

INTERREG EUROPE
1ST CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Overall objective of the programme

To improve the implementation of regional development policies, including Investment for jobs and growth goal programmes, by promoting the exchange of experiences, innovative approaches and capacity building in relation to the identification, dissemination and transfer of good practices among regional policy actors.

Interreg Europe is structured on the basis of the Interreg-specific objective 'a better cooperation governance' as the single objective of the programme.

Specific objectives

The programme also recognises the need to concentrate resources on those policy areas that are most relevant and urgent for regions in Europe. For this reason, the programme plans to indicatively concentrate the largest share of its budget (80%) on the thematic areas covered by a selection of specific objectives.

Share of programme budget	Policy objectives	Specific objectives
80%	1. Smarter Europe	All specific objectives: (i) Research and Innovation capacities, uptake of advanced technologies (ii) Digitisation for citizens, companies, research organisations and public authorities (iii) Sustainable growth and competitiveness of SMEs and job creation in SMEs, including by productive investments (iv) Skills for smart specialisation, industrial transition & entrepreneurship (v) Digital connectivity
	2. Greener Europe	All specific objectives: (i) Energy efficiency and reduction of greenhouse emissions (ii) Renewable energy (iii) Smart energy systems, grids and storage (iv) Climate change adaptation, disaster risk prevention, resilience (v) Access to water and sustainable water management (vi) Circular and resource efficient economy (vii) Protection and preservation of nature and biodiversity, green infrastructures, pollution reduction (viii) Sustainable urban mobility for zero carbon economy
	4. More social Europe	The following selected specific objectives: (i) Effectiveness and inclusiveness of labour market, access to quality employment, social economy (v) Equal access to health care, health systems resilience, family-based and community-based care (vi) Culture and tourism for economic development, social inclusion and social innovation
20%	3. More connected Europe	All specific objectives: (i) Climate resilient, intelligent, secure, sustainable and intermodal TEN-T (ii) Sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local mobility
	4. More social Europe	The following selected specific objectives: (ii) Accesses to education, training and lifelong learning, distance and on-line education and training (iii) Inclusion of marginalised communities, low-income households and disadvantaged groups (iv) Socio-economic integration of third country nationals, including migrants
	5. Europe closer to Citizens	All specific objectives (i) Sustainable integrated territorial development, culture, natural heritage, sustainable tourism and security (urban areas) (ii) Sustainable integrated territorial development, culture, natural heritage, sustainable tourism and security (other than urban)

An **interregional cooperation project** is a project in which organisations from different countries work together on a shared regional policy issue (e.g., insufficient digitisation of SMEs in a specific sector, difficulty to prevent flood disaster in rural areas, insufficient development of renewable energy, lack of integration of disadvantaged groups in labour market, lack of performance in the implementation of integrated territorial strategies). It builds on the experience gained within these regions. By **exchanging their experience, good practices, and, when relevant, testing innovative approaches, the participating regions aim at finding new solutions to address their territorial challenge and at integrating these solutions into their regional development policies.** At application stage, **at least one of the policy instruments addressed in a project must be an Investment for jobs and growth goal programme.**

Intervention logic

Chart 1: steps towards the programme's objective

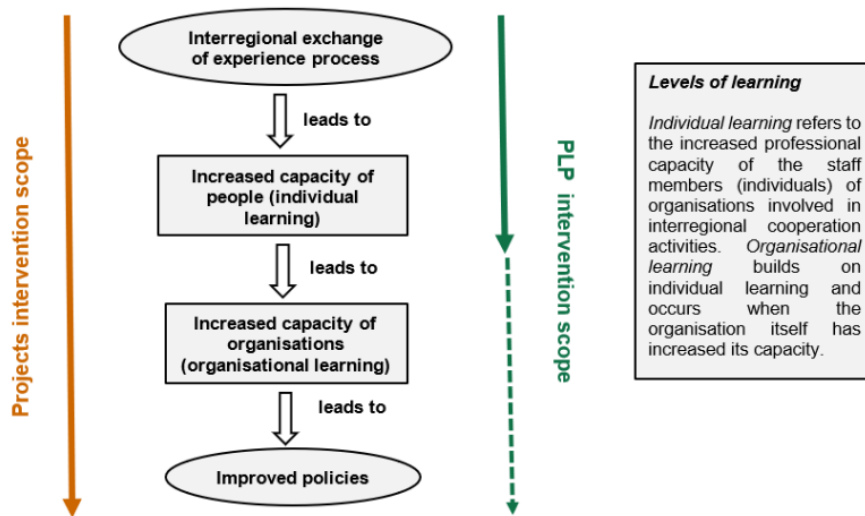
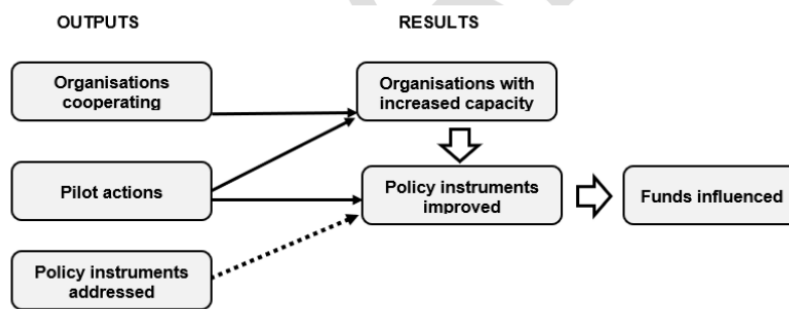


Chart 3: project intervention logic, from outputs to results



The project activities are implemented in two phases over four years (with an additional three months dedicated to closing the project).

