

European Regional Development Fund  
(2007 - 2013)



## **INTERREG IVC**

Commission Decision

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Amended by

Commission Decision

C(2012) 6859 of 28 September 2012

## **ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT**

**2014**



17 June 2015

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## 1. Identification and executive summary

<b>OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME</b>	<b>Objective concerned</b>	Territorial cooperation
	<b>Eligible area concerned</b>	Whole EU plus Norway and Switzerland
	<b>Programming period</b>	2007-2013
	<b>Programme number (CCI No)</b>	CCI 20007 CB 163 PO 046
	<b>Programme title</b>	INTERREG IVC
<b>ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT</b>	<b>Reporting year</b>	2014
	<b>Date of approval of the annual report by the monitoring committee</b>	17 June 2015

2014 can be regarded as a transition year. Continuing to implement on the one hand the INTERREG IVC programme with a number of projects in the final implementation phase, and on the other hand, busy preparing with the Partner States the successor programme: Interreg Europe.

The updated but still not final balance of the programme performance shows robust achievements. The few figures below should just be regarded as an appetiser to fully analyse this report: 7,475 staff members with increased knowledge; 5,669 good practices identified; 508 good practices successfully transferred and 590 regional and local policies improved.

The thematic programme capitalisation, finalised in June 2014 with 12 in-depth thematic reports and succinct policy recommendations, ensures that this treasure of knowledge is made available for all regions in Europe.

The Partner States continued the preparation for the future and approved in May 2014 the co-operation programme Interreg Europe which was submitted in November 2014 to the EC.

Substantial communication efforts were therefore not only carried out to disseminate the results of INTERREG IVC, but also to promote the new programme. During the transition event in Italy (December 2014) the programme welcomed, including the online viewers, more than 2,000 participants.

This record participation underlines the high demand of the European regions to cooperate to improve their local and regional policies and is further inspiration for the start of Interreg Europe.

## **2. Overview of the implementation of the operational programme**

### **2.1 *Achievement and analysis of the progress***

#### **2.1.1 Information on the physical progress of the operational programme**

Based on the indicator system approved by the Member States for the INTERREG IVC Programme and outlined in section 4.5 of the operational programme (OP), the table in annex 01 shows the achievements in the different sections up to the year 2014. The baseline value for all indicators is zero.

## 2.1.2 Financial information (in EUR)

**Table 1: Financial information by priority and by source of funding (2007 to 2014)**

	Expenditure paid out to the beneficiaries included in payment claims sent to the managing authority	Corresponding public contribution	For information		Private expenditure (1)	Expenditure paid by the body responsible for making payments to the beneficiaries	Total payments received from the Commission
			Norwegian contribution	Swiss Contribution			
<i>Priority 1:</i> Innovation and the Knowledge Economy ERDF, Public Funding	161,643,950.80	161,643,950.80	1,205,107.61	3,585.36	0.00	125,557,326.81	129,315,160.64
<i>Priority 2:</i> Environment and Risk Prevention ERDF, Public Funding	124,065,725.45	124,065,725.45	252,668.05	2,205.82	0.00	96,472,005.87	99,252,580.36
<i>Priority 3</i> Technical Assistance ERDF, Public Funding	21,056,546.39	21,056,546.39	275,230.37	137,615.16	0.00	14,739,582.29	14,739,582.30
<b>Grand total:</b>	<b>306,766,222.64</b>	<b>306,766,222.64</b>	<b>1,733,006.03</b>	<b>143,406.34</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>236,768,914.97</b>	<b>243,307,323.30</b>
Total in transitional regions in the grand total	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total in non-transitional regions in the grand total	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
ESF type expenditure in the grand total where the operational programme is co-financed by ERDF (2)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
(1) Only applicable for operational programmes expressed in total cost							
(2) This field is completed where the operational programme is co-financed by the ERDF or the ESF where use is made of the option under Article 34(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006							

### 2.1.3 Information about the breakdown of the use of funds

**Table 2: Information about the breakdown of the use of funds 2007 to 2014**

Code (*) Dimension 1 <i>Priority theme</i>	Code (*) Dimension 2 <i>Form of finance</i>	Code (*) Dimension 3 <i>Territory</i>	Code (*) Dimension 4 <i>Economic activity</i>	Code (*) Dimension 5 <i>Location</i>	<i>Amount (**)</i>
09 Priority 1: <i>Innovation and the Knowledge Economy</i>	01	10	00	inter-re-gional	125,557,326.81
54 Priority 2 <i>En-vironment and Risk Prevention</i>	01	10	00	inter-re-gional	96,472,005.87
85 Priority 3 <i>Technical Assistance</i>	01	10	00	inter-re-gional	12,193,539.66 ***
86 Priority 3 <i>Technical Assistance</i>	01	10	00	inter-re-gional	3 983 057,37 ***
<b>Total:</b>					<b>238,205,929.71</b>
(*) The categories are coded for each dimension using the standard classification (**) Allocated amount of the Community contribution for each combination of categories. (***) The figures include technical assistance paid by the managing authority but not yet co-financed with ERDF by payments from the certifying authority (body responsible for making payments to the beneficiaries). They differ therefore from the amount indicated in table 1 under priority 3.					

Further financial information regarding ERDF commitments and payments by year can be found in annex 02.

### 2.1.4 Assistance by target groups

The assistance of the programme is only targeted at public bodies and bodies governed by public law. The table below shows the amounts paid by the end of 2014 to these target groups:

**Table 3: Assistance to target groups in ERDF 2007 to 2014**

Target Group	ERDF in EUR
Public bodies	108 223 313,84
Bodies governed by public law	113 806 018.84
<b>Total</b>	<b>222 029 332.68</b>

### **2.1.5 Assistance repaid or re-used**

No assistance was repaid or re-used in 2014.

### **2.1.6 Qualitative analysis**

The programme committed all remaining funds to projects by the end of 2011. As in the previous years the programme focused on sound monitoring of the running projects to ensure that they were not only implemented as approved by the Monitoring Committee, but also that their achievements reported were valid and in accordance with the programme expectations. The monitoring was carried out by checking incoming progress reports twice a year, participating in project final conferences and mini-programme steering groups, providing various email and telephone consultations, and, when necessary, by inviting project representatives to meet the JTS at its premises in Lille.

The average underspending of running projects was 15 % in 2014, down from 17 % in 2013 and 22% in 2012, while in 2010 during the start-up phase of the first projects we had to report an average project underspending of 40%. Thanks to the n+3 rule and the reasonably high spending of running projects, the programme avoided any de-commitment of funds in 2014, as in previous years.

The processing of requests for changes in 2014, as in the past, required the attention of the projects and the JTS. Adjustments of budgets and partner changes had to be handled. The latter often as a result of the financial crises as partner organisations were closed, restructured or merged to reduce costs, while others lost the financial capacity to participate in projects.

The thematic programme capitalisation analysis was finalised in June 2014. An in-depth thematic report, a publication with the main policy recommendations and a policy paper for each of the 12 thematic areas were delivered and widely disseminated. Additionally an evaluation survey was launched to measure the impact of the exercise on the policymaking processes at all governance levels. Further information is outlined in sections 2.7.4 and 3.1.1.2.

In respect to the promotion of equal opportunities for men and women and the protection of the environment, several fields of the application form require applicants to indicate and describe the effects of the project 'on the ground', and also how the day-to-day implementation of the project takes account of these requirements. The programme's decision-making body,



the Monitoring Committee, is obliged to ensure that the requirements regarding equal opportunities for men and women and the protection of the environment are fulfilled, in accordance with chapter 8.3 of the programme.

These requirements were taken into account and evaluated when assessing and approving projects. 64 % of all approved projects focus on or are regarded to be positive in terms of equal opportunities. 84 % of all projects place the main focus on or are regarded to be positive in terms of environmental sustainability.

Chapter 6.4 of the operational programme (OP) specifies the need for the Member States, where appropriate, and in accordance with current national rules and practices, to organise a partnership with the respective authorities at regional, local and urban levels, and with economic and social partners and other appropriate bodies.

## ***2.2 Information about compliance with community law***

No problems related to the compliance with community law were encountered in the implementation of the operational programme in 2014.

## ***2.3 Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them***

While in 2013, the certifications of expenditure submitted to the EC were reimbursed with delay, the situation improved during 2014, when all but one certification were reimbursed timely so that the programme did not have to interrupt any payments to projects. To minimize the risk of delayed reimbursement, the programme continues to submit certifications more frequently so that there is always a certification in the pipeline.

## ***2.4 Changes in the context of the operational programme implementation***

No changes in the context of the operational programme implementation were noted in 2014.

## **2.5 Substantial modification pursuant to Article 57 of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006**

No substantial modification of an operation as referred to in Article 57 of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 is to be reported.

## **2.6 Complementarity with other instruments**

During various information events and the consultations with potential partners, INTERREG IVC staff systematically underlined the specific nature of the INTERREG IVC programme. The staff made it clear that INTERREG IVC could not be a substitute for the ESF or other EU programmes.

Furthermore, during the application process all applicants were required to confirm, in their co-financing statement, that no expenditure related to their project had been or would be funded by any other EU programme. In addition, the lead applicant was required to confirm in the application form that neither their project, nor any part of it, had received, or would receive, any other complementary EU funding during the whole duration of the project.

In the quality assessment, one of the criteria checked was whether the partnership covered a wide EU area beyond the cross-border and transnational programme areas. If there was only a limited geographical coverage, justification had to be provided. The assessment of this partnership criterion allowed for the identification of applications that could also be submitted under related transnational or cross-border INTERREG programmes.

For the third and fourth calls, the rules on geographical coverage were amended. For example, a requirement was introduced for a partnership to include at least one partner from each of the four information point areas and at least one (for the fourth call) or two (for the third call) from the twelve most recent EU Member States. While the purpose of these stricter requirements was to increase the quality of the applications submitted, it was also a further safeguard to avoid double applications to different INTERREG programmes, and thus it reduced the risks of double financing.

Throughout the project, the first level controllers had to check and confirm that no expenditure had been supported by any other EU funding source and they also had to ensure that there were mechanisms in place to avoid double-financing.

## **2.7 Monitoring and evaluation**

The Monitoring Committee, the JTS, the Managing Authority and the Auditing Authority set up efficient measures and procedures to ensure that the programme is implemented in accordance with the various relevant regulations and the operational programme.

### **2.7.1 Meetings and decisions of the Programming (PC) and Monitoring (MC) Committees**

In 2014, the MC held two meetings alongside meetings of the PC. To prepare the decisions, three Task Force meetings were organised. The preparation of the future programme progressed. Further information on the preparation of the new programme is outlined in section 2.7.6. An overview of the meetings and the decisions made is provided in table 4 below.

**Table 4: Programming/Monitoring Committee meetings, decisions in written procedure**

<b>Meetings/ Written procedure</b>	<b>Date &amp; Location/ Approval date</b>	<b>Main issues</b>
Monitoring Committee	5 March 2014, Athens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication Plan 2014</li> <li>• Approval TA expenditure 2013 and budget 2014</li> <li>• Update on financial situation of the programme, decommitment risk and Group of Auditors meeting</li> </ul>
Programming Committee	5/6 March 2014, Athens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical Assistance Budget (including national contributions to TA)</li> <li>• Agreement – update on draft agreement text</li> <li>• Programme branding</li> <li>• Update on the programme Intervention logic</li> <li>• Information on the Investment for Growth and Jobs programmes</li> <li>• Mapping of programme stakeholders</li> </ul>
Programming Committee	6/7 May 2014 Lille	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private involvement / co-financing rates</li> <li>• Technical Assistance budget, including contact point financing</li> <li>• Public consultation</li> <li>• Ex-ante Evaluation/Strategic Environmental Assessment</li> <li>• Finalisation of Cooperation Programme</li> </ul>

Meetings/ Written procedure	Date & Location/ Approval date	Main issues
Written procedure	26 May 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interests raised with the help of national contributions on the INTERREG IVC TA account to allocate to the INTERREG EUROPE programme</li> </ul>
Monitoring Committee	18 June 2014 Thessaloniki	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update communication activities</li> <li>• Upcoming communication activities</li> <li>• Projects</li> <li>• Thematic programme capitalisation</li> <li>• Annual Report 2013</li> <li>• Finances</li> <li>• Programme closure</li> </ul>
Programming Committee	18/19 June 2014 Thessaloniki	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update latest programme developments</li> <li>• Reminder on the programme rationale for MAs of Growth and Jobs programmes present</li> <li>• Interregional Cooperation Projects</li> <li>• Policy Learning Platforms</li> <li>• Involvement of MAs of Growth and Jobs Programmes</li> </ul>
Programming Committee	15/16 October 2014 Rome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update on programme development</li> <li>• Preparing programme start</li> <li>• Draft communication strategy</li> <li>• Draft programme manual</li> <li>• First call for proposals: principles</li> <li>• Application form</li> <li>• Set-up Policy Learning Platforms</li> <li>• Update on Bologna event</li> </ul>
Programming Committee	4 December 2014 Bologna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update on programme development</li> <li>• Preparing programme start</li> <li>• Programme manual - second draft</li> <li>• Draft baseline survey</li> <li>• First call for proposals</li> </ul>

### 2.7.2 Monitoring procedures

As described in the 2008 Annual Report, the monitoring procedures were successfully implemented. On 12 November 2010 and 31 May 2011 respectively, the MC and the EC both approved the simplification of administration cost reporting by introducing a flat rate of 12% of the partner staff costs for administration costs. Project applications to the fourth call, which closed on 1 April 2011, were already required to calculate and base their administration cost budget on the simplified administration cost option. In 2013, the fourth call projects for the first time declared their administration costs using the simplified reporting method. This simplification measure was very much welcomed by the projects. Further details on the calculation and implementation of the flat rate were outlined in the 2010 annual report.

In 2014, the programme took another major step by further simplifying and streamlining the reporting of projects by applying the request for changes form to all projects with smooth transition, making all reports (including final report) online, as well as the good practice annexes.

The main advantages of this, are as follows:

- Elimination of compatibility problems between different excel versions
- As the Lead Partner can provide access to the coordinator, the finance manager and also to the partners, the completion of the form can be shared between different parties and thus accelerated
- The form is required to be fully completed before it can be sent to the JTS. The Lead Partner gets a detailed error message if there are problems. Unnecessary exchanges (for clarification purposes) and delays in the progress report approval process will be significantly reduced.

For the Lead Partners of projects, responsible for gathering the partner data and reporting to the programme, the advantages of this step are numerous:

- Access can be granted to the project coordinators, for example, to facilitate their work.
- Accounts with varying user rights can be created for partners to access and input data, and even for first level controllers to verify data.
- The Lead Partner can check at any time the status of the request for changes, if there are any errors or any financial inconsistencies and in which sections precisely.

Further to this, more improvements were done in the system as described in section 2.7.2.

### **2.7.3 Programme documents, tools, first level control and Group of Auditors**

Since 2007, the MC, the Certifying Authority, the Audit Authority, the Managing Authority and the JTS worked towards setting up a transparent and efficient management and control system. An update on the development of the main programme documents, tools, first level control system, and meetings of the Group of Auditors is given below.

### **2.7.3.1 Operational programme**

The MC updated the operational programme on 9 September 2011 mainly in order to incorporate adjustments related to the inclusion of the thematic programme capitalisation activities into the programme strategy. The EC, however, suspended the approval of the OP since some changes in the financial figures were expected in connection with the approval of the fourth and last call for projects.

At the beginning of 2012 and after all fourth call approved projects fulfilled their conditions and reduced their budgets by 5 %, the JTS were able to confirm that the initial financial table drawn up in 2007 matched almost exactly the total demand after all project funds were committed. Therefore no shift of funds between the priority 1 (Innovation and knowledge economy) and priority 2 (Environment and risk prevention) was needed.

Consequently, the amended operational programme was approved on 27 September 2012 under the decision number C(2012) 6859 final. No further changes have happened since then.

### **2.7.3.2 Rules of Procedure**

The rules of procedure for the Monitoring Committee remained unchanged.

### **2.7.3.3 Management and Control System Description**

The 'Management and Control System Description' was updated in the context of the annual control report 2013/2014. These updates concerned changes in the first level control system and in the Group of Auditors. For further details please refer to the Annual Control Report, Chapter 2.1.

### **2.7.3.4 Agreement between the EU-Member States, Norway, Switzerland, the Certifying Authority and the Managing Authority**

The Agreement between the EU-Member States, Norway, Switzerland, the Certifying Authority and the Managing Authority remained unchanged.

### **2.7.3.5 First Level Control System**

Annex 03 provides a cumulative update on the diverse range of tasks taken over by the FLC approbation bodies and centralised first level controllers. In 2011 two meetings took place to exchange on the tasks carried out by the Member State approbation bodies and centralised FLCs. Following these meetings the EC invited Member States to regularly provide information on these tasks. From the EC's experience, such information can be very helpful with respect to the programme closure procedures. A first overview of these tasks was provided in the 2011 Annual Report and then annually updated. The overview confirms the impression gained through the interaction with FLC approbation bodies and centralised first level controllers during the seminar. The results show that a significant effort is made on their part to support project partners and decentralised first level controllers in order to ensure an adequate quality of first level control. This is very much in the interest of both the programme and Member States. To complement the programme guidance on FLC, Member States for instance reply to questions of controllers and project partners on an ad-hoc basis, publish national guidelines, and provide templates and model documents. Almost 100 training seminars have been organised to date. Eight Member States out of the 14 with a decentralised FLC system carried out quality checks. The tasks undertaken by Member States are proportional to the number of partners involved in INTERREG IVC, and the results from past and current second level audits. So far the cumulative error rate for the programme is 0.64%. For both the centralised and decentralised systems it is below 1%. This confirms that neither system is superior to the other. Rather, they confirm the useful co-existence of both.

In light of the preparation of the new programme and the new management and control system description, trainings and quality checks (that can take various forms) have been highly promoted as good practices for FLC quality assurance.

### **2.7.3.6 Group of Auditors meeting**

The INTERREG IVC Group of Auditors (GoA) meeting took place in Luxembourg on 27 and 28 November 2014. As usual, it was a joint meeting including the representatives of the ESPON and URBACT programmes. This helps to create synergies and avoid overlaps, and makes better use of the time of the GoA members, who are in most cases the same for each programme.

The meeting in 2014 covered the following points:

- The audit findings from the 2014 round of project audits and the state of play of the follow-up were presented.

- The sample size for audits of projects to be carried out in 2015 was set at 10%. Furthermore, all operations representing more than 4% of the total 2014 expenditure certified and all project partners representing more than 2 % of the total 2014 expenditure certified were automatically included in the sample. This concerned the Technical Assistance (TA) of the programme. No complementary sample was drawn. The sampling method carried out was consistent with the new COCOF *Guidance on sampling methods for audit authorities applied*.
- The programme closure
- The designation process and the audit strategy for the next programming period

The next joint (INTERREG IVC, URBACT and ESPON) GoA meeting will take place in November 2015 in Lille.

### **2.7.3.7 Annual control report and annual opinion**

According to Article 62(1)(d)(i) of Regulation (EC) No1083/2006 and in accordance with the audit strategy of the operational programme, the Audit Authority shall submit to the Commission an annual control report on the findings of the audits carried out during the previous 12-month period ending on 30 June of the year concerned. It reports any shortcomings found in the system for the management and control of the programme. The current report had to be submitted by 31 December 2014 and covered the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014. The annual control report was submitted to the EC on 15 December 2014.

Similarly, with the annual control report, the Audit Authority also issued the annual opinion in compliance with Article 62(1) (d)(ii). The opinion expressed by the Audit Authority for the period concerned (1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014) was an unqualified one without any limitations.

### **2.7.3.8 Audit methodology**

The audit methodology was not amended in 2014.

### **2.7.3.9 Audit strategy**

The audit strategy was updated in the context of the annual control report 2013/2014. These updates concerned the flowchart and the monitoring factsheet for the validation of the audits



of operations reports. For further details please refer to the Annual Control Report, Chapter 3.2.

#### **2.7.3.10 System audit**

The first system audit began on 6 July 2009. The final report was approved by the French representative at the Group of Auditors meeting on 4 November 2009, presented and discussed on 18 November 2009 during the GoA meeting in Lille 2009. The follow-up on the findings was carried out between November 2009 and June 2010 in order to put into practice auditors' recommendations and revise the rating of the system. All system audit findings were closed in 2010. The system audit rating at programme level is now category 1 ("Works well; only minor improvements needed. There are no deficiencies or only minor deficiencies. These deficiencies have no significant impact on the functioning of the key requirements / authorities / system."). The level of confidence in the system is therefore high. No system audit was carried out in 2014.

#### **2.7.3.11 Audits on projects**

Project audits in 2014 were carried out during the first semester of 2014. The error rate for 2014 was 0.24%. This rate is below the 2% tolerated by the EC.

At the time of drafting the annual control report, all amounts had been followed up upon with the projects. However, not all amounts had been deducted from a certification to the EC. This has now been done and all findings will be closed when the next annual control report is submitted to the EC at the end of 2015.

As mentioned before regarding the sampling method for the project audits taking place in 2015, it was decided that a 10% sample would be drawn. It was decided that a complementary sample would not be necessary in 2015. As for the previous year the sampling for 2015 comprised the LP of the project automatically selected and another partner selected randomly from that same project. The new elements for this year's sampling were that all operations representing more than 4% of the total 2014 expenditure certified and all project partners representing more than 2% of the total 2014 expenditure certified were automatically included in the sample. Finally, in practice, the sample drawn based on the criteria mentioned above covered 14.42% of the expenditure.

The INTERREG IVC programme undertook the last certification for 2014 on 7 October 2014. The sample was agreed by the GoA on 23 January of 2015. In total 14 projects and Technical Assistance were randomly selected and are being audited in 2015.

Audits are being carried out from January 2015 onwards. Results of the audits of projects (incl. contradictory phase) will be finalised by 30 June 2015.

#### **2.7.3.12 Application pack**

In preparation of the fourth and last open call, the application pack, which includes the terms of reference, the programme manual, the application form, the co-financing statement, was last updated in 2010. Details are available in the 2010 Annual Report.

#### **2.7.3.13 Subsidy contract**

The subsidy contract was updated during the MC meeting in Stockholm, Sweden, on 4 and 5 November 2009. No further update was carried out since then.

#### **2.7.3.14 Partnership Agreement**

The partnership agreement template as developed during 2008 remained unchanged.

#### **2.7.3.15 Database System**

From the beginning of the INTERREG IVC programme the MA/JTS developed an efficient database system, which has become the core tool for the management of project applications and running projects. A general description of the functions was given in the 2009 Annual Report. As described in section 2.7.2, an important change from the excel format to an online reporting format was introduced for the semestrial progress reports (incl. final report), the Request for Changes procedure and the good practice annexes.

Further to this, more improvements were done in the system in 2014, such as:

- Harmonising the monitoring system with the online reporting numbering as a last step in the transition to online reporting.

- Adding the update stamp to all generated statistics tables.
- Improving the instructions for Lead Partners and all other users of the online forms.
- Several functions and automations in the request for changes form to prevent human error.
- Introducing a control number to the request for changes to check if paper version and the online version match.

#### **2.7.4 Thematic programme capitalisation**

##### **Overview**

Over the last seven years the INTERREG IVC programme has been enabling public institutions all over Europe to ‘learn through cooperation’ across 204 different interregional projects, involving 2285 partners, aimed at improving regional policies. Inevitably, certain regional development issues were tackled by several projects, which represented a unique opportunity for obtaining additional results and drawing conclusions and recommendations through benchmarking and detailed content analysis.

In that context, in June 2012, the programme (following the MC decision in Oslo on 15 June 2011) commissioned, through a public procurement process, 12 teams of thematic experts to carry out the thematic programme capitalisation. The initial contract with the experts was for one year and it has been renewed twice (additional 2 years). The initiative has involved an in-depth analysis, benchmarking, dissemination and capitalisation on the wealth of knowledge generated by projects working on similar policy issues. Altogether, the following 12 policy themes, each covered by a minimum of five projects, have been analysed:

- Priority 1: Innovation systems (triple helix & open innovation), Innovation capacity of SMEs, Eco-innovation, Creative industries, Entrepreneurship, E-government services, Demographic change, and Rural development
- Priority 2: Climate change, Energy efficiency, Renewable energy, and Sustainable transport



## Objectives

The overall scope of the initiative is twofold: firstly, to exploit better the knowledge resulting from projects working on a similar topic for the benefit of other regions in Europe, and secondly, to increase the visibility of the programme and its impact on the policy-making process at regional, local, national and European levels. More precisely the thematic programme capitalisation aims at:

- bringing forward the INTERREG IVC project results that validate the added-value of interregional cooperation;
- identifying innovative practices, tools, and methodologies from the INTERREG IVC analysed projects that could be also relevant to other regions in Europe;
- identifying relevant state-of-the-art practices, tools, and methodologies outside the INTERREG IVC programme, and exploring their potential learning effect on the still-running INTERREG IVC projects;
- identifying how INTERREG IVC achievements can contribute to create a competitive advantage in the regions involved, and if possible drawing policy recommendations for the regions in view of developing their policies and in particular their Smart Specialisation Strategies;
- drawing theme-specific policy recommendations for local, regional and European policy makers and practitioners in the thematic field;
- placing the analysis results within the Europe 2020 context and identifying links with the EU flagship initiatives;
- mapping and setting up a thematic community of the existing initiatives in the field in terms of platforms, communities, and networks, and linking the projects to relevant initiatives in other EU programmes;

- exploring the possibilities for mutual learning and enrichment within the projects, the capitalisation topics and with the results of other relevant capitalisation initiatives undertaken by ETC Programmes (in particular URBACT, ESPON and INTERACT);
- ensuring a sustained promotion of the analyses' results to relevant networks and at suitable EU events or those organised by the projects;
- contributing to the discussions on the 'capitalisation' approach of the future inter-regional cooperation programme in particular by brainstorming on the development of 'thematic learning platforms' based on the experience of the thematic programme capitalisation.

## **Beneficiaries**

The beneficiaries of the thematic programme capitalisation are:

1. The projects themselves and more generally the local and regional authorities in Europe, who are the main targets of Cohesion Policy  
The identification of valuable experience within a specific field of regional development can be of added-value for the local and regional authorities interested in that field. It could also lead to possible synergies and mutual enrichment among running projects.
2. The members of the Monitoring Committee  
It provides MC members with a clearer insight into the programme thematic achievements; that could also lead to a better strategic governance of the programme.
3. Regional, national, and European policy levels  
The screening and information on regional policy issues and solutions provides regional, national, and European policy-makers with a better insight into the programme achievements. It could even have an influence on the shaping of some of the policies.

To implement this exercise, specialised thematic expertise was required, as it was not covered by the in-house capacities of the programme. Thus, a specialised company per topic - 12 companies, gathering in total 26 thematic experts - was contracted on 22 June 2012 initially for 1 year. In 2013, the contracts were renewed for another 12 months and in 2014 were renewed for a last phase of another 12 months. The experts were responsible for conducting the in-depth content analysis of the project results, preparing the content and animating targeted thematic workshops with the involved projects, exchanging with EU relevant actors to establish bridges, drafting a detailed thematic report, a policy paper and a publication, presenting the results at relevant events, identifying the key stakeholders in their policy field and evaluating the impact of the Capitalisation initiative on the policy making process in the respective topic.

111 INTERREG IVC projects that tackle the selected 12 capitalisation topics were also engaged in the exercise as knowledge resources. The project partners were requested to contribute by providing all relevant information about the results of their project to the experts and by participating in targeted thematic workshops and online surveys.

