

Citizen's summary of the 2017 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 2017?

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:

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

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

Some examples

Here are some examples of our outputs from 2017:

- **Training and network events:** Organising seminars, workshops, trainings and other events represents the core of Interact's work. In 2017 we organised several events, addressing a wide range of areas and issues relevant for the Interreg community, e.g. how to build successful partnerships (25-26 October, Zagreb), basic programme management for beginners (19-20 April, Stockholm) or how to work with indicators and improve data collection methods (2-3 March, Florence) and of course network meetings for programme managers to facilitate exchange of experiences and good practises (e.g. for communication managers, audit authorities and certifying authorities).
- **Interreg portal:** we created a new portal that presents information of all Interreg programmes at one place, a true 'one-stop-shop' for potential beneficiaries and the general public. You can easily find out using an interactive map what programmes your country participates in, what thematic areas these programmes address and if there is an open call for projects at the moment. On the other hand the portal is used by Interreg programmes to publish news and success stories and even job openings.
- **European Cooperation Day:** EC Day is an annual communication campaign that aims at introducing what Interreg programmes do and what impact European cooperation can have on the life of citizens by means of local promotional events all over Europe. The campaign took place already for the sixth time in 2017. Interact coordinated the campaign and supported other cooperation programmes organising in total 73 events in 26 European countries. Interact itself organised the kick-off event in Tallinn, Estonia and a local activity in each city hosting an Interact Office, including a conference for students in Bratislava, a film festival in Valencia and an event in the Viborg international school to introduce European cooperation to pupils.
- **keep.eu:** A huge, constantly updated, searchable database of territorial cooperation projects and beneficiaries that is freely accessible online for everyone. Apart from extending the database with new projects we improved the usability of the system, and started adding project outputs as well.

What about spending?

The total expenditure of the programme certified until the end of 2017 amounts to EUR 4,418,415.

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.