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European Regional Development Fund

(2007 - 2013)

INTERREG IVC

Commission Decision

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ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2015
&
FINAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

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1. Identification and executive summary

OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME	**Objective concerned**	Territorial cooperation
	Eligible area concerned	Whole EU plus Norway and Switzerland
	Programming period	2007-2013
	Programme number (CCI No)	CCI 20007 CB 163 PO 046
	Programme title	INTERREG IVC
ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT	**Reporting year**	2015
FINAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT		2007-2015
	Date of approval of the annual report by the monitoring committee	October 2016

INTERREG IVC – Accelerator for European regional development
Final Report Summary

The interregional cooperation programme INTERREG IVC started in 2007 as a successor of four INTERREG IIIC programmes – North, East, South and West.

Knowledge as a key
The programme's core activity is facilitating knowledge sharing and transfer between European regions with the ultimate objective to improve European regional policies. Knowledge is the basis for smart decisions and smart investments. The lack of knowledge leads to misguided decisions and partly explains the high diversity in the development of European regions. Knowledge is a key factor to overcome and diminish these gaps which is at the heart of the European cohesion policy.

Unique exchange programme
While the private sector is usually more open and even forced to think outside the box due to competition, local and regional governments and administrations have to overcome political, cultural, administrative and financial barriers before entering into a structured exchange with their peers abroad. INTERREG IVC helped to overcome these barriers. It is the only programme that supported learning among regions from all EU Member States, Norway and Switzerland. Furthermore, it was a programme for regions by regions and those responsible for regional policy, allowing an exchange among equals about successful practice in the fields of innovation and the environment.

Overwhelming demand

Regions were keen to profit from this unique opportunity: more than 1,300 project proposals involving about 14,000 local and regional actors were submitted, even if only a fraction could be approved. However, the 2,300 partners involved in over 200 projects represent 90% of NUTS 2 regions of the programme.

Proven success

INTERREG IVC demonstrates impressive results, validated by two mid-term evaluations. These results exceed almost all targets:

- More than 8,000 staff members of local and regional bodies with increased capacity in regional policy implementation in relation to the themes tackled,
- More than 680 good practices successfully transferred,

  e.g. the city of Vécses (HU) was inspired by the ECO Centre Wales approach (UK) and an Educational Centre of the city of Sittard-Geleen (NL) through the RETS project on renewable energies to establish a "Sustainable Development Education Centre" targeted at school children.
- About 770 local and regional policy instruments improved or developed,

  e.g. in Brittany region (FR), the content and process of the regional innovation policy monitoring system was deeply influenced by the exchange of experience and learning made possible by SCINNOPOLI project. The monitoring system was included in a specific measure for the implementation of ERDF Regional Operational Programme 2007/2013.
- National/regional funds dedicated to the implementation of good practices reached EUR 895m which is almost triple the budget of the whole INTERREG IVC programme.

Selected examples showing 'win-win' outcomes for all regions are illustrated in the booklet 'Solidarity works! How regions improve thanks to cooperation'.

Dig deeper to shift up a gear

With around 5,000 good practices identified all over Europe, the programme has a treasure of knowledge which should be available to all European regions, beyond the project partnership. The thematic programme capitalisation, launched in 2012, provided a wide European community with an access t the project knowledge resources in 12 topics most represented in the programme. 12 sets of policy papers, recommendations and general overviews of the topics informed public beyond the limits of each project. This initiative was positively received and encouraged a more ambitious task for the future programme – development of so-called policy learning platforms.

Front runner and reference for European territorial cooperation

With its exceptional position to involve all participating European countries, the programme used its potential to identify creative solutions and define standards. The thematic programme capitalisation, the simplified administrative costs reporting or the online reporting system, all developed in close cooperation with the Partner States, are seen today as templates for other European territorial cooperation programmes. They underline the outstanding role of INTERREG IVC and paved the way for the future Interreg Europe.

As a complement to this report, the online document 'The INTERREG IVC Story' (report.interreg4c.eu) gives an attractive, visual overview of the success stories behind the figures and projects.