Moreover, a stakeholders group, composed of MC Members, national experts, JTS, and interested EC experts, was created and updated through an online platform: [groupspaces.com/interreg4c-capitalisation](http://groupspaces.com/interreg4c-capitalisation). The group could contribute to the content discussions and was invited to meetings, workshops, project visits, events and thematic conferences that took place in 2014 within the framework of the exercise.

The overall coordination of the thematic programme capitalisation is undertaken by a Capitalisation Officer in the JTS who ensures the general progress and quality of the initiative and works in tandem with a Project Officer per topic who acts as a link between the expert team and the projects and provides intellectual and administrative support.

In terms of monitoring tools, the experts submitted to the programme bimonthly activity reports for approval. Additionally a set of guidance notes was drafted and circulated by the programme to the experts in order to steer their work and provide clarifications on their mission. Finally, an evaluation grid to monitor the performance of the experts was filled in every trimester by the Project and Capitalisation Officers.

For further details about the setup of the initiative please see the annual report 2012.

Based on the success of the thematic programme capitalisation, the Member States decided to build on the delivered work and expertise resources to prepare and pre-configure the work of the future Policy Learning Platforms. Thus, on 23 November 2013 the Monitoring Committee in Vilnius approved a renewal of the capitalisation contracts for a 3<sup>rd</sup> year (2014-2015) for a maximum budget of EUR 492,000.

### **2.7.5 Programme evaluation**

During the meetings in Prague, Czech Republic, on 14 and 15 May 2009 and further in Stockholm, Sweden, on 4 and 5 November 2009, the MC decided to carry out a programme evaluation before committing any of the remaining funds. A task force on programme evaluation was set up and met in Brussels, Belgium, on 2 March 2010 to propose an evaluation plan,

content, and schedule. These proposals were approved by the MC in a written procedure on 26 March 2010.

The evaluation plan proposed that an intermediate programme evaluation should be carried out during 2010, with a budget of EUR 114,000. An additional evaluation was planned during 2012 with a maximum budget of EUR 57,000.

The draft final report dated 4 October 2010 was presented, discussed, and endorsed with some minor requests for adjustments during the MC meeting in Bern on 25 and 26 October 2010. The final document was delivered on 10 November 2010 and it is available for download on the programme website [http://i4c.eu/about\\_the\\_programme\\_evaluation.zip](http://i4c.eu/about_the_programme_evaluation.zip).

The evaluators presented the programme with 18 recommendations. Further details were provided in the 2010 annual report. During the meeting in Budapest on 2 February 2011, the Monitoring Committee made a follow-up decision on the recommendations of the evaluators. Details on the decision are outlined in the annual report 2011.

During the meeting of the Monitoring Committee on 26 June 2012, the Member States agreed to launch a call for an update of the mid-term evaluation, as initially agreed in the evaluation plan.

The call was launched at the beginning of September 2012 and in October 2012 ECORYS was selected to carry out the update of the mid-term evaluation. The final report was presented during the MC meeting in Lille on 26 April 2013 and is available on the programme website: [http://www.interreg4c.eu/fileadmin/User\\_Upload/PDFs/about\\_the\\_programme\\_evaluation\\_update\\_2013.pdf](http://www.interreg4c.eu/fileadmin/User_Upload/PDFs/about_the_programme_evaluation_update_2013.pdf).

The evaluators developed 22 suggestions. The Member States agreed by consensus during the MC meeting in Dublin on 27 June 2013 on the recommendations made. Further details are outlined in the annual report 2013.

### **2.7.6 Future programme**

Already in June 2011, the Member States discussed preliminary ideas for a future programme, which were outlined in the annual report 2011.

The kick-off meeting of the Programming Committee (PC) took place in Copenhagen, Denmark, on 25 and 26 June 2012. Another meeting was held in Larnaca, Cyprus, on 29 and 30 November 2012.

The Member States agreed that the meetings of the committee should be assisted by the INTERACT programme. Their experience in setting up small working groups was used to ensure a structured discussion, but also allow all Member States to contribute better to shaping the new programme.

Concerning the procedures, the Member States established the rules of procedure for the Programming Committee, the terms of reference for the ex-ante evaluation, and the external drafting of the operational programme, and agreed on a procedure for the selection of the future Managing Authority.

On the content of the next programme, the SWOT analysis of the current programme was discussed, reflections on the strategic orientation and the thematic focus exchanged, and an agreement on the mission statement achieved.

In 2013 the Programming Committee (PC) met five times and the Task Force three times to develop the future interregional programme. The following main decisions were made on the future programme:

- The Nord-Pas de Calais region was selected as Managing Authority
- The programme would focus on the following thematic objectives:
  - Research, technological development and innovation
  - Competitiveness of SME
  - Low carbon economy
  - Environment and resource efficiency
- The ERDF funds would be equally allocated to the four thematic objectives
- Two types of actions would be supported:
  - Interregional cooperation projects – with two phases
  - Policy learning platforms
- The section ‘Implementation provisions’ would incorporate the stipulations which were so far dealt with in a special agreement between the PS and the MA. The agreement to be signed in the future programme would be limited to the minimum requirements as outlined in the regulation
- The name of the future programme would be INTERREG EUROPE



In 2014 the programme committee met again five times and was able to agree on the following main issues:

- Technical assistance budget with a substantial reduction in comparison to the previous funding period
- Eligibility of private non-profit partners
- Setting the unique co-financing rate for projects to
  - 85 % for all public partners in all Europe and
  - 75 % for private non-profit partners
- Ex-ante evaluation and the Strategic Environmental Assessment carried out and approved
- The public consultation was successfully finalised. The report is available on our [web-site](#).
- The final cooperation programme was approved on 7 May 2014  
Due to a significant delay during the signing process, the cooperation programme was only submitted to the Commission in November 2014, two months after the official deadline. The CP could therefore not be approved in 2014.
- Further features were agreed on the projects and the policy learning platforms
- Work on a programme manual started and possible terms of reference for a first call were discussed

### 3. Implementation by priority

#### 3.1 Priorities 1 and 2

##### 3.1.1 Information on the physical progress

###### 3.1.1.1 Projects

It should be noted that certain figures reported in the 2014 column of the performance table in annex 01 reflect only the **first semester of 2014**. This is the case for all the indicators related to project implementation as they are extracted from the progress report submitted in October 2014.

- Commitment of funds

**Table 5: Commitment of funds to projects (as of 20 May 2015)**

Priority/Sub-theme	ERDF committed to projects (in EUR)	Programme budget (in EUR)	% of programme budget
<b>1. Innovation and the knowledge economy:</b>	<b>169,071,627.74</b>	<b>176,726,969.00</b>	<b>95.67%</b>
• Employment, human capital and education	27,217,053.37	N/A	N/A
• Entrepreneurship and SMEs	58,599,142.29	N/A	N/A
• Information society	27,064,087.50	N/A	N/A
• Innovation, research and technology development	55,538,938.18	N/A	N/A
• Thematic programme capitalisation	652,406.40	N/A	N/A
<b>2. Environment and risk prevention:</b>	<b>124,251,572.54</b>	<b>125,315,487.00</b>	<b>99.15%</b>
• Biodiversity and preservation of natural heritage, air quality	9,502,030.43	N/A	N/A
• Cultural heritage and landscape	14,624,305.85	N/A	N/A
• Energy and sustainable transport	57,641,732.32	N/A	N/A
• Natural and technological risks (including climate change)	21,636,371.05	N/A	N/A
• Waste management	6,771,096.03	N/A	N/A
• Water management	13,641,099.26	N/A	N/A
• Thematic programme capitalisation	434,937.60	N/A	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>293,323,200.28</b>	<b>302,042,456.00</b>	<b>97.11%</b>

- Changes in running projects

The number of requests for changes approved by the JTS in 2014 was lower than the 59 requests treated in 2013. Indeed, 38 requests (related to 42 changes, as one request can cover more than one change) were approved in 2014 (see full overview in annex 04). As some of the second call projects were still running in 2014, the 36 projects affected by the requests for changes came from both the second and fourth calls, i.e. 4 from the second call and 34 from the fourth call. There were no requests from third call.

All four types of changes occurred in 2014: Partnership, Budget/Finances, Duration and Activities.

The percentage of changes related to **partnership** decreased from 50% in 2013 to 33% in 2014. All but one request came from the fourth call projects. The reasons for these changes covered a wide range of issues including structural change/administrative reform; internal re-organisation/organisational change; internal lack of capacity; liquidation and financial difficulties.

Changes in **duration** continued to decrease compared to the previous years, representing now 12% of all requests for changes (26% in 2012, 21% in 2013). Of the five requests, one came from a second call project and four from fourth call projects.

Changes in **budget** increased compared to the previous years, representing now 50% of all the requests for changes (28% in 2012, 27% in 2013). While the proportion of changes related to budget has increased, the actual number of requests has remained similar to previous years (19 in 2013; 21 in 2014). These changes were always made in compliance with the 20% flexibility rule stipulated in the Subsidy Contract. These changes occurred mainly in the fourth call projects (19 requests out of 21). This is logical considering the stage of implementation of the projects and the fact that the fourth call projects were finalising their activities in 2014.

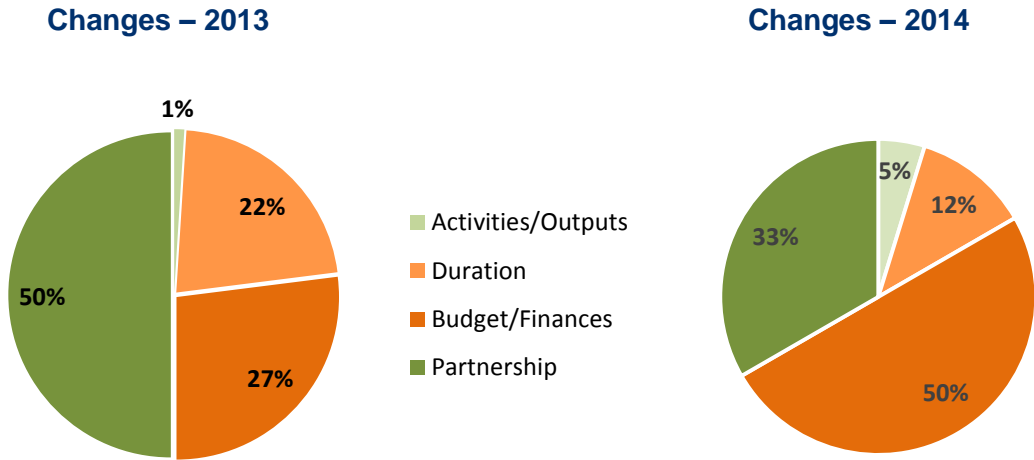
Finally, two changes in the **activities** were approved for the project InCompass and Renergy (fourth call) in order to ensure that outcomes of the project are better adapted to serve local and European policy objectives (creation of a toolkit and a pilot experimentation). In the vast majority of cases, changes in activities are tackled through the deviation section of progress reports. When changes in activities entail more significant modifications to the work plan and budget, it can be decided for transparency's sake and in agreement with the finance team to proceed to an official request for changes. The condition is that these changes do not impact the core objectives of the projects concerned.

In Article 5.1 of the Agreement between the Member States, the Managing Authority, and the Certifying Authority, the Monitoring Committee (MC) gave the MA/JTS the mandate to approve the following changes:

- The modification of a partnership, the withdrawal or replacement of up to two partners, or if more, up to 10 % of the partners in a project;
- A reallocation of the budget by up to 20 % of total costs as stated in the approved application;
- Changes in activities which do not change the aim of the project; and
- An extension of duration of the project not extending beyond the programme deadline.

As all changes in 2014 were within the limits mentioned above, they were approved by the JTS. Each MC meeting provided an opportunity to keep the MC informed about these changes (i.e. meetings in Athens, Greece on 5 March 2014 and in Thessaloniki, Greece on 17 June 2014).

The following graphs show the evolution of requests for changes from 2013 to 2014.



**3.1.1.2 Thematic Programme Capitalisation**

In 2014, the Project Officers in cooperation with the Capitalisation Officer monitored and supported throughout the year the work of the 12 teams of external experts who analysed 111 INTERREG IVC projects.

As a reminder the number of INTERREG IVC projects and partners involved in the thematic programme capitalisation initiative is as follows:

**Table 6: Projects and partners involved**

Capitalisation Topic	N° of projects	N° of partners	Partner States
Innovation systems	10	112	21 EU
Innovation capacity of SMEs	7	61	18 EU
Eco-innovation	7	166	26 EU + Norway
Creative industries	14	171	25 EU + Norway
Entrepreneurship	8	74	22 EU
E-government services	6	75	21 EU + Norway
Demographic change	9	100	22 EU + Norway
Rural development	9	94	23 EU + Norway
Climate change	7	83	21 EU
Energy efficiency	12	122	27 EU + Norway
Renewable energy	7	71	21 EU
Sustainable transport	15	173	23 EU + Norway
<b>Total</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>1,302</b>	

The first year of the thematic programme capitalisation ended in June 2013 with the delivery of an in-depth report presenting the analysis of the projects achievements and a publication providing a snap-shot of the full report and its conclusions/ recommendations in each thematic field. The contracts of the expert teams were renewed for another year until June 2014 in order to go deeper in the analysis and update the results of the projects and do a wider communication on the lessons learnt and policy recommendations reached. A coordination meeting for the second year of the thematic programme capitalisation took place on the 18 March in Brussels between the programme and all the capitalisation experts in order to ensure a common understanding about the final deliverables of the Capitalisation exercise, to prepare the Thematic Capitalisation Event on 22 May 2014 and to discuss the extension of the mission and the future. In June 2014 the contracts of the experts were renewed (final phase) for another year in order to evaluate the impact of the initiative and exploit further and prepare the capitalisation results as a first content for the future Policy Learning Platforms.

**Picture 1: Coordination meeting for the second year of Capitalisation**



## **Results and indicators**

There are two main interrelated results expected from the two years of the capitalisation initiative:

- increase in understanding and visibility of the programme's thematic achievements;
- increase in the influence of INTERREG IVC on the policy-making process at regional, national, and EU levels (for the analysed thematic fields).

These results were achieved mainly through the promotion and dissemination of the thematic reports and publications on each of the thematic fields. While the first year (2012-2013) focused on the collection of data, detailed analysis and benchmarking of the projects' achievements, the second year (2013-2014) focused on the wider communication of the findings, lessons learnt and policy recommendations drawn from the analysis.

In detail, the first year of the exercise proved very successful mainly because the involved projects were eager to discuss their achievements, to continue their learning and to capitalise on their results, while the experts found a wealth of knowledge interesting for other regions and developed theme-tailored recommendations for all levels of governance. The second year was focused on the challenge of informing and involving the beneficiaries/ users of the capi-

talisation results by setting up ‘thematic communities’, dissemination of awareness raising papers, presentations in the EU and project thematic events, and organisation of an annual capitalisation conference. In parallel, the experts went deeper in the analyses by updating the findings with new results, creating links with other ETC capitalisation initiatives, identifying the contribution to EU strategies and preparing more targeted and ‘ready to use’ recommendations for policy makers and practitioners.

The indicators set to measure the expected results are the following:

**1/ Increased understanding and visibility:**

- **N° of thematic policy recommendations resulting from programme capitalisation**

In their presentation of the wide range of innovative good practices and policies improved by the projects, the reports offer a timely inventory of up-to-date evidence and experience to help regional authorities and interested stakeholders introduce or develop their regional policies. 343 theme-specific recommendations are identified throughout the 12 final analysis reports for policymakers and practitioners at all levels – regional, national and European. In detail per topic:

**Table 7: Number of policy recommendations per topic**

CAPITALISATION TOPICS	n. of Policy recs
Innovation systems	19
Innovation capacity of SMEs	24
Eco-innovation	26
Creative industries	20
Entrepreneurship	73
E-governement services	15
Demographic change	61
Rural development	12
Climate change	35
Energy efficiency	20
Renewable energy	25
Sustainable transport	13
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>343</b>

- **N° of appearances of programme capitalisation in press and media**

In view of receiving feedback and evaluating the overall impact of the Thematic Capitalisation initiative, the Programme circulated in December 2014 a Capitalisation Survey to more than 2000 stakeholders that were identified as beneficiaries and collected 426 responses. In that context, 118 responders confirmed that they mentioned the INTERREG IVC Thematic Capitalisation in their press and (social) media activities.

For further detailed examples please see also online the [Capitalisation Evaluation Report](#).

- **N° of thematic publications downloaded from the programme website**

The 12 analysis reports and publications were also made available for consultation and download on INTERREG IVC website since October 2014 for the Open Days opening (see <http://www.interreg4c.eu/capitalisationlibrary/>). There were 7018 visits recorded on the Capitalisation section and library on the INTERREG IVC website in 2014.

## **2/ Increased influence on the policy-making process**

- N° of policy documents at regional, national, or EU levels referring/ taking into consideration the lessons learnt from the capitalisation
- N° of EU programmes adopting the approach of thematic programme capitalisation

Regarding these indicators, the programme circulated an evaluation survey in December 2014 – a feedback questionnaire to collect the relevant information from the beneficiaries of the thematic programme capitalisation initiative:

- “Thematic Communities”, i.e. existing networks, platforms, communities, EU initiatives, as well as policymakers, practitioners and representatives of relevant EC Directorates-General working in the 12 analysed policy fields;
- all 204 INTERREG IVC Project Partners;
- all the Regional offices of the EU Member States in Brussels;
- members of the INTERREG IVC Committees;
- INTERREG IVC newsletter subscribers.

The questionnaire was organised around the following points:

- mapping the interest in the policy areas;
- visibility and dissemination effectiveness of the capitalisation results;
- relevance, use and quality of capitalisation outputs and activities;
- impact of the capitalisation initiative on regional, national and European policy-making processes.



426 policy makers responded to the evaluation of the INTERREG IVC Thematic Programme Capitalisation. In detail:

- **N° of policy documents at regional, national, or EU levels referring/ taking into consideration the lessons learnt from the capitalisation**

90 indicated that they considered results from the capitalisation analyses in their policy documents. Moreover, 101 responded that the capitalisation results influenced their existing or planned programmes and policies; 97 answered that the results improved existing practices in their organisation, city or region; 88 mentioned that the results helped them introduce new practices in their organisation, city or region; 52 confirmed that the capitalisation outcomes influenced the policymaking process at regional, national or EU level and most of the respondents provided concrete examples on how they / their organisation used/ applied the capitalisation results. Finally 255 people answered that are expecting to use/ apply further the policy recommendations, good practices and other results of the Capitalisation in their activities/ projects/ programmes in the coming one to three years.

- **N° of EU programmes adopting the approach of thematic programme capitalisation:**

64 policymakers confirmed that they/ their organisation applied a capitalisation approach similar to INTERREG IVC Capitalisation in their activity/ initiative / project/ programme.

For further detailed examples please see also the [Capitalisation Evaluation Report](#).

## Deliverables

The deliverables per topic for the second year of the thematic programme capitalisation (June 2013 – June 2014) were:

**Table 8: Deliverables per topic**

Output indicator per topic	Value
N° of topic workshops per year	1
N° of annual topic reports	1
N° of annual topic publications	1
N° of presentations made at other conferences (e.g. programme events, EU events) per year	1 minimum
N° of policy papers/ bulletins for awareness raising	1

Output indicator per topic	Value
N° of “Thematic Communities” , i.e. existing networks, platforms, communities, EU initiatives, as well as policymakers, practitioners and representatives of relevant EC Directorates-General working in the analysed policy fields	1 list including ~200 contacts

For the implementation of the initiative, as explained under the point 2.7.4, a team of 26 specialised experts was initially contracted for one year on 21 June 2012 and their contracts were renewed twice. Their tasks per topic mainly consisted of:

- Collection of data (e.g. thematic good practices, policies addressed)
- Analysis/ validation of the data compared to the EU state of the art on the topic
- Organisation of topic workshops to share results and contribute to mutual enrichment
- Dissemination of the outputs through the programme website and events, dedicated publications, reports, policy papers, thematic surveys, participation in thematic conferences, etc.
- Evaluation of the Capitalisation results and impact into the policymaking process at regional, national and European level.
- Use of the Capitalisation knowledge and results to prepare the future work of the Inter-reg Europe policy learning platforms.

In that framework during 2014, the following activities took place:

### **Thematic Workshops**

Following a full year of analysis and the delivery of the first year reports and publications, a one-day thematic workshop was organised per topic (12 in total) with the analysed INTERREG IVC projects and some relevant external experts or EC representatives to discuss the findings, lessons learnt and policy recommendations. All 12 workshops were hosted by the Committee of the Regions in Brussels and they took place from 28 October to 29 November 2013. They were reported in detail in the Annual Report of 2013.

### **Capitalisation Events during Open Days 2014**

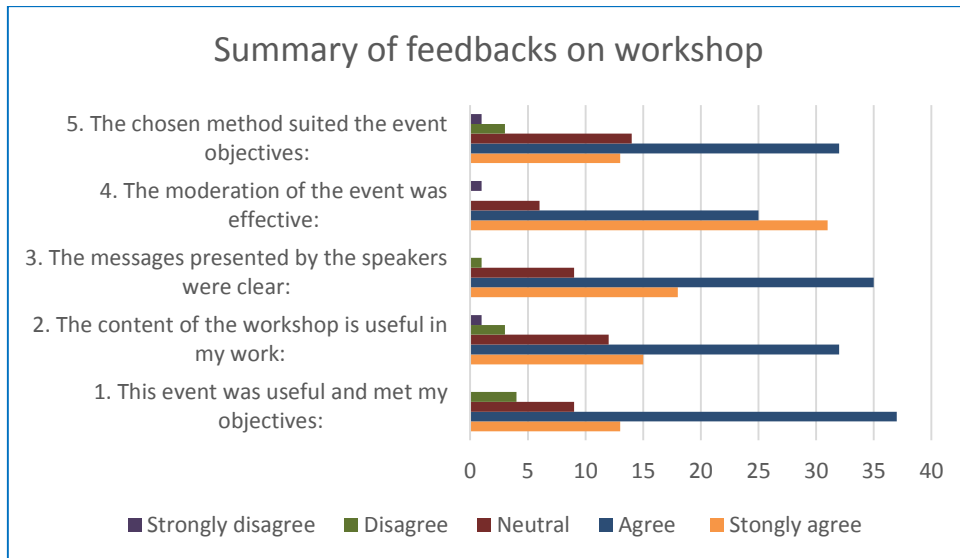
During the Open Days 2014, the programme presented the results of the thematic programme capitalisation to the European regions at one dedicated workshop and at a joint workshop with URBACT, ESPON and INTERACT. Additionally at the opening of the Open Days in the premises of the Committee of the Regions, the 12 thematic analysis reports and publications were presented. A stand on each of the 12 analysed thematic fields, as well as a dedicated stand

on the INTERREG IVC Programme were displayed and visited by around 500 participants and 500 sets of Thematic Programme Capitalisation publications were distributed. In parallel the capitalisation results and publications were widely promoted through the programme's social media channels.

**Picture 2: Networking area during Open Days 2014**



- 7 October 2014: “Success factors for regional policies on innovation and entrepreneurship”  
The workshop was fully booked and attended by around 220 people. Capitalisation experts – innovation systems, innovation capacity of SMEs and entrepreneurship – presented the best practices and policy recommendations resulting from a two-year analysis. Participants also learned about the upcoming financing opportunities and networks within the future INTER-REG EUROPE programme. A good example of the need to tackle the lack of transparency of innovation services in a region is ASTRIDE in Nord-Pas de Calais - <http://www.jinnove.com/>. In general the event met the participant's expectations and thus the feedback received was in majority very positive on all indicators:



- *8 October 2013: “Getting the most out of pan-European cooperation programmes - 2014-2020”*

The programme organised a workshop with the ESPON, URBACT and INTERACT programmes. This workshop explored the features of the programmes for 2014-2020 and presented how potential partners (cities, regions, research, public and private stakeholders, and other ESIF programmes) can participate in and benefit from the networking, evidence, exchange and learning, capacity building, research and capitalisation activities which will be developed by the four European Territorial Cooperation Programmes. The thematic programme capitalisation experts on Innovation Systems, (open Innovation and triple helix), Innovation Capacities of SMEs and Entrepreneurship have provided input in the discussions. Around 200 participants were present.

**Picture 3: Open Days 2014 INTERREG IVC workshops**



## Dissemination in project or EU thematic events

The capitalisation experts acted as ambassadors of the programme and participated in thematic project or EU events to disseminate the findings of their analyses. An overview is provided in the table below:

**Table 9: Overview of the dissemination of capitalisation results in thematic events**

Topic	Event date	Event official title	Event place	Event organiser
Entrepreneurship	05/02/2014	MESSE project event	Hannover, Germany	MESSE
Demographic change	11/02/2014	Vernetzung von INTERREG-Projekten (networking event for INTERREG projects in the field of Demographic change) zum demografischen Wandel	Berlin, Germany	INTERREG IVC projects on Demographic change
Entrepreneurship	10/03/2014	Visit to Young SMEs	Tipperary, Ireland	
Climate change	10-12/3/2014	Circle 2 Conference on European Climate Change Adaptation.	Lisbon, Portugal	
Innovation capacity of SMEs	17/03/2014	ClusterCOOP final conference	Bratislava, Slovakia	ClusterCOOP - Central Europe project
Climate Change	24/03/2014	Workshop on the new cycle of the Cohesion Policy in 2014-2020	Brussels, Belgium	RSA Research Network on Cohesion Policy
E-government services	10/04/2014	E-government and Reduction of Administrative Burden: Applying the 'Once only' principle	Brussels, Belgium	European Dynamics, Deloitte
Rural development	29/04/2014	<u>Rur@ct Benchmarking Seminar</u>	Brussels, Belgium	Assembly of European Regions, Rur@act

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Event date</b>	<b>Event official title</b>	<b>Event place</b>	<b>Event organiser</b>
Creative industries	30/04/2014	INTERREG conference	London, United Kingdom	Euclid International
Renewable energy	07/05/2014	Regions4Green-Growth meeting	Sundsvall, Sweden	R4GG
Sustainable transport	07-09/05/2014	ECOMM 2014	Florence, Italy	European Platform on Mobility Management
Entrepreneurship	14/05/2014	TII Annual Conference	Utrecht, the Netherlands	TII Technology Innovation International
Climate Change	21-23/05/2014	CLUE project event	Vienna, Austria	CLUE
Climate Change	15-18/06/2014	Diverse Regions: Building Resilient Communities and Territories	Izmir, Turkey	Regional Studies Association European Conference
Energy efficiency	23-27/06/2014	EC Sustainable Energy Week	Brussels, Belgium	EC
Climate Change	25-27/08/2014	Third Nordic International Conference on Climate Change Adaptation	Copenhagen, Denmark	
Rural development	09/10/2014	Grisi Plus project final conference: Using geomatics for a more attractive countryside	Moravske Toplice, Slovenia	Grisi Plus
Energy efficiency	29/10/2014	GreenITNet project Final Conference	Rome, Italy	GreenITNet
Entrepreneurship	18/11/2014	InCompass final conference	Brussels, Belgium	InCompass
Climate Change	27-28/11/2014	Dissemination event of OrientGate	Athens, Greece	OrientGate project supported by SEE Transnational Cooperation programme

### **European Best Practices Conference**

The Managing Authority of European Territorial Cooperation Programmes in Greece organized a 2-day “Best Practices Conference” under the Greek Presidency of the Council of Europe on 8-9 May in Thessaloniki. The goal of the conference was to capitalise on existing experiences and lessons learnt and to focus efforts, in order to transform individual and institutional experience and knowledge into capital that can be used in future. The Thematic Capitalisation stands for Climate change, Rural development, Innovation systems, Innovation capacity of SMEs, Entrepreneurship, and Demographic change were sent to the Conference accompanied by 50 Thematic Capitalisation publications for distribution.

