXIMISING CSO ROLE IN PROGRAMMES

- Informing programme development
 - Consultation
- Programme management and implementation roles
 - MC Membership
 - Advisory
 - Voting rights
- TA activities
- New European Bauhaus
- Wider collaboration

Have you used/do you plan to use in the 2021-27 period novel/innovative approaches to civil society engagement as compared to previous periods



- There are new ideas and approaches
- Fruitful area for further exchange

QUESTIONS AND POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

- **Involvement of CSOs in MC/SC:** Do you see a potential conflict of interest if also programme target group?
- **Boosting civil society participation in projects:** Pros and cons of providing active help and support to CSOs to submit a project or of incentivizing civil society participation through specific project selection criteria?
- **Guidance and capacity building for beneficiaries:** What are good practices of citizens engagement observed in projects that could be included in guide? What could be done on the programme level to build up capacities in beneficiaries?