

# Cooperation and synergies with other EU funds and instruments

Interreg Knowledge Fair session report | March 2024

## Overview

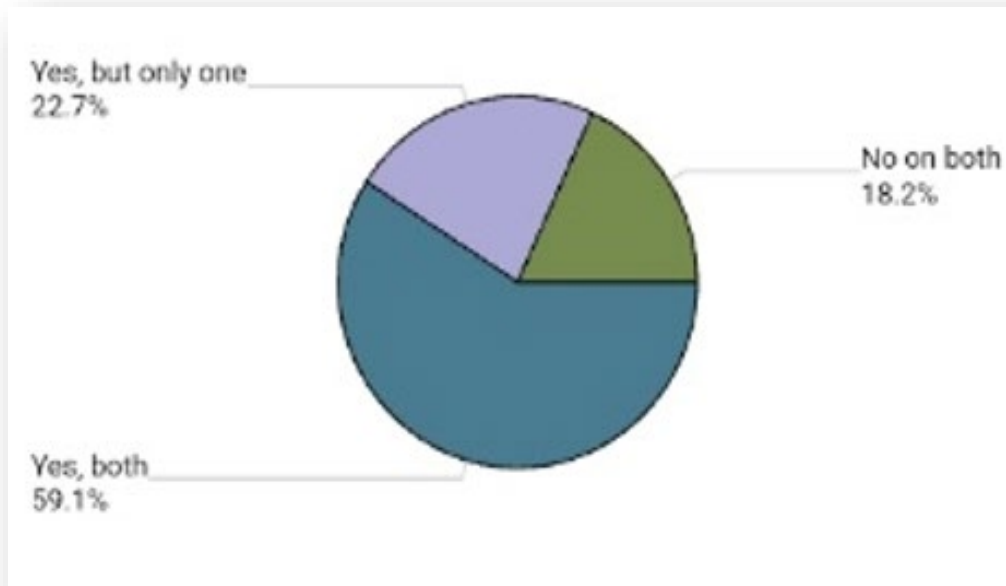
Interreg is actively engaged in initiatives that closely align with the objectives of other EU funds. Projects funded under the RRF, ESF+, Horizon, Just Transition, and other programs can also find support through Interreg. This raises pertinent questions about the program's prioritisation of working in synergy with other funds. Identifying which programs and funds are most relevant to Interreg is crucial for strategic positioning. To achieve this, it may be necessary to provide a more specific reference to the expectations set by legislators regarding complementarities and synergies in the regulation. Current experiences can offer valuable insights into ensuring better alignment and cooperation among these funds, avoiding overlaps, and fostering complementarities and synergies. Practical steps must be taken to establish links with IJG funds and ensure the transfer and mainstreaming of Interreg results in the future. This requires a proactive approach to collaboration and coordination across different funding mechanisms to maximise impact and achieve common objectives.

Around 40 Interreg participated in the discussion. The session counted on the active participation of Esteller Roger (DG REGIO), who shared some reflections.

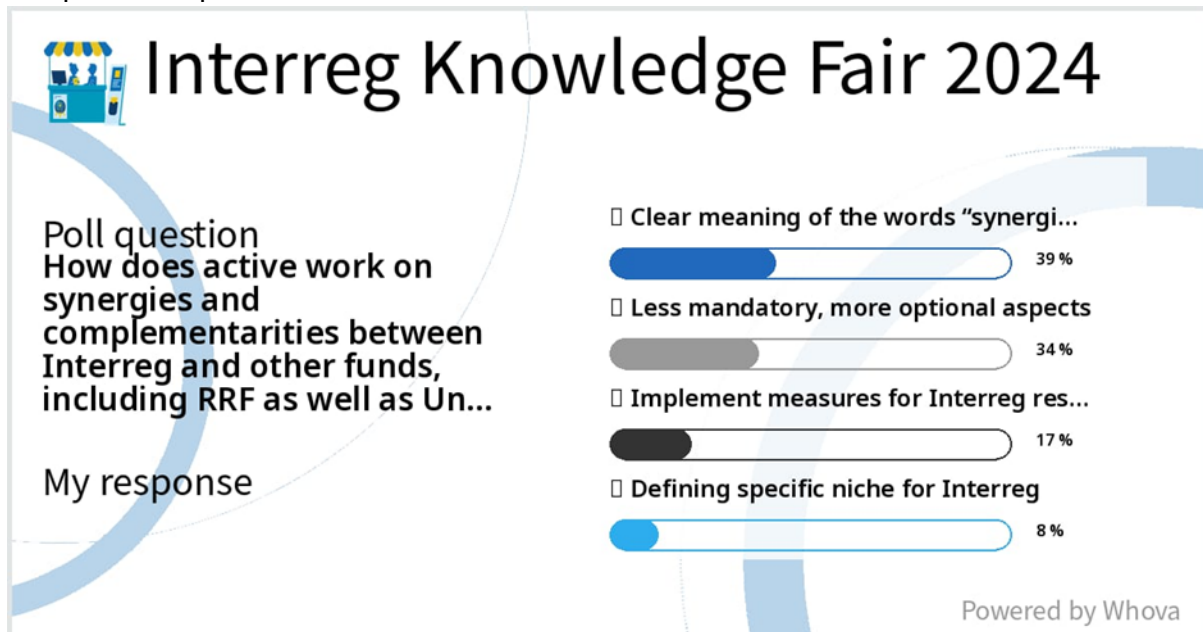
## Methodology

In early February, a survey was shared with programmes, which provided insights. One response was collected per programme for a total of 22 responses.