The success of the INTERREG IVC programme and the confirmed added value for the European regions ensured the future of the interregional cooperation programme. The new name Interreg Europe underlines the great ambitions of the European partner states and regions have for the programme period 2014-2020.

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 2015. 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 2015)

	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 (3)	Total payments received from the Commission (4)
			Norwegian contribution	Swiss Contribution			
Priority 1: Innovation and the Knowledge Economy ERDF, Public Funding	206,623,861.11	206,623,861.11	1,494,208.43	7,763.24	0.00	160,819,441.32	165,303,707.80
Priority 2: Environment and Risk Prevention ERDF, Public Funding	154,396,783.82	154,396,783.82	351,050.04	4,686.85	0.00	120,314,740.33	121,111,787.81
Priority 3 Technical Assistance ERDF, Public Funding	26,914,535.63	26,914,535.63	351,800.27	175,900.08	0.00	18,840,174.70	18,840,178.29
Grand total:	**387,935,180.56**	**387,935,180.56**	**2,197,058.74**	**188,350.20**	**0.00**	**299,974,356.35**	**305,255,673.90**
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
(3) for priority 1 + 2, the calculation is based on the real ERDF rate applicable by partner (85% for the project partners from the 10 EU-MS having joined the EU in 2004 + 2007 + Greece + Portugal, 75% for the partners from the other 15 EU-MS).
(4) corresponding to 95% of the ERDF available and based on the ERDF rate of 80% as indicated in the financial plan in the OP

Regarding the interests generated by the ERDF pre-financing and in line with Article 83 of the General Regulation, the MC decided to make use of it as follows:

ERDF interest accrued on account (status: 29/02/2016)	EUR 609,346.95
ERDF interest amount allocated to the Capitalisation exercise as national financing (MC decision of 15/16 June 2011 + 11 December 2013) and corresponding to the actual spent amount (see above)	EUR 333,372.87
ERDF interest allocated as national co-financing to Technical Assistance (MC decision of 16/06/2015)	EUR 275,974.08

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 2015

Code (*) Dimension 1 ***Priority theme***	**Code (*) Dimension 2** ***Form of finance***	**Code (*) Dimension 3** ***Territory***	**Code (*) Dimension 4** ***Economic activity***	**Code (*) Dimension 5** ***Location***	***Amount (**)***
09 Priority 1: *Innovation and the Knowledge Economy*	01	10	00	inter-regional	160,819,441.32
54 Priority 2 *Environment and Risk Prevention*	01	10	00	inter-regional	120,314,740.33
85 Priority 3 *Technical Assistance*	01	10	00	inter-regional	14 352 506.69
86 Priority 3 *Technical Assistance*	01	10	00	inter-regional	4 487 668,01
				Total:	**299,974,356.35**

(*) The categories are coded for each dimension using the standard classification
(**) Allocated amount of the Community contribution for each combination of categories.

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 2015 (Priority 1 and 2)

Target Group	ERDF in EUR
Public bodies	140,686,658.75
Bodies governed by public law	140,447,522.90
Total	281,134,181.65

2.1.5 Assistance repaid or re-used

No assistance was repaid or re-used in 2015.

2.1.6 Qualitative analysis

In terms of results, 2015 confirmed the good performance of the INTERREG IVC programme. Based on this integrated monitoring system, the programme's achievements are impressive and, as far as the indicators are concerned, the vast majority of target values set in the initial Operation Programme were exceeded:

- 8,408 staff members with increased capacity - average of 3.7 people per partner (initial OP target: 2,800),
- 684 good practices transferred – almost 12% of all practices identified (initial OP target: 200),
- 770 policies improved – 37.8% of all policies addressed by projects (initial OP target: 150),
- 627 spin-off activities (initial OP target: 480).
- MEUR 895 of mainstream funding impacted (initial OP target: 1,500 MEUR).

The programme has achieved all its initial objective. It should also be highlighted that the above results relate to the lifetime of the projects only. Feedback from lead partners after the end date of the project indicates that the above results are underestimated due to the current reporting system which stops at the end of the project implementation. 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. A consolidated and detailed insight into these achievements are provided in section 3.1.2 of the present report.