### **6<sup>th</sup> European Summit for Regions and Cities in Athens**

The programme participated in the 6<sup>th</sup> European Summit for Regions and Cities that took place on the 7-8 March 2014 with an exhibition presenting the Thematic Programme Capitalisation topics and results. The exhibition was visited by around 1400 participants. First vice-president of the Committee of the Regions, Mercedes Bresso, and Secretary General Gerhard Stahl, were some of the visitors. 80 sets of Thematic Programme Capitalisation publications were distributed during the event.

***Picture 4: INTERREG IVC Exhibition to the 6<sup>th</sup> European Summit for Regions and Cities in Athens***



### **INTERREG IVC Thematic Capitalisation Event: Policy sharing, policy learning**

The Thematic Capitalisation event “Policy sharing, policy learning”, organised by the INTERREG IVC programme, informed the participants on the latest policy trends and best practices available from all around Europe resulting from the analysis of the projects in 12

thematic areas. This one-day event was focused on the durability of project results and how cooperation helps meet Europe's regional development objectives. 60 thematic specialists and practitioners presented the knowledge acquired through interregional cooperation and discussed the latest policy trends and common challenges identified in European regions. 12 theme-specific workshops took place in parallel; this was an opportunity for the participants to meet good practice owners and policymakers from all governance levels and learn about innovative solutions that could be useful and easily transferable to any European region.

Over 300 participants from 26 different countries attended workshops on 12 policy themes, ranging from innovation to the environment. More than 200 Thematic Programme Capitalisation publications and 100 Policy papers were distributed during the event. More than 7000 people visited the webpage dedicated to the event: <http://www.interreg4c.eu/policy-sharing-policy-learning/overview/>.

**Picture 5: Policy sharing, policy learning event**



For detailed information about the event participation, content, evaluation, please visit <http://www.interreg4c.eu/policy-sharing-policy-learning/overview/> and see also online the [Capitalisation Event Report](#).

### **Thematic reports, publications and policy papers**

In 2014, the expert team in each topic drafted a detailed analysis report showcasing how the INTERREG IVC project results are of interest to other regions, why they are innovative compared to the EU state of the art and how they contribute to improving policies. These in depth



reports were also accompanied for each topic by policy papers summarising the main conclusions and publications presenting the main results and policy recommendations of the analyses. In total 2990 publications (both from the first year brochure and the second year policy recommendations) were distributed in 2014 as follows:

**Table 10: Distribution of publications**

Date	Event/Organisations	N. of publications
09/01/2014	HR NCP	10
28/02/2014	CoR summit in Athens	80
04/03/2014	LV NCP	10
30/04/2014	SK,PL,CZ NCP	192
16/05/2014	INTERREG IVC Capitalisation event - Policy sharing, policy learning (22/05/2014)	214
02/06/2014	DE NCP	24
05/06/2014	EE NCP	12
05/06/2014	AT NCP	24
10/06/2014	Séminaire d'information : programmes Interreg VB, VC, Urbact III - Liege	12
11/06/2014	PT NCP	36
11/06/2014	BG NCP	24
16/07/2014	HU NCP	24
01/10/2014	Brussels - Open Days 2014	500
17/09/2014	MT NCP	10
03/11/2014	Monitoring Committee Members	66
03/11/2014	Capitalisation Experts	37
18/11/2014	Project event - Climate change Experts	30
20/11/2014	FR NCP (south)	5
20/11/2014	HU NCP	5
30/11/2014	Bologna INTERREG IVC event	1650

Date	Event/Organisations	N. of publications
09/12/2014	AT NCP	10
09/12/2014	SK NCP	10
09/12/2014	LU NCP	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>2990</b>

All the Thematic Programme Capitalisation results, i.e. the in depth reports, the policy papers, the brochures and the policy recommendations were placed online (for reading and download) on a dedicated webpage as “Capitalisation Library”: <http://www.interreg4c.eu/capitalisationlibrary/> . An information campaign was launched in October 2014 to inform through email more than 3000 policymakers around Europe including networks, platforms, communities, EU initiatives, policy makers, practitioners representatives of relevant EC Directorates-General, all 204 INTERREG IVC Project Partners, all the Regional offices of the EU member States in Brussels, members of the INTERREG IVC Committees and the INTERREG IVC newsletter subscribers. In 2014 there were 7018 visitors on the Capitalisation library page. For further information on the content of the reports please consult the Capitalisation Library and the section 3.1.2.7.

### 3.1.2 Qualitative analysis

#### PART A - PROJECTS

As of June 2014<sup>1</sup>, 127 projects had finalised their activities (41 first call, 74 second call, 7 third call and 5 fourth call projects), which represent more than 60% of the projects supported by INTERREG IVC. The main features of all running projects (i.e. sub-theme tackled, partnership, budget committed and brief description of the projects activities) are available on the ‘approved projects’ database on the programme website: [www.interreg4c.eu/approved\\_projects.html](http://www.interreg4c.eu/approved_projects.html).

All details related the project’s achievements (outputs and results) can be found in the INTERREG IVC monitoring database (<http://db.interreg4c.eu>). In particular, the evidence provided for all result indicators (e.g. details on good practices transferred, policies improved, spin-off activities) are available through the progress reports and clarification forms data. Most

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<sup>1</sup> The qualitative analysis is based on the progress reports submitted until October 2014 covering activities and achievement demonstrated until June 2014.

of the illustrations provided in this qualitative analysis are extracted from the monitoring database.

INTERREG IVC is one of the rare ETC programmes which is based on a coherent intervention logic with a fully integrated monitoring system (i.e. indicators described in the Operational Programme to assess the achievement of the programme's objectives are reflected in the application form of all projects as well as in the progress reports submitted by the projects). Such a system provides a fairly good picture of the programme's achievements and success as reflected in the present chapter.

As highlighted in the previous annual report, the programme has reached critical mass in terms of achievements:

- **7,475 staff members with increased capacity - average of 3.3 people per partner** (initial OP target: 2,800)
- **508 good practices transferred - 9% of all practices identified** (initial OP target: 200)
- **590 policies improved - 30% of all policies addressed by projects** (initial OP target: 150)
- **467 spin-off activities** (initial OP target: 480)
- **EUR 972 million of mainstream funding impacted** (initial OP target: 1,500 MEUR)

Apart from the amount of mainstream funding impacted (related to the low number of Capitalisation Projects supported), the programme will achieve all its initial objectives. These results demonstrate the usefulness and leverage effect of INTERREG IVC which, financially speaking, represents only 0.1% of the budget of EU Cohesion Policy.

The main reason why the majority of the programme's initial target values are now by far exceeded is due to the assumptions on which these values were established. The only point of reference of INTERREG IVC was the INTERREG IIIC programme and all assumptions were based on the experience gained within this previous programme. But in reality, the INTERREG IVC was significantly different from INTERREG IIIC:

- INTERREG IIIC was a new programme with limited demand and the programme had certain difficulties to select high quality projects. Thanks to the momentum of INTERREG IIIC, local and regional stakeholders were much more aware of the opportunities offered by interregional cooperation and the demand between IIIC and IVC was multiplied by . The programme was therefore able to select the projects with the highest

potential for policy impacts and in particular projects where policymakers were often directly involved in the cooperation.

- Compared with IIIC, the number of mini-programmes was very limited (11). Considering that these mini-programmes are the most expensive type of projects, INTERREG IVC was able to support more traditional projects where a high number of regions are involved. This has obviously impacted the level of results achieved within INTERREG IVC.
- Based on the experience of INTERREG IIIC, the approach to policy learning became more professional and this has resulted in improved assistance to lead applicants and lead partners.

A non-exhaustive overview of the results per country is presented in annex 05. The idea is to get a geographical picture of these results by allocating them by country. For some results which are not always precisely located (e.g. staff with increased capacity, spin-off activities), this geographical allocation had to be carried out based on a certain number of assumptions (e.g. for the staff members with increased capacity, the total number was equally shared among the partners involved). This table is regularly updated by each Project Officer. Several Member States highlighted the importance of this table in particular to demonstrate in their country the usefulness and concrete outcomes of interregional cooperation. This table complements the qualitative analysis below.

A number of examples of project achievements in particular in terms of policy improved, good practices transferred and spin-off activities generated are provided here. This information complements the numerous examples already provided in the previous annual reports.

#### **Points of attention to the qualitative analysis**

Before going into the details of the analysis, the following four points of attention which show the challenging character of evaluating the INTERREG IVC achievements have to be taken into consideration:

- The first remark relates to the **characteristics of the data** exploited in this qualitative analysis. In order to avoid any misunderstanding for the reader, a certain number of points have to be reminded.

The figures on which this analysis is based are a mix between 'static' figures, taken from the original 204 application forms (e.g. 'number of regional/local policies

addressed', 'number of public authorities involved'), and more 'dynamic' figures, reported in the progress reports (e.g. 'number of interregional events organised', 'number of good practices successfully transferred'). As far as the 'static' picture is concerned, the data provided in this report is more or less final, since all funds were committed in 2011 to 204 projects (from now on, this picture will evolve only slightly in particular due to partnership changes). In order to avoid any '**statistical bias**', when a figure reported by a particular project is very far from the average figure (also taking into consideration the project characteristics such as mini-programme and although this figure was carefully checked by the officers in charge of the project), this specific figure was often removed and is not included in the total figure reported as 2014 achievements. This manipulation often applies to the indicators of component 2 (communication related indicators) but it does not apply to the three core result indicators of component 3 (i.e. good practices transferred, policies improved and spin-offs activities) which are subject to a particular procedure within the programme (in particular with regard to harmonisation as explained in the third bullet point below).

Last but not least, this analysis takes into consideration the reports submitted by October 2014 (mainly 5<sup>th</sup> report of fourth call projects). In other words due to the time gap of the reporting procedures, this analysis covers **activities carried out and results achieved until to June 2014**.

- The second remark refers to the **diversity of information** to be exploited. Despite the simple structure of two thematic priorities and the fact that all running projects have in common their strategic approach and objective to improve regional/local policies and instruments, there is still a high heterogeneity of the projects supported within INTERREG IVC. This heterogeneity is reflected at different levels:

- o In terms of thematic focus

The programme supports a wide diversity of projects even under the same sub-theme. These sub-themes are indeed broadly defined in the Operational Programme. For instance, in the sub-theme 'Innovation, Research and Technology Development', and even if all running projects under this sub-theme are related to regional innovation policies, certain projects have a purely sectoral focus (e.g. NANO4M on nanotechnology, I4W on health and safety, ChemClust on chemical industry); others have a particular focus on a certain aspect of innovation policies (e.g. POOLING4CLUSTERS focusing on cluster policies, CLIQ on the participation of civil society in the framework of the Quadruple Helix system); finally, some others

like PERIA which exchanges experience on the interrelation between the regional innovation agencies and their respective regional authorities have a more process-oriented focus.

- In terms of partners

First, all territorial levels are eligible within the programme. It goes from the local level (municipalities, cities, districts), to the regional level (counties, provinces, regions) up to the national level. Second, the partners can be of different nature (e.g. public authorities or bodies governed by public law such as associations, academic organisations, development / environment agencies, business support organisations).

- In terms of intensity of cooperation

Beyond the traditional 'networking' projects, INTERREG IVC allows a variety of approaches and activities such as pilot actions or sub-projects (in mini-programmes). Even if this openness contributes to the programme's richness, it also makes the consolidation of results much more complex. This has to be taken into consideration when analysing the results achieved by the programme through the available quantitative data.

- Third, the indicators on which the projects have to report every six months can sometimes be subject to **different interpretations**. This issue is reinforced by the diversity described above (the interpretation of an indicator may differ according to the characteristics of the project and in particular the issue tackled). The notion of 'good practice' for instance is rather broad and can refer to different realities depending on the project. Similarly, a policy document or a regional instrument can be interpreted differently. This is true at project level but also at programme level. To tackle this challenge, the seriousness in checking the information provided in the progress report is crucial. In terms of project monitoring, Project Officers spend most of their time in checking indicators and their justification. The justification provided for the core result indicators are usually not sufficient and the programme has to come back to lead partners for further clarifications. In most cases, this means that, at the end of the clarification process the figure reported under these indicators is removed or at least reduced. The ESF 6CIA project (first call Capitalisation Project) is a good example of this demanding process. The amount of mainstream funds dedicated to the implementation of good practices was initially estimated at EUR 158 million for the Bulgarian partner in the final report. After numerous exchanges with the lead partner and based on the justification provided, it was finally agreed to reduce this amount to EUR 51.3 million. Apart from this individual monitoring, the

following measures are carried out to ensure a better harmonisation of the results monitoring:

- Taking into consideration the experience gained in monitoring indicators, the programme regularly improves the definition of the indicators in annex 3 of the programme manual. In the most recent version of the manual, the differences between the practice level and the policy level is also explained with concrete examples provided.
  - At the end of 2011, a new format for the Lead Partner Seminar (which took place in January 2012 for the 82 fourth call projects) was elaborated. In addition to the plenary sessions, parallel workshops which include practical exercises on indicators of components 2 and 3 were included. One of the aims was to raise the Lead Partners' awareness on the importance of these indicators and the necessity to precisely understand them as early as possible.
  - Last but not least, the results reported under the two core indicators (i.e. good practices transferred and policies improved) are usually checked by more than one person. The most interesting and tricky cases are also presented during the weekly Project Team meeting in order to ensure a learning curve among the officers when monitoring these core achievements.
- The last remark refers to the **limits of the monitoring system**. The present qualitative analysis is based on the monitoring and evaluation system as described in section 6.3 and Annex 2 of the Operational Programme. Despite its qualities, this system does not provide an exhaustive picture of the programme's achievements. First, the evaluation of project results stops at the end of the programme's funding although a significant part of the results often occurs after the exchange of experience has taken place (see the examples below of ERIK ACTION and RAPIDE). Second and apart from a few indicators (e.g. staff members with increased capacity, spin-off activities), this system only partly reflects the 'social capital' generated from cooperation activities (see chapter 4 of the INTERACT 'study on indicators for monitoring transnational and interregional cooperation programmes', March 2006<sup>2</sup>). This second issue relates more generally to the complexity of monitoring intangible but real achievements resulting from networking activities. These intangible outcomes should nevertheless not be underestimated and can take different forms such as:

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<sup>2</sup> [http://admin.interact-eu.net/downloads/152/INTERACT\\_Study\\_Indicators\\_for\\_Monitoring\\_Transnational\\_and\\_ICP\\_06\\_2006.pdf](http://admin.interact-eu.net/downloads/152/INTERACT_Study_Indicators_for_Monitoring_Transnational_and_ICP_06_2006.pdf)

- changes in way of thinking on local problems through European awareness,
- contribution to creativity and innovation,
- better international visibility of actors and regions,
- new cooperation between actors who would normally compete.

The programme can identify some of these outcomes through information provided in the reports (in particular under the spin-off activities) or during the final conference. A few examples are also provided below in the present analysis.

Concerning the social capital, it is interesting to note that certain projects (e.g. CLIQ) were thinking about developing measures to validate more officially the increased capacity of the staff involved in the cooperation. Similarly, the approach of SCINNOPOLI to assess the additional competences of the people involved in the project is worth mentioning (see illustration provided for 'staff with increased capacity' under the second programme objective).

### **3.1.2.1 Programme Objective: Improvement of regional and local policies**

This objective is at the heart of the INTERREG IVC programme. This is the core objective that all 204 approved projects are supposed to achieve.

A total of 2,037 regional and local policies are addressed by all 204 projects which means an average number of 10 policies addressed per project. This total figure of policies addressed is closely related to the total number of regions represented in these projects; which is logical since by essence projects address the policy of each of the partners' area in the field they are involved in (e.g. innovation, broadband connection in rural areas, sustainable transport, waste management, etc.). In other words, at project level, the number of policies addressed corresponds in most cases to the number of regions represented in the project (taking into consideration that a single region can be represented by more than one partner). What is more important, the total figure of policies addressed exceeds by far the initial target figure indicated in the Operational Programme (i.e. 750). This can be explained, on the one hand, by an underestimation of this initial figure and, on the other hand, by the fact that the average number of partners per project is higher than initially expected.

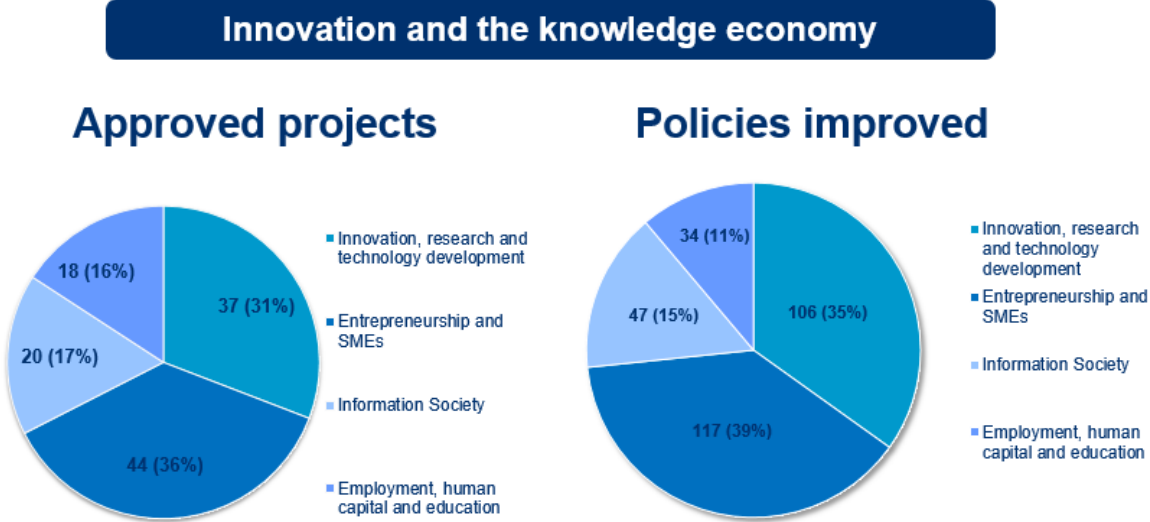
In terms of results, the achievement of the above objective has continued to progress compared with last year's Annual Report where 432 improved policies were reported (from 108 projects). As of 30 June 2014, 146 projects (39 from the first call, 60 from the second call, 6



from the third call and 41 from the fourth call) have demonstrated policy improvements. Compared with 2013, the most remarkable evolution is that the fourth call projects started bearing fruits. In 2013, only 8 were able to justify policy change whereas one year later half of them (41 out of 82) did so. The 146 projects directly contributed to the **improvement of 590 regional or local policies** in the following area of regional development:

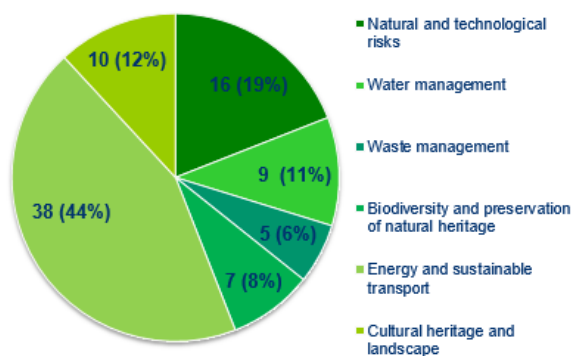
- **304 policies improved in Priority 1: Innovation and the knowledge economy**
  - 106 under ‘Innovation, research and technology development’
  - 117 under ‘Entrepreneurship and SMEs’
  - 47 under ‘Information Society’
  - 34 under ‘Employment, human capital and education’
- **286 policies improved in Priority 2: Environment and risk prevention**
  - 57 under ‘Natural and technological risks; climate change’
  - 29 under ‘Water management’
  - 16 under ‘Waste prevention and management’
  - 22 under ‘Biodiversity and preservation of natural heritage’
  - 132 under ‘Energy and sustainable transport’
  - 30 under ‘Cultural heritage & landscape’

The graphs below show a comparison between the number of approved projects and the number of policies improved for each programme’s sub-theme.

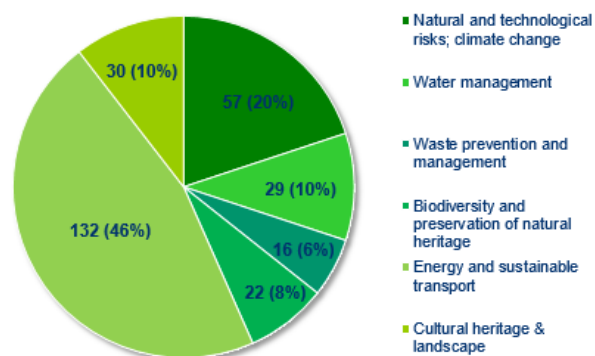


## Environment and risk prevention

### Approved projects



### Policies improved



As reflected in the above charts, the level of achievements per sub-theme correspond almost perfectly to the number of projects approved within these sub-themes. The highest number of policies improved can be found in the most popular programme sub-theme (in terms of number of projects). Reciprocally, the number of policies improved is limited under sub-themes like water management, waste management or cultural heritage and landscape, where only a few projects were approved. There is therefore no area of regional development policy which particularly over- or under-performs. Only under the first priority, projects under ‘innovation, research and technology development’ and ‘Entrepreneurship and SMEs’ have slightly better performed than those under ‘Information Society’ and ‘Employment, human capital and education’. Still the difference is not significant enough to draw specific conclusions.

The correlation in each sub-theme between the number of running projects and number of policies improved may also reflect the coherence and homogeneity in the selection process of the projects.

Considering the state of implementation of the programme (one year of reporting left for 77 fourth call projects), the final number of policies improved within INTERREG IVC will certainly exceed 600. The final overview will be available in next year’s annual report.

Even if the programme monitors closely the number of policy changes and practices transferred as a direct result of the exchange of experience, the final impact of these results on the territory of the partners concerned (e.g. number of new patents created; number of new firms created; number of new jobs created; amount of greenhouse gas emissions reduced; number

of tons of freight traffic withdrawn from road, etc.) is rarely known since these impacts can usually be measured only after a certain time of implementation.

There are some exceptions with projects like PIMMS TRANSFER (where the transfer was planned at the application stage) or MINI EUROPE (see illustrations below):

**Project:**  


**Practice:**  


 → 

**From:**  
Borough of Bromley (UK)

**To:**  
Frankfurt am Main (DE)

**Results:** - 15 schools and 3,000 pupils involved  
- 40 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> (and 19,200 litres of oil) saved

  
Green-Day 22.9.09







**Results:** - Participation of 38 young people  
- Creation of 1 business



Despite this difficulty in accessing the territorial impacts of the changes, the fact that a policy was modified or that a practice transferred is regarded as a success within the programme considering that the regions and policymakers concerned would not have decided on it without expecting clear benefits from it.

Now that the programme enters in its final phase, it is also interesting to look at the projects that were not successful in terms of policies improved. Out of the 122 closed projects, 17 projects (14%) could not demonstrate any policy improvements: PEOPLE, COMMON, DeltaNet, SufalNet4EU, ENSPIRE EU, ECREIN+, IPP, SolidarCity, Pre-waste, ChemClust, SURF-NATURE, POOLING4CLUSTERS, ORGANZA, Brain Flow, CivPro, SHARP, EUFOFINET.

The above list does not reveal any specific trend in terms of:

- Topics:

Almost all programme's sub-themes (apart from Information Society, Energy and Sustainable Transport and Cultural Heritage and Landscape) are covered under these 17 projects. Three projects are also related to improving Structural Funds programmes (i.e. Sufalnet4EU, SURF-NATURE and EUFOFINET).

- Types of projects

Both types of projects are concerned (i.e. 2 capitalisation projects and 15 Regional Initiative Projects).

- Intensity of cooperation

All levels of intensity of cooperation are concerned: 11 with a low level, 4 with a medium level (ENSPIRE EU, IPP, ORGANZA, SolidarCity) and 2 mini-programmes (Brain-Flow and PEOPLE). This proportion represents more or less the overall picture of INTERREG IVC with a majority of projects with low level of intensity of cooperation. But considering the high budget for the mini-programmes, this lack of results does not help demonstrate their value for money. It anyway reflects their difficulty to influence the policy level. These projects have a rather implementation-related character with their main efforts dedicated to the sub-projects where policymakers are rarely represented.

And beyond the above elements, the 17 projects do not share any other features (e.g. nature of partners, countries represented, duration, exchange of experience process, etc.).

The justifications provided by these projects for not achieving their initial objectives are similar. Except for a few projects which suffered from bad management and should perhaps have been closed a mid-term (e.g. ECREIN +), the majority of the projects explained that it was still too early report a concrete policy change. Despite interesting developments, the decision to modify a policy instrument could not be reached yet. A few projects also refer to the financial crisis which has a strong impact on the policy context and in particular on the possibility to launch new initiatives. There were then specific difficulties related to one characteristic of the project itself (e.g. lack of direct involvement of policymakers in POOLING4CLUSTER, particular complexity of the issue addressed in SufaltNet4EU).

It should also be highlighted that most of these projects have been successful in other areas. In particular, 12 of them were able to demonstrated transfer of good practices between the participating regions.

Even at policy level, these projects were usually able to demonstrate interesting developments. The following examples from the PEOPLE mini-programme are good illustrations of these developments which are not reflected under any indicator:

**PEOPLE** focuses on the adaptation of labour market to ageing population and changes in family structure. The conference organised in Malopolska (PL) on 18 October 2010 on Silver economy and the publication of a policy recommendation White Paper on "Challenges for Malopolska in the context of demographic change" were the last steps of a fruitful interregional cooperation started in March 2010 within PEOPLE. Over 100 people participated in the conference, mostly regional and national experts to discuss important issues regarding silver economy. Although Malopolska region will suffer from the consequences of demographic change in the next decades, there are still chances for stable economic growth. The silver economy can be one of the solutions. Different aspects of these problems were presented by many scientists and experts with practical experience and three PEOPLE's sub-projects (Tcares, Diversia, Silver Academy) presented their goals and achievements in the context of silver economy.

On 8 and 9 November 2010, the Regional Minister for Equality and Social Welfare of Andalusia (partner 1, ES), Mrs. Micaela Navarro, held several meetings with Malopolska policymakers in Poland. Specifically, on 8 November 2010, at the regional government premises, the Regional Minister met Mr. Roman Ciepela, vice-Marshall of Malopolska Voivodship and regional officers responsible for PEOPLE project, as well as other representatives of the International Cooperation Office and the Regional Development Department of Presidency. The main issues discussed were about the importance of social economy as a fundamental key of social services, the importance of interregional cooperation in the field of reconciliation and equal opportunities between women and men, the incorporation of ethnic minorities and the implementation of measures for combating gender violence.

Similarly, although the SufalNet4EU methodology for the reconversion of landfill could not be integrated into Structural Funds programmes during the lifetime of the project, it has become a reference for numerous authorities in Europe and even beyond. In particular, it has been spread outside Europe too by Campania region/Consortium Salerno (IT) in the framework of

the Revime project. This project with Cuba, Dominican Republic and Haiti was funded by EuropeAid: [www.revime.org](http://www.revime.org);

[www.revime.org/solid-waste-recycling-international-conference-workshops/](http://www.revime.org/solid-waste-recycling-international-conference-workshops/)

Delegations visited landfills in Noord-Brabant in 2012. In April 2014 Noord-Brabant participated in the final conference of Revime in Santo Domingo. Results and outputs were presented in an international conference last 13-17 April 2015 in Cava dei Tirreni/Salerno (IT). Delegations from Cuba, Brasil, Paraguay, Indonesia, Cambodia, China, Jordan and UNDP participated in this conference.

## **Capitalisation Projects**

The overall performance of the 20 Capitalisation Projects can be considered as good. Only two projects (i.e. SufalNet4EU and EUFOFINET) were not in a position to demonstrate any policy achievements within the timeframe of the project.

