

**IMPLEMENTATION REPORT FOR THE EUROPEAN TERRITORIAL  
COOPERATION GOAL  
PART A**

**IDENTIFICATION OF THE ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT**

CCI	2014TC16RFIR001
Title	INTERREG EUROPE
Version	2018.0
Date of approval of the report by the monitoring committee	25-Jun-2019

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## 2. OVERVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME (Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(3)(a) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

### Key information on the implementation of the cooperation programme for the year concerned, including on financial instruments, with relation to the financial and indicator data.

2018 was a successful year considering the programme's overall performance:

- 184 projects were running with 75% of ERDF committed.
- The projects succeeded in influencing 121 regional policy instruments (including 84 Structural Funds programmes) with a total financial impact estimated at MEUR 320 (including MEUR 312 ERDF).
- 2,892 people increased their professional capacity thanks to their involvement in the projects.
- 274 project action plans were developed.
- The last call was launched, attracting 170 applications and confirming the high attractiveness of the programme among local and regional authorities.
- A new lump sum was introduced for the 4<sup>th</sup> call projects, showing the programme's readiness to further simplify rules, consider simplified cost options more and more as a standard rather than an exception, and further shift the attention to the monitoring of outputs and results.
- Demand driven services were successfully tested by the Policy Learning Platform (6 matchmaking sessions and 1 peer review).
- The programme exceeded the decommitment target by 60%. This high spending rate reflects:
  - the programme's attractiveness
  - good governance, i.e. the MC ability to approve operations early
  - the project partners' ability to implement projects timely
  - proper functioning of the control systems across 28 MS and Norway (no bottlenecks)
- The low audit error rate of 0.07% confirmed the good functioning of the management and control system.
- The online database gathered 5890 users. The reliability and the legality of developed functions was confirmed during system audits. Beneficiaries' and controllers' feedback highlighted the user-friendliness and intuitiveness of the system. The use of the agile method allowed to save time and budget, leaving room for development of additional features for the benefit of the users.

2018 was also the most challenging year since its start due to the peak in the programme's activities. First, with the approval of the 3<sup>rd</sup> call, a total of 184 projects were actually running and monitored. Second, the organisation of the 4<sup>th</sup> call for proposals required a lot of resources. Third, the programme mid-term evaluation and the first second level audit campaign (incl. new aspects like the closure and audit of accounts) were carried out. Finally, the draft regulations for post 2020 led to the first reflections on the future of Interreg Europe.

The 8th MC meeting took place in March in Sofia (BG). The MC decided on the results of the 3rd call for proposals, approved the first pilot actions for running projects, and agreed on the 4th call application pack.

54 3rd call projects were approved under conditions. Thanks to the communication campaign dedicated to priority axis 4, 31% of the 3rd call projects were approved under TO6.

The 4th call for proposals ran from 7 May until 22 June 2018. A physical event (Europe, let's cooperate, 4th interregional cooperation forum) was organised in Brussels in March 2018, bringing 319 participants from 26 Partner States. A second event was organised online in April 2018 with 775 viewers.

The usual assistance services were offered to applicants. The partner search function as well as a 'self-assessment tool' were available on the programme website. Weekly Q&A sessions with JS were also proposed. More detailed feedback from the joint secretariat was provided to 68 applicants through the project idea form available on the website. Points of contact in the different Partner States promoted the programme activities and its 4<sup>th</sup> call in particular through the organisation of 17 national events, one-to-one meetings, online announcements and other promotional campaigns.

170 applications were received in the 4th call. 139 were eligible for quality assessment (81%). Thanks to the new measures implemented (e.g. no amount in partner declaration, possibility of one mistake in the letter of support), this call was the most successful in terms of eligibility (ineligibility rate below 20%). The quality assessment, split into two steps (strategic and operational), was carried out in the second half of 2018.

The 9th MC meeting in December in Innsbruck (AT) was dedicated to decisions on the 4th call strategic assessment. 64 applications were approved for operational assessment. The MC also requested full assessment of 19 applications scored 2.83 (i.e. just below the recommendation threshold) to prepare the final MC decision in March 2019.

The implementation of the Policy Learning Platform (PLP) remained challenging in 2018. The establishment of the management team in Lille took more time than anticipated but the situation improved from the second semester. The delivered PLP services in the second year mainly consisted of the following: 21 policy briefs and 26 articles, validation of 743 good practices, organisation of a networking event (125 participants), 7 thematic workshops and 9 online discussions gathering more than 200 regional practitioners, organisation of a test peer review, 6 matchmaking sessions and the 1st open call for peers reviews. By the end of 2018, 5,260 people were members of the PLP community.

For the first time, the PLP developed more demand-driven services. The first pilot peer review was successfully organised in October 2018. It focused on the ESIF programme of Hauts-de-France region in the field of energy efficiency in buildings. Another service was successfully tested during the EWRC through 6 matchmaking sessions with exchanges between regional practitioners on policy areas such as innovation governance of circular economy. The sessions also prepared the ground for the submission of applications under the 1st call for peer reviews open from 21 August to 31 October. 13 applications across the four thematic priorities were received. 7 requests were approved (from BE, BG, ES, FR, DE, LU, SE).

In terms of financial activities, the first second level audit campaign was carried out in 2018: 13 partners from 6 interregional projects as well as the technical assistance expenditure were audited. These audits resulted in EUR 1,407 of ineligible expenditure and an extrapolated error rate of 0.07%. This audit campaign and the preparation of the annual accounts for 2017-2018 were also the occasion to clarify and apply the programme EUR 250 rule based on article 122 (2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 (i.e. irregular amounts declared in interim payment claims not exceeding this threshold over the accounting year were not recovered neither from the beneficiaries nor from the programme accounts).

Due to the programme reaching its peak period in terms of activities running in parallel and other factors (e.g. challenging character of the new project features such as the action plans or pilot actions which require more JS resources than initially anticipated), the JS workload was high throughout the year. This was confirmed by the programme mid-term evaluation and the recruitment of two new officers was approved by the MC at its meeting in December 2018.

### 3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRIORITY AXIS

#### 3.1 Overview of the implementation

ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems
1	Research, Technological Development and Innovation	<p>The implementation of priority axis 1 (PA1) was smooth and according to plan. In terms of the performance framework outputs, the target is exceeded.</p> <p>In 2018, 11 new projects were approved under PA1 as a result of the 3rd call. A total of 51 projects were running in 2018 (including 21 from 1st call and 19 from 2nd call). As forecasted in the cooperation programme, the majority of projects (41 out of 51) were approved under specific objective 1(b).</p> <p>2018 was particularly interesting because some of the 1st and 2nd call projects started reporting achievements in terms of policy changes. 14 projects finalised their phase 1. For the first time projects reported on two core output indicators: the number of action plans developed and the number of people with increased capacity.</p> <p>By the end of 2018, projects under PA1 had developed 86 actions plans. In terms of results, these projects already demonstrated an influence on 38 policy instruments (including 33 SF programmes) with a total financial impact estimated at MEUR 32. Full details on these policy changes can be found in the programme monitoring system (iDB), in the 'Policy Instruments Results' table. Interreg Europe was also actively involved in several events in 2018, some related to the partnership with the S3 platform in Seville (e.g. organisation with DG REGIO, DG GROW and the JRC of the "S3P-Industry and Interreg Europe working for Industrial Modernisation" conference in Lapland on 11 April).</p> <p>The main PLP activities under PA1 were: publication of 4 policy briefs and 6 articles, validation of 216 good practices, organisation of 2 online discussions, 2 thematic workshops and 2 matchmaking sessions. Projects approved under PA1 were actively involved in these activities.</p>
2	Competitiveness of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises	<p>The implementation of priority axis 2 (PA2) was according to plan. In terms of the performance framework outputs, more than 80% of the target is achieved. The initial objective was not reached due to lower number of PA2 projects finishing phase 1 in 2018. The target will be exceeded in March 2019 when all 1st call projects close their phase 1.</p> <p>In 2018, 16 new projects were approved under PA2 as a result of the 3rd call. In total 49 projects were running in 2018 (incl. 17 from 1st call and 16 from 2nd call).</p> <p>2018 was interesting because some of the 1st and 2nd call projects started reporting achievements in terms of policy changes. For PA2, only 8 projects finalised their phase 1 and reported on 2 core output indicators: the number of action plans developed and the number of people with increased capacity.</p> <p>By the end of 2018, projects approved under PA2 had developed 58 actions plans. In terms of results, 14 projects have already demonstrated an influence on 27 policy instruments (including 22 SF programmes) with a total financial impact estimated at MEUR 25. Details on these policy changes can be found in the programme monitoring system (iDB), in the 'Policy Instruments Results' table.</p> <p>In the 2nd year of implementation, the PLP activities for PA2 were impacted by poor performance of the PA2 thematic experts. The programme had to require a replacement of these experts. Severe delays resulted and the situation was solved in the 2nd semester. Nevertheless, the PLP was active in PA2. The main activities were: publication of 1 policy brief and 4 articles, validation of 201 good practices, organisation of 2 online discussions, 1 thematic workshop and 1 matchmaking session. Projects under PA2 were actively involved in them.</p>
3	Low Carbon Economy	<p>The overall implementation of priority axis 3 (PA3) was smooth and according to plan. In terms of the performance framework outputs, the target is almost reached (69 actions plans compared to the target of 70).</p> <p>In 2018, 10 new projects were approved under PA3 as a result of the 3rd call. This means that a total of 41 projects were running in 2018 (incl. 15 from 1st call and 16 from 2nd call).</p>

ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems
		<p>2018 was interesting because some of the 1st and 2nd call projects started reporting achievements in terms of policy changes. 11 projects finalised their phase 1. For the first time projects reported on 2 core output indicators: the number of action plans developed and the number of people with increased capacity.</p> <p>By the end of 2018, projects approved under PA3 had developed 69 actions plans. In terms of results, these projects already demonstrated an influence on 23 policy instruments (including 14 SF programmes) with a total financial impact estimated at MEUR 188. Full details on these policy changes can be found in the programme monitoring system (iDB), in the 'Policy Instruments Results' table.</p> <p>In terms of PLP activities, PA3 is the best performing priority thanks to the quality of the thematic experts involved. The main PLP activities within PA3 were: publication of 8 policy briefs and 8 articles, validation of 168 good practices, organisation of 2 online discussions, 2 thematic workshops and 1 matchmaking session. More importantly, the TO4 experts successfully implement the first pilot peer review in the Hauts-de-France region. Projects approved under PA3 were actively involved in these activities. The programme was also involved in other strategic initiatives such as the EMA (Energy and Managing Authorities) network.</p>
4	Environment and Resource Efficiency	<p>The overall implementation of priority axis 4 (PA4) was smooth and according to plan as reflected in the performance framework with 90% of the output target achieved. This target will be exceeded in March 2019 when all 1st call projects close their phase 1. In 2018, 17 new projects were approved under PA4 as a result of the 3rd call. It was the most successful priority in terms of the number of projects approved in the call. A total of 41 projects were running in 2018 (incl. 11 from 1st call and 15 from 2nd call). A similar number of projects were approved under the 2 investment priorities: 14 under 'natural and cultural heritage' and 12 under 'resource efficiency'.</p> <p>2018 was interesting because some of the 1st and 2nd call projects started reporting achievements in terms of policy changes. 10 projects finalised their phase 1. For the first time projects reported on 2 core output indicators: the number of action plans developed and the number of people with increased capacity.</p> <p>By the end of 2018, projects approved under PA4 developed 61 actions plans. They demonstrated an influence on 33 policy instruments (including 12 SF programmes) with a total financial impact estimated at MEUR 2.2. Full details on the policy changes can be found in the programme monitoring system (iDB), in the 'Policy Instruments Results' table.</p> <p>The main PLP activities organised within PA4 can be summarised as follows: publication of 8 policy briefs and 8 articles, validation of 158 good practices, organisation of 3 online discussions, 2 thematic workshops and 1 matchmaking session. Projects approved under PA4 were actively involved in them.</p> <p>PLP was involved in initiatives such as the European Network of Environment and Managing Authorities (ENEA-MA)</p>
5	Technical Assistance	<p>In 2018, the TA focused on monitoring the 184 running projects, the launch and assessment of the 4th call, the first audit activities and the preparation of the annual closure of accounts for the accounting year 2017/2018, and on further development of the online monitoring system.</p> <p>The programme organised its annual event (Experience fair) in Sofia on 24-25 April. It was not dedicated to promoting a call but to bringing together all approved projects. They exchanged experience in how to implement interregional cooperation and ensure successful interregional learning process. The JS briefed the 3rd call projects on the EU and programme requirements at the communication and finance seminars in November in Dublin. The programme held several workshops during the EWRC in Brussels.</p> <p>The JS finalised the development of the online monitoring system.</p> <p>The TA financed the following audit activities performed by an external audit firm (open tender in 2017) on behalf of the audit authority, closely monitored and followed up by the JS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2 system audits related to the organisation and procedures of the MA, including the JS and the certifying authority (key requirements 1, 2, 4, 6,7 and 10);</li> <li>- 6 interregional projects (second level) audits (the lead partners and one project partner for each project);</li> <li>- a (second level) audit of the TA expenditure;</li> </ul>

ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems
		<p>- the first audit of accounts</p> <p>The audits' results confirmed proper functioning of the management and control system, suggesting only minor improvements on a few aspects (see section 2 for more information on the results of the second level audits).</p> <p>In 2018, the TA financed participation in the MC and organisation of national events by the national points of contact for 3 partner states.</p>



### 3.2 Common and programme specific indicators (Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

#### Priority axes other than technical assistance

<b>Priority axis</b>	<b>1 - Research, Technological Development and Innovation</b>
Investment priority	1a - Enhancing research and innovation (R&I) infrastructure and capacities to develop R&I excellence, and promoting centres of competence, in particular those of European interest

**Table 2: Common and programme specific output indicators - 1.1a**

(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2018	Observations
F	1	Number of Action Plans developed	Number	76.00	12.00	
S	1	Number of Action Plans developed	Number	76.00	13.00	No forecast set per year but the figure derives from the forecast provided in the application form of the projects finalising their phase 1 in 2018. The difference of one action plan is due to the withdrawal of the Durham Region from the SmartPilots project.
F	2	Number of people with increased professional capacity due to their participation in interregional cooperation activities	Number	1,000.00	58.00	
S	2	Number of people with increased professional capacity due to their participation in interregional cooperation activities	Number	1,000.00	0.00	No forecast available for 2018 but final forecast for all projects approved under investment priority 1.a is 1,181.
F	3	Share of all European regions' (NUTS 2) registered to the Policy Learning Platform	%	7.00	9.31	This percentage derives from the number of regional public authorities which are involved in the projects approved under this specific objective and which are also members of the PLP. Currently, out of 290 NUTS2 (including Norway and Switzerland), 27 NUTS2 regions are registered. The PLP registration system does not allow yet to identify precisely, per specific objective, possible other NUTS2 regions which do not come from projects. This means that the percentage may in reality be higher.
S	3	Share of all European regions' (NUTS 2) registered to the Policy Learning Platform	%	7.00	0.00	No forecast available per year.
F	4	Number of policy learning events organised by the Policy Learning Platform	Number	10.00	7.00	Most of the events organised by the PLP in thematic objective 1 are open to projects from both investment priorities 1.a and 1.b. This is the reason why the same events are often reported under these investment priorities. 1 kick-off event in 2016, 1 workshop Health and wellbeing (28/06/17) 1 back-to-back networking event for TO1 and TO3 (19-20 October 2017); 1 workshop on clusters (20/06/18) 1 workshop on rural innovation (05/12/18) 1 matchmaking session on 'Centre of excellence' (10/10/18) 1 online discussion on Innovation infrastructure
S	4	Number of policy learning events organised by the Policy Learning Platform	Number	10.00	0.00	No forecast is available per year per investment priority.