This resulted from the question: **Active work to build synergies with other EU policy instruments and funds will lead to better efficiency and effectiveness.**



Whova also asked questions to complete the context with the following answers. 26 people completed the pools.





The topics discussed in the room were:

1. Setting the current context, HLG report and current regulations.
2. Short overview of how other Funds and programmes consider synergies in their regulations.
3. Programmes: Discussion on what worked well and what can be improved. Is there anything new? Is there a specific niche for Interreg? Suggestions for post 27.
4. Conclusions and feedback from EC

## Key discussion points

### What is working?

There are good experiences on the complementarities between Interreg and other funds. Some are driven by the programmes through programme design, specific calls, as well as capitalisation efforts, and others by the project partners, with no intervention from the programme's side.

Several programmes shared specific examples of their experiences, for example, Interreg A GR-BU reflected on their experience implementing infrastructure projects that are closely linked with ERDF and National Funds' investments. Further examples were provided by IT-SL, Atlantic Area, IPA ADRION, and Baltic Sea Region programmes.

### What can be improved?

**Conceptual Clarification:** To ensure a common understanding, concepts such as synergies, complementarity, harmonious cooperation, and capitalization need to be defined and clarified. Examples:

- Synergies: Sets of connections resulting in problem-solving from appropriate instruments
- Complementarity: Precondition for synergy: Good communication and Good understanding
- Harmonious Cooperation: Efficient use of resources. And Multiplication of impact
- Capitalisation: Spreading/Transferring the results of projects in the territories

- Promotion: Making Interreg better known, emphasising its role in the territory.

**Relevance and Visibility:** Enhancing the relevance of Interreg in comparison to other funds and improving INTERREG visibility.

**Clear reference** to synergies with Interreg next to ERDF is other regulations

**Communication and Stakeholder Analysis:** Better communication across Interreg and other funds and a thorough stakeholder analysis are necessary.

**Roles Definition:** Clearly defining the roles of stakeholders responsible for ensuring complementarity between Interreg and other funds:

- EC: Promotion and liaison of Interreg in other DG's
- NCP and Regional authorities: Best link with regional Funds. And Sectorial Regional Strategies
- MA and JS. Facilitators
- SBS and MRS.
- Project partners
- Interact: Bring Direct management sectoral programmes together through thematic and geographic work groups. Thematic work to be enhanced.

### What would be your vision for the future?

Participants discussed the listed below points, voicing different opinions and possible practices how synergies could be addressed in the future:

- **Compulsory Synergies and Incentives:** Consider making synergies compulsory in regulations and establishing an incentives framework to encourage synergistic collaborations. Programme opinion on this point was divided, some strongly favouring strengthening of synergies aspect in the regulation, other arguing for a more flexible approach using the flexibility programmes have currently.
- **Resource Allocation:** Acknowledgment of the additional tasks and workload for programmes involved in synergies, necessitating allocating more resources.
- **Creation of Liaison Officers:** Introduction of a new position of "Liaison Officers" at both programme and EU levels to facilitate communication and coordination.
- **Awareness and Guiding Documents:** Emphasize the importance of working in complementarities throughout the programming, implementation, and evaluation phases, and provide guiding documents for applicants and programmes to define responsibilities clearly.

### Regulations and articles of particular significance

#### CPR.

- Preamble
- Art 11.1 b iii: Partnership agreement. the AMIF, the ISF, the BMVI, and other Union instruments, including LIFE strategic integrated projects and strategic nature projects, and, where appropriate, projects funded under Horizon Europe;
- Art 22. 3 a) Content of the Programmes

#### Interreg Regulation.

- art 17.3 b) ii /
- Template for programmes.

Interreg is not mentioned in any other regulations of funds with whom it should work within complementarities.

### **Conclusions, plans for followed up**

Although there are few instances of synergy between Interreg and other funds, there's a clear need for conceptual clarity, improved Interreg visibility and recognition as a funding instrument, stakeholder involvement, and strategic planning to enhance the effectiveness and relevance of such collaborations in the future.

There is some confusion among the programmes considering that if synergies are in the regulation, this means it should be compulsory. However, there are many other ways of introducing an article in this regard besides making it mandatory, such as through guidance and incentives.

All discussion elements will be followed at the next online event.

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