As explained in previous reports, the successful elaboration and signature of the Action Plan in a Capitalisation Project is not sufficient to consider the policy of a region as improved. The first call Capitalisation Projects had a tendency to mix the successful elaboration of the Action Plan with the improvement of policy. The policy of the region was considered as improved only in the two following cases:

- when a structural change has occurred with long term effect (e.g. modification of a policy document such as the Structural Funds Regional Operational Programmes),
- when at least the level 2 (meaning that the first measures to implement the Action Plan have started) of the implementation stage was reached (see page 4 of the project final report).

Despite this demanding approach, the 20 Capitalisation Projects have demonstrated 93 policies improved out of the 192 addressed. In other words, more than 48% of the policies tackled by these projects were finally improved thanks to the two-year cooperation.

The extract below from the fourth progress report of ENTREDI gives a good concise overview of the results achieved in the seven participating regions. Further details can be found in the same report and final report.

*“The seven signed Regional Action Plans ready for implementation will improve the entrepreneurship support in the seven partner regions.*

*The Regional Action Plan developed for the Emilia-Romagna Region has been signed by the Department for Productive Activities within the Emilia-Romagna Regional Authority that has identified three specific objectives and related actions to improve support mechanisms for*

*start-ups in the region: 1. Intelligent Networking: development of strategies and tools to accompany Emilia-Romagna regional entrepreneurs. This initiative is already in place and will be further implemented through transferring networking tools used within the Kompass 4+1 approach and SPS Jonköping. 2. Evaluate companies' potential and provide better and more efficient services such as the Kompass Profiling Tool, and Jonköping SPS. 3. Ensure the continuity of the regional support to nascent entrepreneurship:*

*The LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership) has confirmed its support for the implementation of the Kompass model adapted to the needs of the UK region. The region will maintain and manage a business support map that will provide information on business support in the area. The portal will become the only and best source of local and regional business support information with the aim to improve the entrepreneurial spirit across the region.*

*Through their signatures, the Region of Jönköping committed itself to implement, through its Science Park System the GP IPlanner, GP Profiling tool, and to further explore the GP "We-TechOff" for possible implementation of relevant aspects of this GP in the future.*

*For partner 8 (University of West Macedonia, EL), Mr. Oikonomidis signed the Regional Action Plan during the ceremony and expressed the willingness and support of the regional authorities to implement and integrate the 4+1 model, the Global Mini MBA and the Profiling Tool GPs into new regional initiatives in order to create a holistic support mechanism for entrepreneurship and innovation.*

*The ENTREDI Good Practices selected to be integrated by the Lodz Region were: the Kompass "Profiling Tool", the Kompass "4+1 Phase Model", and the Science Park System Jonköping. There was also interest expressed in the iPlanner Tool from Tartu, Estonia. The Department of Entrepreneurship of the Marshal's Office for the Lodz Region performs a key role as an organisational unit working towards the achievement of the ROP targets. It will be important to follow the Lodz Voivodship priorities, linking them to selected ENTREDI GPs in order to improve business support services offered to entrepreneurs, to enhance the success of start-ups as well as survival rates in the region.*

*Tartu Science Park is already actively implementing in its daily operations Good Practice (GP) Profiling Tool. Adapted model of GP 4+1 Model by Kompass. It has great potential for setting up common and unified approach to business support system among regional Business Development organisations to offer small and medium-sized enterprises sustainable and quality services. The good practice 'Science Park System' from Jönköping in Sweden is also considered for implementation.*

*The main focus for the lead partner Kompass, together with HAT e.V., during the RAP implementation will be on the enhancement of the networks of all actors with increased linkages among offered services and an improved exploitation of entrepreneurship potentials in the region. The Hessian Ministry of Economics, Transport, Urban and Regional Development is endorsing the goals of a Regional Action Plan to enhance the business start-up environment in Hesse."*

The overall good performance of the Capitalisation Projects should not undermine the difficulties faced during their implementation. In particular, the outcomes of the third call Capitalisation



Projects - approved in July 2010 only - were available in 2012 when the implementation of Structural Funds mainstream programmes was already well under way. It was therefore more challenging for these projects to influence Structural Funds and most of them had also to target the 2014-2020 programming period.

These difficulties are illustrated in the extract below from the PIMMS CAPITAL final report:

*“As a third call capitalisation project, the main challenge faced by PIMMS CAPITAL was that the relevant ERDF budgets and programmes were, in 7 out of 12 participating regions, fully committed. Accordingly, and with the encouragement of the EC’s DG REGIO, project partners devised and agreed a Mobility Management Manifesto which was incorporated into the 12 Regional Action Plans, and this adopted by all 12 regions. The intention is to promote this to other European regions as a basis for developing suitable Operational Programme policies in the programming Period 2014- 2020.”*

Another example is provided below in the last progress report of GEO.POWER project.

*Even if all partners have figured out the measures to encourage the geothermal heat pump market exploitation in its own regions or countries, the matter of quantifying the allocated resources has not been decided yet. This is an on-going process that will end-up in April 2013, when the European Regions are supposed to deliver to the European Commission their Regional Operational Programmes (that include – among others - the detailed budget priorities under the Energy axis). This is the most challenging task for the GEO.POWER partners. Indeed, in many cases geothermal energy and heat pump systems are mentioned in the sustainable use of energy priority, energy restoration and sustainable use of buildings, pilot projects, innovation, etc., but they are neither explicit priorities in the Operational Programme 2007-2013 nor in the forthcoming OP 2014-2020 of all members’ regions. The development targets to 2020 vary in the concerned regions but generally there is an up-growing trend in GCHP (Ground Coupled Heat Pump) installations. Main target group-MA of Structural Funds in charge of defining investment strategies and managing funds-have been consulted. However, it is difficult to exactly quantify specific funds dedicated to the implementation of GEO.POWER practices in the current and next Programming Periods. Two follow-up projects were still successfully completed: LEGEND project 'Low Enthalpy Geothermal ENergy Demonstration cases for Energy Efficient building in Adriatic area', financed under the IPA Adriatic CBC Programme - EUR 763.250,00 (budget of Province of Ferrara, GeoZS, Emilia-Romagna region, former PPs of GEO.POWER) and LUDIS 'Large scale uptake of mini district heating systems in the social housing sector", submitted under the IEE Programme (budget requested for GeoZS, EGEC and Estonian Assoc is of EUR 401.706,00). Both projects will implement GCHP investments inspired from the GEO.POWER practices.*

Despite these difficulties, the GEO.POWER project managed to achieve interesting results. In particular, the success below is a good example of mainstreaming within ETC programmes:

*“The LEGEND project ('Low Enthalpy Geothermal ENergy Demonstration cases for Energy Efficient building in Adriatic area') was implemented under the IPA Adriatic*

*Cross-border Cooperation Programme and was coordinated by the Province of Ferrara. It was approved on the 27 July 2012 and the kick off meeting is scheduled on the 11 December 2012 in Ferrara (IT). LEGEND can be considered the follow-up of GEO.POWER since it permits to turn some of the measures included in the Emilia-Romagna Region action plan of into hard investments.*

*The amount of the project is EUR 3,085,540.00 out of which EUR 1,5M are dedicated to implement 10 pilot energy requalification of public buildings (5 in Italy, 2 in Croatia, 1 in Albania, 1 in Montenegro, 1 in Bosnia Herzegovina) through the application of heat pump technologies. The SWOT analysis carried out in GEO.POWER to identify the most suitable GCHP technology to be transferred will be used in LEGEND to help the partners to choose the building for the energy requalification.”*

Beyond the INTERREG IVC funding, interesting developments were identified from two first call Capitalisation Projects:

- **ERIK ACTION**

Within the context of the project, partner 5 (Bretagne Innovation, FR) has imported three practices and among them the 'Innovation Assistance' imported from Lower Austria (AT) and the Fabrica Ethica from Tuscany region (IT). These two transfers had further policy impact in the French region.

The Innovation Assistance was first imported as an initiative called 'Innov'acteur'. This initiative was so successful that it has now become a core programme of the Regional Innovation Strategy called 'SIDE' ([www.bdi.fr/notre-action/programmes](http://www.bdi.fr/notre-action/programmes)). This programme is managed by Bretagne Développement Innovation (merging of Bretagne Innovation and the Regional Development agency in 2011). It is developed within the Regional Innovation Network (150 business advisers from more than 40 entities) and is the backbone of the regional innovation system in Bretagne. It is co-financed by ERDF via the Regional Operational Programme.

The Fabrica Ethica practice has also led to a more structural evolution in the Bretagne region. Thanks to this first experience and the long-standing willingness of the Regional Council to develop 'social innovation' expertise on the territory, a specific team in charge of developing a strategy on social innovation and Corporate Social Responsibility has now been created within Bretagne Développement Innovation. This strategy will be fully integrated in the future Smart Specialisation Strategies of the region called 'Regional Strategy for Development and Innovation' (Stratégie Régionale de Développement et d'Innovation, SRDEI).

- **RAPIDE**

Pre-Commercial Procurement (PCP) approaches were among the good practices transferred within this project. PCP is actively promoted by DG Enterprise as a new way to foster innovation. Through PCP, public procurers can drive innovation from the demand side. This enables European public authorities to innovate the provision of public services faster and creates opportunities for companies in Europe to take international leadership in new markets. According to the EC, reducing time to market by developing a strong European home market for innovative products and services is key for Europe to create growth and jobs. Thanks to the RAPIDE project, the Észak-Alföld region, HU (partner 12) is the first region in the new Member States that tries to implement a PCP and the first in the whole EU that implements it within its Regional Operational Programme.

It should be noted that the above developments were identified only by chance. In particular, it is through the participation of the JTS in certain events that it was possible to get this information. This reflects the limits of the current monitoring system and supports the rationale of having two phases for the projects under Interreg Europe.

### **Mid-term evaluation update**

In order to estimate more precisely the level of achievements after the cooperation, the Programming Committee agreed to include a specific 'ex post' evaluation of the six first call Capitalisation Projects as part of the Mid-Term evaluation update which was launched at the end of 2012. The objective was to review the implementation of the action plans development by these projects. This review was carried out through a questionnaire sent to all concerned regions and through six case studies covering the different stages of implementation (i.e. from fully implemented to not implemented at all).

The two most important outcomes of the evaluation are the following:

- A majority of Action Plans were either fully or at least partly implemented.
- This territorial impact would not have taken place without interregional cooperation.

The results of the questionnaire should however be taken with care considering that only 30% of the interviewees answered. For 8 out of 20 regions, the Action Plan was completely implemented, while 7 other regions stated that their Action Plan was partly implemented. This means that for the majority of the respondents (75%) actions were undertaken in the regions. Only 10% of the respondents (i.e. 2 out of 20) said their Action Plan will not be implemented.

The case studies were selected to ensure variety of the examples to be analysed. All six Capitalisation Projects from the first call were represented. In addition, all cases for the implementation stages of the Action Plan (i.e. from fully implemented to not implemented at all) were also represented.

In terms of successes, the examples of the North Yorkshire Next Generation Broadband (UK) from B3 REGIONS and of the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodship (PL) from RAPIDE are particularly interesting:

- In North Yorkshire, through an investment of almost £30 million (higher than the initial £21 million planned in the Action Plan), the access to fast broadband was deployed to over 147,000 premises (250,000 citizens) and to 10,000 SMEs.
- In the Kujawsko-Pomorskie region, EUR 2 million were invested through three calls in 158 innovation research vouchers for entrepreneurs. A fourth call was under preparation in January 2013.

These above results are very positive and confirm the leverage effect of interregional cooperation. Concerning Structural Funds mainstreaming, the update mid-term evaluation has confirmed the challenges identified by the programme and in particular:

- Financial constraints and availability of ERDF,
- Heaviness of the procedures and bureaucracy.

Further information is available below in the final report of the update mid-term evaluation:

[http://www.interreg4c.eu/fileadmin/User\\_Upload/PDFs/about\\_the\\_programme\\_evaluation\\_update\\_2013.pdf](http://www.interreg4c.eu/fileadmin/User_Upload/PDFs/about_the_programme_evaluation_update_2013.pdf)

Some concrete examples of policy changes can be found below. They complement the numerous illustrations already provided in previous annual reports. All results can be retrieved from the monitoring system used by the programme.

### **Examples of policies improved from Priority 1 'Innovation and the knowledge economy'**

#### **Priority 1 - Sub-theme 'Innovation, research and technology development'**

##### **BORDWIIS+ on ICT innovation strategies**

The lessons learnt during the exchange of experience in Bordwiis+ directly influenced how Tuscany Region (Italy) defined its Regional Innovation Strategy (RIS3). Tuscany was in need

of a thorough analysis of its territorial potential to identify the excellences in ICT within the international scenario in order to better define a roadmap towards its smart specialisation strategy. Study visits among partners and the comparative analysis carried out within the project have allowed Tuscany to identify some of its most important R&D fields, namely “Photonics for space and medical applications” and the cross innovation field “ICT for smart manufacturing”. During the entrepreneurial discovery process, fostered by S3 Platform for the consistency and legitimacy of the strategy, Bordwiis+ project results have been discussed by the regional stakeholders. As a result, in the current version of the RIS3, roadmaps for photonics solution for space and medical applications as well as the application of automation mechatronics and robotics to traditional sectors are mentioned as two of the three core technologies of the smart specialisation strategy for Tuscany.

### **Priority 1 - Sub-theme ‘Innovation, research and technology development’**

#### **DISTRICT+** on the reconversion of traditional economies

The “Lower Silesia voucher for innovation” is a specific instrument in support of SMEs development funded by the Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020 of Lower Silesia (Poland), under Priority 1 “entrepreneurship and innovation”. The voucher scheme has its origin in DISTRICT+. It is thanks to the project that Lower Silesia government has discovered this good practice from the partner Vastra Gotaland (Sweden) that had already implemented a similar concept called "R&D Card" and decided to finance it within its Regional Operational Programme.

### **Priority 1 - Sub-theme ‘Innovation, research and technology development’**

#### **Cross-Innovation** on innovation across ‘boundaries’ for cities and regions

Different policies were influenced within the project thanks to the elaboration of the local implementation plans. First of all, based on the knowledge gained in the project, the Local Implementation Plan "Tallinn Enterprise and Innovation Strategy 2014-2018" was finalised in September 2013 and officially adopted by the City Council on 19 September 2013. The aim of the strategy is to create better opportunities for the development of enterprises and innovation in Tallinn, and, in this way, to increase the competitiveness of Tallinn as a city and region. The strategic action plan divides the activities into four pillars of development: knowledge and skills; cooperation; international openness and motivational urban space. Activities include the simplification of access to capital, cluster development, cross-sectoral cooperation, promotion of international networking and development and implementation of smart innovative solutions in the city. Moreover, the implementation of the strategic plan implies an effective cooperation with other city agencies, government institutions, educational institutions and entrepreneurial support structures like Tallinn Science Park Technopol, Tallinn Business Incubators, or the

Tallinn Creative Hub. As a result, the plan also contributes to a more efficient cooperation among regional stakeholders.

In the same project, the Local Implementation Plan for cross-innovation policy for Amsterdam was finalised in May 2013 and has led to the Cluster strategy for the Creative Industry 2014-2020 and was officially adopted by the Amsterdam Economic Board and its City Council on 15 June 2014. The aim of the strategy is to create better opportunities for the creative industries to increase the competitiveness of Amsterdam in Europe as a creative hotspot. The strategic action plan divides the activities into four themes of development:

- Stimulating cross-overs with other sectors;
- Creating sustainable (inter)national connections;
- Facilitating access to finance;
- Attracting and holding talent.

Activities include cross sectoral trade missions, one-stop shop for access to capital, cluster development, cross-sectoral cooperation, attracting and holding international talent and development and implementation of smart innovative solutions in the city and surrounding area.

The link to the strategy is available here:

<http://www.amsterdameconomicboard.com/nieuws/12363/nieuwe-clusterstrategie-voor-creatieve-sector>

## **Priority 1 - Sub-theme 'Entrepreneurship and SMEs'**

### **I4FOOD** on sustainable regional food industries

The project I4Food aims at improving the policies in support of regional food industries. In Hungary, the competence on such legislation is given to the Ministry of Agriculture. The Hungarian partner in the project (the South Transdanubian Regional Development Agency - STRDA) has been working hard to communicate the lessons learnt within the project to the relevant policy makers who were in charge of drafting the Mid and Long Term Food Industry Development Strategy of Hungary (2014-2020). STRDA intended to make sure that the above mentioned strategy carried the results of the I4Food projects. Their work has been successful: many recommendations of the project are explicitly mentioned in the document: For instance, under the chapter "Stable financing, balanced operation" the I4Food proposal of creating new financial instruments (i.e., development of credit schemes) is included. The subchapter 5.2.3 "Innovative, efficient enterprises" mentions the recommendations coming from I4Food, namely the production of food goods serving special customer needs (i.e. local and functional foods) and the provision of local and regional supply is integrated into the strategy. Similarly, the cooperation of the actors in the food supply chain is to be strengthened according to the strategy as it is also stipulated by the position paper. As regards "Human resource possessing up-to-date knowledge", the strategy exactly copies the content of the position paper: the fine-tuning of food industry HR (white and blue collar workers) supply and demand, more facilitated access to dual trainings. Under "Popular Hungarian foods, strong market position" SMEs are advised to produce local food goods and focus on niche markets with strong protection of origin.

## **Priority 1 - Sub-theme 'Entrepreneurship and SMEs'**

### **TOURAGE** on silver tourism in remote regions

Tourism is identified as one of the most important economic sectors to be developed in North Karelia (Finland). The new Tourism Operational Programme 2014-2020 has been drafted with the objective of identifying the measures and themes that will lead to the development and growth of tourism in the region. Regional tourism enterprises and other stakeholders were actively involved in the drafting process of this strategic policy document. They had the possibility to comment on the programme's draft version and suggest new objectives and targets for development. Despite such an interesting participatory process, senior tourism still remained a neglected sector. The experiences gained within TOURAGE were of great added value for the Regional Council, who was able to integrate the lessons learnt within the project in the operational programme. Senior tourism is now seen as one of the key measures that will increase tourism development in North Karelia, especially in the field of welfare tourism. As stated in the new tourism operational programme, during the next programming period 2014-

2020 North Karelia will invest in senior tourism marketing, sales and developing suitable products for senior travellers in order to increase tourism flows in low and mid seasons and extend the tourism season.

### **Priority 1 - Sub-theme 'Information Society'**

#### **ONE** on ICT Structural Funds absorption

In Ile-de-France Region (France), the Regional Digital Policy Strategy is implemented since 2012, and it aims at developing new ways of working, by supporting the growth of “third places” (smart work centres, co-working spaces). On average 15 projects of “third place” implementation are selected each year and funded through an annual regional call for tender. After having seen the way the Manchester Digital Development Agency - MDDA (UK) runs its own programmes in support of “third places”, La Fonderie (the digital agency of the Region Ile-de-France) has made some proposals to improve the Regional Digital Policy Strategy. Consequently, in September 2014, the Regional Council voted a new regulatory framework which includes in particular FabLabs (creative space for budding product designers and entrepreneurs to test out ideas and bring them to life) as eligible to the regional grant, following the experience of MDDA. 18 new projects were selected (among which 6 FabLab projects) for a global amount of EUR 1,310,425.30.

### **Priority 1 - Sub-theme 'Information Society'**

#### **CASA** on solutions for ageing population

The 'Wielkopolska Programme for Elderly People 2020' is the unique document tackling strategies related to demographic change and the elderly people in the Wielkopolska region (Poland). Adopted by the Management Board of Wielkopolska last November 2013, the programme defines the main directions of social policy for the region to support the elderly by 2020. The lessons learnt from CASA were included in the strategy thanks to the participation in the project activities of the policymakers responsible for drafting the Regional Plan. Study visits and interregional seminars allowed the participants to gain a deeper knowledge on the way ICT can contribute to the quality of life of the elderly. As a consequence, issues concerning eHealth, education and the use of new technologies to increase quality of life were included into the Wielkopolska Programme.

### **Priority 1 - Sub-theme 'Employment, human capital and education'**

#### **MICROPOL** on smart work centres in non-metropolitan areas

In Latvia, the Riga Technical University participated in a public consultation process for the definition of the Sustainable Development Strategy of Limbazy District 2013-2030. The inputs given by the University derived from the lessons learnt within the project MICROPOL, such as,



for instance, a new strategy for “environmentally sustainable entrepreneurship” which supports Smart Work Centres in rural territories. The municipality of Limbazy took into account these suggestions and they are now an integral part of the above-mentioned strategy.

## **Examples of policies improved from Priority 2 ‘Environment and risk prevention’**

### **Priority 2 – Sub-theme ‘Natural and technological risks; climate change’**

#### **Heritprot on fire risk prevention in historic town centres**

The involvement of the local stakeholders in the project activities of exchange of experience has been a successful approach for the Vilnius Old Town Renewal Agency, partner in the project Heritprot. The engagement of the representatives of the Ministry of Culture and the State Department of Cultural Heritage in local meetings of the project raised their awareness on the good practices coming from other European partners. They were convinced of the importance of implementing the Heritprot project experience in their work. As a consequence, two policy instruments have updated taking into consideration the lessons learnt from the project:

- Order of the Ministry of Culture regarding evacuation of movable cultural heritage objects (19 February 2014).
- Vilnius Fire Prevention Programme (6 June 2014).

### **Priority 2 – Sub-theme ‘Water Management’**

#### **ERCIP on European river corridors**

A new participatory approach for the drafting of the “Landschaftsplan Erftaue Süd” is the result of the implementation of the lessons learnt by the Rhine-Erft-Kreis District Administration (Germany) from the ERCIP project.

The “Landschaftsplan Erftaue Süd” sets the regional policy framework for the delivery of landscape and water management in the Cologne area. The process for delivery of the plan is now open to public consultation, something that had never been part of the process before. There has also been a change by introducing a more cooperative approach when working with other stakeholders and incorporating their expertise in the process. Previously, the drafting of the plan was done unilaterally by the Rhine-Erft-Kreis District Administration.

## **Priority 2 – Sub-theme ‘Water Management’**

### **TRAP** on river catchments management

and the application of the Water Framework Directive

On the occasion of an interregional meeting, the Slovenian partner Soca Valley Development Centre presented a good practice to ensure the compatibility and balance between fishing tourism and water sports and thus allowing water protection and economic exploitation of lakes and rivers to be combined. The Development Agency of Western Macedonia (Greece) found the practice particularly interesting and decided to import it into the local development plan. Moreover, as the Development Agency of Western Macedonia is part of the ESIF Operational Programme (OP) planning group, the Agency advocated the inclusion of several lessons learnt during the TRAP project into the Western Macedonia ESIF OP. Apart from the good practice described above, an economic impact assessment tool as a methodology to involve stakeholders and strengthen capacity building was promoted and finally included in the operational programme.

## **Priority 2 – Sub-theme ‘Biodiversity and preservation of natural heritage’**

### **GreenInfraNet** on the development of green infrastructure

The partner Stara Zagora Regional Economic Development Agency (Bulgaria) is one of the main stakeholders in the region for the definition and implementation of regional development policies. The agency's participation in GreenInfraNet allowed the organisation to strengthen its expertise on the topic of green infrastructure. And the knowledge gained within the project led to green infrastructure measures being integrated into two important policy instruments of Stara Zagora: the Municipal Development Plan 2014-2020 and the Integrated Plan for Urban Regeneration 2014-2020. These documents lay down the strategic goals for the regeneration of the area: supporting a competitive knowledge-based economy, enhancing a better urban environment and the improving the quality of life. As a direct result of GreenInfraNet, a particular focus is now given to the seven urban parks of the region and their fundamental role as “green infrastructures” in the contribution to achieving the strategic goals.

## **Priority 2 – Sub-theme ‘Energy and sustainable transport’**

### **MOG** - Move On Green on sustainable transport in rural areas

In 2013, Podkarpackie region started working on the definition and implementation of the new "Podkarpackie Region Development Strategy 2020". The development strategy of the region is an essential, strategic document outlining the main axes of development of the region. The first draft of the "Podkarpackie Region Development Strategy 2020" did not contain any reference to public transport services in rural areas. As for many regions in Poland, legislation on this matter is insufficient and there is a general lack of cooperation among the institutions that

have the competence on this policy field. As a result, there is a constant decrease in the number of passengers of public transport, while there is an increase in the use of individual modes of transport. This leads to a poor economic situation of the railway and bus companies. Bearing in mind the exchange of experience in MOG, the Polish team decided to make some amendments to the draft of the new "Podkarpackie Region Development Strategy 2020". In chapter 3.4.3. "Integration and stimulation of the rural community serving social and cultural needs in the context of rural renewal", clear reference is made on the importance of supporting sustainable transport service in rural areas. The amendments were approved by the regional Parliament and are now an integral part of the Plan.

## **Priority 2 – Sub-theme 'Energy and sustainable transport'**

### **BIO-EN-AREA** on bio-energy

The interregional exchange of experience within BIO-EN-AREA had multiple positive impacts at several levels of governance. At regional level, in the framework of the project, the South East Regional Assembly (and Tipperary County Council after dissolution of the latter) carried out a detailed review of the 2008-2013 Bioenergy Implementation Plan for Southeast Ireland. The new 2013-2020 Plan aims to stimulate growth in the bioenergy sector within the region during the timeframe of the Plan and sets challenging targets for the Bioenergy industry within the region. A Steering Committee has been established to assist the implementation process. In addition to that Plan, the Irish partner succeeded in incorporating a reference to bioenergy in the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) for Southeast Ireland. These Guidelines constitute a statutory strategic planning framework for the development of region. They now contain the following objective: "Local authorities, the private sector, energy production and supply companies are encouraged to formulate sustainable energy policies and practices which seek to...support and promote sustainable indigenous bioenergy industries including bioethanol industry".

Furthermore, the Local Authorities' (Counties) Development Plans were influenced through BIO-EN-AREA: local authorities must prepare statutory Development Plans to support and regulate development within their functional area. Thanks to the experience gained by the Local Energy Agencies as subproject participants in BIO-EN-AREA, these Plans now contain references to sustainable energy production, including from bioenergy sources.

The experience gained by the Irish partner was also transferred to the national level by means of consultation run by the central government. The South-East Regional Assembly advised the government on an emerging Strategy on Jobs in Rural Areas as well as on the Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020.

## **Priority 2 – Sub-theme ‘Energy and sustainable transport’**

### **GreenITnet on greening ICT**

Thanks to the cooperation and to the significant contribution from the partnership, Riga has elaborated and discussed with stakeholders the Riga Sustainable Action Plan for Smart City (SEAP), adopted by the City Council on 8th July, 2014, with decision No.1358. The management and coordination bodies engaged public and private bodies, universities and other stakeholders in a participatory approach. A number of good practices identified within GreenITNet are now part of the Riga SEAP, they have become projects to be implemented in the city. The 15 projects are the following:

- 1) Improvement of energy consumption management in multi-apartment residential buildings;
- 2) Set up of energy consumption management system in the public sector buildings;
- 3) Support to local biogas cogeneration with heat utilized in the greenhouse complex;
- 4) Use of programmed LED lamps for city lighting with remote voltage control;
- 5) Recover the heat from flue gas and cooling flows in energy production plants;
- 6) Set up of automatic reading systems for heat consumption data with remote data transmission in the urban district heating system;
- 7) Introduction of e-tokens and discounts for specific social groups in the municipal public transport;
- 8) Creation of a database for multi-apartment residential buildings in Riga;
- 9) Use of heat pumps with thermos probes installed by deep drilling for heat supply to buildings in the city;
- 10) Creation of a wood biomass fuelled boiler house operated in an automatic mode with an efficiency rate >100%;
- 11) Use of electric cars for providing municipal technical services;
- 12) Use of solar batteries on the roof tops of buildings in the city;
- 13) Facilitation of energy efficiency in households with the use of smart technologies;
- 14) Use of solar pumps for heating;
- 15) Waste water heat recover from residential buildings.