(1)	ID	Indicator	2017	2016	2015	2014
F	1	Number of Action Plans developed	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	1	Number of Action Plans developed	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	2	Number of people with increased professional capacity due to their participation in interregional cooperation activities	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	2	Number of people with increased professional capacity due to their participation in interregional cooperation activities	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	3	Share of all European regions' (NUTS 2) registered to the Policy Learning Platform	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	3	Share of all European regions' (NUTS 2) registered to the Policy Learning Platform	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	4	Number of policy learning events organised by the Policy Learning Platform	3.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
S	4	Number of policy learning events organised by the Policy Learning Platform	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00

(1) S=Cumulative value - outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries], F=Cumulative value - outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]

<b>Priority axis</b>	<b>1 - Research, Technological Development and Innovation</b>
<b>Investment priority</b>	1a - Enhancing research and innovation (R&I) infrastructure and capacities to develop R&I excellence, and promoting centres of competence, in particular those of European interest
<b>Specific objective</b>	1.1 - Improve the implementation of regional development policies and programmes, in particular programmes for Investment for Growth and Jobs and, where relevant, ETC programmes, in the field of research and innovation infrastructure and capacities, notably in the framework of Smart Specialisation Strategies.

**Table 1: Result indicators - 1.1a.1.1**

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	2018 Total	2018 Qualitative	Observations
1	Share of Growth & Jobs and ETC programmes where measures inspired by INTERREG EUROPE were implemented	% of all Growth & Jobs and ETC programmes	2.62	2014	8.00	7.00		This indicator is based on 2 sources of information. First, it includes the results of the surveys sent to all managing authorities in 2014 (baseline value: 10 programmes indicated as influenced by Interreg IVC) and in 2018 (9 programmes indicated as influenced by Interreg Europe). But as agreed by the monitoring committee in December 2018, this indicator also includes the results reported by the projects under this priority (as long as the same programme is not counted twice). By December 2018, the projects demonstrated influence on 10 Structural Funds programmes (details of these programmes is available in iDB). But only 8 of these programmes are included since 2 of them (ROP of Lodzkie and OP of Romania) were already reported in the 2018 surveys. In total, 27 programmes (out of 382 SF programmes in Europe) were therefore influenced by Interreg Europe.
2	Amount of Structural Funds (from Growth & Jobs and ETC) influenced by INTERREG EUROPE	EUR	3,500,000.00	2014	48,000,000.00	21,300,000.00		This indicator is based on two different sources of information. First, in compliance with the cooperation programme, it includes the results of the surveys sent to all managing authorities in 2014 (baseline value: MEUR 3.5 were indicated as influenced by Interreg IVC) and in 2018 (MEUR 7 influenced by Interreg Europe). But as agreed by the monitoring committee during its 9th meeting in Innsbruck (December 2018), this indicator also includes the results directly reported by the projects running under this investment priority (as long as the same amount is not counted twice). By December 2018, the projects demonstrated an additional amount influenced estimated at MEUR 10.8 (details of this amount is available in iDB under the 'Policy Instruments Results' table). In total for this investment priority, an amount of MEUR 21.3 was therefore influenced by the programme

ID	Indicator	2017 Total	2017 Qualitative	2016 Total	2016 Qualitative	2015 Total	2015 Qualitative	2014 Total	2014 Qualitative
1	Share of Growth & Jobs and ETC programmes where measures inspired by INTERREG EUROPE were implemented	2.62		2.62		2.62		2.62	
2	Amount of Structural Funds (from Growth & Jobs and ETC) influenced by INTERREG EUROPE	3,500,000.00		3,500,000.00		3,500,000.00		3,500,000.00	

<b>Priority axis</b>	<b>1 - Research, Technological Development and Innovation</b>
Investment priority	1b - Promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector, in particular promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialisation, and supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production, in particular in key enabling technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies

**Table 2: Common and programme specific output indicators - 1.1b**

(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2018	Observations
F	1	Number of Action Plans developed	Number	154.00	74.00	
S	1	Number of Action Plans developed	Number	154.00	84.00	No forecast set per year but the figure derives from the forecast provided in the application form of the projects finalising their phase 1 in 2018. The difference of 10 is due to the issue faced with S34Growth which was granted one additional year to finalise the action plans.
F	2	Number of people with increased professional capacity due to their participation in interregional cooperation activities	Number	2,000.00	788.00	
S	2	Number of people with increased professional capacity due to their participation in interregional cooperation activities	Number	2,000.00	0.00	No forecast available per year but final forecast for all project approved under this investment priority is 4,771.
F	3	Share of all European regions' (NUTS 2) registered to the Policy Learning Platform	%	18.00	28.62	This percentage derives from the number of regional public authorities which are involved in the projects approved under this investment priority and which are also members of the PLP. Currently, out of 290 NUTS2 (including Norway and Switzerland), 83 NUTS2 regions are registered. The PLP registration system does not allow yet to identify precisely, per investment priority, possible other NUTS2 regions which do not come from projects. This means that the percentage may in reality be higher.
S	3	Share of all European regions' (NUTS 2) registered to the Policy Learning Platform	%	18.00	0.00	No forecast available for 2018.
F	4	Number of policy learning events organised by the Policy Learning Platform	Number	18.00	8.00	Most of the events organised by the PLP in thematic objective 1 are open to projects from both investment priorities 1.a and 1b. This is the reason why the same events are often reported under these investment priorities. 1 kick-off event in 2016 1 workshop on TO1: Innovation in Health (28/06/18) 1 back-to-back networking event for TO1 and TO3 (19-20 October 2018); 1 workshop on clusters (20/06/18) 1 workshop on rural innovation (05/12/18) 2 matchmaking sessions on 'Innovation Governance' and 'Digital public services' (10/10/18) 1 online discussion on Industrial modernisation
S	4	Number of policy learning events organised by the Policy Learning Platform	Number	18.00	0.00	No forecast is available per year per investment priority.

(1)	ID	Indicator	2017	2016	2015	2014
F	1	Number of Action Plans developed	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	1	Number of Action Plans developed	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	2	Number of people with increased professional capacity due to their participation in interregional cooperation activities	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	2	Number of people with increased professional capacity due to their participation in interregional cooperation activities	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	3	Share of all European regions' (NUTS 2) registered to the Policy Learning Platform	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	3	Share of all European regions' (NUTS 2) registered to the Policy Learning Platform	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	4	Number of policy learning events organised by the Policy Learning Platform	3.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
S	4	Number of policy learning events organised by the Policy Learning Platform	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00

(1) S=Cumulative value - outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries], F=Cumulative value - outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]

<b>Priority axis</b>	<b>1 - Research, Technological Development and Innovation</b>
Investment priority	1b - Promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector, in particular promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialisation, and supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production, in particular in key enabling technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies
Specific objective	1.2 - Improve the implementation of regional development policies and programmes, in particular programmes for Investment for Growth and Jobs and, where relevant, ETC programmes, that support the delivery of innovation by actors in regional innovation chains in areas of "smart specialisation" and innovation opportunity.

**Table 1: Result indicators - 1.1b.1.2**

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	2018 Total	2018 Qualitative	Observations
1	Share of Growth & Jobs and ETC programmes where measures inspired by INTERREG EUROPE were implemented	% of all Growth & Jobs and ETC programmes	3.66	2014	25.00	12.56		This indicator is based on 2 sources of information. First, it includes the results of the surveys sent to all managing authorities in 2014 (baseline value: 14 programmes indicated as influenced by Interreg IVC) and in 2018 (13 programmes indicated as influenced by Interreg Europe). But as agreed by the monitoring committee in December 2018, this indicator also includes the results reported by the projects under this priority (as long as the same programme is not counted twice). By December 2018, the projects demonstrated influence on 23 Structural Funds programmes (details of these programmes are available in iDB). But only 21 of these programmes are included since 2 of them (ROP of Basque Country and ROP of Central Macedonia) were already reported in the 2018 survey. In total, 48 programmes (out of 382 SF programmes in Europe) were influenced by Interreg Europe
2	Amount of Structural Funds (from Growth & Jobs and ETC) influenced by INTERREG EUROPE	EUR	3,500,000.00	2014	144,000,000.00	119,224,000.00		This indicator is based on 2 sources of information. First, in compliance with the cooperation programme, it includes the results of the surveys sent to all managing authorities in 2014 (baseline value: MEUR 3.5 were indicated as influenced by Interreg IVC) and in 2018 (MEUR 100 influenced by Interreg Europe). But as agreed by the monitoring committee during its 9th meeting in Innsbruck (December 2018), this indicator also includes the results directly reported by the projects running under this investment priority (as long as the same amount is not counted twice). By December 2018, the projects demonstrated an additional amount influenced estimated at MEUR 15.7 (details of this amount is available in iDB under the 'Policy Instruments Results' table). In total for this investment priority, an amount of MEUR 119.2 was therefore influenced by the programme.

ID	Indicator	2017 Total	2017 Qualitative	2016 Total	2016 Qualitative	2015 Total	2015 Qualitative	2014 Total	2014 Qualitative
1	Share of Growth & Jobs and ETC programmes where measures inspired by INTERREG EUROPE were implemented	3.66		3.66		3.66		3.66	
2	Amount of Structural Funds (from Growth & Jobs and ETC) influenced by INTERREG EUROPE	3,500,000.00		3,500,000.00		3,500,000.00		3,500,000.00	

<b>Priority axis</b>	<b>2 - Competitiveness of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises</b>
<b>Investment priority</b>	<b>3d - Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets, and to engage in innovation processes</b>

**Table 2: Common and programme specific output indicators - 2.3d**

(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2018	Observations
F	1	Number of Action Plans developed	Number	230.00	58.00	
S	1	Number of Action Plans developed	Number	230.00	58.00	No forecast set per year but the figure derives from the forecast provided in the application form of the projects finalising their phase 1 in 2018.
F	2	Number of people with increased professional capacity due to their participation in interregional cooperation activities	Number	3,000.00	433.00	
S	2	Number of people with increased professional capacity due to their participation in interregional cooperation activities	Number	3,000.00	0.00	No forecast available per year but final forecast for all project approved under this investment priority is 5,581.
F	3	Share of all European regions' (NUTS 2) registered to the Policy Learning Platform	%	25.00	26.89	This percentage derives from the number of regional public authorities which are involved in the projects approved under this specific objective and which are also members of the PLP. Currently, out of 290 NUTS2 (including Norway and Switzerland), 78 NUTS2 regions are registered. The PLP registration system does not allow yet to identify precisely, per investment priority, possible other NUTS2 regions which do not come from projects. This means that the percentage may in reality be higher.
S	3	Share of all European regions' (NUTS 2) registered to the Policy Learning Platform	%	25.00	0.00	No forecast available per year
F	4	Number of policy learning events organised by the Policy Learning Platform	Number	28.00	7.00	1 kick-off event in 2016 1 back-to-back networking event for TO1 and TO3 (19-20/10/2017); 1 workshop on SME internationalisation (30/07/17); 1 workshop on Entrepreneurship and business creation (14/11/18) 1 matchmaking session on 'SMEs involvement in cross-border cooperation projects' (10/10/18) 2 online discussions on 'Enabling digital transformation' and 'SME internationalisation'
S	4	Number of policy learning events organised by the Policy Learning Platform	Number	28.00	0.00	No forecast is available per year per investment priority.

(1)	ID	Indicator	2017	2016	2015	2014
F	1	Number of Action Plans developed	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	1	Number of Action Plans developed	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	2	Number of people with increased professional capacity due to their participation in interregional cooperation activities	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	2	Number of people with increased professional capacity due to their participation in interregional cooperation activities	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	3	Share of all European regions' (NUTS 2) registered to the Policy Learning Platform	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	3	Share of all European regions' (NUTS 2) registered to the Policy Learning Platform	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	4	Number of policy learning events organised by the Policy Learning Platform	3.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
S	4	Number of policy learning events organised by the Policy Learning Platform	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00

(1) S=Cumulative value - outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries], F=Cumulative value - outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]

Priority axis	<b>2 - Competitiveness of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises</b>
Investment priority	3d - Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets, and to engage in innovation processes
Specific objective	2.1 - Improve the implementation of regional development policies and programmes, in particular programmes for Investment for Growth and Jobs and, where relevant, ETC programmes, supporting SMEs in all stages of their life cycle to develop and achieve growth and engage in innovation.

**Table 1: Result indicators - 2.3d.2.1**

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	2018 Total	2018 Qualitative	Observations
1	Share of Growth & Jobs and ETC programmes where measures inspired by INTERREG EUROPE were implemented	% of all Growth & Jobs and ETC programmes	1.83	2014	33.00	9.42		This indicator is based on 2 sources of information. First, it includes the results of the surveys sent to all managing authorities in 2014 (baseline value: 7 programmes indicated as influenced by Interreg IVC) and in 2018 (8 programmes indicated as influenced by Interreg Europe). But as agreed by the monitoring committee in December 2018, this indicator also includes the results directly reported by the projects running under this priority (as long as the same programme is not counted twice). By December 2018, the projects demonstrated an influence on 22 Structural Funds programmes (details of these programmes are available in iDB). But only 21 of these programmes are included since one of them (ROP of Świętokrzyskie Region) was already reported in the 2018 survey. In total, 29 programmes (out of 382 SF programmes in Europe) were influenced by Interreg Europe.
2	Amount of Structural Funds (from Growth & Jobs and ETC) influenced by INTERREG EUROPE	EUR	0.00	2014	192,000,000.00	24,268,850.00		This indicator is based on 2 sources of information. First, in compliance with the cooperation programme, it includes the results of the surveys sent to all managing authorities in 2014 (baseline value: MEUR 0 were indicated as influenced by Interreg IVC) and in 2018 (EUR 268,850 influenced by Interreg Europe). But as agreed by the monitoring committee during its 9th meeting in Innsbruck (December 2018), this indicator also includes the results directly reported by the projects running under this investment priority (as long as the same amount is not counted twice). By December 2018, the projects demonstrated an additional amount influenced estimated at MEUR 24 (details of this amount is available in iDB under the statistic 'Policy Instruments Results'). In total for this investment priority, an amount of MEUR 24.2 was therefore influenced by the programme.