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 in December 2014 to measure the impact of the exercise on the policymaking process and to collect feedback for the developing the Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platforms. 426 policy makers around Europe responded to the survey and the programme analysed the input and published the Capitalisation Evaluation Report in May 2015. Further information on programme capitalisation is outlined in sections 2.7.4 and 3.1.1.2.

The programme has also conducted in December 2014 an overall survey to evaluate the influence/ impact of the Thematic Programme Capitalisation initiative on the policy making process in the involved regions

In terms of implementation, 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. Since all projects had to close by 31 December 2014 at the latest, the monitoring in 2015 was exclusively dedicated to checking the fourth call projects' last progress report and final report.

The final average underspending of running projects is 6.9%. It has continuously decreased throughout programme implementation. It was 15% in 2014, down from 17% in 2013 and 22% in 2012, while in 2010 during the start-up face 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 2015, as in previous years.

Due to the closing of projects, the processing of requests for changes in 2015 was lighter than in previous years. In total, 21 requests were approved (compared with 59 in 2014) in the first semester. The vast majority of these changes (almost 90%) were related to budget adjustments which is logical in the final phase of implementation.

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) also 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

Report 2015

No problems related to the compliance with community law were encountered in the implementation of the operational programme in 2015.

Final report

No problems related to the compliance with community law were encountered in the implementation of the operational programme during the whole programme implementation period and no measures needed to be taken to deal with them.

2.3 Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them

Report 2015

In order to ensure timely closure of the programme, the projects had to finalise their activities by 31/12/2014 and submit their last progress report by 1 April 2015. Some projects had encountered difficulties to obtain the necessary first level control confirmations for the expenditrure to be reported and answering first level controllers' requests on time and thus faced delays in submitting the report by the set deadline. In order to give projects the opportunity to

obtain an extension for the submission of the last progress report in duly justified cases and at the same time not to put at risk the timely closure, the projects had been informed in November 2014 already that 1 July 2015 was the final deadline for submission: no extensions could be granted and no additional expenditure would be accepted beyond this date. Thanks to the early and wide communication about this final cut-off date and regular reminders to the projects as well as individual follow-up, all progress reports had been received by this date the latest. The monitoring of the reports could be completed before the end of 2015 and the last payment to projects made by 15 January 2016. The certification to the Commission was submitted by 21/01/2016, which was the pre-condition for the Audit Authority and the Group of Auditors to agree on a last sample of projects to be audited. The audits could then be completed in the first half of 2016.

Final report

During the implementation of the INTERREG IVC programme, no significant problems were encountered. The Monitoring Committee took several decisions at an early stage in anticipation, which allowed to minimise the risk of potential problems turning into significant ones:

Level of demand

One of the main challenges the programme had to face was the high level of demand and more particularly the high number of poor applications submitted at each open call. In total, 1,328 applications were submitted in the three open calls (the third call was dedicated to Capitalisation Projects only); which meant an average of 443 applications per call.

This very high number of (poor) applications had several consequences. Due to the limited resources within the JTS, additional resources had to be allocated to assessment and Information Points had to be involved in this task although this mission was not initially part of their envisaged tasks. To a limited extent, external experts were also contracted for carrying out quality assessment. The JTS had also to develop several measures to ensure the overall consistency of the process. In particular, in addition to the 'four eyes' principle, harmonisation guidelines were developed and weekly meetings among assessors were organised to build capacity among the team of assessors. This issue also impacted the programme's image. The success rate of 8.3% in the first call (41 approved projects out of 498 applications submitted) led inevitably to frustration on the applicants' side.

Apart from the lack of focus on policy level, one of the main weaknesses identified in the applications was the limited geographical coverage. In particular, a significant number of applications were submitted by partnerships from the MED transnational cooperation areas. After

the first call, the JTS proposed to the Monitoring Committee several additional requirements in order to increase the quality of the submitted applications. But it was only for the fourth call that the Committee agreed on the following rules:

- In terms of eligibility:
  - at least one partner from each of the four Information Point areas to be represented in the partnership,
  - at least one of the twelve most recent EU Member States to be represented in the partnership (i.e. Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia).
- In terms of quality assessment:

All participating regions had to produce an implementation plan at the end of the cooperation. The implementation plan was defined as a document that specifies how each 'region' participating in the cooperation will work to integrate the lessons learnt from the cooperation into its local / regional or, if relevant, national policies.