## **Priority 2 – Sub-theme ‘Energy and sustainable transport’**

### **SERPENTE on energy efficiency in public buildings**

In 2014, recognising the need for more energy efficient buildings, the Cyprus Government started consultations with all market actors and stakeholders about possible support schemes for energy renovations. The Cyprus Energy Agency, partner in the SERPENTE project, has supported those consultations by organising the second meeting of the Regional Focus Group in March 2014, where SERPENTE was presented and all the stakeholders had the opportunity

to exchange ideas about a proposal of a new support scheme called “I renovate – I save energy”. As a result, the scheme was updated. It aims to upgrade energy efficiency in housing and public buildings, by using incentives in the form of non-repayable financial aid for renovation. The Support Scheme is funded by the Republic of Cyprus, through the Fund for Renewable Energy Sources and Energy Efficiency, and the European Regional Development Fund of the Operational Programme "Sustainable Development and Competitiveness 2014-2020". The total amount allocated for the purposes of the support scheme amounts to EUR 16 million.

## **Priority 2 – Sub-theme ‘Cultural heritage and landscape’**

### **HISTCAPE on historic towns and their landscapes**

The General Directorate for Cultural Heritage Rhineland-Palatinate (Germany) has incorporated the lessons learned from the exchange of experience process in the HISTCAPE project in the regional policy through the adoption of the “General Agreement about Simplified Procedures” as an important instrument for monument protection in Rhineland-Palatinate. This agreement came into force on 01 January 2013 and defines the technical standards required for the approval of monuments protection measures. It provides the legal basis for the simplification of the administrative procedures between the Lower Monument Protection Authorities and the State Monument Conservation Office. The simplification of the procedure is based on the lessons learnt from the good practice “Legal Framework for protection of cultural heritage in North Portugal” of the Northern Cultural Regional Direction. This good practice has shown the importance of both coordinating actions between the national and the local administrations and the relevance of implementing technical trainings for practitioners at both levels. To ensure the proper implementation of the General Agreement in Rhineland-Palatinate, the Directorate for Cultural Heritage adopted the lesson learnt from the good practice of Northern Portugal and successfully tested the establishment of further education offers and technical trainings within the HISTCAPE pilot action. Through these education and training offers provided to the administrative officers of the Lower Monument Protection Authorities, the proper implementation of the General Agreement can be ensured. It is planned to expand the General Agreement step by step based on the experiences gained throughout the HISTCAPE exchange of experience process and the Pilot Action and to continue and extend the further training offers for administrative officers.

As reflected in the above examples, most of the policy achievements take place at the local, regional and even sometimes national levels. But links and synergies were also identified between the projects and the **EU level**; a few projects like CITEAIR II, C2CN or ENGAGE having even influenced strategies developed at EU level. An illustration of these synergies is provided below.

**EuroPROC** is a first call Regional Initiative Project addressing the access of SMEs to International Public procurement (IPP) markets. Since its start, the project has adopted a very efficient communication strategy. It also worked closely with DG Enterprise which had a particular interest in this topic.

As a result, DG Enterprise was so interested in the EuroPROC final good practice guide (see link below) that, at the end of 2011, this DG was negotiating with the Lead Partner (Catalonia Competitiveness Agency, ES) the ownership rights of the guide so that it becomes a DG Enterprise publication ([http://www.ideram.pt/files/europroc\\_good\\_practices\\_guide\\_4x4d.pdf](http://www.ideram.pt/files/europroc_good_practices_guide_4x4d.pdf)).

It occurs regularly that European Commission initiatives refers to INTERREG IVC projects as inspiring examples.

This is the case of the Regional Innovation Monitor (RIM, [www.rim-europa.eu](http://www.rim-europa.eu)) which is a DG Enterprise initiative led by Technopolis group, Fraunhofer Institute and Maastricht University. It aims to provide a reference framework for the development of more effective and efficient regional innovation strategies. During their analysis, the experts in charge of the initiative provided three different examples of interesting projects. Certain examples were INTERREG IVC projects approved under priority 1 (i.e. **SCINNOPOLI**, **EuroPROC** and **RAPIDE**).

The **RAPIDE** and **EuroPROC** projects were invited to DG Enterprise conference on Public Procurement in March 2010 (<http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ict/pcp/23-march-conf-agenda-en.pdf>). **EuroPROC** was also included in the third e-newsletter of DG Enterprise in February 2011 ([https://www.innovation-procurement.org/fileadmin/editor-content/DG\\_Entr\\_Newsletters/newsletter3\\_en.pdf](https://www.innovation-procurement.org/fileadmin/editor-content/DG_Entr_Newsletters/newsletter3_en.pdf)). These references are a good sign of the quality of the INTERREG IVC projects and their capacity to inspire the EU level.

In **ENGAGE**, following the participation of a representative of DG Connect at different project events, a cooperation meeting between the EC (DG Connect and Regio), the ENGAGE project and the experts in charge with updating the European Broadband Investment Guide was organised on 7 May 2013. The main conclusions were that the regions involved in the ENGAGE network and the European Commission will:

- Cooperate with the three broadband experts charged with the update of the DG Regio guide on broadband investment (e.g. reviewing drafts, assist in the development of templates for implementing the models of investment)

- Identify good practices in terms of new and successful models of investment that make an efficient use of public and private investment with a view to delivering high speed network and services.
- Join forces to make these good practices available and facilitate exchange of ideas and networking also through the use of a variety of web-based tools
- Cooperate with the Smart Specialisation Platform (S3) arranged by the JRC in Seville with the organisation/participation in pertinent activities and events planned in the field of broadband
- Identify and make available broadband experts (to the S3 platform through the AMI list of DG Regio) that can assist regions in the programming of broadband measures over the coming programming period.

Following this meeting, ENGAGE appointed the Leppinen Suupohja Economic Development Agency in Finland (partner 10 in the project) to oversee ENGAGE input to the Broadband Investment Guide (which has materialised and which will be launched in late 2013 with recognition of ENGAGE input). Strategies to ensure an ENGAGE response to the other points were established at the ENGAGE management meeting in London on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2013.

**ENSPIRE EU** and **YES** are both second call projects dealing with entrepreneurship issues. Both projects have built good relationships with DG Employment and, as a result of these fruitful exchanges, both projects are now mentioned on the following page of DG Employment website: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=952&langId=en>.

**WINNET 8** is a second call Capitalisation Project. It aims to improve women's participation in the labour market, focusing in particular on horizontal segregation, lack of women working in the field of innovation and technology and lack of women entrepreneurs. The project was invited to present its aims and activities at a meeting of the High Level Group for Gender Equality of the European Parliament on 18 March 2011. The following month, WINNET 8 was also presented at the Regional Committee of the European Parliament. The presentations of the project at the highest levels of the European Institutions are a first step to raising awareness of the actions made in favour of gender equality across Europe, and are meant to be a source of inspiration for the work of the EU. The recognition of the relevance of the project at the EU level was further confirmed in 2012. On the 13 February 2012, WINNET 8 was invited to a joint COCOF (Coordination Committee of the Funds) and ESF Technical Working Group meeting on Gender Mainstreaming in the Structural Funds, in Brussels. This was a unique opportunity for the project to disseminate its results at EU level.

WINNET 8 is also listed as an example of 'cohesion policy success stories 2007-2013' in DG REGIO publication called 'Cohesion Policy and Bulgaria':

[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/information/cohesion-policy-achievement-and-future-investment/factsheet/bulgaria\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/information/cohesion-policy-achievement-and-future-investment/factsheet/bulgaria_en.pdf)

**CITEAIR II** aims to improve regional policies in the domain of air quality protection, sustainable transport and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. CITEAIR II is continuously cooperating with the European Environment Agency (EEA). This cooperation is developed first within the framework of the PAQ (Promote – Legacy Air Quality Index for Europe) project. This initiative, financed by the EEA, aimed at providing an air quality platform where air quality indices are calculated from the European database AIRBASE. Second, the cooperation is also ongoing within the 'AirWatch' system. EEA has established a strategic partnership with Microsoft and developed Airwatch as part of their Eye-on-earth initiative. This system <http://eyeon-earth.cloudapp.net> was officially launched during the COP15 Summit in November 2009 in Copenhagen. When developing this system, the EEA decided to adopt the CITEAIR Air Quality Index (CAQI) to present Air Quality information to the public in Europe. In January 2010, a meeting with EEA took place in Rome where the EEA presented AirWatch (on which CITEAIR II gave its feedback). In June 2010, EEA also took part in a CITEAIR II workshop. The fact that EEA adopted the CAQI as the European standard to inform the public about air quality is an excellent way to ensure the use and durability of the CITEAIR II results.

**C2CN** is a second call Capitalisation Project dealing with the 'cradle to cradle' approach to waste management and prevention. As a Fast Track Initiative, the project was closely followed up and monitored by DG Regio, in cooperation with DG Environment. During the final conference in Maastricht on 7 December 2011, DG Regio explained the importance of projects like C2CN that work to develop the potential of innovative solutions for environmental sustainability. The Commission considers that C2CN demonstrates the involvement of local and regional authorities in cutting-edge innovations, in particular in the implementation of actions that stem from the work carried out during the Fast-Track project. According to DG Regio, the C2CN project in particular has helped the Commission to better understand the concept of 'cradle to cradle' and has contributed to the concept of 'circular economy' being introduced in the policy lines and orientations for the 2014-2020 cohesion policy. For instance, the project is listed as an example at the end of DG REGIO thematic guidance fiche for the desk officers on waste management:

[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/guidance\\_3\\_thematic\\_objective\\_6\\_waste\\_management.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/guidance_3_thematic_objective_6_waste_management.pdf).



**SURF-NATURE** is a second call project aiming at further integrating the preservation of natural heritage, biodiversity, and nature conservation into Structural Funds programmes. Although SURF-NATURE is one of the 14 projects that did not demonstrate any policy improvement within the lifetime of the project, it is now taken as a good example in DG REGIO thematic guidance fiche for desk officers on 'Biodiversity, green infrastructure, ecosystem services and Natura 2000':

[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/guidance\\_fiche\\_biodiversity\\_n2000.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/guidance_fiche_biodiversity_n2000.pdf)

Similarly, the first call Capitalisation Project, **ERIK ACTION** is taken as an example in DG REGIO thematic guidance fiche for desk officers on 'SME competitiveness':

[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/thematic\\_guidance\\_fiche\\_sme\\_competitiveness.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/thematic_guidance_fiche_sme_competitiveness.pdf)

Finally, INTERREG IVC projects made a significant contribution to the 2014 Open Days considering that 5 side events out of 38 (13%) were organised by IVC projects (CHARTS, CLUE, Cross Innovation, STEP and URMA).

### **Conclusion on policy improvements**

As highlighted in the 2013 Annual Report and after six years of analysing project results, it is almost impossible to identify specific trends in the policy changes achieved within the programme. For instance, in the 2012 annual report, the assumption that policy changes were easier to achieve at local level than at regional level was mentioned. It was partly due at that time to the high success rate under topics like mobility management where the local public authorities are competent and are often directly involved in the cooperation. This trend has not been confirmed since and the reality appears much more complex. Projects which tackle policies at regional level (e.g. CLIMACTREGIONS, R4GG, MINI EUROPE, REVERSE) have demonstrated policy changes whereas certain projects like SOLIDARCITY or ORGANZA that were tackling local strategies were not in a position to achieve policy change within the project lifetime.

Partners often reckoned that, although it was not necessarily anticipated at the application stage, policy changes were possible mainly because the project arrived at the 'right moment' meaning a period where the policy of the partner region was under review. This has allowed

the concerned partner to integrate the lessons learnt from the cooperation into this review process.

It is therefore difficult to draw general conclusions from the experiences of INTERREG IVC with regard to policy improvement. Successes have to be analysed on a case-by-case basis but a certain number of factors can be highlighted as conditions for success such as:

- clarity of the need addressed by the project and necessity of ensuring that this need is shared by the partners (importance of the preparation phase),
- direct involvement of the bodies in charge of the policy tackled by the project,
- quality of the interregional learning process with clear and logical interrelation between the different activities organised,
- integration in the learning process of external stakeholders that play a role in the policy making process and / or policy implementation.

### **3.1.2.2 Programme Objective: Exchange experience and improve the capacities and knowledge of regional and local stakeholders in particular by matching less experienced regions with more experienced regions**

As demonstrated by the consolidated figures, this objective is achieved. This is not surprising as the achievement of this objective is the minimum requirement expected from the projects.

A total of 2,285 partners are currently involved in the 204 approved projects. The average number of partners per project (11.2) is therefore higher than initially anticipated.

Within the 204 approved projects, an average number of 15.5 interregional events to exchange experiences were organised per project (3,177 interregional events in total). This average has significantly increased since the last annual report as fourth call projects have progressed in their implementation. This figure covers a wide variety of activities, from workshops to study trips, from staff exchange to thematic seminars. In total, there were more than 80,000 participants in these interregional events. Compared with 2013, the average number of participants per event is more or less the same (26/25).

**99% of all approved projects have a partnership composed of members coming from both 'Objective Convergence' regions and 'Objective Competitiveness' regions.** This can be considered a noticeable achievement for the programme, one of the aims of which is to match more experienced with less experienced partners. This figure also exceeds the initial

target value indicated in the Operational Programme. In fact, only one approved project (i.e. PADIMA approved in the second call) has a partnership composed of regions from the same objective (i.e. 'Objective competitiveness'). PADIMA is anyway particularly relevant to the EU cohesion policy since it focuses on mountainous areas. A few other projects have a majority of 'convergence regions' involved in the cooperation. This is in particular the case of NEEBOR and of ICHNOS PLUS.

The geographical area covered by the projects has been improved thanks to the fourth call results. All EU Member States are represented in the 204 approved projects. More importantly, 88.9% of the NUTS II regions in Europe are now represented (i.e. 241 out of 271 NUTS II regions). Through the fourth call for proposal and its targeted communication activities, 15 more NUTS II regions are represented in the programme. Norway is represented by 21 partners (one of them being Lead Partner) and Switzerland by three partners. Finally, seven countries outside the programme area (i.e. Albania, Belarus, Croatia, Iceland, Serbia, Russia, Ukraine) are represented by eight partners (two of them coming from Croatia before its accession in 2013).

As far as results are concerned, the programme will not reach its initial objective in terms of percentage of public authorities involved. Instead of 70 %, the participation of public authorities represents 50% of all partners (i.e. 1,145 out of 2,290), although applications with direct participation of public authorities were better considered in the assessment process (as stipulated in the Operational Programme and programme manual). Despite this ratio, it should be noted that only one out of the 204 approved projects have no public authorities directly represented in their partnership. This is the case of SEE where the policy relevance of the partners was very well demonstrated in the application form.

As already highlighted in previous Annual Reports, the high percentage of bodies governed by public law among the project partners can be explained by three main reasons:

- The definition of a body governed by public law reflects different realities according to the situation and the country. It is clear that, although they are both considered as bodies governed by public law, an association of local authorities would be more relevant in INTERREG IVC than a local incubator without any policy relevance. It can also happen that bodies governed by public law are in fact the relevant policy-makers in the region. For instance, a significant number of regional development agencies (more than 120) are approved in the projects, in particular from several Member States like Hungary, Bulgaria or Romania. Although these agencies are considered as bodies governed by public law, they are often the authority directly in charge of the

development of new policy instruments and of the implementation of Structural Funds Operational Programmes. If these agencies were to be considered as public authorities, the ratio would increase to 56%. The same remark applies to the public establishments for cooperation between local authorities in France (e.g. 'intercommunalities' such as urban communities). Although these organisations have policy power, they are considered as bodies governed by public law according to the Directive 2001/18/EC.

- In a significant number of projects (e.g. NANO4M, ORGANZA), the same region is represented directly by its public authorities but also by some other organisations relevant to the topic tackled (e.g. development agencies, universities, research institutes). This means that out of the three or four partners involved from the same region, only one is a public authority. As a result, a higher number of bodies governed by public law are represented in this kind of project although the core requirement of the INTERREG IVC is met since each of the regions is represented by its policymaker.
- Finally, there are cases where a body governed by public law is involved in a cooperation not to address a specific policy but to bring its specific knowledge and competences which are required for the success of the project (e.g. thematic expertise, dissemination skills). Numerous examples can be provided: the ERRIN network in the MKW project, the Stockholm School of Economics in the CLUSNET project, the LUCI association in the PLUS project. This specific kind of partner has been officialised under Interreg Europe under the name of 'advisory partner'.

Within the 204 projects, the exchange of experience has already contributed to increase the capacity (competence) of **7,475 staff members** involved in the projects. This represents an average of 36.6 people per project who have increased their skills thanks to their involvement in interregional activities. Between 2012 and 2013, this average figure increased significantly from 22 to 30. In 2014, the increase continues but is slightly less important (from 30 to 36) since only fourth call projects are running.

Concerning this indicator, the following quote from SCINNOPOLI (second call Capitalisation Projects) is interesting for two reasons. First, it gives an interesting example on the way the project tries to monitor the increased capacity of the partners involved. Second, it demonstrates that this indicator only partially reflects the results of the project since the capacity building effect on the local / regional stakeholders not being partner is not counted under this indicator.

*“12 additional staff members from Lower Austria (Lead Partner, AT), WTSH (partner 3, DE), WTRDA (partner 4, HU), ARTI (partner 6, IT) and MT (partner 7, FR) increased their knowledge due to active participation in interregional events. Increased capacity is also documented by the self-assessments which are filled out by the participants for the interregional transfer workshops: on the question “Has the meeting provided new ideas/ insights for your job and increased your knowledge about monitoring?” the participants evaluated the meeting in Rennes with 3.4, in Marseille with 3.6 and in Bari with 3.2 on a scale from 1 = insufficient to 4 = very good.*

*As SCINNOPOLI is a Capitalisation project, the active involvement of regional stakeholders in the development of the Regional Action Plan is essential too – and thus also their increase of capacity in terms of knowledge/skills/expertise. So far 18 regional and national stakeholders have actively participated in interregional events and increased their capacity in the three semesters.”*

The positive trend highlighted in 2013 with regards to the number of spin-off activities is confirmed. A few years ago, this indicator was one of the few areas where the programme was underperforming. Since 2012, the curve has changed and, until end of June 2014, **467 new projects / activities / approaches resulting from the interregional exchange of experiences** have been reported. This represents an increase of 34% compared with the previous year where 349 spin-offs were demonstrated.

This recent progress means that the programme’s objective (target value of 480 spin-off activities) will be certainly reached by the end of the programme. The improvement noted since 2012 can be mainly explained by the awareness-raising measures of the JTS. Through the clarification requests of the six-month report, the Project Officers have kept on highlighting the importance of this indicator. A specific explanation was also provided during the Lead Partner seminar of the fourth call projects in January 2012. These measures were needed considering the lack of awareness of the Lead Partners on this indicator. The ‘number of new projects / activities / approaches’ is also the only project-related indicator that does not appear in the application form (i.e. by definition, projects cannot be asked at the application stage to estimate the unexpected results).

These results better reflect the experience gained in monitoring the impact of interregional cooperation. When INTERREG IVC officers participate in projects’ final conferences, it often occurs that they discover through the presentations or through the discussions with partners a lot of unexpected benefits gained from the cooperation although these benefits have never been reported in the progress reports. The JTS then strongly encourages the partners to report these impacts in the final reports.

As demonstrated in the examples provided in the previous Annual Reports, the spin-offs can take very diverse forms such as:

- the submission of new applications in other EU programmes (e.g. NEEBOR in South East Europe transnational cooperation programme, ERIK ACTION in FP7)
- the adoption of new tools (e.g. CLUSNET with an interactive cluster mapping, POWER with a carbon reduction tool)
- the development of new joint services (e.g. CLIQ on incubators inter services)
- the adoption of new cooperation convention (e.g. B3 Regions with new agreement between Piedmont, Sardinia & Catalonia on ICT observatory)
- the integration in an existing EU network (e.g. DC with the I-NEC network)

The detailed analysis of these spin-offs shows that a majority are related to the development of new projects between partners often in the context of EU programmes (e.g. FP7, Leonardo, CIP, cross-border / transnational or interregional cooperation).

This indicator reflects the variety of results that can emerge from the interregional exchange of experience process. But, as highlighted in the introductory part of this analysis, the monitoring of these spin-offs is a first attempt to assess the intangible but real achievements resulting from cooperation activities. It reflects only partially the richness of the 'indirect outcomes' deriving from interregional cooperation. The progress reports submitted by projects sometimes include very interesting information which cannot be reflected in any of the current programme predefined indicators. The extract below from the progress report submitted by the MiSRaR project is a good illustration of this richness:

*“The partners all have created a network of public bodies in their region that are closely related to the disaster mitigation work and therefore highly relevant to the project. Most of these bodies often provide input for the project, make presentations, provide best practices, assist in the organisation of field visits etc. Even though these partners are not co-financed by the programme, they play an integral and very important part in the development of the project and its activities. Since these public bodies are so closely involved in the disaster mitigation practice, the exchange of experiences in this field has a spillover effect to these bodies as well. One of the major “not planned” effects of the project is that their involvement has increased the quality of the public-public cooperation in the field of disaster mitigation in the participating regions to a great extent.”*

Even if INTERREG IVC does not impose any local action groups for the Regional Initiative Projects, most of the projects (as illustrated above) associate the relevant stakeholders from their territory in the exchange of experience process. This is also the way certain projects

approved in priority 1 ensure the participation of the private sector in the projects. The extract below from the final report of KNOW-MAN provides another good example of this process:

*“The Know-Man partnership was characterised by a wide spectrum of actors representing different parts of the “triple-helix-structure” (public authorities, economic actors represented by technology parks and academic representatives) as well as different economic backgrounds. On the one hand, the unique opportunity to establish links and to benefit from the experiences of the different partners was stressed. It enabled the partners to broaden their view on specific issues and to gain new insights. On the other hand, their differences in “day-to-day-business” also led to different expectations. For instance, the relations between partners located in the same region or between those partners working on similar topics (e.g. STP’s) were described as stronger than the relations to those working in other fields. The project partners attracted other local and regional actors in a considerable quantity. For instance, during the Kick-off Meeting which was held in Berlin, the following regional partners were actively involved: IZBM GmbH (international Business Incubator Berlin-Adlershof), Adlershof Projekt GmbH and NAVI Berlin Charlottenburg. During the final Conference in Berlin, the Coworking space “betahaus” and “Modulor”, a unique concept which brings various aspects of creativity and innovation under one roof, have been visited by the project partners. Both concepts are examples for Smart Specialisation approaches in creative industries.....In the Koroška region (partner 10, SI), local, regional and national actors were attracted especially during the process of implementing the Good Practices “Ideas to start-up” and “Business Plan Competition”. The Regional Development Agency for Koroška region mentioned the following actors:*

- *“Ideas to Start-up”:* Polymer Technology College, Koroška Student’s Club, start-up school Hekovnik, Koroška Centre for Higher Education, Business Centre Slovenj Gradec, Koroška Youth and Cultural Centre
- *“Business Plan Competition”:* Economists Association of Koroška, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia – Regional Chamber of Koroška, Business Centre Slovenj Gradec, Polymer Technology College, external experts (trainings for the participants, evaluation committee).

*Further actors were involved in the regional project events or Round Tables:*

- *Companies:* Nieros d.o.o., Kopa.d.d, Vox.io, Zementa, Eutrip, Lek d.d., Metal Raven d.d., VGP Drava Ptuj d.d., Vorkum d.o.o., VIGRAD d.o.o.
- *Banks:* NKB d.d.
- *Representatives:* RACE KOGO (Development Centre of Koroška economy), Ministry of Economic Development and Technology of Slovenia, start-up school Hekovnik.

A few interesting examples of more recent spin-offs are provided below:

### **Priority 1 – Sub-Theme Innovation, research and technological development**

#### **CLUSTERIX** on clusters management and internationalisation

The partner West-Pannon Region- and Economy Development Supplier Public Nonprofit Ltd. (Hungary), managed to raise high interest of cluster managers not only in Western Transdanubia, but all over Hungary in the Clusterix project. This partner used the opportunity of a planned staff exchange in Győr (Hungary) in April 2014 to enlarge the target group and invite

cluster managers and policymakers from all over Hungary, as well as international cluster experts to exchange experience on cluster internationalisation and cross-sector collaboration with representatives of the Business Agency of Lower Austria, ERAI (Entreprise Rhone-Alpes International, France) and the INMA Research Institute (Romania). The meeting resulted in the bottom-up creation of a Hungarian Cluster Alliance enabling cross cluster meetings on a regular basis and in increased efforts in cluster internationalisation. In fact, two Western Transdanubian clusters used the meeting for a benchmarking interview and received the European Cluster Excellence Bronze Label.

### **Priority 1 – Sub-theme Entrepreneurship and SMEs**

#### **DESUR on innovation for sustainable SMEs**

The partners Fundecyt (Spain), Province of Bologna (IT) and Kaunas University of Technology (LT) decided to develop a new project proposal called R-ICT. The proposal is funded by the EU CIP programme. The project focuses on promoting corporate social responsibility within the ICT sector, and it addresses themes of key importance such as better internet for kids, safer internet, inclusion, web accessibility, digital social platforms, ICT for ageing well, e-Privacy, “do not track”, on-line behavioural advertising, media freedom and pluralism, no disconnect strategy, etc. Additional information on the project can be found in [www.r-ict.eu](http://www.r-ict.eu).



## **Priority 1 – Sub-Theme Information Society**

### **ENGAGE** on broadband in rural areas

On the basis of the lessons learnt within the project, and on the established relationships among partners, the lead partner Digital Nièvre Joint Authority (Nièvre Numérique, France) and ERNACT (Ireland) both applied for a DG CONNECT “Connected Communities” proposal. Further information can be found at the following link: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/node/70418>

## **Priority 1 – Sub-theme ‘Employment, human capital and education’**

### **BRAIN-FLOW** on brain drain and brain gain in border regions

As a follow-up of the sub-project Best Practice Cluster Management (BPCM), Karlstad University (Germany) has started to develop an international course for cluster management professionals. This course builds on the experiences and insights of the sub-project and BPCM partners regularly provide inputs to the programme by being involved as guest lecturers.

## **Priority 2 – Sub-theme ‘Water management’**

### **ERCIP** on European river corridors

ERCIP had a fundamental impact on the relationship between the Romanian Institute of Geology (IGR) and Constanta County Council (Romania). Due to the activities foreseen in the project, IGR had to start working much more closely with Constanta County. The improved relationship led to the delivery of a key infrastructure project financed by Constanta County: the creation of the new Water Treatment Plant for the town of Harsova has been agreed while the partners were in Romania on the Partnership Exchange Visit in September 2013, the funding being allocated as a result of Harsova's River Corridor Improvement Plan and its commitment to managing the river corridor within its control. The Plant will have a direct benefit on water quality locally with the treatment of waste water and sewage. So far, waste water was directly pumped into the Danube. The importance of this was highlighted during the visit to Tulcea on the Danube Delta where delegates experienced the impact of raw sewage being pumped straight into the river.

## **Priority 2 – Sub-theme ‘Biodiversity and preservation of natural heritage’**

### **GreenInfraNet** on the development of green infrastructure

After the experience gained in GreenInfraNet, the Regional Development Agency of Plovdiv (Bulgaria) decided to get engaged in a new project called INTEGREEN (integrating the green alternative into vocational education and training for the service sector) financed by the EU Life Long Learning Programme. In this project, green skills have to be improved in the entire work force, in order to build a resource efficient and competitive economy, and to reinforce the

competitive advantage of business, in particular SMEs. The project also aims to provide a list of trainings in order to incorporate a 'green alternative' for green working jobs.