ID	Indicator	2017 Total	2017 Qualitative	2016 Total	2016 Qualitative	2015 Total	2015 Qualitative	2014 Total	2014 Qualitative
1	Share of Growth & Jobs and ETC programmes where measures inspired by INTERREG EUROPE were implemented	1.83		1.83		1.83		1.83	
2	Amount of Structural Funds (from Growth & Jobs and ETC) influenced by INTERREG EUROPE	0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	

<b>Priority axis</b>	<b>3 - Low Carbon Economy</b>
<b>Investment priority</b>	<b>4e - Promoting low-carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular for urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility and mitigation-relevant adaptation measures</b>

**Table 2: Common and programme specific output indicators - 3.4e**

(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2018	Observations
F	1	Number of Action Plans developed	Number	230.00	69.00	
S	1	Number of Action Plans developed	Number	230.00	70.00	No forecast set per year but the figure derives from the forecast provided in the application form of the projects finalising their phase 1 in 2018. One action plan was not produced due to the withdrawal of the Baden-Württemberg Region from the FINERPOL project.
F	2	Number of people with increased professional capacity due to their participation in interregional cooperation activities	Number	3,000.00	1,208.00	
S	2	Number of people with increased professional capacity due to their participation in interregional cooperation activities	Number	3,000.00	0.00	No forecast available per year but final forecast for all project approved under this investment priority is 5,214.
F	3	Share of all European regions' (NUTS 2) registered to the Policy Learning Platform	%	25.00	24.13	This percentage derives from the number of regional public authorities which are involved in the projects approved under this investment priority and which are also members of the PLP. Currently, out of 290 NUTS2 (including Norway and Switzerland), 70 NUTS2 regions are registered. The PLP registration system does not allow yet to identify precisely, per specific objective, possible other NUTS2 regions which do not come from projects. This means that the percentage may in reality be higher.
S	3	Share of all European regions' (NUTS 2) registered to the Policy Learning Platform	%	25.00	0.00	No forecast set per year
F	4	Number of policy learning events organised by the Policy Learning Platform	Number	28.00	8.00	1 event in 2016 1 workshop on Sustainable transport (26/06/17); 1 back-to-back event for TO4 and TO6 (17-18/10/17); 1 workshop on Energy efficiency in buildings (28/06/18) 1 workshop on Sustainable mobility (21/11/18) 1 peer review on Energy efficiency in buildings (October 2018) 2 online discussions on Demand responsive transport (12/06/2018) and Behaviour change (05/12/2018)
S	4	Number of policy learning events organised by the Policy Learning Platform	Number	28.00	0.00	No forecast is available per year per investment priority.

(1)	ID	Indicator	2017	2016	2015	2014
F	1	Number of Action Plans developed	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	1	Number of Action Plans developed	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	2	Number of people with increased professional capacity due to their participation in interregional cooperation activities	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	2	Number of people with increased professional capacity due to their participation in interregional cooperation activities	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	3	Share of all European regions' (NUTS 2) registered to the Policy Learning Platform	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	3	Share of all European regions' (NUTS 2) registered to the Policy Learning Platform	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	4	Number of policy learning events organised by the Policy Learning Platform	3.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
S	4	Number of policy learning events organised by the Policy Learning Platform	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00

(1) S=Cumulative value - outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries], F=Cumulative value - outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]

<b>Priority axis</b>	<b>3 - Low Carbon Economy</b>
<b>Investment priority</b>	4e - Promoting low-carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular for urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility and mitigation-relevant adaptation measures
<b>Specific objective</b>	3.1 - Improve the implementation of regional development policies and programmes, in particular programmes for Investment for Growth and Jobs and, where relevant, ETC programmes, addressing the transition to a low-carbon economy, notably in the framework of Smart Specialisation Strategies.

**Table 1: Result indicators - 3.4e.3.1**

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	2018 Total	2018 Qualitative	Observations
1	Share of Growth & Jobs and ETC programmes where measures inspired by INTERREG EUROPE were implemented	% of all Growth & Jobs and ETC programmes	1.31	2014	33.00	7.59		This indicator is based on 2 sources of information. First, it includes the results of the surveys sent to all managing authorities in 2014 (baseline value: 5 programmes indicated as influenced by Interreg IVC) and in 2018 (3 programmes indicated as influenced by Interreg Europe). But as agreed by the monitoring committee in December 2018, this indicator also includes the results directly reported by the projects running under this investment priority (as long as the same programme is not counted twice). By December 2018, the projects demonstrated influence on 14 additional Structural Funds programmes (details of these programmes are available in iDB under the statistic 'Policy Instruments Results'). In total for this specific objective, 29 programmes (out of 382 structural funds programmes in Europe) were therefore influenced by Interreg Europe.
2	Amount of Structural Funds (from Growth & Jobs and ETC) influenced by INTERREG EUROPE	EUR	13,000,000.00	2014	192,000,000.00	202,667,000.00		This indicator is based on 2 sources of information. First, in compliance with the cooperation programme, it includes the results of the surveys sent to all managing authorities in 2014 (baseline value: MEUR 13 were indicated as influenced by Interreg IVC) and in 2018 (MEUR 1.6 influenced by Interreg Europe). But as agreed by the monitoring committee during its 9th meeting in Innsbruck (December 2018), this indicator also includes the results directly reported by the projects running under this specific objective (as long as the same amount is not counted twice). By December 2018, the projects demonstrated an additional amount influenced estimated at MEUR 188 (details of this amount is available in iDB under the statistic 'Policy Instruments Results'). In total for this specific objective, an amount of MEUR 202.6 was therefore influenced by the programme.

ID	Indicator	2017 Total	2017 Qualitative	2016 Total	2016 Qualitative	2015 Total	2015 Qualitative	2014 Total	2014 Qualitative
1	Share of Growth & Jobs and ETC programmes where measures inspired by INTERREG EUROPE were implemented	1.31		1.31		1.31		1.31	
2	Amount of Structural Funds (from Growth & Jobs and ETC) influenced by INTERREG EUROPE	13,000,000.00		13,000,000.00		13,000,000.00		13,000,000.00	



<b>Priority axis</b>	<b>4 - Environment and Resource Efficiency</b>
Investment priority	6c - Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage

**Table 2: Common and programme specific output indicators - 4.6c**

(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2018	Observations
F	1	Number of Action Plans developed	Number	115.00	37.00	
S	1	Number of Action Plans developed	Number	115.00	37.00	No forecast set per year but the figure derives from the forecast provided in the application form of the projects finalising their phase 1 in 2018.
F	2	Number of people with increased professional capacity due to their participation in interregional cooperation activities	Number	1,500.00	272.00	
S	2	Number of people with increased professional capacity due to their participation in interregional cooperation activities	Number	1,500.00	0.00	No forecast available per year but final forecast for all project approved under this investment priority is 2,684.
F	3	Share of all European regions' (NUTS 2) registered to the Policy Learning Platform	%	12.00	18.96	This percentage derives from the number of regional public authorities which are involved in the projects approved under this investment priority and which are also members of the PLP. Currently, out of 290 NUTS2 (including Norway and Switzerland), 55 NUTS2 regions are registered. The PLP registration system does not allow yet to identify precisely, per specific objective, possible other NUTS2 regions which do not come from projects. This means that the percentage may in reality be higher.
S	3	Share of all European regions' (NUTS 2) registered to the Policy Learning Platform	%	12.00	0.00	No forecast available per year
F	4	Number of policy learning events organised by the Policy Learning Platform	Number	14.00	6.00	1 kick-off event in 2016 1 back-to-back networking event for TO4 and TO6 (17-18/10/17); 1 workshop on Cultural heritage for sustainable development (20/06/18); 1 workshop on Management of natural heritage (22-23/11/18) 1 matchmaking session on Cultural tourism (10/10/2018) 1 online discussion on Cultural routes (stakeholder involvement)
S	4	Number of policy learning events organised by the Policy Learning Platform	Number	14.00	0.00	No forecast is available per year per investment priority.

(1)	ID	Indicator	2017	2016	2015	2014
F	1	Number of Action Plans developed	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	1	Number of Action Plans developed	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	2	Number of people with increased professional capacity due to their participation in interregional cooperation activities	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	2	Number of people with increased professional capacity due to their participation in interregional cooperation activities	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	3	Share of all European regions' (NUTS 2) registered to the Policy Learning Platform	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	3	Share of all European regions' (NUTS 2) registered to the Policy Learning Platform	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	4	Number of policy learning events organised by the Policy Learning Platform	3.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
S	4	Number of policy learning events organised by the Policy Learning Platform	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00

(1) S=Cumulative value - outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries], F=Cumulative value - outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]

Priority axis	<b>4 - Environment and Resource Efficiency</b>
Investment priority	6c - Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage
Specific objective	4.1 - Improve the implementation of regional development policies and programmes, in particular Investment for Growth and Jobs and, where relevant, ETC programmes, in the field of the protection and development of natural and cultural heritage.

**Table 1: Result indicators - 4.6c.4.1**

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	2018 Total	2018 Qualitative	Observations
1	Share of Growth & Jobs and ETC programmes where measures inspired by INTERREG EUROPE were implemented	% of all Growth & Jobs and ETC programmes	1.57	2014	16.00	3.66		This indicator is based on 2 sources of information. First, it includes the results of the surveys sent to all managing authorities in 2014 (baseline value: 6 programmes indicated as influenced by Interreg IVC) and in 2018 (5 programmes indicated as influenced by Interreg Europe). But as agreed by the monitoring committee in December 2018, this indicator also includes the results directly reported by the projects running under this specific objective (as long as the same programme is not counted twice). By December 2018, the projects demonstrated an influence on 3 additional Structural Funds programmes (details of these programmes is available in iDB under the statistic 'Policy Instruments Results'). In total for this investment priority, 14 programmes (out of 382 SF programmes in Europe) were therefore influenced by Interreg Europe.
2	Amount of Structural Funds (from Growth & Jobs and ETC) influenced by INTERREG EUROPE	EUR	19,000,000.00	2014	96,000,000.00	62,582,000.00		This indicator is based on 2 sources of information. First, in compliance with the cooperation programme, it includes the results of the surveys sent to all managing authorities in 2014 (baseline value: MEUR 19 were indicated as influenced by Interreg IVC) and in 2018 (MEUR 42.3 influenced by Interreg Europe). But as agreed by the Monitoring Committee during its 9th meeting in Innsbruck (December 2018), this indicator also includes the results directly reported by the projects running under this investment priority (as long as the same amount is not counted twice). By December 2018, the projects demonstrated an additional amount influenced estimated at EUR 688,000 (details of this amount are available in iDB under the statistic 'Policy Instruments Results'). In total for this investment priority objective, an amount of MEUR 62.6 was influenced by the programme.

ID	Indicator	2017 Total	2017 Qualitative	2016 Total	2016 Qualitative	2015 Total	2015 Qualitative	2014 Total	2014 Qualitative
1	Share of Growth & Jobs and ETC programmes where measures inspired by INTERREG EUROPE were implemented	1.57		1.57		1.57		1.57	
2	Amount of Structural Funds (from Growth & Jobs and ETC) influenced by INTERREG EUROPE	19,000,000.00		19,000,000.00		19,000,000.00		19,000,000.00	

<b>Priority axis</b>	<b>4 - Environment and Resource Efficiency</b>
Investment priority	6g - Supporting industrial transition towards a resource-efficient economy, promoting green growth, eco-innovation and environmental performance management in the public and private sectors

**Table 2: Common and programme specific output indicators - 4.6g**

(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2018	Observations
F	1	Number of Action Plans developed	Number	115.00	24.00	
S	1	Number of Action Plans developed	Number	115.00	24.00	No forecast set per year but the figure derives from the forecast provided in the application form of the projects finalising their phase 1 in 2018.
F	2	Number of people with increased professional capacity due to their participation in interregional cooperation activities	Number	1,500.00	132.00	
S	2	Number of people with increased professional capacity due to their participation in interregional cooperation activities	Number	1,500.00	0.00	No forecast available per year but final forecast for all project approved under this investment priority is 2,152.
F	3	Share of all European regions' (NUTS 2) registered to the Policy Learning Platform	%	12.00	11.37	This percentage derives from the number of regional public authorities which are involved in the projects approved under this investment priority and which are also members of the PLP. Currently, out of 290 NUTS2 (including Norway and Switzerland), 33 NUTS2 regions are registered. The PLP registration system does not allow yet to identify precisely, per specific objective, possible other NUTS2 regions which do not come from projects. This means that the percentage may in reality be higher.
S	3	Share of all European regions' (NUTS 2) registered to the Policy Learning Platform	%	12.00	0.00	No forecast available per year
F	4	Number of policy learning events organised by the Policy Learning Platform	Number	14.00	5.00	1 event in 2016 1 thematic workshop on Circular economy (29/07/17) 1 back-to-back networking event for TO4 and TO6 (17-18/10/17) 1 matchmaking session on Circular economy / CRD (10/10/2018) 1 online thematic discussion on Circular economy business models
S	4	Number of policy learning events organised by the Policy Learning Platform	Number	14.00	0.00	No forecast is available per year per investment priority.

(1)	ID	Indicator	2017	2016	2015	2014
F	1	Number of Action Plans developed	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	1	Number of Action Plans developed	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	2	Number of people with increased professional capacity due to their participation in interregional cooperation activities	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	2	Number of people with increased professional capacity due to their participation in interregional cooperation activities	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	3	Share of all European regions' (NUTS 2) registered to the Policy Learning Platform	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S	3	Share of all European regions' (NUTS 2) registered to the Policy Learning Platform	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	4	Number of policy learning events organised by the Policy Learning Platform	3.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
S	4	Number of policy learning events organised by the Policy Learning Platform	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00

(1) S=Cumulative value - outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries], F=Cumulative value - outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]

<b>Priority axis</b>	<b>4 - Environment and Resource Efficiency</b>
<b>Investment priority</b>	6g - Supporting industrial transition towards a resource-efficient economy, promoting green growth, eco-innovation and environmental performance management in the public and private sectors
<b>Specific objective</b>	4.2 - Improve the implementation of regional development policies and programmes, in particular programmes for Investment for Growth and Jobs and, where relevant, ETC programmes, aimed at increasing resource-efficiency, green growth and eco-innovation and environmental performance management.

**Table 1: Result indicators - 4.6g.4.2**

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	2018 Total	2018 Qualitative	Observations
1	Share of Growth & Jobs and ETC programmes where measures inspired by INTERREG EUROPE were implemented	% of all Growth & Jobs and ETC programmes	0.52	2014	16.00	2.87		This indicator is based on 2 sources of information. First, it includes the results of the surveys sent to all managing authorities in 2014 (baseline value: 2 programmes indicated as influenced by Interreg IVC) and in 2018 (2 programmes indicated as influenced by Interreg Europe). But as agreed by the monitoring committee in December 2018, this indicator also includes the results directly reported by the projects running under this specific objective (as long as the same programme is not counted twice). By December 2018, the projects demonstrated an influence on 7 additional Structural Funds programmes (details of these programmes are available in iDB under the statistic 'Policy Instruments Results'). In total for this investment priority, 11 programmes (out of 382 Structural Funds programmes in Europe) were therefore influenced by Interreg Europe.
2	Amount of Structural Funds (from Growth & Jobs and ETC) influenced by INTERREG EUROPE	EUR	19,000,000.00	2014	96,000,000.00	20,500,000.00		This indicator is based on 2 sources of information. First, in compliance with the cooperation programme, it includes the results of the surveys sent to all managing authorities in 2014 (baseline value: MEUR 19 were indicated as influenced by Interreg IVC) and in 2018 (EUR 0 influenced by Interreg Europe). But as agreed by the monitoring committee during its 9th meeting in Innsbruck (December 2018), this indicator also includes the results directly reported by the projects running under this specific objective (as long as the same amount is not counted twice). By December 2018, the projects demonstrated an additional amount influenced estimated at MEUR 1.5 (details of this amount are available in iDB under the statistic 'Policy Instruments Results'). In total for this investment priority, an amount of MEUR 20.5 was therefore influenced by the programme.