As a result of these new requirements, 'only' 355 applications were submitted in the fourth call.
The lessons learnt with regards to the level of demand were as much as possible integrated in the Interreg Europe programme. In particular, Interreg Europe has become much more demanding with the specifications of the policy instruments to be improved and with the participation of the bodies responsible for these policy instruments.

Programme management

For the first time, four separate programmes (INTERREG IIIC North, South, East and West) each with their own monitoring committee and managing authority, were merged into one. This brought with it certain challenges in programme management as decision-making among five or six countries is not the same as among 29 countries. The rules of procedure initially provided for all decisions to be taken by consensus. The experience of the first monitoring committee to approve projects in 2008 (Marseille) led to a revision of the rules of procedure to allow for majority voting, in case a consensus could not be found.

Management and control system set-up

The programme start-up was marked by a delayed approval of the management and control system due to the missing first level control system description from one partner state. However, it did not prevent the programme from committing funds and did not impact too seri-

ously on project implementation and reporting expenditure. The Monitoring Committee decided to set a deadline by when this partner state either had to provide the description of its first level control system or otherwise risk that their partners would be temporarily excluded from reporting and change of Lead partners imposed. The Partner State however managed to submit the system by the set deadline.

First level control systems

Once all the 29 FLC systems had been put into place by the 28 EU-MS and Norway, all partners were able to report and receive ERDF payments. Throughout the whole programming period, the first level control systems in all EU-MS and Norway were performing well. No significant delays or errors were encountered. In this context it was helpful that the regulation for the first time had defined a timeframe of 3 months for the expenditure verification and confirmation and in addition the Monitoring Committee in the Partner State agreements had committed themselves to do their utmost to carry out the control within 2 months even. These time references proved to be helpful and realistic references.

Commitment and certification of funds (N+3/N+2)

The programme did not encounter any decommitment during programme implementation thanks to the programme benefitting from the N+3/N+2 rule, the Monitoring Committee being able to commit funds to projects sufficiently early, and projects spending and reporting sufficiently on time.

In 2013, the EC reimbursed the programme's certified expenditure with a significant delay (in 4.5 months instead of the usual 1 to 2 months) which led twice to an interruption of payments to projects.The Commission explained that the payment delays had resulted from Member State credits being allocated with delays. Due to a snowball effect, the whole programme's financial management system risked being slowed down: the late payment of ERDF to the projects delayed their spending and subsequent reporting to the programme which delayed further reimbursement from the programme to the projects and certifications to the EC and so on. In order to reduce the impact on programme's and projects' finances, the programme multiplied the certifications to the European Commission (5 certifications instead of the usual 3). The Certifying Authority also mobilised all available resources to make payments to projects very quickly as soon as funds were available again. These two measures helped to ensure that the projects' activities and finances did not suffer noticeably from these delays; neither the programme's finances in view of the decommitment.

The overall programme spending rate by the time of programme closure amounts to 93.4%.

The following measures had been put in place to absorb a maximum of the funding available:

- the attention to the project budgets was reinforced from one call to the next to detect overbudgeting already before the approval and related commitment of funds.
- funds could be decommitted through MC decision from partners who had not reported at all after the first 4 progress reports (NB.: the threat of a potential cut after PR3 usually made partners report in PR4).
- the available ERDF was overbudgeted by 5.17% during the approval of the fourth call projects.
- the fourth call projects' ERDF budget was systematically cut by 5% when the decision concerning the fourth call projects was taken.
- request for partnership changes / major budget changes were used by the JTS to also identify overbudgeting when budgets were transferred from one partner to another.