- Core phase (3 years):** dedicated to the **exchange of experience** (seminars, workshops, site visits, staff exchanges, peer reviews, surveys) and to **the integration of the lessons learnt** from the cooperation into the regional development policy instruments. **Pilot actions** (a maximum of one per region) can be implemented. The project's overall objective to **improve the policies** of the participating regions should ideally be **achieved by the end of the core phase**. Partner regions that do not achieve policy improvement during the core phase shall produce, by the end of this core phase, an action plan for policy improvement
- Follow-up phase (1 year):** **monitoring** the effects of the policy improvements

Possibilities for policy improvement

- implementation of new projects: based on the lessons learnt from interregional cooperation, **a region implements on its territory a new project financed through its policy instrument**. For example, the good practice developed by region A on promoting innovative tourism (in particular using international electronic marketing) has served as a basis for the development of the new project dedicated to the promotion of lake tourism in region B. The idea is to generate additional revenues for the tourism industry by providing new sustainable

experiences and services for visiting tourists. The new project is approved in region B for a total budget of EUR 80,000 fully financed through 'Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy' (policy instrument addressed) of this region.

2. **change in the management of the policy instrument** (improved governance): New approaches can be adopted thanks to the lessons learnt from other regions. These improvements can for instance be related to:
 - a. a revised methodology for evaluating the performance of the policy instrument,
 - b. the introduction of new criteria for selecting the projects supported by the policy instrument,
 - c. a more efficient way to communicate on the calls for proposal launched within the policy instrument,
 - d. the modification of the decision-making rules or of the composition of the managing committee in charge of the policy instrument implementation.
3. **revision of the policy instrument itself** (structural change): It occurs when, based on the lesson learnt from the cooperation, a region modifies the main features of its policy instrument. This can for instance take the form of adding a new priority or measure. It can also be related to modifying the budget allocation of the different priorities of the policy instrument.

Innovative character

The 2021-2027 Interreg Europe programme needs to go beyond the results achieved in the 2014-2020 period where more than 250 projects were supported (only one project targeted the elderly people).

Eligible applicants

Any of the following organisations relevant to regional development policies and based in the **27 EU** Member States, as well as **Norway and Switzerland** are eligible for Interreg Europe funding:

- National, regional or local public authorities
- Institutions governed by public law (e.g. regional development agencies, business support organisations, universities)
- Private non-profit bodies.

Partnership

Projects must involve partners from at least three countries, of which at least two are beneficiaries from EU Member States. To be eligible in the first call, the applications submitted have to ensure that the **four areas below are represented in the partnership** with at least one project partner:

Geographical areas	Countries covered
North	Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden
East	Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia
South	Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain
West	Belgium, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Switzerland

Each 'region' involved in a project has to identify the main policy instrument it aims to improve through the cooperation. At least, one policy instruments addressed by the application is an Investment for jobs and growth goal programme. E.g. it is not sufficient that the policy instrument addressed is linked to an Investment for jobs and growth goal programme, but it must be the operational programme itself. For instance, the Sustainability Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) of a specific city cannot be considered as an operational programme even if this SUMP is fully financed through Structural Funds.

The direct involvement of the authorities responsible for these instruments is a key feature for projects to achieve their objectives. The involvement of the policy responsible authority as partner is compulsory for at least 50% of the policy instruments addressed in a project application. For any instruments where this is not the case, the relevant policy responsible authorities are involved as 'associated policy authorities'.

To be considered as 'policy responsible authority', the organisation must have a clear responsibility towards the elaboration and/or delivery of the policy instrument it addresses. In case of doubt, the assessor can contact the relevant Partner State to get final confirmation of the policy relevance of the organisation.

Financial issues

Co-financing rate	Eligible project partner according to legal status and location
80% ERDF	Public bodies and bodies governed by public law from all 27 EU member states
70% ERDF	Private non-profit bodies from all 27 EU member states
Up to 50% Norwegian funding	Public bodies, bodies governed by public law and private non-profit bodies from Norway
Swiss funding	Partners from Switzerland are invited to contact the Swiss Interreg national point of contact to receive information on Swiss funding opportunities

It is not possible to receive an advance payment from the programme. This means that each project must pre-finance its activities until the approval and payment of the six-monthly progress reports.

Based on the experience from previous programming periods, the total ERDF budget of a project usually goes from 1 MEUR up to 2 MEUR.

Up to 40% of the overall ERDF budget (approximately EUR 130 million) of the Interreg Europe programme is made available for the first call for proposals. (!!!)

The complete application has to be submitted online at the latest by **31st May 2022, 12 pm** (midday) CEST (Paris time).

Notions

'**Region**' refers to any territory which can be represented by a public authority. Depending on the issue addressed and the characteristics of the territories involved, it can relate to the different administrative levels which contributes to regional development (e.g., municipality, city, county, province, region, country). In projects, the number of 'regions' involved correspond to the number of policy instruments addressed.

'**Regional development policy**' refers to any policy developed at local, regional and, when relevant, national levels.

A '**policy instrument**' is a means for public intervention. It refers to any policy, strategy, or law developed by public authorities and applied on the ground in order to improve a specific territorial situation. In most cases, financial resources are associated with a policy instrument. However, an instrument can also sometimes refer to a strategy or legislative framework with no specific funding. In the context of Interreg Europe, operational programmes under the Investment for jobs and growth goal are considered as policy instruments. Beyond the programme of the EU cohesion policy, local, regional or national public authorities develop their own policy instruments, which can also be addressed by Interreg Europe projects.