ID	Indicator	2017 Total	2017 Qualitative	2016 Total	2016 Qualitative	2015 Total	2015 Qualitative	2014 Total	2014 Qualitative
1	Share of Growth & Jobs and ETC programmes where measures inspired by INTERREG EUROPE were implemented	0.52		0.52		0.52		0.52	
2	Amount of Structural Funds (from Growth & Jobs and ETC) influenced by INTERREG EUROPE	19,000,000.00		19,000,000.00		19,000,000.00		19,000,000.00	

## Priority axes for technical assistance

Priority axis	5 - Technical Assistance
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**Table 2: Common and programme specific output indicators - 5.Technical Assistance**

(1)	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	2018	Observations
F	5	No of Interregional Cooperation Projects approved	Number	200.00	184.00	In total, 184 projects were approved during the first three calls for proposals.
S	5	No of Interregional Cooperation Projects approved	Number	200.00	150.00	The initial forecast for 2018 was 150 approved projects in three calls (50 projects per call on average)
F	6	No of project visits and participations in project events by JS	Number	200.00	82.00	By the end of 2018, the joint secretariat participated physically in the kick-off meetings of 5 projects (Beyond EDP, iEER, MOLOC, RECORD and S34growth) and in 10 other project events organised by 11 projects (some events were joint events organised by several Interreg Europe projects). The JS participated remotely (online) in 24 kick-off events of projects. In addition, the JS organised for the first time in 2018 mid-term reviews for all projects approaching the end of phase 1. 43 mid-term reviews were held in 2018, in which the JS participated through physical meetings for 26 projects and through online meetings for 17 projects.
S	6	No of project visits and participations in project events by JS	Number	200.00	0.00	Initially, it was not envisaged that the JS would participate in other project events than the final conferences (no final conferences of projects have been held yet). Mid-term reviews were introduced later on in the programme implementation. This new feature appeared important considering the longer duration of projects and the need to discuss phase 2 before its start.
F	7	Average no. of visits to programme website	Number/month	15,000.00	51,131.00	The programme website hosts websites of all projects after their approval. Visits (Sessions in Google Analytics terms) at the project pages generate traffic at the programme website too, which helps the programme reach well beyond the initial target.
S	7	Average no. of visits to programme website	Number/month	15,000.00	15,000.00	The initial forecast for the programme website traffic (number of visits/sessions) was 15,000.
F	8	No of Monitoring Committee meetings	Number	14.00	9.00	2 monitoring committee meetings were held in 2015, 3 in 2016, 2 in 2017 and 2 in 2018.
S	8	No of Monitoring Committee meetings	Number	14.00	8.00	The initial forecast was counting with two monitoring committee meetings per year.
F	9	No of employees (FTEs) whose salaries are co-financed by TA	Number		27.00	
S	9	No of employees (FTEs) whose salaries are co-financed by TA	Number		27.00	

(1)	ID	Indicator	2017	2016	2015	2014
F	5	No of Interregional Cooperation Projects approved	130.00	130.00	0.00	0.00
S	5	No of Interregional Cooperation Projects approved	100.00	50.00	0.00	0.00
F	6	No of project visits and participations in project events by JS	4.00	3.00	0.00	0.00
S	6	No of project visits and participations in project events by JS	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
F	7	Average no. of visits to programme website	43,984.50	28,539.00	10,221.00	0.00
S	7	Average no. of visits to programme website	15,000.00	15,000.00	15,000.00	0.00
F	8	No of Monitoring Committee meetings	7.00	5.00	2.00	0.00
S	8	No of Monitoring Committee meetings	6.00	4.00	2.00	0.00
F	9	No of employees (FTEs) whose salaries are co-financed by TA	26.00	26.50	0.00	0.00
S	9	No of employees (FTEs) whose salaries are co-financed by TA	26.00	26.50	0.00	0.00

(1) S=Cumulative value - outputs to be delivered by selected operations [forecast provided by beneficiaries], F=Cumulative value - outputs delivered by operations [actual achievement]

Priority axis	5 - Technical Assistance
Specific objective	5.1 - To maximise the effectiveness and efficiency of the management and implementation of the INTERREG EUROPE Programme.

**Table 1: Result indicators - 5.5.1**

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	2018 Total	2018 Qualitative	Observations
TA1	Share (%) of all supported operations (projects and platforms) that is implemented successfully, demonstrated by the achievement of planned outputs.	%	0.00	2013	90.00	95.80		The achievement of the planned outputs by projects is almost 100% when considering the core deliverables (i.e. action plans developed). As reflected in the specific output indicators per investment priority, out of the 286 action plans to be delivered by the end of 2018, 274 were developed (95.8%). Also as reflected in the performance framework, the total number of action plans produced (274) almost match perfectly the 2018 target (280). As far as the PLP is concerned, the difficulties faced in the starting phase mainly impacted the quality of the services more than the delivery of the core outputs. As reflected under each investment priority, the core outputs related to policy learning events organised were delivered. Since projects still represent 96% of the operations' budget, the percentage reported under TA1 reflects the performance at projects' level.
TA2	Share (%) of total programme ERDF budget decommitted	%	0.00	2013	0.00	0.00		The programme met its first decommitment target in 2018. The target was even exceeded by 60%.

ID	Indicator	2017 Total	2017 Qualitative	2016 Total	2016 Qualitative	2015 Total	2015 Qualitative	2014 Total	2014 Qualitative
TA1	Share (%) of all supported operations (projects and platforms) that is implemented successfully, demonstrated by the achievement of planned outputs.	0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	
TA2	Share (%) of total programme ERDF budget decommitted	0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	

### 3.3 Table 3: Information on the milestones and targets defined in the performance framework

Priority axis	Ind type	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone for 2018 total	Final target (2023) total	2018	Observations
1	F	1	Amount of financial resources spent	EUR	11,000,000	84,441,686.00	21,697,135.22	ERDF amount. Target exceeded by almost 100%.
1	O	1	Number of Action Plans developed	Number	70	230.00	86.00	The figure is the total number of action plans developed by projects approved under priority axis 1 by December 2018. All the action plans, in particular those submitted in May 2019 reports, were developed in 2018, but not necessarily validated by JS yet. The initial target set at the programme level is exceeded due to the high number of projects approved under this axis in the 1st call for proposals. The majority of the 1st call projects (9 under priority axis 1) end their phase 1 just after 2018, covered in the present report (phase 1 ends at the end of March 2019, to be reported in July 2019 to the JS). Based on the target provided by the projects in their applications, from the first quarter of 2019, the initial milestones set for 2018 will be exceeded by far. For priority axis 1, the estimated number of action plans developed by March 2019 is 167.
2	F	1	Amount of financial resources spent	EUR	11,000,000	84,441,685.00	15,868,428.36	ERDF amount. Target exceeded by 45%.
2	O	1	Number of Action Plans developed	Number	70	230.00	58.00	The figure is the total number of action plans developed by projects in priority axis 2 by December 2018. All the actions plans, in particular those submitted in May 2019 reports, are still under check by the JS. The actual achievement is more than 80% of the initial target. This slight underperformance is due to the low number of projects in priority axis 2 approved in the 1st call finalising phase 1 in 2018 (only 8 projects). Majority of the 1st call projects in priority axis 2 (13) end their phase 1 just after 2018, covered by the present report (phase 1 ends at the end of March 2019, to be reported in July 2019 to the JS). Based on the target provided by the projects in their applications, from the first quarter of 2019, the initial milestones set for 2018 will be exceeded by far. The estimated number of actions plans to be developed by March 2019 is 149.
3	F	1	Amount of financial resources spent	EUR	11,000,000	84,441,685.00	15,649,393.39	ERDF amount. Target exceeded by 40%.
3	O	1	Number of Action Plans developed	Number	70	230.00	69.00	The figure is the total number of action plans developed by projects approved under priority axis 3 by December 2018. All the actions plans, in particular those submitted in May 2019 reports, are still under check by the JS. The initial target set at the programme level is almost perfectly reached. This priority axis is implemented according to plans. The majority of the 1st call projects (6 related to priority axis 3) end their phase 1 just after 2018 covered by the present report (phase 1 ends at the end of March 2019, to be reported in July 2019 to the JS). Based on the target provided by these projects in their application from the first quarter of 2019, the initial milestones set for 2018 will be exceeded by far. With regards to priority axis 3, the estimated number of actions plans developed by March 2019 is 94.
4	F	1	Amount of financial resources spent	EUR	11,000,000	84,441,685.00	11,715,689.00	ERDF amount. Target met, despite an initial lower approval rate for this priority.
4	O	1	Number of Action Plans developed	Number	70	230.00	61.00	The figure is the total number of action plans developed by projects approved under priority axis 4 by December 2018. All the actions plans, in particular those submitted in May 2019 reports, are still under check by the JS.

Priority axis	Ind type	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone for 2018 total	Final target (2023) total	2018	Observations
								<p>The initial target set at the programme level is not reached. The actual achievement is almost 90% of the initial target, mainly due to the lower number of projects approved under this priority in the 1st call for proposals.</p> <p>The majority of the 1st call projects (5 related to priority axis 4) end their phase 1 just after 2018, covered by the present report (phase 1 ends at the end of March 2019, to be reported in July 2019). Based on the target provided by these projects in their application, from the first quarter of 2019, the initial milestones set for 2018 will be exceeded. The estimated number of action plans developed by March is 94.</p>

Priority axis	Ind type	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	2017	2016	2015	2014
1	F	1	Amount of financial resources spent	EUR	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1	O	1	Number of Action Plans developed	Number	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2	F	1	Amount of financial resources spent	EUR	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2	O	1	Number of Action Plans developed	Number	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
3	F	1	Amount of financial resources spent	EUR	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
3	O	1	Number of Action Plans developed	Number	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
4	F	1	Amount of financial resources spent	EUR	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
4	O	1	Number of Action Plans developed	Number	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00



### 3.4. Financial data

**Table 4: Financial information at priority axis and programme level**

As set out in Table 1 of Annex II to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1011/2014 (Model for transmission of financial data) and table 16 of model for cooperation programmes under the European territorial cooperation goal

Priority axis	Fund	Calculation basis	Total funding	Co-financing rate	Total eligible cost of operations selected for support	Proportion of the total allocation covered with selected operations	Public eligible cost of operations selected for support	Total eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the managing authority	Proportion of the total allocation covered by eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries	Number of operations selected	Total eligible expenditure incurred by beneficiaries and paid by 31/12/2018 and certified to the Commission
1	ERDF	Total	99,344,632.00	85.00	87,845,571.25	88.43%	85,664,785.25	28,202,167.25	28.39%	52	21,697,135.22
2	ERDF	Total	99,344,629.00	85.00	80,558,283.25	81.09%	78,559,113.25	21,566,061.04	21.71%	50	15,868,428.36
3	ERDF	Total	99,344,629.00	85.00	67,474,929.25	67.92%	66,494,384.00	20,320,831.69	20.45%	42	15,649,393.39
4	ERDF	Total	99,344,629.00	85.00	68,778,426.25	69.23%	67,541,107.75	15,525,713.20	15.63%	44	11,715,689.00
5	ERDF	Public	28,931,099.00	74.52	28,931,099.00	100.00%	28,931,099.00	9,278,626.10	32.07%	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>ERDF</b>		<b>426,309,618.00</b>	<b>84.29</b>	<b>333,588,309.00</b>	<b>78.25%</b>	<b>327,190,489.25</b>	<b>94,893,399.28</b>	<b>22.26%</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>64,930,645.97</b>
<b>Grand total</b>			<b>426,309,618.00</b>	<b>84.29</b>	<b>333,588,309.00</b>	<b>78.25%</b>	<b>327,190,489.25</b>	<b>94,893,399.28</b>	<b>22.26%</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>64,930,645.97</b>

**Where applicable, the use of any contribution from third countries participating in the cooperation programme should be provided (for example IPA and ENI, Norway, Switzerland)**

In 2018, 10 interregional projects (from the 1st and 2nd call) with a total of 12 partners from Norway, two of them being lead partners, were monitored by the joint secretariat. In addition, in 2018, with the approval of the 3rd call, 6 additional interregional projects with a total of 6 partners from Norway, two being lead partners were approved. As a result, 16 interregional projects now include 18 partners from Norway (4 of them being lead partners). A total amount of EUR 1,857,470 of Norwegian funding is committed to those projects. The Norwegian funding for the projects is directly managed by the programme authorities. It is paid by the certifying authority to the lead partners of the concerned projects together with the ERDF contribution. By the end of 2018, EUR 419,770 of Norwegian contribution was paid by the certifying authority to those projects.

Regarding Switzerland, after the approval of the 3rd call in 2018, there was still only one interregional project with one Swiss partner, with a total budget of EUR 393,920. The contribution from Switzerland is allocated and paid directly by the Swiss authorities to Swiss partners.

It is also possible for partners from other third countries to participate in the projects. However, only at their own cost. So far, one approved project currently involves one partner from another third country. This partner is from Albania with a total budget of EUR 5,965.

In 2018 the Platform (PLP) activities with a total expenditure of EUR 1,056,863.22 also benefited from a contribution from Norway (EUR 8,497.86) and Switzerland (EUR 8,865.24).

In 2018, Norway and Switzerland also participated in the technical assistance expenditure of the Interreg Europe programme (EUR 3,567,052) with a contribution of EUR 29,146 and EUR 14,573 respectively.

**Table 5: Breakdown of the cumulative financial data by category of intervention**

As set out in Table 2 of Annex II to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1011/2014 (Model for transmission of financial data) and tables 6-9 of Model for cooperation programmes

Priority axis	Fund	Intervention field	Form of finance	Territorial dimension	Territorial delivery mechanism	Thematic objective dimension	ESF secondary theme	Economic dimension	Location dimension	Total eligible cost of operations selected for support	Public eligible cost of operations selected for support	The total eligible expenditure declared by eneficiaries to the managing authority	Number of operations selected
1	ERDF	096	01	07	07	01		24	FR30	87,845,571.25	85,664,785.25	28,202,167.25	52
2	ERDF	096	01	07	07	03		24	FR30	80,558,283.25	78,559,113.25	21,566,061.04	50
3	ERDF	096	01	07	07	04		24	FR30	67,474,929.25	66,494,384.00	20,320,831.69	42
4	ERDF	096	01	07	07	06		24	FR30	68,778,426.25	67,541,107.75	15,525,713.20	44
5	ERDF	121	01	07	07			24	FR30	25,969,277.60	25,969,277.60	8,134,626.56	1
5	ERDF	122	01	07	07			24	FR30	424,656.71	424,656.71	130,939.51	1
5	ERDF	123	01	07	07			24	FR30	2,537,164.69	2,537,164.69	1,013,060.03	1

**Table 6: Cumulative cost of all or part of an operation implemented outside the Union part of the programme area**

1. Operation (2)	2. The amount of ERDF support(1) envisaged to be used for all or part of an operation implemented outside the Union part of the programme area based on selected operations	3. Share of the total financial allocation to all or part of an operation located outside the Union part of the programme area (%) (column 2/total amount allocated to the support from the ERDF at programme level *100)	4. Eligible expenditure of ERDF support incurred in all or part of an operation implemented outside the Union part of the programme area declared by the beneficiary to the managing authority	5. Share of the total financial allocation to all or part of an operation located outside the Union part of the programme area (%) (column 4/total amount allocated to the support from the ERDF at programme level *100)
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(1) ERDF support is the Commission decision on the respective cooperation programme.

(2) In accordance with and subject to ceilings set out Article 20 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013.

## 4. SYNTHESIS OF THE EVALUATIONS

2018 was an important year in terms of evaluation. First, the programme decided to launch a mini ex-post evaluation of the Interreg IVC projects in order to check the possible long-term impact of the cooperation. Second, the programme carried out its mid-term evaluation consisting of two main elements: an operational evaluation focusing on the way the programme is implemented on a day-to-day basis, and an impact evaluation to check the first achievements of the programme. These evaluations are summarised below.