## **Priority 2 – Sub-theme 'Energy and sustainable transport'**

### **GreenITnet on greening ICT**

Based on the information on Digital Cities which was shared with the partners during an inter-regional seminar in Manchester in 2012, and following further exchanges with the UK partner, the Riga City Council passed a decision to commit to the European Commission Green Digital Charter, which was signed by Riga in October, 2013, in Brussels, engaging Riga in a network of the 43 EU cities actively involved in energy efficiency through ICT tools. Additional information is available at the following link: <http://www.greenitnet.com/news.detail.php?id=24>

Finally, as far as the 20 Capitalisation Projects are concerned, **91 action plans have been developed by “Objective Convergence” regions further to the lessons learnt from “Objective Competitiveness” regions**. This represents almost half of the 210 Action Plans developed by these projects. Some of the most remarkable results, in particular in terms of amount of mainstreaming funds committed to the implementation of the practices, have been achieved in convergence regions. The following quote from the Bulgarian partner of ESF6 CIA (i.e. Vasil Asenov from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, partner 11) is interesting in this regard:

*“In the beginning, the ESF ‘Development’ programme was designed only to tackle unemployment after mass redundancies in enterprises. The foreseen budget was EUR 75 million. Thanks to ESF6 CIA, we were able to redesign the programme and include preferential treatment to people age 50+. It helped a lot, as it gave us a good idea how people in these target groups could be included in trainings.”*

Another core lesson learnt from the Capitalisation Projects is that the cooperation was also useful for the regions of the EU15. Apart from a few cases, the process has also ended in the introduction of real new practices into the Operational Programmes of the most advanced regions. This reflects the added-value of the win-win cooperation supported within INTERREG IVC.

### 3.1.2.3 Programme Objective: Identification, sharing and transfer of good practices into regional policies, in particular into EU Structural Funds mainstream programmes

If one considers the target values of the Operational Programme, this programme objective is already achieved. The number of good practices identified by Regional Initiative Projects continues to increase. In total, **5,669 good practices** have been identified within the 184 Regional Initiative Projects. This means an average of 31 good practices per project. This exceeds by far the initial target value of 2,400. To a certain extent, this can be explained by the average number of partners per project (more than 11) which exceeds the programme's expectations.

With regard to the 20 Capitalisation Projects, 255 good practices were already identified at the application stage and made available to regional and local actors involved in the projects. This figure matches almost perfectly the initial target value of 250.

The good practice database on the programme website allows anyone interested to find examples of practices identified by the projects (<http://www.interreg4c.eu/findGoodpractices.html>). It is under constant development and, at the end of 2014; it included 1,270 good practices (plus 48% compared with 2013). Each project has to submit a minimum of four descriptions of good practices during its lifetime.

As far as results are concerned, a total of **508 practices have now been successfully transferred** amongst the partners. This exceeds the Operational Programme's target value of 200. Compared with the results of 2013 where a total of 403 good practices transferred were reported, this represents an increase of 26%. This is less impressive than the increase that occurred between 2012 and 2013 (+151%) since only fourth call projects are now running. The good practices (GP) were transferred in the following area of regional development:

- 273 practices transferred in Priority 1: Innovation and the knowledge economy
  - 86 under 'Innovation, research and technology development'
  - 125 under 'Entrepreneurship and SMEs'
  - 43 under 'Information Society'
  - 19 under 'Employment, human capital and education'
- 235 practices transferred in Priority 2: Environment and risk prevention
  - 45 under 'Natural and technology risks; climate change'
  - 41 under 'Water management'
  - 7 under 'Waste prevention and management'

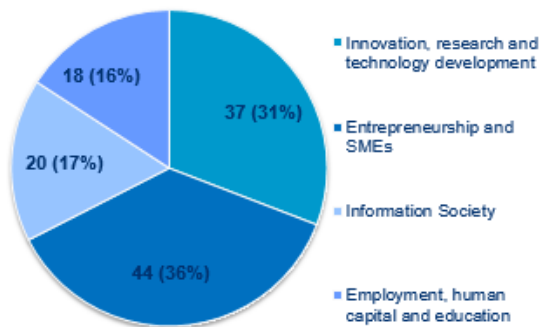
- 97 under 'Energy and sustainable transport'
- 11 under 'Biodiversity and preservation of natural heritage'
- 34 under 'Cultural heritage & landscape'

As already highlighted in the previous report, the initial target set in the Operational Programme (200 good practices transferred) is exceeded by far. The majority of results are reported under Priority 1 which is logical considering the higher number of projects approved under this Priority. Good practices transferred are now demonstrated in all sub-themes of the programme, even in those that are poorly represented (e.g. waste and water management).

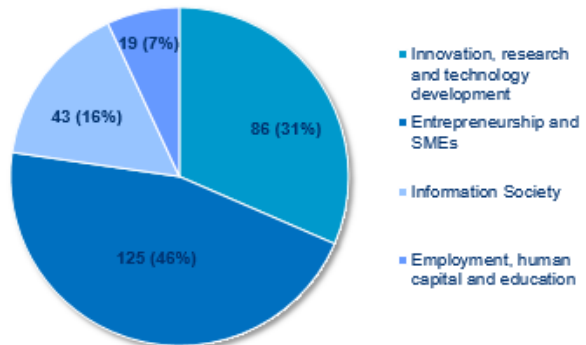
The graphs below show a more detailed comparison between the number of approved projects and the number of good practices transferred for each programme's sub-theme.

## Innovation and the knowledge economy

### Approved projects

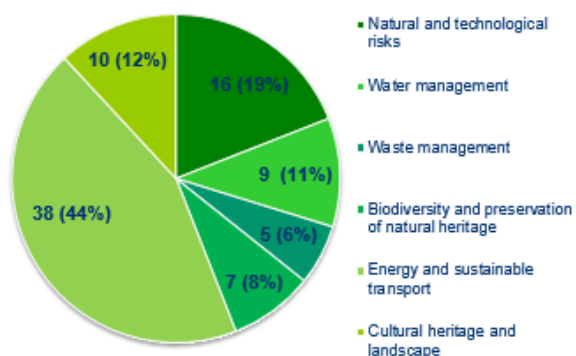


### GP transferred

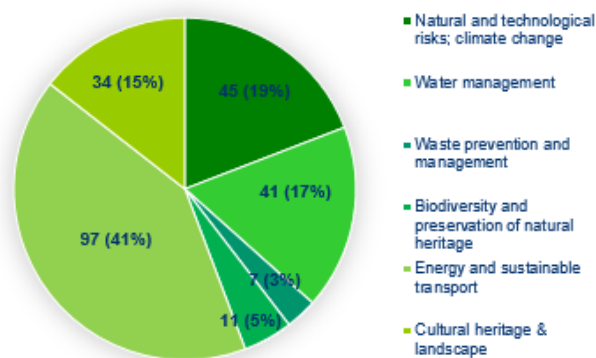


## Environment and risk prevention

### Approved projects



### GP transferred



Compared with the policies improved where the level of achievement correspond almost exactly to the number of project approved, the situation is slightly different with the good practices transferred.

Under priority 1, it is interesting to notice that the project under ‘SME and competitiveness’ are particularly successful and over performed compared with the other sub-themes (i.e. 46% of the result for 36% of the projects approved). Reversely, the projects under ‘Employment, human capital and educations’ under performed. They are responsible for 7% of the practices transferred although they represent 16% of the projects approved under the first priority. This finding may be explained by the specific context of these two areas of regional development. As far as SME support policies are concerned, the comparability and transferability of practices between regions may be easier in particular since economic development is clearly a decentralised competence where local and regional authorities are fully legitimate. In comparison, the transfer of practices in the field of employment and education may be more complex. Even if the local and regional authorities have a role to play, this policy area is still in most countries strongly influenced by the national level.

Under priority 2, the differences are less striking but it can be highlighted that projects under water management (11% of projects achieving 17% of transfers) and cultural heritage (12% of the projects for 15% of the transfers) appear more successful than projects under waste management (6% of the projects for 3% of the transfers) and biodiversity / natural heritage (8% of project for 5% of the transfers). Concerning the area of waste management, several

projects (R4R, PreWaste) have highlighted the difficulty of comparing practices and approaches between local authorities. There is no recognised European standards and, even within the same country, the monitoring of the waste practices and policies can significantly change from one authority to another. For instance, it is difficult to check the success criterion of a specific practice. This issue makes the transfer of practices between authorities more challenging in the field of waste management.

Beyond these thematic analysis, it should be highlighted that the achievement of the programme in terms of good practices transferred is remarkable considering the way the transfer is defined in the programme (see Annex 3 of the programme manual). Since this result indicator is interrelated to the number of practices identified, it refers to the number of practices and not to the number of transfers. In other words, if the same practice is transferred to several partners (e.g. in Mini-Europe, Summer Entrepreneur was transferred from Mid-Sweden to Flevoland, NL and to North West England, UK), only the figure of '1' should be reported under the indicator. Moreover, a transfer can be reported to the programme only when implementation has already started on the territory of the importing region. The intention to transfer is therefore not sufficient and evidence of implementation on the territory is required. This approach is very demanding but already 102 projects have demonstrated transfers and most of the 115 Regional Initiative Projects of the two first calls were already able to report interesting lessons learnt from the cooperation.

Compared with 2013, more and more fourth call projects are able to demonstrate good practice transferred.

- 168 practices transferred (33%) were demonstrated by first call projects,
- 222 (44%) by second call projects,
- 118 (23%) by fourth call projects.

Now that the programme enters in its final phase, it is also interesting to look at the projects that were not successful in terms of policies improved. Out of the 122 projects that are closed, the following 18 projects (5 from the first call and 13 from the second call) were not in a position to demonstrate any transfer of practices before the end of their activities: FUTUREforest, PRESERVE, PEOPLE, NANO4M, PRoMPt, UNICREDS, DeltaNet, D2N, ECREIN+, CATCH\_MR, SuPorts, YES, OSAIS, SURF-Nature, Brain-Flow, CREATOR, EURIS, INOLINK.

Similarly to the above analysis on policy improvements, this list of projects does not reveal any specific trend in terms of:

- Topics:

Almost all programme's sub-themes (apart from Information Society and waste management) are covered under these 17 projects with a rather high representation of the sub-theme 'employment, human resources and education' (in particular compared with the relatively low number of projects approved in that field, 18)

- Intensity of cooperation

All levels of intensity of cooperation are concerned and in particular 3 mini-programmes (out of 11) are concerned.

Beyond these two elements, the 18 projects do not share any other features (e.g. nature of partners, countries represented, duration, exchange of experience process, etc.).

The justifications provided by these projects for not achieving their initial objectives are similar to those provided for the policies improved. Indeed, a majority of them (9 out of 17) explained that the transfer could not be achieved within the lifetime of the project but that work was still going on. In several cases, projects explained that, although some interesting practices were identified, their implementation in a different territorial context appear very difficult. The question of the funding can also play a role in the difficulties encountered. In any case, the absence of transfer did not necessarily mean that the project was unsuccessful. Even if a transfer was not achieved, the learning process was still useful for the project and, in most cases led to other interesting results. This is reflected in the fact that 13 out of these 18 projects were still able to demonstrate policy improvements. In fact, only 5 projects (PEOPLE, DeltaNet, ECREIN+, SURF-Nature, Brain Flow) could not demonstrate neither a good practice transferred nor a policy improved.

A sample of interesting transfers is provided below and all results can be retrieved from the monitoring system used by the programme.

**Examples of good practice transferred from Priority 1  
'Innovation and the knowledge economy'**

**Priority 1 – Sub-theme 'Innovation & RTD'**

**URMA on urban-rural partnership in metropolitan areas**

During one of the interregional events of the project, Lombardy region (Italy) shared its good practice "Buon Mercato"; a local service centre for a social and cooperative economy, which aims to promote new lifestyles and consumption patterns that make the present and future of

the local community more sustainable and eco-friendly. The market promotes responsible consumption thanks to the promotion of local (short) food chains, thus enhancing virtuous behaviours. The two Dutch partners (Municipality of Enschede and Municipality of Borne) have found the idea very interesting and decided to adopt it. Both partners come from the same area, Twente. This area, similarly to Lombardy, is characterised by small-scale agriculture, offering an opportunity for local farmers to produce high quality products in a sustainable way. The development of regional food chains is an important driver for the distribution of regional food. Twente could benefit from Lombardy's good practices and the established contacts helped the smooth transfer of the practice. Indeed, supported by the Italian experience, the "Freshroute" was developed and implemented: an urban farm was set up and several researches are being carried out to further develop the distribution system in the region.

### **Priority 1 – Sub-theme 'Innovation & RTD'**

#### **KTForce** on knowledge transfer for innovation policies

During the KTForce project, a mapping of good practices in Knowledge Transfer was done by all the partners within their regions, and each partner selected at least one of these practices for implementation within their own organisation. The practice *Viral marketing* brought in the project by Floralis, the knowledge transfer subsidiary of the University Joseph Fourier (France), was selected for implementation by University of Porto Innovation, the technology transfer unit of the University of Porto (Portugal).

*Viral marketing* is a technique to promote the spreading of new technologies by "creating a buzz" and University of Porto is expecting to increase its visibility and connection with relevant stakeholders with the aim to improve the commercialisation of its technologies. The practice started to be implemented in December 2013 and already showed results by April 2014.

### **Priority 1 – Sub-theme 'Innovation & RTD'**

#### **CLUSTERIX** on clusters management and internationalisation

The Business Agency EcoPlus (Austria) took inspiration from "France Green Plastics" approach to set up a cross-sectoral platform for plastics, Textiles and Mechatronics Electronics industries, called PlasTexTron. The platform enables the development of cross-sectoral R&D projects and joint international promotion of the conceived products. The project, supported by the Austrian Ministry of Economy, involves three Austrian clusters as well as partners from France.



### **Priority 1 – Sub-theme ‘Entrepreneurship and SMEs’**

#### **INNOCRAFTS** on entrepreneurship in the crafts sector

One of the good practices brought by the Irish partner Design and Crafts Council of Ireland is called "FUSE Innovation and Design". Back in 2013, the Municipality of Florence decided to implement one part of it (called "clinics") in its area. Florence developed the project together with the Fondazione Artigianato Artistico (FAA). The project is based on a model of assistance and experts advice for craftsmen in the field of photography, web marketing, management control, finance, photo editing. It provides the assistance of a group of experts with a range of very different skills to the craftsmen. The professionals involved are committed to "guarantee" for a specific period of time (February to April 2014) a sort of "assistance" and "training" courses addressed to artisans and to the craftsmen who worked in the Spazio Art e Mestieri (SAM) - the artistic and handcrafts incubator. The artisans will have the opportunity to book one or more meetings with professionals to suit their specific needs.

### **Priority 1 – Sub-theme ‘Entrepreneurship and SMEs’**

#### **CIE** on support to SMEs to invest in clean technologies

Szent Istvan University (HU) has taken the initiative to plan the renovation of one of their buildings and turn it into the RubikLogiCentre (<http://www.rlogicenter.org>). This centre should become a sustainable business incubator, based on the YES!Delft concept, a good practice brought from the City of Delft and the University of Delft (the Netherlands).

RubikLogiCenter is a development centre offering know-how on the application of results achieved by R&D and on the successful use of *cleantech* solutions. RubikLogiCenter's portfolio offers solutions to any user, who wants to adapt professional knowledge, or high-level European clean technological innovations (i.e. license, patent, invention) to any business environment in any part of the world. The strategy applied refers to the Rubik's Cube methods and the Game Theory. They present unique features, as they propose a continuously advancing and evolving solution frame, which is applicable to any phase of the planning process, so that even the wrong developments and innovation programmes can be easily corrected and adjusted.

The main orientation and aim of low-carbon or sustainable developments realised by Rubik's logic are the production areas facing the inconsistencies of energy resource usage due to intensive development, or high production capacities every day. The partners of RubikLogiCenter are offered solutions which can help achieving successful and sustainable investments, developments, and innovation programmes.

## **Priority 1 – Sub-theme ‘Information Society’**

### **E-COOP on digital cooperatives**

The initiative “MyStory” is an ICT-based solution to empower seniors in learning basic technical skills via intergenerational learning, to access new learning opportunities and to make contact with different social categories facing the risk of social exclusion. The target population is mainly senior people. However, “MyStory” is also addressed to socially excluded youngsters as well as public institutions such as universities, colleges, libraries, museums or archives. This practice is applied in the city of Iasi, Romania since 2010. In the framework of the E-COOP project, MyStory was successfully transferred to the city of Mazovia (Poland). This transfer was implemented as an E-COOP micro-implementation activity, and was constantly supervised by the E-COOP partners. After the first implementation experience, the importing partner organised a study visit to share and evaluate the transfer and to discuss possible improvements with the rest of the partnership.

## **Examples of good practices transferred from Priority 2 ‘Environment and risk prevention’**

### **Priority 2 – Sub-theme ‘Natural and technological risks’**

#### **Heritprot on fire risk prevention in historic town centres**

In Liverpool, the Central Local Government (CLG) initiative to standardise and circulate “Best operational procedural practices” has benefited from the experiences gained during the Heritprot project. In particular, a Standard Operational Procedure for Fires in Heritage buildings (Fires in the built environment - FIBE) has been developed. FIBE is a comprehensive document embracing the whole fire protection process, and it is made of several components. A strategic risk assessment for fires in Heritage buildings and damage control activities lists the hazard control measures to be incorporated into the operational procedural guidance for fires in Heritage buildings. An *aide memoir* has also been produced for guidance on the initial actions for the incident commander, to be used during the initial attendance stages of an incident involving a Heritage building. The UK partner Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service developed these new elements thanks to the lessons learnt within Heritprot. Moreover, risk management is supported by the “Bench mark” Fire Protection inspection, which was jointly designed by the partners for the Heritprot project. It has laid down the process to carry out an inspection in heritage buildings or other “high-risk” premises. The Heritprot Model also sets the standards for the “site specific risk information” (SSRI) process which again supports the operational crew risk awareness, for the fire protection departments and other operational departments involved in the protection of heritage buildings.

## **Priority 2 – Sub-theme ‘Water management’**

### **TRAP** on river catchment management

and the application of the Water Framework Directive

The British partner The Rivers Trust, an umbrella organisation for river management in the UK, shared several of its good practices with the TRAP partners. One of the most interesting practices it shared is its own organisation and governance model. It attracted the attention of several partners as it allows an effective institutional solution (at catchment level) for implementing parts of the EU’s Water Framework Directive (article 13). More precisely, the governance, structure, approach and objectives of the Rivers Trust movement across England, Wales and Northern Ireland have been closely analysed by the partners, including the Rivers Trust engagement with a wide range of stakeholders as well as its ultimate aim of catchment management to support WFD implementation. As a result, the Slovenian partner Socca Valley Development Centre created an NGO based on the model of The Rivers Trust. Based on the same model, the Irish partners (Tipperary County Council, Cork County Council, Shannon Development, Mid-West regional authority, South West regional authority) worked to improve existing structures on their territory, such as the Lough Derg stakeholders group on tourism development and marketing. The importing partners worked in close cooperation with the donor region who offered bilateral exchanges and training sessions upon request from the importing partners.

## **Priority 2 – Sub-theme ‘Energy and sustainable public transport’**

### **D-AIR** on reducing CO2 emissions in airports

During the study visit to Charles de Gaulle airport (France) in April 2013, the City Council of El Prat (Spain) has been inspired by the project Fileo. Fileo provides bus services to the workers of the airport hub. Fileo was originally created in 1998, then rebranded and optimized in 2010. There is a high number of people working around the airport whose shifts begin or end outside the “normal” public transportation hours. These users have to call a reservation number and ask for the Fileo bus at their closest bus station. After the call, they receive a confirmation of their ride on their phone. The system is not a taxi and a door to door service neither. It runs on public transport lines, it complements the regular bus system. It consists of 32 buses and had 13.000 customers in the first three months of 2013. The price is the same as the public transportation. 88% of the passengers is happy with Fileo. Thanks to this system, about 10.000 tons of CO2 have not been released into the atmosphere. In fact, before Fileo workers living around the airport were obliged to use their own cars to go to the airport, thus contributing to CO2 emissions.

On the basis of this practice, El Prat contacted the bus metropolitan authority and the bus company Capmar in order to implement a bus-on-demand service redesigning the last part of the way of a bus line. This way two new bus stops were created at the industrial area of the airport. The users inform via WiFi the nearest bus that there is a traveller waiting at the bus station, and the traveller in a few seconds is informed about the waiting time of the arrival of the bus. If the passenger is on the bus, he just has to ask the driver that he wants to go to the industrial bus stops. Small investments have been put in place for a high impact on the quality of life and transport sustainability of El Prat.

### **Priority 2 – Sub-theme ‘Energy and sustainable transport’**

#### **EnercitEE** on energy efficiency policies

The idea of the “energy saving competitions” in schools has been developed by the Saxon Energy Agency (Germany), a sub-project partner in the project and it has been transferred to the local authorities in Haute Savoy (France). During the project, nine schools, i.e. more than 360 pupils and 30 teachers, participated in the initiative. Class-projects were developed within each school, an online tool was specifically created to enter the school energy consumption and 3% to 7% of energy saving were reached. The project is still going on after the end of EnercitEE and is co funded by different local public authorities in Haute-Savoie.

### **Priority 2 – Sub-theme ‘Cultural heritage and landscape’**

#### **CHARTS** on cultural heritage added value for tourism sustainability

The good practice “Cycling for Tourists” was successfully transferred from the Vidzeme Tourism Association (VTA, Latvia) to Pafos Regional Board of Tourism (Cyprus). A first exchange on the practice was done during a workshop in Latvia in September 2013, where the Cypriote partner discovered the “Cycling for Tourists” initiative. Afterwards, two staff exchanges were carried out: one visit of a senior officer from VTA to Pafos in October 2013, and a return staff exchange visit by a senior officer from Pafos to Latvia in November 2013. During these events, the wide experience of VTA in engaging all year round tourism by bikes to cultural heritage sites (including the Iron Curtain Trail), was transferred to Pafos, that is in the process of setting up all the facilities needed for this form of tourism. In 2014 Pafos Regional Board of Tourism further developed the Cyclotourism initiative, for instance by disseminating a specific map including cycle trails as well as by introducing bike rental schemes for sustainable mobility access, including to UNESCO World Heritage sites.

## **Priority 2 – Sub-theme ‘Cultural heritage and landscape’**

### **HISTCAPE** on historic towns and their landscapes

The good practice “Tools for Social Participation and Involvement” identified by Tecnalía (Spain) was successfully transferred to Marche Region. This good practice highlighted the need to involve “non-structured” agents in planning processes for cultural heritage protection. Through a pilot action, the good practice was adapted from the focus of cultural heritage protection to landscape management in rural areas of Marche Region. The goal of the good practice transfer was to use local tacit knowledge and civic participation as a device for a landscape development action in rural areas. Even though adjustments have been made to the good practice to ensure its full adaptability to the Italian context, the principle of involvement of non-structured agents in local planning and management processes could be successfully transferred through an intensive on-site work consisting of various interactions with the local population (interviews, walking tours, etc.). The pilot action was a successful experiment to improve the active policies for landscape of the renewed Landscape Plan.

A certain number of lessons can be learnt from the good practices transferred within the projects:

- The notion of transfer is not as straightforward as it may seem from the definition provided in Annex 3 of the programme manual. Usually, a transfer of practice means that a specific initiative developed by one partner has attracted the interest of another partner who has implemented it on its territory. However, in numerous cases (e.g. CLUSNET, DIFASS), it is the joint input of the partners on a specific local case which has finally resulted in the implementation of new actions in the concerned territory. It is therefore not one specific practice which is transferred but a variety of inputs provided by different partners on a precise local issue. In the case of CITEAIR II, it is a practice coming from another source (European Environment Agency) or developed by the partners in the course of the project that is adopted by certain partners.
- It often occurs that the projects able to demonstrate concrete transfer of practices are projects with a low level of intensity of cooperation (e.g. CLUSNET, CLIQ, MINI EUROPE, MORE4NRG, SEE, Regions4GreenGrowth). This finding is important since it proves the usefulness and efficiency of interregional learning. These transfers represent a form of mainstreaming into policies since the implementation of the transfer was not funded in these projects by INTERREG IVC but by other public sources at local, regional or national levels (see also the D-AIR example above).

- The win-win character of the cooperation is also demonstrated in the achieved transfers. Even if in a majority of cases, it is the less advanced region that benefited from the most advanced region, there are more and more examples where the transfer goes in the other direction (e.g. in MINI EUROPE where the Veneto region, IT gets inspiration from the Hungarian Regional Knowledge Centre or in PERIRUBAN where Lille in France benefited from the experience of the Bulgarian partner).
- It seems that certain domains are more conducive to transfer. This is the case of 'soft' domains related to communication or more generally to governance processes. A significant number of projects have demonstrated transfers in the way they are organising consultation activities or the way they communicate on their strategies. This domain is indeed relatively easy to influence. In particular, it usually does not require specific financial means.

This is also the case of ICT based solutions. There is a significant number of cases where the practices transferred are e-tools although the project does not directly tackle ICT issues (i.e. the project is not approved under the 'information society' sub-theme). Examples are provided above from the DART and SIGMA for Water projects. DART deals with demographic changes while SIGMA tackles wetlands management but both projects have demonstrated transfers related to an ICT tool. The success achieved in this second domain may be explained by the flexibility of ICT which can often be easily adapted to each local context. It also shows that ICTs are also a cross-cutting notion in INTERREG IVC relevant for all programme sub-themes and not only for the 'Information Society' topic.

- The distinction between the notion of practice transfer and that of policy improved is not always clear. In that domain, the theory is easier than the reality. In principle, even if a good practice transfer is a concrete result, it usually remains a one-off which does not necessarily lead to a structural change. In comparison, a policy improved (e.g. modification of a strategy or of a policy document) is supposed to be sustainable and to have a long-term impact. In MINI EUROPE, the way Flevoland, NL has tackled the 'Summer entrepreneur' initiative is a good example of the difference that can exist between practice transfer and policy improved. Initially, the summer entrepreneur initiative was organised once in Flevoland following the experience developed in Mid Sweden. There was no particular plan to make it an on-going measure within the region and Flevoland region had to find specific funding to organise the event. At that stage, this result was correctly reported to the programme as a good practice transferred. In

a second step and due to the success of the first event organised in the Netherlands, the new policy of Flevoland for the period 2010-2013 was finally modified to include the Summer Entrepreneur initiative as core measure for promoting young entrepreneurship in the region. Only this second achievement through its longer term impact was reported to the programme as a policy improved.

Nevertheless, it appears in more and more cases that this difference between practice transfer and policy improved is artificial. The example provided above for DISTRICT+ (under the examples of policies improved) or with DIFASS in the 2013 Annual Report illustrate this difficulty. The DIFASS project for instance has reported the launch of a new microfinance facility in Burgos (ES) in January 2013 as a transfer of practices. Indeed, certain features of the facility were inspired by practices that were discovered in the other partner regions thanks to the project. But is this microfinance facility a practice or a policy? In case the Spanish partner would have considered it as a specific policy instrument, the influence of the project could have been reported as a policy improved.

In this context, the approach proposed for Interreg Europe brings simplification. Instead of maintaining the above distinction, Interreg Europe will think in terms of policy change which will include both practice transferred and policies improved.

All Capitalisation Projects are now finalised. Within these 20 projects, the following elements are of interest.