The Interreg IVC study was mainly carried out internally but it also benefited from an external methodological support provided by Tako Popma and Pascal Chazaud. The study was mainly based on a survey targeted at all Interreg IVC projects relevant to the current priority axes of the Interreg Europe programme. A total of 150 projects were targeted. Based on the results of the survey (426 replies from 117 projects), a more in-depth analysis of the long-term impact of cooperation was undertaken through interviews with a selected number of projects (23 in total). The main results of the study, which is available on the programme website ([www.interregeurope.eu/projectresults](http://www.interregeurope.eu/projectresults)), can be summarized as follows:

There are several aspects of the interregional cooperation projects which contribute to regional development and help in the improvement of policies in the participating regions. Among the projects covered by the study, the following was frequently found:

- Exchange of experience helped to collect inspiration and generate vision;
- Capacity building boosted staff and stakeholder knowledge in a given field;
- Stakeholder involvement was a conduit for mind-set change, demonstration of effects and policy change endorsement;
- Endorsement of a new or improved policy document by policymakers ensured sustainability of change and continuity on a set path;
- The projects helped in better use of the EU Structural Funds;
- The people-to-people aspect of the interregional cooperation projects was very important for successful implementation of the Cohesion policy and for the European Union as a whole.

The programme evaluation plan foresaw a mid-term evaluation for 2018, split into an operational evaluation and an impact evaluation. It was decided to have two distinct lots for each evaluation. The terms of reference for the call for tender were approved during the MC meeting in Tallinn, in December 2017. Following the call for tender procedure, a consortium of three companies was selected in April 2018 to carry out the two evaluations. The evaluation itself started in May and closed at the end of November 2018. Interim reports were also produced in autumn so that the monitoring committee could check and react on the first findings before producing the final reports. The final reports of both lots were presented to the Partner States at the 9th monitoring committee meeting organised in Innsbruck in December 2018.

The main conclusions of the mid-term evaluation are positive for both the operational and the impact evaluations. They can be summarised as follows:

On the operational side, the evaluators looked at the management of the programme, at the support provided to projects and the Platform, and at the communication strategy. The evaluators found a high level of satisfaction among the programme's stakeholders with the programme procedures and support. The evaluation's recommendations served mainly as suggestions for further improvement such as:

- more visibility to the role of Partner States in the programme implementation,
- more distinct focus on storytelling about the project results

The **impact evaluation** was more challenging due to the early stage of projects and the Platform implementation. Only 19 projects had their phase 1 closed at the time of the evaluation. Nevertheless, the conclusions of the evaluation were also positive. Based on the level of outputs and achievements reported by the 1st call projects, the evaluators assumed that the programme would exceed most of its initial objectives. The fact that the programme supports more projects than initially anticipated (258 instead of 200) helps as well.

As for the Platform and despite the lack of some data on its performance, the evaluators found that the latest developments went in the right direction. Reinforced management team and the development of demand-driven services such as peer reviews should help reach the set targets. Here also, the evaluation helped in further

improving the way the programme monitors the Platform and the projects' implementation. In particular, the following recommendations were made:

- update of the progress report template to better capture the impact of the learning process in the participating regions
- more specific guidance for projects on phase 2

The monitoring committee approved the final reports of the mid-term evaluation during its meeting in December 2018. It was also decided during that meetings that the measures to follow-up on the evaluation's recommendation would be discussed and approved at the next MC meeting organised in March 2019 in Romania. These follow-up measures will be summarised in the 2019 annual implementation report.

The programme also continuously evaluates each communication action and monitors the key performance indicators. Satisfaction of participants is monitored at all events. The large event open to all public in 2018 (Europe let's cooperate in Brussels) again attracted more than 50% of newcomers and close to 40% of representatives of public authorities. 100% of evaluation survey respondents (47) said that their expectations were met at the event.

An audit of the website was concluded in early 2018. External experts assessed the website overall (its usability, content architecture, performance and accessibility) and proposed a set of recommendations for improvement. The results were positive, praising the website for its modern and pleasant look and general user-friendliness. A number of the recommended improvements, such as simpler and clearer menu structure and content organisation, were put in place in 2018. Search and filter optimisation are ongoing.

A survey on the programme's result indicators was carried out in summer 2018. Results of the survey are reflected in the present annual implementation report. The survey had a rather low response rate among the targeted managing authorities of the IGJ and ETC programmes (less than 10%). Measures to increase the response rate at the re-run of the survey in 2020 were discussed with the monitoring committee.

Name	Fund	From month	From year	To month	To year	Type of evaluation	Thematic objective	Topic	Findings
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## 5. ISSUES AFFECTING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PROGRAMME AND MEASURES TAKEN

### (a) Issues which affect the performance of the programme and the measures taken

As mentioned in section 2, the programme faced a certain number of issues in 2018. In particular, the following elements should be highlighted:

- Programme internal resources

Since the start of the programme, 2018 was the most challenging in terms of workload in the joint secretariat (JS). This was related not only to the high number of projects for monitoring and assessment (the programme will finally support more than 250 projects instead of the 200 envisaged) but also to the new project features which require more work at the JS level than initially expected. This is for instance the case of the mid-term review organised with each project. Although very useful, the preparation, organisation and follow-up of this review is time consuming for the officers. In the policy officers' unit, the validation of the action plans and the assessment of the pilot action requests are also much more demanding than initially anticipated. Moreover, in 2018 the programme received the first action plans developed by projects which was particularly interesting, but as the overall quality of these plans remained rather poor and it appeared that the programme requirements were not always fully understood at project level, it required more monitoring and assistance from the JS. As a result, the JS staff were overloaded throughout the year. This challenge was also confirmed by the programme mid-term evaluation.

Concrete measures to tackle the issue were discussed at the end of 2018 with the Partner States. Primarily, the managing authority proposed to recruit two additional officers (one finance officer and one policy officer), which was approved by the monitoring committee. This measure will be implemented as soon as possible in 2019. Secondly, the JS is regularly reviewing its procedure to see where further simplification may be implemented (e.g. requesting action plans as soon as a draft is available and not wait for the reporting 3 months after the end of phase 1). In this perspective, the JS also work on internal guidance notes related to action plans validation, phase 2 monitoring and pilot action request treatment. These notes should hopefully be finalised early 2019 and should contribute to streamlining of the JS actions. Finally, the JS has also developed several tools (webinar, articles and workshops) to better explain the programme requirements to the projects in particular in relation to the action plans.

- PLP implementation

The implementation of the Policy Learning Platform (PLP) remained challenging in 2018. To face the difficulties encountered in the first year of implementation (2017), the programme already decided on significant measures and in particular on a recruitment in 2018 of a permanent management team partly based at the JS premises in Lille. However, the setup of the team took more time than initially anticipated and all positions could not be filled throughout the year. This was partly due to the overall management on the consortium side which remained rather weak and inefficient. The situation improved only in the second half of 2018 with the recruitment of the deputy manager. The programme saw the effects of the changes demonstrated by the success achieved in the second semester through the matchmaking sessions organised during the EWRC and the first peer review implemented in the Hauts-de-France region at the end of the year. To keep this positive trend in the future, the managing authority proposed a replacement of the PLP manager with the deputy manager. Arrival of a new PLP deputy manager at the beginning of 2019 will finally put the full PLP management team in place. This should allow the JS to step back from the day-to-day management of this strategic project as recommended in the mid-term programme evaluation.

- Financial challenges

As in the previous years, on the programme management side, regulatory requirements remained heavy. Notably, in 2018 the programme faced the following challenges:

- Understanding and applying the new requirements of the annual closure of accounts and developing the online monitoring system accordingly, especially regarding the correction of irregularities occurring at different stages remained a challenge in 2018. But thanks to a good cooperation between all concerned bodies (joint secretariat/ managing authority, certifying authority and audit authority), it was possible to develop the relevant modules of the monitoring system and to use them to prepare the annual closure of accounts documents and submit them on time by the regulatory deadline of 15 February 2019.
- The general financial reporting and audit requirements at the programme level (financial data, payment forecasts, annual implementation report, annual accounts, second level and system audits) being quite heavy,



several staff members needed to work on those tasks and that reduced the capacity of the joint secretariat to assist and monitor approved projects.

In addition, the interpretation and application of the EUR 250 rule based on article 122 (2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 also required several exchanges with the certifying authority and audit authority to clarify in which cases it is possible for the programme not to recover irregularities not exceeding EUR 250. It however implied an important simplification for the programme and the audited projects: from the 12 project partners audited only 3 partners had findings, but as they were all below EUR 250, no follow-up was required, which was perceived by beneficiaries as a very proportionate approach to audits and appreciated.

**(b) OPTIONAL FOR LIGHT REPORTS, otherwise it will be included in point 9.1. An assessment of whether progress made towards targets is sufficient to ensure their fulfilment, indicating any remedial actions taken or planned, where appropriate.**

Please see section 9.1

## **6. CITIZEN'S SUMMARY (ARTICLE 50(9) OF REGULATION (EU) No 1303/2013)**

A citizen's summary of the contents of the annual and the final implementation reports shall be made public and uploaded as a separate file in the form of annex to the annual and the final implementation report

You can upload/find the Citizen's summary under General > Documents

**7. REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS (ARTICLE 46 OF REGULATION (EU) No 1303/2013)**

**8. PROGRESS IN PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MAJOR PROJECTS AND JOINT ACTION PLANS (ARTICLE 101(H) AND ARTICLE 111(3) OF REGULATION (EU) No 1303/2013 AND ARTICLE 14(3)(B) OF REGULATION (EU) No 1299/2013)**

**8.1. Major projects**

**Table 7: Major projects**

Project	CCI	Status of MP	Total investments	Total eligible costs	Planned notification/submission date	Date of tacit agreement/ approval by Commission	Planned start of implementation	Planned completion date	Priority investment priorities	Axis/	Current state of realisation — financial progress (% of expenditure certified to Commission compared to total eligible cost)	Current state of realisation — physical progress Main implementation stage of the project	Main outputs	Date of signature of first works contract (1)	Observations
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(1) In the case of operations implemented under PPP structures the signing of the PPP contract between the public body and the private sector body (Article 102(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013).

**Significant problems encountered in implementing major projects and measures taken to overcome them**

**Any change planned in the list of major projects in the cooperation programme**

## 8.2. Joint action plans

Progress in the implementation of different stages of joint action plans

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**Table 8: Joint action plans (JAP)**

Title of the JAP	CCI	Stage of implementation of JAP	Total eligible costs	Total public support	OP contribution to JAP	Priority axis	Type of JAP	[Planned] submission to the Commission	[Planned] start of implementation	[Planned] completion	Main outputs and results	Total eligible expenditure certified to the Commission	Observations
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**Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them**

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## 9. ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME (ARTICLE 50(4) OF REGULATION (EU) No 1303/2013 AND ARTICLE 14(4) OF REGULATION (EU) No 1299/2013)

### 9.1 Information in Part A and achieving the objectives of the programme (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Priority axis	1 - Research, Technological Development and Innovation
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With 28% of the approved projects, priority axis 1 remains the most popular priority of the programme so far. In total, 51 projects were running in 2018: 21 from the 1st call, 19 from the 2nd and 11 from the 3rd call approved in March. The majority of projects (41 out of 51) were approved under specific objective 1(b). This unbalanced allocation of projects was anticipated at the beginning of the programme (see the estimation of the programme specific result indicators in the cooperation programme) considering that the demand for interregional cooperation is mainly related to innovation systems and more rarely to innovation infrastructure.

The most successful topic under priority axis 1 is related to supporting innovation in specific economic sectors with 17 projects. Within this topics, the sector of health is particularly popular with 6 projects and food sector is addressed by 4 projects. The other 7 projects tackle various sectors such as nanotechnologies, water technologies, bio economy, sport, rail or textile.

23 other projects under priority axis 1 address directly the RIS3 but from various angles. For instance, 7 projects focus on governance-related issues: for example, Beyond EDP aims at improving the entrepreneurial discovery process. Others are dealing with RIS3 in specific fields (e.g. photonics, chemical industry, CCI, advanced materials). 6 projects tackle the way clusters' support is approached within the RIS3.

Another well-represented issue is more generally the innovation capacity of SMEs tackled by 6 projects, but again from different angles (e.g. in rural and remote areas, related to industry 4.0). 2 projects are dedicated to open innovation.

The main characteristics of these projects can be summarised as follows:

- a total of 428 partners involved from 28 Partner States (only Switzerland and Luxembourg are not represented)
- a total of 357 action plans to be finalised by the end of phase 1
- out of the 362 policy instruments addressed, 319 are Structural Funds programmes (88%)
- for 37% of these Structural Funds programmes (119 out of 319), the managing authority or intermediate body is directly partner in the project

The 3rd call projects started in June 2018 and will begin reporting only from 2019 on. The stage of implementation is more advanced for the 1st and 2nd call projects which reached their third and second year of implementation respectively in 2018. For the first time, 15 projects finalised their phase 1 (12 from the 1st call and 2 from the 2nd call). This means that for the first time projects had to report on two core output indicators: the number of action plans developed and the number of people with increased capacity. Out of these 14 projects, S34Growth had exceptionally an extension of one year approved by the monitoring committee. Due to the challenging objective of the project (in particular related to co-investment), the quality of the action plans after two years did not reach the minimum quality standards and needed more work. The extension of one year will allow the project to finalise its exchange of experience process and hopefully improve the quality of the action plans. In SmartPilots, the partner from UK could not produce a proper action plan and the region left the partnership before phase 2 started.

Beyond the activities and outputs reporting, some of the 1st and 2nd call projects started reporting achievements in terms of policy changes. By the end of 2018, the main project outputs achieved under priority axis 1 are as follows: 1,638 policy learning events organised, 411 good practices identified, 846 people with increased capacity in innovation policies and 86 actions plans developed.

More interestingly, in terms of results, 16 projects have already demonstrated some influence on 33 Structural Funds programmes with a financial impact estimated at MEUR 26. Two projects (CLUSTERIX 2.0 and ERUDITE)

have also demonstrated some influence on 5 other policy instruments with a financial impact estimated at MEUR 6. Some of these policy changes are related to the funding of new projects which were inspired by the cooperation. Other achievements are related to the way the policy instrument is implemented. This is the case when terms of reference of calls for proposals are influenced or when new criteria for projects selection are introduced.

For instance, the ERUDITE project dedicated to digital open innovation succeeded in influencing the Operational Programme for Slovenia 2014-2020 (priority 2.1.4 on promoting investment in product and service development). Based on good practices developed in France, Italy, Finland and Ireland, the Ministry of Public Administration in Slovenia (partner 6) managed to mobilise MEUR 2.8 to develop new Fab Labs and support a network of 25 Fab labs throughout the country.

The INKREASE project dedicated to innovation ecosystems succeeded in influencing the ERDF Programme Investment in Growth and Jobs Austria 2014-2020, A.1, 1.b measure M6\_FTI\_IP1b\_MN4: Clusters/Networks, Location Management. Based on the CRAFT good practice developed in Brittany, the Lower Austrian Government decided in January 2018 to finance a new project called 'House of Digitalization' with a total budget of EUR 351,000. The aim of to develop a virtual one stop shop to help digitalization of SMEs.

Full details on these policy changes can be found in the programme monitoring system (iDB) in particular in the 'Policy Instruments Results' table. The results are collected through the regular project reports. It should be highlighted that each policy change reported by a project is carefully checked by the JS policy officer in charge of the project. In particular, to validate the result, the officer assesses whether the following elements are clear: the nature of the change achieved, the actual realisation of the change (the intention is not sufficient) and the way the project has contributed to this change (i.e. the way the interregional / local learning has led to this change). It often occurs that these elements are not fulfilled and that the policy change cannot be validated by the JS.

Interreg Europe was also actively involved in several events throughout 2018, some related to the partnership with the S3 platform in Seville. In particular, the programme organised jointly with DG REGIO, DG GROW and the JRC a conference "S3P-Industry and Interreg Europe working for Industrial Modernisation" in Lapland on 11 April. Interreg Europe also actively participated in the monitoring committee meeting of the S3P-Industry partnership on 12 April. Similarly, Interreg Europe was invited to present its actions during the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing Conference of Partners organised by DG Connect on 28 February in Brussels.

Concerning the Policy Learning Platform (PLP), the following activities were carried out under priority axis 1:

1. Publication of 6 articles (e.g. on EARTO, Horizon 2020, S3P industry)
2. Publication of 4 policy briefs:
  - The challenges and necessity of rural innovation
  - Research and innovation infrastructure
  - The role of staff exchange and mobility schemes in accelerating innovation policy transfer and uptake of good practices
  - Towards synergies between S3P-Industry and Interreg Europe projects
3. Analysis and validation of 216 good practices in total since the start of PLP
4. Organisation of a networking event for MAs during the EWRC
5. Organisation of 2 online thematic discussions
  - Industrial modernisation and Interreg Europe complementarities
  - Innovation infrastructure
6. Organisation of 2 thematic workshops
  - Clusters as drivers of regional innovation, SME competitiveness and interregional cooperation, Leuven (20/06/18), 32 participants

- Enhancing Rural Innovation Capacity and Performance: policy challenges and exchange of experiences, in Hamburg (05/12/18), 26 participants

7. Organisation of the S3P-Industry and Interreg Europe working for Industrial modernisation, in Rovaniemi (11/04/18)

8. Treatment of 5 requests submitted on the help desk

9. Presentation of PLP TO1 in 4 other events (e.g. TAFTIE annual conference, cross project event on innovation in health)

10. Organisation of 3 matchmaking sessions during the EWRC on 'Innovation governance (stakeholders' involvement)', 'Digital public services' and 'Centre of excellence/ competence'

A matchmaking session is based on the need of a region (the 'host' region) to get advice on a specific regional development policy issue it is facing. The session gathers a limited number of regional development practitioners, who have experience in this issue and may help the host region, identified by PLP experts. Feedback on these sessions was very positive not only from the host regions but also from the peers (other policy practitioners). They also led to several requests for peer reviews in order to deepen the exchange of experience.

As reflected in the above overview, the overall implementation of PLP improved in 2018. In particular, demand-driven actions were tested for the first time in the second semester through the matchmaking sessions.

To conclude, the implementation of priority axis 1 progressed smoothly in 2018. The targets set in the performance framework are already exceeded. The initial objectives will certainly be exceeded since the focus on Structural Funds is higher than anticipated and more projects are to be approved. This is the reason why the number of action plans planned by the 51 projects (357) already exceeded the final target set in the cooperation programme (230). In terms of results and as reflected in section 3.2 of the present report, priority axis 1 is also performing well considering that no projects are finalised yet. The target value for the share of Structural Funds programmes influenced is almost reached for specific objective 1.1, while the amount influenced is progressing well in particular for specific objective 1.2.

Priority axis	2 - Competitiveness of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
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With 27% of the approved projects, priority axis 2 is the second most popular priority of the programme. A total of 49 projects were running in 2018: 17 projects from the 1st call, 16 from the 2nd and 16 from the 3rd call approved in March.

These projects cover a wide variety of issues related to economic development and SME support policies. Similarly to priority axis 1, the most successful topic is the support to specific economic sectors (e.g. tourism, CCI, food, cyber security) with 16 projects. The internationalisation of SMEs is the second most popular topic, addressed by 7 different projects. The issue of entrepreneurship is also well represented with 9 projects covering different angles (e.g. youth entrepreneurs, business incubation, second chance, female entrepreneurship). Then a variety of other issues are also addressed such as access to finance, tackled by 3 projects, or social enterprises addressed by 2 projects. One of these projects, SOCIAL SEEDS, organised a successful workshop called 'Cohesion Policy meets Social Enterprises' during the 2018 edition of the Europe Week of Regions and Cities.

The main characteristics of these projects can be summarised as follows:

- a total of 404 partners involved from 29 Partner States (only Luxembourg is not represented)
- a total of 343 action plans to be finalised by the end of phase 1
- out of the 350 policy instruments addressed, 293 are Structural Funds programmes (84%)
- for 28% of these Structural Funds programmes (84 out of 293), the managing authority or intermediate body is directly partner in the project

The 3rd call projects started in June 2018 and will begin reporting only from 2019 on. The stage of implementation is more advanced for the 1st and 2nd call projects which reached their third and second year of implementation respectively in 2018. As far as priority 2 is concerned, only 8 projects finalised their phase 1 in

2018 (4 from the 1st call and 4 from the 2nd call). Still for the first time in 2018, several projects from priority axis 2 have already started reporting achievements in terms of policy changes.

By the end of 2018, the main project outputs achieved under priority axis 2 are as follows: 1,430 policy learning events organised, 614 good practices identified, 433 people with increased capacity in SME competitiveness policies and 58 actions plans developed.

More interestingly, in terms of results, 14 projects have already demonstrated some influence on 22 Structural Funds programmes with financial impact estimated at MEUR 24. 5 projects have also demonstrated some influence on 5 other policy instruments with financial impact estimated at MEUR 1.1. Some of these policy changes are related to the funding of new projects which were inspired by the cooperation. Other achievements are related to the way the policy instrument is implemented. This is for instance the case when terms of reference of calls for proposals are influenced or when new criteria for projects selection are introduced.

For instance, the EIS project dedicated to internationalisation of SMEs succeeded in influencing the Molise Region Operational Programme (2014IT16M2OP001). On 8th February 2018 a regional act N. 42 has been issued by Molise Region to publish a call for proposal to promote SMEs export. This call included two measures deriving from the project: the focus on sectoral groups of at least 3 SMEs (learned from the 'Clustering for internationalisation' practice of Kujawsko-Pomorskie) and the possibility to support export manager (learnt from the 'Export Consortia' practice in Cantabria).

The ATM for SMEs project dedicated to microfinance for SMEs succeeded in influencing the Świętokrzyskie Regional Operational Programme. Based on practices from Italy and Hungary, the Marshal Office of Świętokrzyskie (partner 9) supported in 2018 two new projects to support SMEs in their early stage of development. With a total budget of MEUR 7.5, both projects include new financial instruments (loans, seed capital investments) to help the start-up enterprises in the Świętokrzyskie Region.

Full details on these policy changes can be found in the programme monitoring system (iDB) in particular in the 'Policy Instruments Results' table. The results are collected through regular project reports. It should be highlighted that each policy change reported by a project is carefully checked by the JS policy officer in charge of the project. In particular, to validate the result, the officer assesses whether the following elements are clear: the nature of the change achieved, the actual realisation of the change (the intention is not sufficient) and the way the project has contributed to this change (i.e. the way the interregional/ local learning has led to this change). It often occurs that these elements are not fulfilled and that the policy change cannot be validated by the JS.

Concerning the Policy Learning Platform, the following activities were carried out under priority axis 2:

1. Publication of 4 articles:

- Digital transformation Scoreboard 2018
- Horizon 2020 SME instrument
- Internationalisation of European businesses
- Manifest for an innovative Europe

2. Publication of 1 policy brief on Public-private start up accelerators in regional business support ecosystems

3. Analysis and validation of 201 good practices in total since the start of PLP

4. Organisation of a networking event for MAs during the EWRC

5. Organisation of 2 online thematic discussions

- Enabling the digital transformation
- SME internationalisation – boosting exports through collective support

6. Organisation of 1 thematic workshop on Fostering entrepreneurship and business creation, Sofia (14/11/18), 27 participants, 11 Interreg Europe projects represented

7. Treatment of 10 requests submitted on the help desk

8. Presentation of the PLP TO3 in the lunchtime briefing at the Committee of the Regions (13/09/2018)

9. Organisation of 1 matchmaking session during the EWRC on SMEs involvement in cross-border projects

A matchmaking session is based on the need of a region (the 'host' region) to get advice on a specific regional development policy issue it is facing. The session gather a limited number of regional development practitioners who have experience in this issue and may help the host region, identified by the PLP. Feedback on this session was very positive not only from the host regions but also from the peers.

Despite the difficulty faced under TO3 with the PLP, the overall implementation of priority axis 2 progressed smoothly in 2018. The financial target set in the performance framework is already exceeded while more than 80% of the forecasted action plans are delivered. The initial objectives are likely to be exceeded since the focus on Structural Funds is higher than anticipated and more projects will also be approved. This is the reason why the number of action plans planned by the 49 projects (343) already exceeded the final target set in the cooperation programme (230). In terms of results and as reflected in section 3.2 of the present report, the progress made under priority axis 2 is according to the plan, also considering that no projects are finalised yet. In particular, almost one third of the target value for the share of Structural Funds programmes influenced is already achieved for this specific objective.

Priority axis

3 - Low Carbon Economy

With 22% of the approved projects after the approval of the 3rd call, priority axis 3 is slightly lagging behind in terms of number of projects. A total of 41 projects were running in 2018: 15 projects from the 1st call, 16 from the 2nd and 10 from the 3rd call approved in March.

In terms of issues addressed, these projects can be grouped in three main categories: 19 projects addressing energy issues, 18 projects addressing sustainable transport, and 4 projects (Green Screen, MOLOC, PASSAGE and SmartEdge) addressing more generally low carbon strategies. For the energy-related projects, it should be highlighted that only 4 of them are specifically addressing 'renewable energy' while the others focus on energy efficiency. Within these groups, certain topics are more popular than others. This is the case of energy efficiency in buildings addressed by 9 different projects. Community engagement in sustainable energy is addressed by 3 projects. More specific topics like electro mobility or smart grids are also covered under priority axis 3.

The main characteristics of these projects can be summarised as follows:

- a total of 321 partners involved from 29 Partner States (only Switzerland is not represented), including one partner from Albania
- a total of 275 action plans to be finalised by the end of phase 1
- out of the 278 policy instruments addressed, 207 are Structural Funds programmes (74%)
- for 31% of these Structural Funds programmes (65 out of 207), the managing authority or intermediate body is directly partner in the project

The 3rd call projects started in June 2018 and will begin reporting only from 2019 on. The stage of implementation is more advanced for 1st and 2nd call projects which reached their third and second year of implementation respectively in 2018. For the first time, 11 projects finalised their phase 1 (9 from 1st call and 2 from 2nd call). 2018 was particularly interesting also because, beyond the activities and outputs reporting, some of the 1st and 2nd call projects started reporting achievements in terms of policy changes.

By the end of 2018, the main project outputs achieved under priority axis 3 are as follows: 1,146 policy learning events organised, 428 good practices identified, 1,208 people with increased capacity in low carbon economy policies and 69 action plans developed.

More interestingly, in terms of results, 10 projects have already demonstrated some influence on 14 Structural Funds programmes with financial impact estimated at MEUR 188. But out of this amount, MEUR 170 was reported by one project only, LOCARBO. Indeed this project demonstrated how it influenced a full grant scheme of the Hungarian Economic Development and Innovation Operational Programme (EDIOP) dedicated to investment in renewable energy and energy efficiency for SMEs. Six projects have also demonstrated influence on 9 other policy instruments with a limited financial impact estimated at EUR 12,000. Some of these policy

changes are related to the funding of new projects which were inspired by the cooperation. Other achievements are related to the way the policy instrument is implemented. This is for instance the case when terms of reference of calls for proposals are influenced or when new criteria for projects selection are introduced.

For instance, the LASTMILE project dedicated to sustainable transport ('last mile') in touristic regions succeeded in influencing the Regional Plan for Development of Northeastern Region 2014-2020. Based on the experience of Catalonia, the Varna Regional Council developed a set of new mobility and 'last mile' measures for its region. These measures were approved by the Ministry (Managing Authority) in July 2018. As a direct results of these measures, 25 new green jobs in the field of mobility (e.g. in the parking space control in park and ride areas) were opened by the end of August in Varna.

The REBUS project dedicated to energy efficient buildings succeeded in influencing the Regional Operational Programme of the Crete region. In April 2018 the Managing Authority of Crete has launched a call for proposals on Priority Axis 2 "Sustainable Development in terms of improving the environment and tackling the impacts of Climate Change in Crete" for the Action 4.c.1: "Energy saving in public buildings". The call supports investment projects in the form of a capital contribution of up to 100% of eligible expenditure and the total budget is MEUR 12. This call includes new selection criteria that were directly inspired by REBUS and in particular: compulsory energy audit coming from the experience of the Malmö city and development of Energy Management System as developed in Tuscany.

Full details on these policy changes can be found in the programme monitoring system (iDB) in particular in the table 'Policy Instruments Results'. The results are collected through regular project reports. It should be highlighted that each policy change reported by a project is carefully checked by the JS policy officer in charge of the project. In particular, to validate the result, the officer assesses whether the following elements are clear: the nature of the change achieved, the actual realisation of the change (the intention is not sufficient) and the way the project has contributed to this change (i.e. the way the interregional/ local learning has led to this change). It often occurs that these elements are not fulfilled and that the policy change cannot be validated by the JS.

Concerning the Policy Learning Platform, the following activities were carried out under priority axis 3:

1. Publication of 8 articles (e.g. on Smart Finance for Smart Buildings, Energy efficiency Directive, EU carbon neutrality by 2050, Year of multimodal transport)

2. Publication of 8 policy briefs:

- Governance Change for Energy Efficiency in Buildings
- Demand Responsive Transport
- Renewable Energy Communities
- Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans
- Behavioural Change
- e-mobility
- Promoting Active Modes of Transport
- Energy efficiency through Financial Instruments

3. Analysis and validation of 168 good practices in total since the start of PLP

4. Organisation of a networking event for MAs during the EWRC

5. Organisation of 2 online thematic discussions:

- Demand responsive transport as a 'last mile' mobility solution
- Behaviour change

6. Organisation of 2 thematic workshops:

- Energy efficiency in building, Florence (28/06/18), 39 participants, 14 Interreg Europe projects represented
- Sustainable mobility, Manchester (21/11/18), 38 participants, 18 Interreg Europe projects represented

7. Treatment of 5 requests submitted on the help desk

8. Presentation of the PLP TO4 in 5 other events (e.g. 5th EU conference on SUMP, URBACT City Festival, Covenant of Mayors)

9. Organisation of 1 peer review on energy efficiency in buildings (October 2018)

The peer review was organised at the request of the Hauts-de-France Regional Council (host region) who was looking for solutions to increase the ERDF absorption under the ROP priority dedicated to energy efficiency in social housing and public buildings. Six experts from five regions (in France, Ireland, Italy, Portugal and Spain) spent two days with the host region to share their experience of managing public funding related to energy efficiency in buildings. As a result, Hauts-de-France has produced two sets of recommendations: short-term measure that can still be implemented in the current funding period up to 2020, and long-term measures relevant for the next programming period. Based on this first experience, the PLP methodology for peer reviews was fine-tuned.

As reflected in the above overview, TO4 is the best performing priority for the PLP both in terms of quantity and quality of the activities carried out. This can be explained primarily by the quality and proactivity of the thematic experts responsible for this priority axis.

To conclude, the implementation of priority axis 3 progressed smoothly in 2018. The financial target set in the performance framework is already exceeded while the forecasted action plans are also reached. The initial objectives may also be exceeded since the focus on Structural Funds is higher than anticipated and more projects will be approved. This is the reason why the number of action plans planned by the 41 projects (275) already exceeded the final target set in the cooperation programme (230). In terms of results and as reflected in section 3.2 of the present report, priority axis 3 is also performing well considering that no projects are finalised yet. In particular, the target value for the amount of Structural Funds influenced is already exceeded for this specific objective.