- 240 partners (of which 125 public authorities) are included in these 20 projects. Apart from Malta, all other EU Member States are represented in these projects.
- Certain of these projects have faced difficulties in the mainstreaming process. For instance, the good practices finally selected for transfer by a partner were not fully compatible with the characteristics of the Regional Operational Programme of this partner (Emilia Romagna, IT in PIKE). Sometimes the practices required a mix of ESF and ERDF although these two funding sources were managed separately in the region. Or there was no relevant measure in which the practice could be finally financed. Other examples of difficulties relate to the decision-making process of each Operational Programme. The final decision on implementing the practices in the region has obviously to be in line with the way the concerned Monitoring Committee usually decides.

Finally, a few third call Capitalisation Projects like MKW informed the JTS that the ERDF of the current Operational Programme was already fully allocated to a few regions. In such cases, the JTS checks carefully with each project which strategy could be adopted to cope with this situation.

Despite the above difficulties and as demonstrated in this chapter, the 20 Capitalisation Projects can be considered as successful in their mainstreaming process. **A total of 210 Action Plans were produced by these projects.** In most cases, one Action Plan was produced per participating region apart from RAPIDE where 17 Action Plans were elaborated. Indeed, the regions involved in RAPIDE decided to make an Action Plan per practice transferred which means that several regions (e.g. South West, UK; Észak-Alföld Regional Development Agency, HU) worked on more than one Action Plan.

In addition to the policies improved (see examples above and in previous Annual Reports); their remarkable achievements are summarised in the table 11 below based on the mainstreaming funds dedicated to the implementation of the practices:

**Table 11: Achievements of the first and second call capitalisation projects**

Projects	IVC ERDF spent (EUR)	Leverage effect	Amount dedicated to the implementation of practices (EUR)	N° of Action Plans produced	N ° of policies improved
<b>B3 Regions*</b>	1 525 947	x 393	599 390 000	12	3
<b>C2CN*</b>	1 748 940	x 2,1	3 699 000	10	5
<b>CO2FREE*</b>	1 147 632	x 7,3	8 374 074	12	7
EFFMIS	1 294 072	x 10,5	13 557 710	9	2
ENTREDI	978 321	x 1,3	1 256 990	7	7
<b>ERIK ACTION*</b>	1 417 103	x 17	24 386 215	11	6
<b>ESF6 CIA*</b>	932 661	x 170	158 830 562	8	2
EU2020 going local	939 819	x 0,1	100 000	11	3
EUFOFINET	1 444 264	x 5,33	7 693 863	13	0
GEO.POWER	1 373 883	x 0,6	763 580	11	4
ICHNOS PLUS	734 037	x 1,3	927 800	6	2



<b>IMMODI*</b>	1 238 359	x 12,5	15 520 100	7	5
<b>MKW*</b>	1 347 461	x 25,3	34 033 750	11	7
<b>PIKE*</b>	1 145 714	x 6,3	7 272 906	9	4
<b>PIMMS CAPITAL*</b>	1 174 700	x 33	38 468 705	12	7
PLUS	1 219 600	x 2,8	3 354 613	11	7
<b>RAPIDE*</b>	1 194 558	x 38	44 998 000	17	11
<b>SCINNOPOLI*</b>	1 273 872	x 4,8	6 131 100	9	9
SufalNet4EU	1 370 116	x 0	0	15	0
WINNET 8	1 532 185	x 2,1	3 265 113	9	2
<b>TOTAL (EUR)</b>	<b>25 033 246</b>	<b>x 39</b>	<b>972 024 081</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>TOTAL (without B3 Regions)</b>	<b>23 507 299</b>	<b>x 16</b>	<b>372 634 081</b>		

*\* Fast Track*

The amount of mainstream funds influenced is one of the very few indicators where the initial target set in the Operational Programme will not met (MEUR 972 instead of MEUR 1,500 initially anticipated). As highlighted in the mid-term evaluation updated, the main reason for this is obviously the low number of Capitalisation Projects approved in the programme (less than 10%). In this regard, it is pity that this indicator did not apply for the Regional Initiative Projects. A significant number of these projects have demonstrated a financial impact on ESF and ERDF programmes but this financial impact has unfortunately never been consolidated at programme level through a dedicated indicator.

Nevertheless, the above table is still a good illustration of the leverage effect of interregional cooperation. The ERDF budget of EUR 34 million that was invested in the 20 Capitalisation Projects may have an impact on EUR 972 million of national / regional funds (mainly ERDF). This means a leverage effect of 20. Of course, the results of B3 Regions play a major role in this huge leverage effect. But without this specific project, the leverage effect would still be of 6.4. On the opposite, SufalNet4EU did not manage to mobilise funding for its Action Plans and

to demonstrate policy change. This is partly due to the issue tackled. The sustainable use of former landfills is rather complex and usually requires heavy investment. It is also mainly a competence of the local level (municipalities) and it was difficult to commit financially the Managing Authorities on these local projects.

The above table has to be analysed with a lot of care taking into consideration the following elements:

- Even if the vast majority of Action Plans are finalised and signed by the relevant policy makers (there are only a few exceptions like the Greek region of Sterea Ellada in PIKE where the Managing Authority could not sign the plan due to the restructuring of the National Reference Framework), most of these Action Plans are not implemented yet. In other words, most of the funding indicated in the last column is not spent yet and often it is not even secured. A noticeable exception is the PIKE project where EUR 3 million (out of the EUR 7.3 million included in the Action Plans) has already been secured.
- The amount of mainstream funds depends a lot on the issue tackled by the project. For instance, the amount reported by B3 Regions can appear extremely high (alone it represents 70% of all the funds) but it can be explained by the fact that this project is dealing with broadband in rural areas. It therefore relates to infrastructures which can require heavy investment. In comparison, the results of ICHNOS PLUS may appear little. But since ICHNOS PLUS deals with soft measures related to SMEs support, the amount of mainstream reported by the project is in fact very satisfactory. Similarly, the learning process within SufalNet4EU was successful (60 staff members with increased capacity) although no policy achievements could be demonstrated before the end of the cooperation.
- Despite the name of this result indicator, the amount dedicated to the implementation of practices is not exclusively related to ERDF. For various reasons, regions were not always in a position to focus on Structural Funds and when this was the case, they strove to mainstream the practices into other sources of funding at local, regional or national levels.

In their first part of the final report, the projects are asked to explain how interregional cooperation has contributed to the project's achievements. The following extract from the "B3 Regions" final report is of particular interest:

*“During the proposal submission stage, B3 Regions partners had identified eight good practices at EU level regarding different approaches or methodologies linked to broadband deployment. The good practices collected were grouped in different categories: we shared knowledge related to management procedure of structural funds or, to technological aspects or to economic investment models.*

*During the organisation of the workshops, the partners effectively tested how challenging and complex was the broadband topic and the drafting of a consistent broadband strategy, requiring so many information, varying from pure technological expertise to social, economic or legal skills, to acquaintance with structural funds management procedures. Partners clearly understood that their capitalisation objective required different and complex type of expertise because their broadband strategy dealt with technological, legal, administrative or economic know-how.*

*Without the interregional cooperation methodology and framework, each single regional or national government partner would have found very difficult to be supported in the broadband design strategy. All partners fully recognised that such a complex and crucial European strategy required a blend of different know-how that only under an interregional framework such as INTERREG IVC had the chance to be effectively shared in a learning framework lasting 20 months.”*

#### **3.1.2.4 Programme Objective: Contribution to EU horizontal policies**

##### Equal opportunities

The target value concerning the percentage of projects with positive effects on equal opportunities (10%) is largely exceeded with an achieved value of 63.7% of all approved projects. This initial estimation was obviously underestimated. A significant number of projects demonstrate that the topic they address has some links with equal opportunities. For instance, the PEOPLE mini-programme explores the opportunities for new employment and ways of reinforcing cohesion and well-being in the context of demographic and societal changes faced by European regions. Equal opportunities are an important issue in most of the six sub-topics tackled by the mini-programme: 1. Social and e-inclusion, 2. Silver economy, 3. Civil society capacity building, 4. ICT for Health and dependency, 5. Social entrepreneurship, 6. Work-life balance.

In addition, although their topic may not be directly related to equal opportunities, a high number of Lead Partners (and partners) have explained that equal opportunities were anyway part of their internal organisation's policy. This internal policy has to be applied to all projects they are involved in including European initiatives such as INTERREG IVC projects. Equal opportunities approaches would therefore apply to the day-to-day management of the project (e.g. in the recruitment of the coordinator). This can explain to a large extent the above unexpected high percentage.

Other projects have a direct focus on equal opportunities and four examples can be found below:

- **Gender4Growth** is a first call Regional Initiative Project addressing economic gender inequalities, in particular lower female employment rates, wages and positions, job market segmentation and lack of conciliation between career and family life. The project aims at improving partners' economic policies so that gender issues are increasingly taken into consideration at policy level. Partners exchange their experiences, organise transfer workshops and grant "Awards" to local economic initiatives that most effectively tackle gender issues.
- **WINNET 8** is a second call Capitalisation Project addressing the challenges related to low employment rates among women. The combination of segregated labour markets and the lack of females in entrepreneurship, innovation and technology constitute obstacles for regional competitiveness. The project's overall objective is to contribute to regional growth by promoting female employment and counteracting horizontal gender segregation. WINNET 8 also focuses on good practices in attracting women to traditionally male fields and targets strategies to integrate gender specific actions into Structural Funds mainstream programmes.
- **ENSPIRE EU** is a second call Regional Initiative Project addressing entrepreneurship for disadvantaged groups. More particularly, the project has three target groups: 1) Disadvantaged People: without the same opportunities as the average European (e.g. female, migrants), 2) Disconnected People: disconnected from the labour Market (long-term unemployed or people with a low education), 3) Discouraged People: young people at secondary level of education discouraged with the education system. The partners of the project all recognise the relevance and challenge of developing and promoting entrepreneurial inspiration. The partners have all focused on entrepreneurial inspiration and have developed a lot of practices and knowhow within this field.

However, the partners have done so in different ways, for different stakeholders and with varying level of success. The projects aim to exchange good practices between the partners and to develop a unique strategic policy framework by mainstreaming new knowledge into the policy sphere.

- **LABOUR PLUS** is a fourth call Regional Initiative Project addressing labour market inclusion of migrants in general and Roma in particular. Through interregional transfer of knowledge and practices, the project aims to create and stimulate more inclusive and sustainable employment policies. It also enables the partners to tackle discrimination and unemployment by analysing and discussing existing policies, strategies and scenarios.

### Environment

The programme also exceeds its initial objective as far as the percentage of projects with positive effects on the environment is concerned. 83.8% of the approved projects state that they will be positive or have their main focus on environmental sustainability (instead of the 60% initially targeted). This focus on environmental issues is obvious for the 85 approved projects in Priority 2 (41.7% of all approved projects). Nevertheless, as explained above for equal opportunities, a high number of projects under Priority 1 also explained how they will make sure the day-to-day implementation of their project will respect environmental constraints. The integrated approach adopted by certain of these projects (e.g. seven projects deals with eco-innovation) also explains why the topics tackled under Priority 1 can directly relate to environmental considerations.

As demonstrated in the previous Annual Report, the thematic overview of the 20 Capitalisation Projects is balanced with 55 % approved in Priority 1 and 45 % approved in Priority 2.

#### **3.1.2.5 Management and coordination**

All approved projects have set up a Steering Group or equivalent decision-making board that meets on average every six months. The management and coordination is going smoothly for the majority of projects.

It still occurs that the JTS faces difficulties with certain Lead Partners (e.g. deadlines not met, poor quality of the reported information). It happens for the most serious cases that individual

consultations are organised in Lille with the concerned projects. Most of the time, this kind of face-to-face discussion brings satisfactory results.

The target value of 10% set in the Operational Programme for the percentage of progress reports approved without clarification requests from the JTS is not reached. Apart one exception, all progress reports submitted until June 2014 were subject to such requests. Despite this statistic, the overall reporting process to the programme usually works properly even if more delays in the treatment on the reports occur at programme level.

The JTS also considers the clarification request as a way to communicate and exchange with the Lead Partners. As far as the activity monitoring is concerned, the Lead Partners are systematically encouraged to provide as many details as possible on their progress and in particular on the results achieved. Often, the JTS remark is not a request for immediate clarification but a simple recommendation to improve the quality of the reporting for future periods. The rationale behind each request (e.g. importance of justifying the indicators, of providing qualitative information) is also explained. The aim is to contribute to a mutual understanding and to ensure that Lead Partners feel committed to the programme's success. In the same spirit, the JTS sends each year the present qualitative analysis to all Lead Partners.

Some projects have developed their own IT monitoring system through an intranet which allows all partners to report their costs and even sometimes their activities and achievements. Some of these systems can be very well elaborated such as in the **PEOPLE** and **POWER** mini-programmes.

POWER is also interesting for another reason in terms of project management. This mini-programme which deals with low carbon economy has adopted an innovative tool in their day-to-day management. The POWER partners have indeed agreed to use a CO<sub>2</sub> calculator to encourage the dissemination of good practice in carbon reduction for the actors participating in the mini-programme (used to gauge CO<sub>2</sub> savings across the programme). This calculator is used to assess the CO<sub>2</sub> savings (or consumption) related to events not held (i.e. savings from alternative communication methods such as teleconferences) and to determine the best venue for the interregional physical meetings / events planned within the project. The calculator is applied by regional partners as well as by all participants in the sub-projects.

### **3.1.2.6 Dissemination**

For the first time, the figures presented for the dissemination refer to the all approved projects. As demonstrated by the indicators related to publicity activities, these projects continue to be very active in disseminating their projects and results. Most of the target values set in the Operational Programme are exceeded by far.

761 brochures were published and more than 3,100 dissemination events were organised. The number of events organised can vary differently depending on projects. This figure includes interregional dissemination events but also the events organised in each partner area in order to ensure that the lessons learnt from the project are also available to local stakeholders. A majority of projects have organised less than 10 dissemination events but, for a few projects (e.g. WINNET 8, ENTREDI, REVERSE, PIMMS TRANSFER) with a special focus on local dissemination, this figure can exceed 20 events. The effort in promoting the projects and their results is also reflected in the fact that the projects have now been presented in more than 5,100 'other events' (i.e. events not organised by the project but where the project is proactively promoted through a presentation or a stand). Thanks to all these dissemination efforts, projects have already reported more than 13,800 appearances in press and media. It is estimated that almost 582,000 people were also reached through the different dissemination events organised.

As part of the progress report monitoring, the JTS also systematically checks project websites and publicity materials to ensure that EU publicity requirements are respected.

Interesting examples of internal and external communication are provided below:

- **RETS** ('Renewable Energies Transfer System') is a second call Regional Initiative Project. One of the principle objectives of the project is to facilitate communication and access to knowledge through the integration of internet technologies and applications as a key component of the project. The Lead Partner (ADEC, FR) has wide experience in the organisation and use of Web 2.0 technologies and it has initiated a transfer of these practices to the project partners for both the project management and the project activities. A major element has been the set-up of the project wiki: ([www.rets-community.eu](http://www.rets-community.eu)). The wiki which is only open to registered members, has two main sections: a project management section which regroups all the internal project administrative, financial and communication aspects of the project, and dedicated sections for the project activities: good practices related to renewable energy, seminars, study visits, competitive intelligence. All partners have the possibility to consult, create and modify information within the wiki application. Another technology that ADEC has deployed for the project partners is a competitive intelligence service, which sources and collects

new and up-to-date information on renewable energy related issues from all over the web. This information is then validated by the expert partners before being created into dedicated thematic newsletters and diffused to the local authorities.

- The **PEOPLE** mini-programme is a first call Regional Initiative Project. PEOPLE decided from its start to adopt interactive communication approach with among others the use of social media. This approach had a large influence on the communication policy of the department in charge of PEOPLE within the province of Noord-Brabant (partner 4, NL). Because of the valuable experience gained within the mini-programme, the use of social medias within this department increased a lot, not only in terms of participants like policy makers, management and board but also in terms of use of new applications like the start of new accounts and groups on Twitter and LinkedIn. It has become a process of open innovation in which everyone learns from each other. The regional coordinator of PEOPLE is considered as the initiator of this process of innovation. His experience is now even shared outside the department. The PEOPLE coordinator gave several master classes about the use of social media in the social domain inside the provincial organisation and to partners in the regional 'Smart Care' programme. The products developed within PEOPLE (twitter account, twitter conference, policy forum, wiki and LinkedIn group) are always provided as interesting examples during these master classes.
- **BORDWIIS+** is a fourth call project on ICT innovation strategies. The project used a dual-approach in its communication actions:
  - A general diffusion approach of projects results, through brochures, newsletters, website, with the aim to provide first level information on results and the progress of the project;
  - A focused approach, with a selected circle of stakeholders, discussing on opportunities of cooperation, follow up and roadmaps.ICT is a general purpose technology and regional policies for ICT are very challenging and difficult to be implemented in an effective way. In order to exploit effectively project's results it is important to "invest" in consensus building and to enforce a community of stakeholders and practitioners, in order to share information to find commonly agreed solutions. The dual approach can allow combining open innovation dynamics together with an efficient exploitation of results and opportunities.
- **IMAGINE** is a fourth call project on low energy cities. Linking the IMAGINE Final Conference to the Future of Cities Forum 2014 allowed expanding the visibility of the project



on a world-wide level. The conference Future of Cities Forum, jointly organised with the World Future Council (under the framework of its Expert Commission on Cities and Climate Change) showcased the outcomes of the project in a highly participative manner and attracted around 100 persons from all around the world, willing to discuss and exchange potential solutions for sustainable cities. The two networks, Energy Cities and World Future Council, proved complementary.

- **ENGAGE** is a fourth call project aims at the development of High Speed Broadband through fibre connections in rural areas. The project has developed a particularly interesting and successful communication strategy in order to raise awareness and to reach local, regional, national and European authorities. This strategy relied on the idea that access to Broadband is a political and social priority. The most striking actions of their communication strategy were the following.
  1. The project created of a Manifesto, signed by organisations from all over Europe, to reach European authorities and show to them that rural areas should not be left behind.
  2. On 22 January 2014, during the meeting of the French project delegation to the European Commission, ENGAGE launched a Tweet campaign. As a results, 134,582 accounts were reached. Moreover, European Commission Vice-President in charge of Digital Agenda Neelie Kroes retweeted ENGAGE tweets.
  3. The project also initiated the Selfie #Connect Europe Campaign before the European Parliament election in 2014. The aim was to involve not only organisations but also citizens, especially broadband users. The instructions were simple, just “tell us what broadband means to you!”, with a selfie and a text message. Thanks to this campaign, a tapestry of photos of broadband supporters and users was built. Neelie Kroes, once again participated to this campaign.  
[www.engage-interreg.eu/mediagalleries](http://www.engage-interreg.eu/mediagalleries)

## **PART B- Thematic Capitalisation**

### **3.1.2.7 Thematic Programme Capitalisation**

In 2014, the 28 specialised experts finalised the in depth analysis of INTERREG IVC projects results and achievements and benchmarked the knowledge and experience gained. The outcome of this theme-specific analysis is a detailed report, a policy paper and a publication on policy recommendations per topic that are available for view and download here: <http://www.interreg4c.eu/policy-sharing-policy-learning/library/>

In principle each analysis report:

- provides Regions and Local authorities that wish to invest in a topic or investigate the relevant policy with:
  - a first clear guidance on the state of play at the EU level
  - examples of good practices and solutions coming from INTERREG IVC projects
- brings forward the INTERREG IVC thematic content that validates the added value of interregional cooperation
- demonstrates innovative practices, tools, and methodologies that can be of interest to other EU regions
- makes theme-specific policy recommendations to the INTERREG IVC projects and to regional, national, and EU policy makers
- proposes synergies and complementarities within the projects and identifies links with other EU initiatives
- increases the visibility and impact of the Programme by benchmarking the knowledge from the INTERREG IVC projects
- provides information that answers all the core questions below:
  1. What are the common features/ challenges / difficulties/ successes among the projects of the same topic?
  2. In particular, do these projects have similar good practices in common? If yes, what are these good practices? Are they easily transferable to other regions? Should they be further disseminated for the benefit of other regions?
  3. Did the partner regions find different solutions to the same issue?
  4. Does one region have a particularly interesting or innovative practice or policy identified which would deserve to be made available to other regions in Europe?
  5. Has a project achieved a particular interesting result (e.g. in terms of good practices transferred or policies improved) which could be useful for the other projects in the same topic and more generally for other local/regional authorities dealing with that topic?
  6. Do the participating regions identify core pre-requisites for a successful implementation of their regional policy in the domain tackled?
  7. Depending on the expert's knowledge, are there some possible synergies among the concerned projects and initiatives undertaken in other EU programmes?
  8. Based on the findings of the analysis, can specific recommendations be provided to individual projects which may not be aware of important practices/ policies or which may be less advanced and experienced than other projects?

9. Based on the answers to all the above questions, which overall lessons learnt/ policy recommendations can be drawn that could be useful for policy makers at regional, national and/or European levels?

Answers to these questions are available in the reports delivered per topic which consist of the following sections:

- Executive summary
  - Executive summary presenting the main findings/ messages/ recommendations/ lessons from the analysis.
- Introduction and Methodology
  - Approach, methods and tools for the analysis
  - Definitions of theme-specific terms
- Policy context
  - Introduction to the topic, what are the barriers, drivers, new developments
  - EU regulatory framework
  - Other EU initiatives, financial instruments, programmes, projects dealing with the topic
  - Conclusion: What is the added value of the interregional cooperation on the topic compared to other EU funded programmes?
- Analysis
  - Analysis of individual projects, description of some good practices with innovative or transferable aspects, if possible, tailored recommendations.
  - Aggregated thematic analysis at programme level; benchmark of the knowledge; information answering the 9 questions listed above.
- Key policy messages and Conclusions
  - Relevant findings for other EU regions
  - Targeted policy recommendations for regional, national and European policy makers and practitioners.
- Annexes
  - Fact sheet for the whole group of projects including aggregated values of result indicators, number of partners per country, governance level of partners, and map.
  - Individual projects fact sheets including project name, duration, budget, contact details, website, logo, and map.
  - Reports from workshop, interviews, site visits, etc.
  - Links, references, literature, further reading, etc.

The final publications present theme specific calls for action and policy recommendations targeted to all governance levels (regional, national, European) in view of improving the implementation of policies in the respective issue.

Finally the policy papers provide a succinct summary of the main conclusions from the analyses; in particular they present some brief success stories of a policy improved or changed (in the respective policy field) using 2-3 examples of good practices identified or transferred. These stories show how the future challenges can be addressed and demonstrate that inter-regional cooperation works!

For further information on the content of the reports, as well as the publications on policy recommendations, brochures and policy papers, please consult the INTERREG IVC Capitalisation Library <http://www.interreg4c.eu/capitalisationlibrary/>

### **3.2 Priority 3**

Information on the implementation of priority axe 3 (Technical Assistance) is given in the section 4 below.

#### 4. Technical assistance

In 2014, an amount of EUR 3,808,667.70 was spent on technical assistance. This amount corresponds to EUR 2,614,800.24 ERDF.

In 2014, the available technical assistance funds allowed the financing of 25 JTS staff members in Lille/France. The staff was employed in the areas of general management, assistance, IT, communication, projects, programme capitalisation, finances and financial control and audit. Due to the closure of the IPs by mid-2013, 4 additional temporary positions had been created in the JTS in order to fulfil the communication and project monitoring tasks so far delivered by the IPs.

In addition to the staff costs mentioned above, the JTS and IPs also assisted the programme in carrying out the following activities financed with funds from the technical assistance budget:

- Providing assistance to project partners after the project approval: advice given by e-mail, phone, through participation in project meetings and conferences.
- Expenditure related to communication and dissemination regarding the INTERREG IVC programme, such as the hosting and regular updates of the website, creation and printing of programme information brochures (e.g. on the thematic capitalisation).
- Organisation of the following communication events: 1 thematic capitalisation event in Brussels and 1 event to promote the results of INTERREG IVC and launch the Interreg Europe programme in Bologna in December 2014
- Participation in awareness-raising events such as the Open Days; promotion of results through a travelling exhibition displayed in different programme Partner States.
- Organisation of information seminars such as those further outlined in sections 5.2.1 and 5.3.2 below: mainly a public consultation workshop for the Interreg Europe cooperation programme in Brussels, a seminar for selected programme beneficiaries and controllers to draw the lessons on Interreg IVC, thematic capitalisation related events (workshops at the Open Days and capitalisation experts' meeting)
- Expenditure for JTS office rental (up to 50%) and material such as office equipment, stationery, maintenance and utilities
- Coordination and implementation of accounting, public procurement, paying and certifying procedures with the legal employer of the secretariat (GEIE GECOTTI) and the Certifying Authority
- IT-related expenditure: office IT equipment such as hardware and software as well as the continued development of a project administration database and especially of the project online reporting tool

- Organisation and facilitation of programme meetings: Monitoring Committee and Group of Auditors meetings, Programming Committee meetings to prepare the Interreg Europe programme
- Payment of the external audit firm responsible for carrying out the audits on projects, preparing the content of the GoA meeting and drafting the annual control report and annual opinion 2013/2014 under the Group of Auditor's supervision and Audit Authority's responsibility
- Drafting the Interreg Europe cooperation programme and carrying out its ex-ante evaluation (incl. strategic environmental assessment)

## 5. Information and publicity

Communication actions in 2014 in large part used the results and achievements of the INTERREG IVC programme to prepare the way for the Interreg Europe programme. Due to the key changes in focus and target groups of Interreg Europe compared to INTERREG IVC, it was important to already start preparing current INTERREG IVC beneficiaries to the new framework. Considerable uncertainty as to the programming and approval of Interreg Europe in 2014 added difficulties to the communication, but the key features were known enough to already organise a transition event from INTERREG IVC to Interreg Europe in December 2014.

Continued strong communication around the programme's capitalisation initiative (see sections 2.7.4 and section 3.1.1.2) built on the solid basis of 2013 and valorised the results of INTERREG IVC projects through printed policy recommendations and a successful policy learning event.

Highlights of 2014 communication actions:

- Innovative hybrid event gathering **more participants online than offline**, in December 2014 (see 5.2.2)
- Systematic and streamlined digital communication leading to **fourfold increase** in website traffic (see 5.4.1)
- Effective policy learning event reaching out to policymakers and stakeholders in Europe (see 5.2.2)

### 5.1 Programme results communication

To reach the objective of widely disseminating project and programme results, the communication team put in place a number of tools.

- **INTERREG IVC story: online report** <http://report.interreg4c.eu>

Work began in 2014 on compiling the 'best of' INTERREG IVC's annual reports in one easy-to-use, attractive online report. This will be the legacy of INTERREG IVC that will be showcased on the programme's website, even after the website will be archived. Although the product was completed in 2015, it includes the most up-to-date information from this 2014 Annual Report, so it seems relevant to include it here under our activities.

#### - **Good Practice Exhibition**

Details of the content of INTERREG IVC's Good Practice Exhibition was provided in annual report 2012 (displayed during Open Days 2012). The exhibition presenting selected good practices continued to be displayed around Europe on demand of the national contact points. One of the destinations was Sofia in Bulgaria. The ministry of regional development hosted the exhibition in its premises for one week from 3 to 7 November 2014. A Bulgarian national information day concluded the week by presenting the achievements of Bulgarian project partners in INTERREG IVC projects as well as providing the first insights into the new features of Interreg Europe.

Further details on displays at other events are in section 5.3.3 below.