Priority axis	4 - Environment and Resource Efficiency
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With 23% of the approved projects after the approval of the 3rd call, priority axis 4 is catching up and has already exceeded priority axis 3 in terms of number of projects approved. A total of 43 projects were running in 2018: 11 projects from the 1st call, 15 from the 2nd and 17 from the 3rd call approved in March. As highlighted in section 2, the specific promotional campaign carried out during the 3rd call for this priority axis paid off.

A majority of these projects are approved under specific objective 4.1 related to natural and cultural heritage with a total of 23 projects, while 17 projects are running under specific objective 4.2 dedicated to resource efficiency. Under specific objective 4.1, a wide range of issues are addressed and in particular sustainable tourism (including cultural routes) addressed by 4 projects and green infrastructure tackled by 2 projects. More specific issues like light pollution, invasive species or preservation of deltas are tackled by individual project. For specific objective 4.2, the most popular topic is circular economy addressed by 6 different projects. Green public procurement is tackled by 2 projects (GPP4Growth and GPP-STREAM). 6 projects are working on waste management (e.g. landfills, food waste, soil pollution) while one project (AQUARES) address the quality of water.

The main characteristics of these projects can be summarised as follows:

- a total of 344 partners involved from 29 Partner States (only Switzerland is not represented)
- a total of 278 action plans to be finalised by the end of phase 1
- out of the 279 policy instruments addressed, 194 are Structural Funds programmes (69%)
- for 33% of these Structural Funds programmes (65 out of 194), the managing authority or intermediate body is directly partner in the project.

Although high, the percentage of policy instruments addressed that are Structural Funds programmes is the lowest of the four programme priority axes. This can be explained by the fact that the concentration principle applied in 2014-2020 to mainstream programmes did not include TO6. As a result, this priority is less covered in operational programmes than TO1, TO3 or TO4.

The 3rd call projects started in June 2018 and will begin reporting only from 2019 on. The stage of implementation is more advanced for 1st and 2nd call projects which reached their third and second year of

implementation respectively in 2018. For the first time, 10 projects finalised their phase 1 (6 from 1st call and 4 from 2nd call). 2018 was particularly interesting also because, beyond the activities and outputs reporting, some of the 1st and 2nd call projects started reporting achievements in terms of policy changes.

By the end of 2018, the main project outputs achieved under priority axis 4 are as follows: 943 policy learning events organised, 332 good practices identified, 404 people with increased capacity in environment and resource efficiency, and 61 action plans developed.

More interestingly, in terms of results, 9 projects have already demonstrated some influence on 12 Structural Funds programmes with financial impact estimated at MEUR 2.2. 13 projects have also demonstrated influence on 21 other policy instruments with financial impact estimated at EUR 471,000. Some of these policy changes are related to the funding of new projects which were inspired by the cooperation. Other achievements are related to the way the policy instrument is implemented. This is for instance the case when terms of reference of calls for proposals are influenced or when new criteria for projects selection are introduced.

For instance, the PERFECT project dedicated to green infrastructure succeeded in influencing the Operational Programme for Slovakia. Indeed, several learnings from the project related to the promotion of green infrastructure were integrated in the call for proposals under Priority Axis 2 "Adaptation to the adverse effects of climate change with the focus on flood protection" launched in April 2018. In particular, the evaluation criteria were adapted to reflect the benefits of green infrastructure. Thanks to the lessons learned from Amsterdam, notions such as "landscape permeability", "mitigation of urban heat island effects" or "removal of pollutants from air" were included in the call.

The INTHERWASTE project dedicated to waste management in European Heritage Cities succeeded in influencing priority axis 4, specific objective 6.1.1 of the Andalusian Operational Programme. The lessons learned from the project were integrated in a 'Study of municipal waste collection models' for the province of Cadiz where two UNESCO Heritage cities (Cadiz and Jerez) are located. The study was approved in April 2017 and is funded for EUR 86,000 from the ERDF OP Andalusia devoted to the Integrated Territorial Investment of the Province of Cadiz.

BIOREGIO dedicated to circular economy has succeeded in influencing the Sustainable growth and jobs 2014 – 2020 of Finland. The good practices and site visits in Spain and Greece, (e.g. pyrolysis of MSW in Toledo, Spain and BIO2ECO producing bioenergy on-site in Greece) have contributed to the project 'Kiertoliike' (A72067) dedicated to promoting Circular Economy Model and New Business Opportunities in the Päijät-Häme Region. This project is financed by the Operational Programme (Priority area 2, Specific priority 4.1) with a total budget of EUR 995 450. Thanks to BIOREGIO, the focus of this project has evolved towards bio-based content and the development of bioenergy solution in the region

Full details on these policy changes can be found in the programme monitoring system (iDB) in particular in the table 'Policy Instruments Results'. The results are collected through regular project reports. It should be highlighted that each policy change reported by a project is carefully checked by the JS policy officer in charge of the project. In particular, to validate the result, the officer assesses whether the following elements are clear: the nature of the change achieved, the actual realisation of the change (the intention is not sufficient) and the way the project has contributed to this change (i.e. the way the interregional / local learning has led to this change). It often occurs that these elements are not fulfilled and that the policy change cannot be validated by the JS.

Concerning the Policy Learning Platform, the following activities were carried out under priority axis 4:

1. Publication of 8 articles (e.g. on implementation of the Nature Directives, EU Strategy on plastics, New European Agenda for Culture, Environment in the post 2020 Cohesion Policy, EU bio-economy strategy)

2. Publication of 8 policy briefs:

- Sustainable tourism: an opportunity for regions to value and benefit from their cultural and natural heritage
- Food waste
- Digital solutions in the field of cultural heritage
- Protection and sustainable management of heritage in coastal and fluvial regions
- Eco-innovation
- Use of technologies for better protection and management of nature and biodiversity



- Cultural routes
- Circular economy business models

3. Analysis and validation of 158 good practices in total since the start of PLP

4. Organisation of a networking event for MAs during the EWRC

5. Organisation of 2 online thematic discussions:

- Circular economy business models
- Cultural routes with focus on stakeholder engagement

6. Organisation of 2 thematic workshops:

- Cultural heritage for sustainable development in European regions and cities, Berlin (20/06/18), 38 participants, 11 Interreg Europe projects represented
- Preservation of natural heritage, Bucharest (22/11/18), 29 participants, 11 Interreg Europe projects represented

7. Treatment of 7 requests submitted on the help desk

8. Presentation of the PLP TO6 in 4 other events (e.g. EREC workshop on resource efficiency in tourism, meeting on ENEA network, Interact event on cultural heritage)

9. Organisation of 2 matchmaking sessions during the EWRC on Circular economy and on Corporate Social Responsibility and cultural tourism

A matchmaking session is based on the need of a region (the 'host' region) to get advice on a specific regional development policy issue it is facing. The session gather a limited number of regional development practitioners who have experience in this issue and may help the host region, identified by the PLP. Feedback on the session was very positive not only from the host regions but also from the peers.

As reflected in the above overview, the overall implementation of the PLP improved in 2018. The level of activities was according to plans and for the first time, demand-driven services through matchmaking sessions could be tested.

To conclude, the implementation of priority axis 4 progressed smoothly in 2018. The financial target set in the performance framework is already exceeded, and almost 90% of the forecasted action plans are delivered. The initial objectives are likely to be exceeded since the focus on Structural Funds is higher than anticipated and more projects will be approved. This is the reason why the number of action plans planned by the 43 projects (278) already exceeded the final target set in the cooperation programme (230). In terms of results and as reflected in section 3.2 of the present report, priority axis 4 is also performing well considering that no projects are finalised yet. In particular, already 64% of the target value is achieved for the amount of Structural Funds influenced under specific objective 4.1.

Priority axis	5 - Technical Assistance
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The resources and activities of the technical assistance priority have allowed the programme to assess and approve 184 interregional projects and to commit 78.25% of the programme total budget by the end of 2018. The programme was also able to exceed the decommitment target for 2018 by reporting to the Commission a total of EUR 84,528,567 of total eligible costs by the end of 2018. The programme is therefore well on track both in terms of budget commitment and spending.

This has been made possible notably through:

- the setup and implementation of adequate management and control systems, confirmed as functioning properly by the audit authority
- the use of simplified costs options facilitating the budgeting and reporting of costs for projects and national points of contacts

- a carefully designed and well-functioning online system, allowing both the application and reporting of projects to be done online and the monitoring and payment of projects to be carried out within the regulatory 90 days deadline
- communication activities and events organised by the programme and the national points of contact allowing applicants and beneficiaries to be well-informed about the programme objectives and procedures, and the programme to disseminate and capitalise on the first project results

The achievement of the result indicator related to the share of supported operations that is implemented successfully is exceeded for 2018 as well as the financial result indicator related to decommitment.

The programme is also well on track with the technical assistance output indicators (see table 2 for technical assistance in section 3.2):

- The number of interregional cooperation projects estimated at 200 is already at 184 and expected to be exceeded in 2019 with the approval of the 4th call projects.
- The number of project visits set at 200 (taking into account the estimated number of projects) will also be exceeded as the JS, in addition to its planned participation in all final conferences, already occasionally participates in project kick-off meetings and since 2018 organises mid-term reviews for all projects.
- The average number of visits at the programme website per month (set at 15,000) is significantly higher than expected due to the fact that the programme website hosts all project websites, which increases the visibility both for the projects and the programme.

The number of monitoring committee meetings set at 2 per year is expected to be reached as well, as each year at least two monitoring committee meetings are organised.

## **9.2. Specific actions taken to promote equality between men and women and to promote non-discrimination, in particular accessibility for persons with disabilities, and the arrangements implemented to ensure the integration of the gender perspective in the cooperation programme and operations (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(4), subparagraph 2, (d) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)**

An assessment of the implementation of specific actions to take into account the principles set out in Article 7 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 on promotion of equality between men and women and non-discrimination, including, where relevant, depending on the content and objectives of the cooperation programme, an overview of specific actions taken to promote equality between men and women and to promote non-discrimination, including accessibility for persons with disabilities, and the arrangements implemented to ensure the integration of the gender perspective in the cooperation programme and operations

As far as the projects are concerned, the horizontal principles of 'Equal opportunities/ non-discrimination' and 'Equality between men and women' are directly integrated in the application form (section C.7 on horizontal principles). Each lead partner has to explain to which extent their project contributes to these principles. Based on the explanation, the lead partner selects whether the project is neutral or positive with regards to equal opportunities and equality. This information is part of the selection criterion n°4 'Coherence of the proposal and quality of the approach'. In case the information provided is not satisfactory and the project is approved by the monitoring committee, the assessor systematically integrates a condition where the lead partner has to clarify the project's positioning towards these principles. For instance, it often occurs that the project explains its positive effect through the fact that these principles will be respected during the project implementation or because these principles are already integrated in the internal policy of the partner organisations. This kind of justification is not considered as sufficient. To demonstrate a positive effect, the project really needs to explain how the issue addressed itself will contribute to the horizontal principles. So in most cases, one of the conditions for approval is that the answer to section C.7 of the application form is modified from 'positive' to 'neutral'.

In total, 57 projects out of 184 (31%) have demonstrated that the issues addressed have a positive effect on equal opportunities while 31 projects (17%) have demonstrated positive effects on equality between men and women. This contribution can be direct with projects such as RaiSE or SOCIAL-SEEDS tackling social enterprises, or FEMINA focusing on female entrepreneurship or SOCENT SPAs dealing with social entrepreneurship. But a significant number of other projects also succeeded in explaining how their project indirectly contributes to these horizontal principles (e.g. HoCare addressing innovation in home care services, Road-CSR on Corporate Social Responsibility, SARURE on retail in rural areas, STOB Regions on business transfer).

At the management level, these horizontal principles are also fully integrated in the internal policy of the MA and JS organisation and are therefore taken into consideration in the day-to-day implementation of the Interreg Europe programme.

### **9.3.Sustainable development (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(4), subparagraph 2, (e) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)**

An assessment of the implementation of actions to take into account the principles set out in Article 8 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 on sustainable development, including, where relevant, depending on the content and objectives of the cooperation programme, an overview of the actions taken to promote sustainable development in accordance with that Article

As far as the projects are concerned, sustainable development principle is directly integrated in the application form (section C.7 on horizontal principles). Each lead partner has to explain to which extent their project contributes to this principle. Based on the explanation, the lead partner selects whether the project is neutral or positive with regards to sustainable development. This information is part of the selection criterion n°4 'Coherence of the proposal and quality of the approach'. In case the information provided there is not satisfactory and the project is approved by the monitoring committee, the assessor systematically integrates a condition where the lead partner has to clarify the project's positioning towards this principle.

Obviously, all 84 projects approved under priority axes 3 and 4 directly contribute to sustainable development. But this is also the case of 45 out of 100 projects approved under priority axes 1 and 2. As a result, 129 out of the 184 approved projects (70%) managed to demonstrate a positive contribution to sustainable development.

#### 9.4. Reporting on support used for climate change objectives (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Calculated amount of support to be used for climate change objectives based on the cumulative financial data by category of intervention in Table 7

<b>Priority axis</b>	<b>Amount of support to be used for climate change objectives (EUR)</b>	<b>Proportion of total allocation to the operational programme (%)</b>
3	22,941,136.44	27.17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,941,136.44</b>	<b>6.38%</b>

As stipulated in section 8.1 of the cooperation programme, Interreg Europe addresses climate change mainly through the 41 projects running under the 'Low carbon economy' priority axis. Further details on these projects can be found in section 9.1 of the present report. The main issues addressed by these projects are energy efficiency, renewable energy, sustainable transport and more generally the development of low carbon strategies. All these issues contribute to addressing the challenges of climate change.

## **9.5 Role of partners in the implementation of the cooperation programme (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(4), subparagraph 1, (c) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)**

Assessment of the implementation of actions to take into account the role of partners referred to in Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, including involvement of the partners in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the cooperation programme

In compliance with section 5.6.2 of the cooperation programme, the Committee of the Regions (CoR) and the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) are official members of the Interreg Europe monitoring committee (MC). As such, they are systematically invited to all MC meetings and receive all communication related to the programme. Although the EESC involvement has been very passive since the start of the programme, the cooperation with the CoR continues to be fruitful; Interreg Europe being the only ETC programme having an official cooperation agreement with the CoR. CoR is very much interested in the Interreg Europe community to disseminate its activities including regular surveys dedicated to local and regional policymakers. In 2018, this cooperation has also led to the organisation of a lunch briefing in September in particular to promote to CoR members the good practice database and the Policy Learning Platform activities.

Beyond the composition of the MC, the Partner States also organise national committee meetings in order to involve relevant partners in the preparation of the programme MC meetings and get their support in the execution of the MC tasks.

The Partner States also support the programme by providing national specific information as necessary, including information on potential beneficiaries, providing a point of contact for potential applicants, ensuring wide dissemination of programme information and organising national events.

## **10. OBLIGATORY INFORMATION AND ASSESSMENT ACCORDING TO ARTICLE 14(4), SUBPARAGRAPH 1 (A) AND (B), OF REGULATION (EU) No 1299/2013**

### **10.1 Progress in implementation of the evaluation plan and the follow-up given to the findings of evaluations**

The evaluation plan which was approved in March 2016 and is implemented according to plans. The most important milestone was the organisation of the mid-term evaluation in 2018. All details on this evaluation and its results are available in section 4 of the present report. The follow-up measures on this evaluation will be decided and implemented from 2019 on. An updated of the mid-term evaluation is planned in 2020.

Status	Name	Fund	Year of finalizing evaluation	Type of evaluation	Thematic objective	Topic	Findings (in case of execution)	Follow up (in case of execution)
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## 10.2 The results of the information and publicity measures of the Funds carried out under the communication strategy

In line with the Interreg Europe communication strategy, activities are implemented in three areas: online, public & media relations, and events & meetings. The following target groups are monitored: public authorities (national, regional, local, EGTC, EEIG), EU programmes/ institutions (ETC, EU), business support organisations, higher education/ research/ training centres, sectoral agencies, infrastructure and (public) service providers, interest groups including NGOs.

In 2018, the following outputs and achievements were reached in the three areas.

### Online

Since the programme website launch in October 2015, the pages improved in content and functionalities. In 2018, setup of a new content delivery network improved the web performance and security, the Implement a project page got a new look, an application form for the PLP peer review was put in place, the infographic on policies at Facts & Figures page saw an update. In 2018, the website saw on average 51,131 sessions per month.

Interreg Europe projects have their websites integrated in the programme website. In 2018, 184 projects had their websites running. Training for the 3rd call projects on web editing took place in June. The top performing project websites saw 750 sessions per month.

Interreg Europe online community reached 16,008 users in 2018 (12,600 in 2017). They had access to new services such as the good practice database or simplified registration to programme events. 50% of users signed up for the programme newsletter (1/3 in 2016). 20% of subscribers are public authorities or EU programmes/ institutions. 47% of users have not indicated to which target group they belong.

Interreg Europe newsletter about programme developments and news was sent monthly in 2018 to more than 13,500 people. On average 31% open it. The newsletter's reach goes beyond the Interreg Europe online community.

Interreg Europe followers' base grew on social media (Twitter – 7,457; Facebook – 9,004; LinkedIn – 5,999).

The programme continued in organising webinars and e-learning events in 2018 for:

- potential applicants (see Events)
- partners in approved projects (see Events)
- Partner State representatives (briefing on communication tools and PLP, August, 15 points of contact present)

The webinars had 1,509 participants in total (4.3 average on how informative the event was – out of 5).

The PLP has a special section on the website. In 2018, it contributed to the website with 21 policy briefs and 56 news articles, disseminated also on social media and in a regular PLP section in the programme newsletter. PLP services were promoted on social media with a video 'Welcome to the Policy Learning Platform': <https://youtu.be/Nfiq5Jqp5bU>

### Public & media relations

In 2018, the programme ran a study on the effects of INTERREG IVC projects in regions all over Europe. The study produced 20 stories with tangible results. The programme presented them as:

- Report on the website (<https://www.interregeurope.eu/projectresults/>, 1,200 views in 2018)
- June newsletter (4,400 opened)
- 2-page leaflet with key facts
- Article - Interregional cooperation works!, Panorama 66, 10/2018
- Story at EU Regions Talks
- Set of social media posts

With the draft post-2020 regulations published, Interreg Europe invited stakeholders to express their opinions on the future. Quotes turned into a leaflet and social media posts.

([https://www.interregeurope.eu/fileadmin/user\\_upload/documents/Quotes\\_of\\_stakeholders.pdf](https://www.interregeurope.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/Quotes_of_stakeholders.pdf))

The JS held a briefing for the points of contact in March 2018 in support for their 17 information days about the 4th call and 7 training or dissemination events. The JS provided templates for the events, country-specific statistics and info flyer on PLP. 7 maps on the intensity of cooperation were designed (<https://www.interregeurope.eu/about-us/maps/>).

The programme communication strategy sees the projects as key in reaching the general public with news. The JS trains approved projects on media relations. The 184 running projects reported 6,694 media appearances so far (on average 71% of their target).

## Events & meetings

### 1. The 4th call

Activities in 2018 to promote the remaining funds available and attract applicants to the 4th call for proposals were:

- The 4th call info campaign (March – 22 June), incl. social media targeting underrepresented regions and organisations
- Europe, let's cooperate! forum with networking, partner search and lead applicant workshops, Brussels, 22 March (319 participants; expectations of 100% of evaluation respondents met) + online, 13 April (775 participants, 98.6% expectations met)
- 4 online Q&A for applicants
- 4 lead applicant webinars, 15-18 May (360 participants, incl. Q&A)
- 17 national/ regional information days by Partner States
- Promotional video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=POEw-IWndM>

### 2. For approved projects

For smooth implementation of project activities and reporting, the programme held:

- 3rd call lead partner welcome webinar (March)
- 3rd call lead partner seminar (April)
- Experience Fair for approved projects on their project management related internal processes, Sofia, 24-25 April (293 participants, 164 projects, 93% expectations met)
- Communication & finance seminar, 13-14 November (142 participants, 100% expectations met)
- Webinar on website editing (June)
- Webinar on reporting for projects and FLC (December)
- 7 training or dissemination events by Partner States

### 3. External events/ initiatives

The programme actively contributed to EU initiatives: EWRC, MOOC, European Year of Cultural Heritage, IVY Initiative, etc.

#EURegionsWeek (370 registered)

- EU Regions Talk: Stories about the impact and added value of interregional cooperation
- Workshop: Towards building a user-centric digital public sector, jointly with 3 pan-European programmes
- Participatory session: Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform: get involved, exchange, benefit
- Agora exhibition: Interreg Europe stand
- RegioStars: TR3S nomination

Cooperation with CoR

- MOOC, Chapter 5: Make the most of EU resources for your region or city, open 12-16 February. Contribution with a video (<https://www.interregeurope.eu/news-and-events/news/2547/interreg-europe-in-6-minutes/>), factsheets on PLP, and a practical task on good practices. All year social media promotion: 14,000+ participants joined the course in 2018.
- Lunchtime briefing: Discover good practices for regions and cities, CoR, 13 September. On good practice database and PLP services. 80 participants, 220 online

European Year of Cultural Heritage

- E-book Connecting cultures, connected citizens (by Interact) with 8 Interreg Europe projects. Social media campaign on the featured projects.

Interreg Volunteer

- The JS had help in communication tasks. <https://www.interregeurope.eu/news-and-events/news/2624/six-reasons-to-be-an-interreg-volunteer-at-interreg-europe>

JS actively participated in meetings held by CoR, DG Regio, INTERACT, INFORM – INIO networks.

**11. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WHICH MAY BE ADDED DEPENDING ON THE CONTENT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME (ARTICLE 14(4), SUBPARAGRAPH 2 (A), (B), (C) AND (F), OF REGULATION (EU) No 1299/2013)**

**11.1. Progress in the implementation of the integrated approach to territorial development, including integrated territorial investments, sustainable urban development, and community led local development under the cooperation programme**

As reflected in the cooperation programme and due to the programme's rationale, territorial tools like ITI or CLLD are not used at the programme level. However, through its projects, Interreg Europe is directly contributing to an integrated approach to territorial development. Out of the 184 projects running in 2018, 30 are linked to integrated urban development. Most of these projects (23) are approved under priority axis 3 on low carbon economy (and focusing on urban mobility) but 7 projects are also focusing on priority axis 4. For instance, the PERFECT project deals with green infrastructure while MOLOC tackle integrated low carbon strategy in urban areas. Another example is the INTHERWASTE project which tackles the challenge of integrated waste management in heritage cities.

Moreover, due to its specific focus on Structural Funds programmes, tools like ITI and CLLD are even sometimes considered in the project exchange of experience process. This is for instance the case of LAST MILE on mobility or ABCities on collaborative entrepreneurship.

## 11.2 Progress in implementation of actions to reinforce the capacity of authorities and beneficiaries to administer and to use the ERDF

The programme continued implementing the simplification measures adopted by the monitoring committee and detailed in the programme manual. In particular, the programme makes use of the following simplified costs options which are automatically applied in the online application and reporting system to make the budgeting and reporting of costs for all beneficiaries easier:

- a lump sum for preparation costs (EUR 15,000)
- a flat rate for the budget line 'office and administration' (15% of staff costs)

Under the technical assistance budget, standard scale of unit costs are also used for programme events organised by the national points of contact (PoC) and PoC travel costs.

In addition, in 2018, for the 4th call for proposals, the programme adopted a new simplification measure with the introduction of a lump sum for all 4th call projects to finance phase 2 of the projects. This measure will make the reporting for these projects easier and also simplify the monitoring, control and potential audit of these projects. It will reduce the workload for the first level control bodies and the programme authorities for the closure of the programme as the 4th call projects end at the latest in 2023.

The joint secretariat also continued to develop its online system. In particular, the modules related to payments, interim payment claims, annual accounts and audits and controls were developed in 2018 and make the work of the programme authorities easier in relation to payments, preparation of the interim payment claims and annual accounts and follow up of audits and controls.

Finally, to make the 3rd call projects and first level controllers (FLC) aware of the programme rules and requirements and ensure smooth reporting, the joint secretariat organised in 2018 seminars for lead partners and FLC as well as webinars on how to report activities and costs, which could be attended also by project partners (not only lead partners).

Compared to the previous programming period, and as described in section 10.2, a number of online tools (such as webinars and videos) are now used by the programme, multiplying the opportunities for project applicants, partners and controllers to obtain detailed information about the programme procedures and tools and to have their questions answered. This is also a cost-efficient way for the programme to extend its communication scope beyond the traditional targets of the physical seminars (that is, lead applicants and lead partners) to project applicants and partners.

The simplification measures, electronic submission and training opportunities mentioned above were designed and implemented to reinforce both:

- The capacity of beneficiaries to use and report the allocated ERDF and concentrate on the project implementation and results, and
- The capacity of programme and national authorities to administer the ERDF and concentrate on the monitoring of projects' implementation and results.

### 11.3 Contribution to macro-regional and sea basin strategies (where appropriate)

As stipulated by the Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013, recital 19, article 8(3)(d) on the "Content, adoption and amendment of cooperation programmes" and article 14(4) 2nd subparagraph (c) "Implementation reports", this programme contributes to MRS(s) and/or SBS:

Interreg Europe could be related to the development of macro-regional strategy or sea basin strategies since the programme is also supposed to capitalise on ETC programmes including transnational cooperation programmes. The PLP was invited in December 2018 to join the Interact event called "New directions for macro-regions: unlocking innovation capacity and performance". The event took place in January 2019 and the PLP participation will therefore be reported in the next annual report.

- EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)
- EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSTR)
- EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR)
- EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP)
- Atlantic Sea Basin Strategy (ATLSBS)

#### **11.4 Progress in the implementation of actions in the field of social innovation**

Interreg Europe does not directly address social innovation even if a few projects approved under priority axis 1 are indirectly related to social innovation. This is the case of the 4 projects dealing with innovation in the health sector (i.e. HELIUM, HoCare, TITTAN and ITHACA).

### 13. SMART, SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH

Information and assessment of the programme contribution to achieving the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

As reflected in the detailed description of the progress made in each priority axis of the programme, Interreg Europe contributes to Union strategy for smart and sustainable growth. More precisely, the 100 projects approved under priority axis 1 and 2 address smart growth while the 84 projects approved under priority axis 3 and 4 tackle sustainable growth. This relevance and contribution are also ensured through the fact that the programme has a particular focus on Investment for growth and jobs programmes which are more directly contributing to the implementation of the Union strategy in the different Member States and partner regions.

As reflected in the conclusion of the impact evaluation, it is however very challenging to assess precisely to which extent Interreg Europe contributes to the overall EU objective of smart and sustainable growth. Even if all its priority axes are relevant to the Union strategy, Interreg Europe is a capacity-building programme which does not directly finance implementation or investment in the European regions. Its contribution is therefore indirect, although it remains crucial. Interreg Europe is the only ETC programme allowing all EU regions to exchange and transfer their experiences. It helps to prevent reinventing the wheel and allows regions to find new solutions to their territorial challenges. As reflected in the results achieved in 2018, its leverage effect on mainstream funds can be very high although its budget represents only 0.1% of the cohesion policy budget. Moreover, through mixing less with more advanced regions, Interreg Europe puts the cohesion policy and its solidarity principle into practice.

Although it is not directly covered by the programme priorities, Interreg Europe can also contribute to inclusive growth through its supported projects. This is obvious with projects like RaiSE or SOCIAL-SEEDS tackling social enterprises, or SOCENT SPAs dealing with social entrepreneurship. More indirectly, this is also the case of projects like HoCare on innovation in home care services or Road-CSR focusing on Corporate Social Responsibility.

The impact evaluation carried out in 2018 assessed the Interreg Europe contribution to EU wide goals. The main conclusions of this evaluation are highlighted below:

- In relation to the nature of the programme contribution:

“A concrete application of already improved regional development policies triggers immediate knock-on-effects of various kinds (e.g. a more effective tackling of territorial, sector-related or target group-specific needs; a more effective and efficient use of public funding etc.), which then also induce positive changes of the socio-economic or environmental situation of territories covered by project partners (i.e. in a short or medium term perspective). Knock-on-effects will enable project partners making stronger contributions to the Europe 2020 Strategy and better delivering national or regional RIS3, while the induced short or medium term territorial changes will primarily support the EU-wide goal of territorial cohesion. The afore-mentioned effects and changes are usually “influence outcomes”, as they will emerge from external contributions (i.e. concrete application of improved policies) as well as from the direct effects of the previously realised projects.”

- In relation to smart growth:

“Interreg Europe will contribute substantially to smart growth, as many of the planned or already realised policy improvements aim at supporting the development of an economy based on knowledge and innovation. This contribution will mainly emerge from improved policies supporting innovation infrastructures (SO 1.1) and innovation delivery processes (SO 1.2), but to some extent also from improved policies strengthening the innovation capacity of SMEs (SO 2.1).

Research and innovation strategies for smart specialisation (RIS3) are a key requirement to develop Europe’s innovation systems and play a crucial role in the EU’s cohesion, research and innovation policies. Interreg Europe will also substantially contribute to these national or regional RIS3 by providing a space for experimentation, learning and identification of good practices that helps in better delivering these strategies (e.g. improved contents and governance or implementation mechanisms). This contribution will mainly emerge from projects under SO 1.1 and SO 1.2 that improve regional public interventions relating to RIS3.”

- In relation so sustainable growth:

“Many polices that will be improved under the six SOs of Interreg Europe promote either explicitly or implicitly a more resource efficient, competitive and greener economy and thereby indirectly contribute to the Europe 2020 Strategy’s sustainable growth priority. The most relevant and visible contribution to the three headline targets on ‘20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions’, ‘20% of energy from renewable sources’ and ‘20% increase in energy efficiency’ is



expected to come from projects implementing SO 3.1. However, this contribution will always be indirect and only emerge when improved policies finance projects or measures that actually change the stated targets positively.”

- In relation to inclusive growth

“Interreg Europe will only indirectly contribute to the Europe 2020 Strategy’s inclusive growth priority. This contribution emerges if completed policy improvements establish new projects or funding measures that will immediately affect the groups of persons mentioned by the two relevant EU 2020 headline targets (i.e. ‘75% of the 20-64 year-old population to be employed’ and ‘at least 20 million fewer people in or at-risk-of-poverty and social exclusion’).”

#### **14. ISSUES AFFECTING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PROGRAMME AND MEASURES TAKEN — PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK (ARTICLE 50(2) OF REGULATION (EU) No 1303/2013)**

Where the assessment of progress made with regard to the milestones and targets set out in the performance framework demonstrates that certain milestones and targets have not been achieved, Member States should outline the underlying reasons for failure to achieve these milestones in the report of 2019 (for milestones) and in the final implementation report (for targets).

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## DOCUMENTS

Document title	Document type	Document date	Local reference	Commission reference	Files	Sent date	Sent By
Citizens' summary	Citizens' summary	27-Jun-2019			Interreg Europe AIR 2018 Citizens summary		