***Picture 6: Good Practice Exhibition viewed by the Bulgarian event participants***



#### - **Thematic Capitalisation publications**

Detailed information on the capitalisation activities can be found in section 3.1.1.2. Following on from 2013's catchy publications to promote the first year of the capitalisation analysis, 2014 saw the production of the final policy recommendations. Simple, direct texts, along with streamlined and attractive visual presentation ensured that the policy recommendations were as straightforward as possible for interested parties to put into use. Dissemination details are provided in section 3.1.1.2.

The programme's website was further updated to reflect the growing library of material available as a result of the capitalisation analysis.



## 5.2 Events

In 2014, the programme focused on promoting achievements of INTERREG IVC and was preparing the ground to launch the new programme. It also continued successful cooperation with the Committee of the Regions, DG-REGIO and other partners, to reach as wide an audience as possible with good practices.

The programme organised an event '**Policy learning, policy sharing**' to present the results of the thematic capitalisation and also a final event '**Europe, let's cooperate**' which marked the closure of the INTERREG IVC programme and the start of the Interreg Europe. Both events were considered as the major communication activities.

In cooperation with the Committee of the Regions and other pan-European programmes (ESPON, INTERACT, URBACT) a joint workshop was included in the programme of the Open Days 2014. In addition, INTERREG IVC programme organised one workshop to present thematic capitalisation results on SME competitiveness and innovation (more information in section 3.1.1.2).

**Table 12: Overview of events organised**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Target group</b>
22 May 2014	INTERREG IVC thematic capitalisation event 'Policy learning, policy sharing'	Brussels (BE)	Stakeholders, organisations interested in the results of the INTERREG IVC thematic capitalisation
13-16 October 2014	Open Days 2014: joint workshop with pan-European programmes and one INTERREG IVC workshop on SMEs and innovation	Brussels (BE)	Potential beneficiaries and end-users of programme results; multipliers; institutions
2-3 December 2014	Interregional cooperation forum: 'Europe, let's cooperate!'	Bologna (IT)	General public; programme stakeholders, potential beneficiaries of the Interreg Europe

### 5.2.1 Events for approved project partners

As the projects were ending, there was no need to organise special events for the approved project partners on communication, finances, reporting as it was done in the previous years. The assistance to projects was provided on individual basis by phone, email, etc.

### 5.2.2 Major information activity

#### INTERREG IVC thematic capitalisation event ‘Policy learning, policy sharing’

- 22 May 2014 (300 participants)

The Thematic Capitalisation event “Policy sharing, policy learning”, organised by the INTERREG IVC programme, informed the participants on the latest policy trends and best practices available from all around Europe resulting from the analysis of the projects in 12 thematic areas.

**Picture 7: ‘Policy learning, policy sharing’ event**



This one-day event was focused on the durability of project results and how cooperation helps meet Europe's regional development objectives. Thematic specialists and practitioners presented the knowledge acquired through interregional cooperation and discussed the latest policy trends and common challenges identified in European regions. It was an opportunity to meet good practice owners and policymakers from all governance levels and learn about innovative solutions that could be useful and easily transferable to their region.

Over 300 participants from 26 different countries attended workshops on 12 policy themes, ranging from innovation to the environment. 60 speakers were on the agenda of the event. The audience was made up of regional and local authorities, regional development agencies, European Commission staff and other relevant policy-makers and practitioners.

After the event, an evaluation form was sent to all participants who attended in order to analyse the impact of the event and know how they liked it. 86 participants completed this feedback form. The presented analysis of the evaluation is based on these answers. The overall feeling from the participant comments is extremely positive given that more than 80% of the respondents found some benefit from the workshops and admitted what they learned will impact their daily work.

***Picture 8: Workshops organised during the 'Policy learning, policy sharing' event***



Participants expressed their appreciation on how the workshops were structured, the interactive methods used and the set-up of the location in general that stimulated dialogue and creativity thus improving learning and networking opportunities. Several participants appreciated also the innovative idea of using the eco-chairs that were offered later to local schools and reused by children.

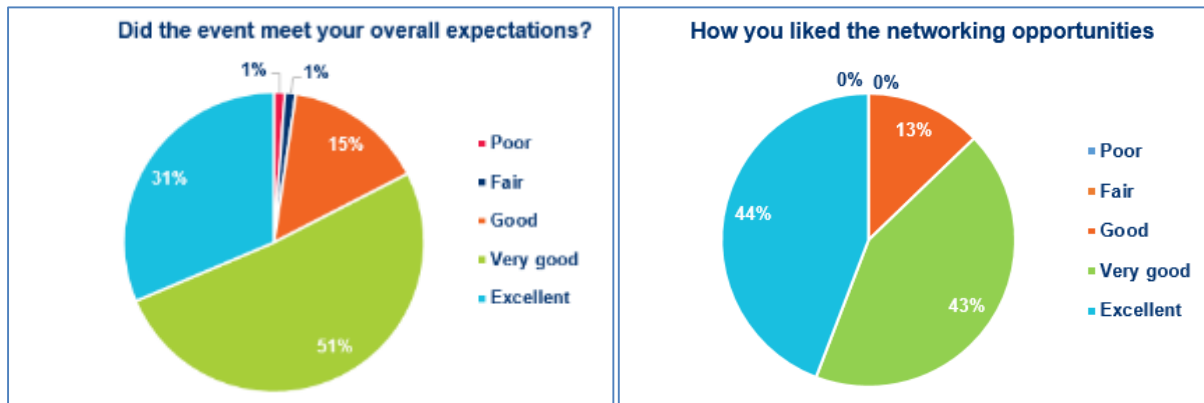
Especially for this event, the digital library presenting the INTERREG IVC publications was created: <http://www.interreg4c.eu/capitalisationlibrary/>

A short animation promoting the capitalisation was first presented during the event and was viewed more than 950 times by 21/05/2015:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xb2R4cHzNAo&feature=youtu.be&t=14>

More information about the event:

<http://www.interreg4c.eu/policy-sharing-policy-learning/overview/>



Feedback from the participants:

*“All the speakers were knowledgeable and engaged, or passionate about their work.”*

*“As we split into different workshops, there was enough time to treat the topics in-depth that you are really interested in. The interactivity was high because of the shared interest and background from the audience and the real experience from the good-practice-speakers.”*

*“The agenda was very well designed with a lot of opportunities for networking and direct exchange with the participants.”*

*“The event was very different from all the classic days around European Programs. The cooperation spirit of INTERREG IVC was floating in the air.”*

### **Interregional cooperation forum ‘Europe, let’s cooperate!’**

- 2-3 December 2014 (850 participants on the spot, 1270 online participants )

With the motto 'Europe, let's cooperate!' regional policymakers were invited to an inspiring two-day event in Bologna. They learnt how they could benefit from interregional cooperation and get inspiration from the institutions and regions that already have the experience implementing INTERREG IVC projects. They also had a chance to meet experts presenting the latest policy trends and enjoy networking. The specially-built networking area allowed the participants to book a particular time slot and discuss their idea with the others who were interested.

Selected INTERREG IVC projects inspired participants by presenting their achievements captured on a poster with a picture of their work. The poster show could be seen during the forum and also was published in a [gallery](#) for the online users.

During this event the new programme Interreg Europe was launched. The experts and the programme representatives presented the new fields of research and innovation, competitiveness of SMEs, low-carbon economy, and the environment and resource efficiency the programme will be supporting. Participants were also interested in the four thematic networks that will help local and regional governments become more effective when planning and implementing policies for the benefits of their citizens. Four short videos were recorded to explain the new features of the Interreg Europe programme. After the event, project idea and project partner search modules were launched on the INTERREG IVC website to help organisations in finding partners to cooperate in the future projects.

The event had an innovative concept of the hybrid event, allowing the online participants to be actively involved in the event. An online moderator activated the online viewers who were asking the questions, sending their comments via the social media channels. In total 850 attended the event on spot and 1270 followed it online. Over 5000 people reviewed the recording of the event by 20/05/2015. There were no print outs at the event, instead participants used the mobile application to follow the event programme and also to get in touch with others.

***Picture 9: 'Europe, let's cooperate!' event***



154 participants completed the electronic event valuation form. 99% of respondents indicated that the event met their expectations (from 3 to 5 points). Looking at the more detailed responses, participants mostly appreciated the networking opportunities and the possibility to exchange and work on new ideas with potential partners for future projects. Also many positive comments were received about the quality of the information provided and the availability of INTERREG officers to freely discuss and consider issues together with the participants.

143 online participants completed the electronic event valuation form. 97% of respondents indicated that the event met their expectations (from 3 to 5 points). 99% believed it is useful to offer web-stream possibility for this type of events. From the feedback provided it is clear that for the respondents this online event is a great chance if you are not able to attend the event. 62% followed the entire session of the event, 19% remained connected about an hour and 20% more than 20 minutes. The interactivity, the feeling of a real participation, the dynamic of the interviews and the organisation of the event were the most appreciated aspects. The participants admitted that this type of online event was a good opportunity to get anticipations on the new programme, following the debate even from a long distance and saving time and costs. They also appreciated the opportunity to ask INTERREG EUROPE team questions and get the answers very quickly and in a real time.

*Event achievements in short:*

- 825 participants from 30 European countries participated in the event
- 1270 registered to follow the event online. 62% followed the entire session of the event, 19% remained connected about an hour and 20% more than 20 minutes. 30% of all online participants were engaged on the last days before the event.
- 2215 subscribed to receive the event documentation
- 131 content-related questions were received and answered during the event using event mobile application and via facebook, twitter and linkedin.
- 650 people viewed the event video published on youtube and social media channels
- 5000 reviewed the web-streaming recording (by 20/05/2015), 100 views each week are counted even three months after the end of the event
- 900-200 views of each picture published in the event gallery
- Visits to the [interreg4c.eu](http://interreg4c.eu) website increased by 35% in the last month before the event (81.379 unique visitors, usually 60.000 visitors per month)
- The number of followers on the social media platforms (facebook, twitter, linkedin) doubled.
- The cost usually allocated to printing the brochures was invested in the mobile application
- 92% of all event participants could bring IT devices with them to the event. 80% used smart phones.
- Participants mostly appreciated the networking. 123 meetings (out of 130 available time slots) were held by participants on project ideas.
- 99% of respondents declared that the event met their expectations

Overall, the event was a big success and participants look forward to the first call of the Interreg Europe programme and future events, especially with the networking and web-streaming possibilities.

On the second day a short video concluded the event:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=saeXSF6JufU&feature=youtu.be>

Event website: <http://www.interreg4c.eu/europecooperates/programme/europecooperatesprogrammeresearch/overview/>

**Picture 10: Networking possibilities at 'Europe, let's cooperate!' event**



**INTERREG IVC presence at OPEN DAYS 2014**

- 13-16 October 2014 - Brussels (BE) (400 participants in two workshops)

A jointly-organised workshop of the four pan-European programmes offered an exceptional opportunity for the 200 participants of the Open Days 2014 to give a glance to the next generation of European Territorial Cooperation Programmes – ESPON 2020, INTERACT, INTERREG EUROPE and URBACT. This workshop explored the new features of the programmes and presented the opportunities and tools for cooperation, experience exchange and learning. The programmes were also presented in the special issue of the newsletter prepared by INTERACT. In the same issue also a focus article on the INTERREG IVC Thematic capitalisation was published.

A second INTERREG IVC workshop 'Success factors for regional policies on innovation and entrepreneurship' had a very high interest and was fully booked before the initial deadline. 200 participants had a possibility to learn about innovation and entrepreneurship that are high on the political agenda in Europe and are among the thematic priorities of the interregional cooperation programme INTERREG IVC as well as of its successor INTERREG EUROPE. INTERREG IVC experts presented the best practices and policy recommendations resulting from a two-year analysis and brought an overview of hundreds of related good practices from all around Europe.

OPEN DAYS Cinema - opened for the first time in 2014 – included an INTERREG IVC video on knowledge resources and a Cycle Cities project video which presented how interregional cooperation helps improve citizen's daily lives.

**Picture 11: INTERREG IVC participation to OPEN DAYS 2014**



**5.2.3 Events participated in**

Thanks to the collaboration with CoR, INTERREG IVC was invited to be present with thematic stands during the bi-annual Summit of Regions and Cities in Athens in March 2014. The event was attended by 1400 people.

Several INTERREG IVC projects were involved in the European Cooperation Day organised by INTERACT. There was a number of INTERREG IVC projects which produced a video for the video contest and also organised events in relation to the European Cooperation Day. Participation in this event also contributed to reach the objective of widely disseminating project and programme results of the INTERREG IVC Programme.

The programme actively participated also in many other EU events where the results of INTERREG IVC were presented as well as the opportunities within the Interreg Europe. Below a detailed summary of the events participated in with presentations or stands:

**Table 13: Details participation to events**

Date	Title of the event, contribution	Location	Number and profile of participants
8 March 2014	CoR 6th summit regions and cities. Presentation, networking	Athens (EL)	1400 participants EU Regions



Date	Title of the event, contribution	Location	Number and profile of participants
18 February 2014	Meeting of Council of European Municipalities and Regions Thematic Platform on sustainable territorial and local development. Presentation of the Interreg Europe	Brussels (BE)	10 participants EU Regions
29 April 2014	RUR@CT Benchmarking Seminar Presentation on INTERREG IVC / Interreg Europe	Brussels (BE)	50 participants EU Regions
2 June 2014	German Länder meeting Presentation on INTERREG IVC / Interreg Europe	Brussels (BE)	45 participants EU Regions from Germany
3 June 2014	EURISY conference Presentation on INTERREG IVC and Interreg Europe	Lyon (FR)	50 participants EU Regions
5 June 2014	Delegation - regions from North and East Finland	Brussels (BE)	10 participants Regions from North and East Finland
5 June 2014	EUROCITIES – Economic Development Forum WG meeting	Brussels (BE)	60 participants EU cities
12 June 2014	Information seminar in Wallonia	Liège (BE)	150 participants, Public institutions from Wallonia
12-13 June 2014	WIRE conference Presentation ‘How can ETC contribute to innovation policies?’	Brussels (BE)	200 participants EU institutions and Regions

Date	Title of the event, contribution	Location	Number and profile of participants
25 June 2014	Sustainable Energy week  Bioenergy in the Rural Areas in the EARDF 2014-2020 Presentation on INTERREG IVC and Interreg Europe	Brussels (BE)	60 participants EU institutions and Regions
26 June 2014	INTERREG IVC/INTERREG EUROPE presentation to IGLO network	Brussels (BE)	10 participants from the network
26-27 June 2014	Innovation procurement conference	Brussels (BE)	50 participants
7 July 2014	Localizing the Post-2015 Development Agenda 50 participants	Brussels (BE)	EU institutions, Regions
24 September	Marche de la recherche regionsuisse & Colloque sur le développement régional 2014	Lucerne (CH)	120 participants, Swiss institutions, private and public, interested in innovation and research
2 October 2014	National info day on North-West Europe, INTERREG IVC/ Interreg Europe	Luxembourg (LU)	60 participants, Public institutions from LU
8 October 2014	National information meeting about CENTRAL EUROPE, BALTIC SEA REGION and INTERREG EUROPE programmes	Warsaw (PL)	160 representatives of Polish institutions

Date	Title of the event, contribution	Location	Number and profile of participants
4 November 2014	National Info Day on transnational and interregional programmes	Copenhagen (DK)	100 participants, Danish public and university institutions
7 November 2014	Information and Idea-generation workshop	Sofia (BG)	65 participants

In total, around 2500 people were informed about the INTERREG IVC achievements and the Interreg Europe programme during all the external events in the course of 2014.

### **5.3 Information and National Contact Points**

#### **5.3.1 National contact point coordination**

With the programme drawing to a close and the preparation of Interreg Europe in full swing, the joint technical secretariat worked closely with national contact points providing them with information about the project results for dissemination at their events and supporting them in other national initiatives.

The secretariat organised a briefing for the national contact point representatives with information about the new programme alongside the monitoring/ programming committee in Rome on 17 October 2014. The national contact points received a support pack with standard presentations on the achievements of INTERREG IVC and basic features of Interreg Europe, a suggested agenda for local information events and an information leaflet about Interreg Europe in a format ready for translation.

The national contact points shared their plans for organising their national dissemination and information events. A system of financial support for organisation of such events, agreed by the monitoring committee in Athens on 5 March 2014, was further explained. Tasks agreed by the national contact points as part of the communication strategy were discussed in more detail as well as the mutual support between the national representatives of the programme and the secretariat in reaching out to the target groups, mainly to the managing authorities of structural funds programmes and intermediate bodies.

Regarding the national initiatives, the French national contact points decided to translate the capitalisation brochures and make them available online. The secretariat supported this initiative with design guidelines and proofreading of translations, as well as with announcing the publication on the programme website (<http://www.interreg4c.eu/news/article/?post=800-highlights-of-capitalisation-now-in-french&>).

### **5.3.2 National Events**

The second half of 2014 saw the fourth call projects reaching the end of their activities and presenting their results. Increasing number of project achievements both in terms of good practices transferred and policies improved served as welcome material for national contact points and their national, regional and thematic events.

Progress in programming of the new interregional programme Interreg Europe also increased the demand for participation of the programme staff at national events of various kinds.

Some national contact points decided to hold their first dissemination and information events already in the second half of 2014. In Switzerland, the national representatives organised an event which focused specifically on research and innovation on 24 September 2014 in Luzern. They invited the secretariat to present the opportunities for interregional cooperation with regions from all over Europe in that field. In Bulgaria, an event presenting the achievements of Bulgarian project partners in INTERREG IVC and some information about Interreg Europe took place on 7 November 2014 in Sofia. The programme staff took part in these events, but the national contact points were the organisers.

Some national contact points decided to hold the first information events on the funding opportunities 2014-2020 for several territorial cooperation programmes combined. Poland, Luxembourg and Denmark represent countries where the programme staff joined the national contact points in informing the participants interested in territorial cooperation in programmes covering the whole Europe – Interreg Europe – or their specific transnational area (Central Europe, Baltic Sea Region, North West Europe and North Sea Region programmes). These events took place on 8 October, 24 October and 4 November respectively.

Apart from participating in national or regional events whenever allowed by the secretariat staff capacity, the communication team provided information support to the member states and their

national contact points. At several events, the national representatives presented the new programme features to interested participants themselves. The secretariat supported them with presentations and country-specific slides with examples of achievements and statistics.

For example at a two-day seminar on cooperation between Lithuanian and French local authorities on 23-24 October 2014 in Vilnius, the Lithuanian national contact point informed the participants about the new features of Interreg Europe and potential funding opportunities for their project ideas.

In the UK, the national representative shared similar information on future funding possibilities under Interreg Europe at a seminar with London-based institutions. This local meeting took place on 28 October 2014 in London.

In some countries, the national contact points organised regional information events without any demand for the programme staff participation. Providing information and project examples illustrating the benefits brought by INTERREG IVC to their countries sufficed. Several regional events took place in the Netherlands (4 events between 19 October and 11 November) and the Czech Republic (5 events between 30 September and 11 November). Information events took place also in Austria (30 September), Belgium (16 September), Finland (12 December) and Hungary (9 December).

### **5.3.3 Interactive exhibition at national events**

In 2014, availability of the interactive INTERREG IVC exhibition with 11 stands and audio-visual experience of some of the projects' achievements was promoted among the national contact points. Demand for this travelling exhibition was, however, rather low.

The exhibition travelled twice to Greece: first, on 7-8 March 2014, the 6<sup>th</sup> European Summit of Regions and Cities took place in Athens and INTERREG IVC participated in it with the exhibition and a networking lunch. Later, INTERREG IVC took part in the "Best Practices Conference" held under the Greek Presidency of the Council of Europe on 8-9 May 2014, in Thessaloniki. Four of the exhibition stands travelled to Greece for this event as well.

***Picture 12: INTERREG IVC team at the 6<sup>th</sup> European Summit of Regions and Cities***

Bulgaria hosted the exhibition in Sofia in early November 2014 near the venue of their national information and dissemination event. The exhibition was available for a week in the lobby of the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works for all public policy representatives passing through the building. Apart from the event participants, tens of other people learned about INTERREG IVC achievements through this exhibition. You can read more about this event in section 5.1.

**5.4 Website and Social media**

**5.4.1 Website**

In 2014, cooperation with the service provider continued smoothly. New modules for organisation of events successfully event in May the ‘Europe, let’s December in for example newsletter and sending, were communication overview of



were developed and used for the capitalisation 2014 in Brussels and for cooperate!’ event in Bologna. Some new tools, MailChimp for smoother event announcement introduced into the online and provided a better statistics than the initial

DirectMail tool on the content management system.

After the correction of the analytics tool in 2013, specific campaigns (mailings about capitalisation event and results of the initiative as well as about the new programme launch) and harmonisation with the presence in social media increased the traffic on the website significantly. While the web visits for 2013 totalled over 54,000, in 2014 it was close to 190,000.

The section dedicated to providing information on the 2014-2020 programme period was regularly updated to keep interested parties informed about the evolution of interregional cooperation. A large part of the traffic went directly to the pages linked to the new programme development. The page (/programme/2014-2020) ranked second after the homepage and attracted over 6% of the visitors to the programme website. A newly developed page /interreg-europe gained another 3% of the visitors. The tender to develop the Interreg Europe website was launched end of 2014.

The Good Practices database was updated with nearly 1200 good practice descriptions, searchable with various criteria. It served as a source of inspiration for the website users – the page ranked 13<sup>th</sup> among all the pages.

The **list of beneficiaries** remains fully accessible, via the ‘approved projects database’ where users can search for a specific project, or view all projects from the same region, country, theme... In addition, the excel table for export which lists each partner who has received funding from INTERREG IVC according to the regulation requirements is still available on <http://www.interreg4c.eu/projects/>

The programme’s online presence was harmonised across the different online platforms (see Social media, below).

**5.4.2 Social media**

Given the importance of social media in the general communication environment and following our audience’s behaviour habits (increased use of such channels), INTERREG IVC initiated dedicated accounts in autumn 2013.

Some facts and figures about the evolution of our social media presence by end of 2014:

**Table 14: Presence on social media**

Channel	Objective	2013 (only 4 months presence)	2014
<b>Facebook:</b> <a href="http://www.facebook.com/interreg4c">www.facebook.com/interreg4c</a>	Create a community of those interested in the day-to-day activities of the programme, building a common spirit by posting ‘personalised’ updates like photos of staff activities, partner activities alongside relevant official information.	200 fans	679 fans

<b>Twitter:</b> @inter-reg4c	Primarily aimed at developing an ‘expert’ community around the topics the programme follows. The emphasis was on ‘live-tweeting’ programme events, and re-tweeting relevant information from those we follow, in particular institutional and thematic ‘expert’ contributors.	206 followers	1354 followers
<b>LinkedIn groups</b> <u>INTERREG IVC projects</u> group – restricted access	Build a professional community around project management. Discussion topics, relevant issues for project partners: project closure, final events etc.	325 members	419 members

In 2014, the approach towards establishing a community management was reinforced:

- actions were in-line with findings from **close monitoring and analysis** throughout use of special monitoring tools such as hootsuite;
- with a goal of **expanding the community and reach**, links with influential and affiliated online presences were established

E.g.: @interreg4c follows 112 profiles on twitter and special lists grouping similar institutions were created (list grouping all INTERREG IVC projects)

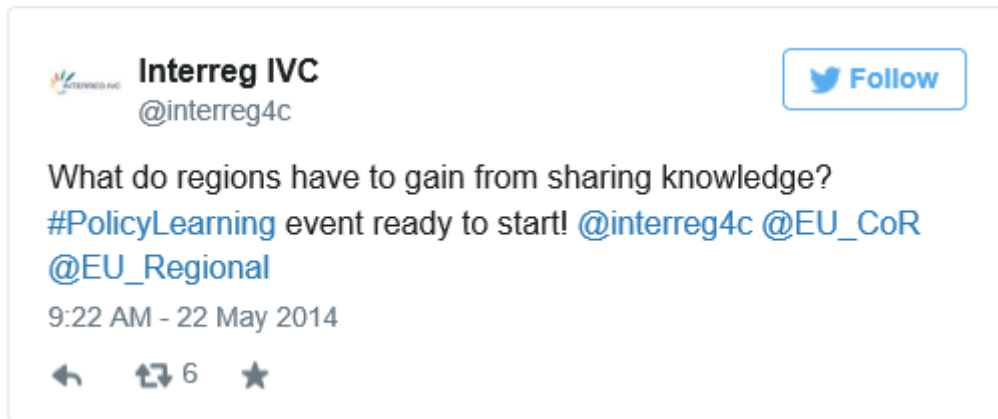
- the main focus was not only on disseminating information, but rather on **creating opportunities for conversation and easy interaction**. In this sense, in 2014, offline actions and events were supported by a strong interactive aspect on social media.

E.g.: special dedicated hashtags were associated to two of our biggest events in 2014 and people were invited to join the conversation even if not present on spot.

**#policylearning** for the ‘Policy sharing, policy learning’ thematic capitalisation event, Brussels, May 2014

**Picture 13: twitter post with #policylearning hashtag**





**#europecooperates** for the INTERREG IVC / INTERREG EUROPE interregional co-operation forum 'Europe, let's cooperate!' Bologna, December 2014

**Picture 14: twitter post with #europecooperates hashtag**



- In line with the specificity of information consumption on social media, **content production was updated** (multimedia oriented: video, photos etc.).  
E.g.: following big events, a special tool was used (storify) to tell the story of the event as seen on social media, by curating user posts

**Picture 15: storify 'Europe, let's cooperate', 2758 views**



In 2014, together with the launch of Interreg Europe, the decision of opening new associated accounts and increase our social media presence was taken. Consequently, one of the challenges we had to face was to properly manage two social media presences, direct audience from INTERREG IVC to Interreg Europe and maintain a coherent approach.

Starting from October 2014, Interreg Europe accounts were opened on Facebook, twitter, LinkedIn (company page with associated groups) and Google+ with Youtube. In 2015, the activity of INTERREG IVC will be closed on social media, with the purpose of concentrating all our efforts on Interreg Europe accounts.

## **5.5 Media and institutional relations**

### **- Media monitoring**

Media monitoring through a Google alert keyword search tool, and via the cooperating national contact points, uncovered close to 70 appearances in local or national media.

In general, the difficulty in carrying out and monitoring Europe-wide press campaigns has been faced throughout the programme due to the resources and budget involved in such actions. Given the particularly strategic nature of interregional cooperation on policy level, the programme is much more effective when developing institutional and public relations.

## - **Institutional relations**

### **Committee of Regions**

Fruitful cooperation with the Committee of the Regions continued in 2014. INTERREG IVC was invited to attend the 6<sup>th</sup> summit of European cities and regions in Athens in March 2014, represented in the partners' exhibition. The CoR also assisted greatly with promoting the Interreg Europe public consultation to its members and subscribers.

### **European Parliament**

No specific activities were carried out with the European Parliament in 2014.

### **European Commission**

## - **External cooperation**

### **Networking programmes**

Two meetings of the four networking programmes took place in

- July 2014, in Naples, hosted by URBACT
- December 2014, in Brussels, hosted by INTERREG IVC

A programme of joint activities was agreed at the beginning of the year, and implemented successfully. The minutes of the meetings (see annex 06) provide details of the joint actions agreed.

### **INTERACT**

In addition to the events and meetings already mentioned, the programme has been a very active contributor to the Harmonised Implementation Tools (HIT) initiative, managed by INTERACT. In terms of communication, INTERREG IVC was particularly involved in the process for harmonised branding for the 2014-2020 period, which was carried out during the course of 2013-2014. Contributions were made to INTERACT newsletters.

### **INFORM**

INTERREG IVC have kept abreast of discussions and meetings held by DG REGIO and the INFORM communication group. We have continued to contribute to the Regio Network platform set up by DG REGIO for communication purposes, and have promoted relevant programme results and events there on occasion.