Despite these measures, the consumption rate remains below target, mainly due to the financial crisis having had a significant impact on project implementation during the 2007-2013 programming period. The financial crisis indeed had an important impact on the capacity of partners to continue their participation in projects.

- Many partner organisations were affected by important austerity measures, which also impacted their ability to provide the national financing as planned, leading to reduced project activities and staff involvement and thus to reduced actual spending of project funds.
- In the context of these austerity measures, many administrative reforms were implemented (often leading to the closure of organisations) and political priorities changed. The number of partner organisations dropping out before the project ended thus significantly increased. The partner withdrawals linked to financial crisis happened at a time when project implementation was already advanced so that meaningful partner replacement was difficult. The budgets of the withdrawn partners were thus returned to the programme. However, it was too late to commit them to new projects as it was not possible to run further calls for applications.

Overcoming the administrative burden / simplification

During the 2000-2006 programming period as well as the first years of the 2007-2013 programming period the project partners had suffered from difficulties in reporting their administrative costs. While it was not doubted that managing an interregional project inevitably leads to a certain amount of administrative expenditure, proving the reality of indirect costs turned out to be time-consuming especially in big organisations. Audit findings and dissatisfied project partners were sometimes the consequence. With the amendment of Regulation (EC) No

1080/2006 Article 7(4) by Regulation (EC) No. 397/2009, the programmes were given the opportunity to make use of flat rates, lump sums and standard scale of unit costs and thus to simplify the reporting for both project partners and first level controllers. INTERREG IVC was the first of the transnational and interregional programmes to establish an administration cost flat rate of 12% applied to the actually reported staff costs (based on historical data). It allowed the programme to have a first experimentation with the simplified cost options in the 2007-2013 programming period. Thanks to the good experience, the Monitoring Committee of the Interreg Europe programme then agreed to widen the use of these costs options in the 2014-2020 period.

Audits

To fulfil the obligations stipulated in Article 62 of Regulation (EC) 1083/2006, 159 audits on 75 projects as well as Technical Assistance were carried out between 2009 and 2016.

The error rate resulting from these project audits remained well below 2%. An audit of the European Court of Auditors in 2014/2015 was also closed without any findings. It shows that the management and control system worked. The European and programme rules had been understood and correctly applied by the project partners and first level controllers. Besides, first level control, quality checks and audits, preventive measures such as providing project partners with:

- a programme manual including a standard first level control report incl. checklist
- regular training seminars for Lead Partners, partners and FLCs on programme and/or national level
- simplified rules for the reporting of administration costs (the latter having led to significant findings in the INTERREG IIIC period) had proven to be successful.

Open issue at the date of final implementation report submission to the EC

In December 2016, the MA/JS have been informed by the Spanish authorities about results of a quality check carried out on the partner “Sevilla City Council”, legal successor of the previous partner organisation “Sevilla Global”, having participated in the Interreg IVC Mediatic project (1238R) until 27/12/2013. The project had ended on 31 December 2014 and a final ERDF payment had been made to the project to the Lead Partner “San Sebastian Local Development Agency” on 17 November 2015.

During the Spanish authorities’ quality check, no documentation had been provided by the project partner “Sevilla City Council”, legal successor of the previous partner organisation “Sevilla Global” to support the partner’s previously reported expenditures. Throughout the project, the partner had reported a total of EUR 86,785.59 (EUR 65,089.18 ERDF), which

now is in the process of being recovered. At the date of submission of the Interreg IVC final implementation report, the situation is as follows:

Total amount to be recovered from the project partner Sevilla City Council	EUR 65,089.18 ERDF (= total expenditure of EUR 86,785.59)
Amount reimbursed by the Lead partner "San Sebastian Local Development Agency" so far	EUR 33,630.81 ERDF
Amount still to be recovered	EUR 31,458.37 ERDF

The recovery is thus still ongoing. In line with the guidance given under point 171 of the EC draft Q&A document on programme closure 2007-2013, **the amount is not yet deducted from the final declaration of expenditure**. The MA/JS together with the CA will update the European Commission as soon as the recovery procedure has been finalized.

2.4 Changes in the context of the operational programme implementation

Report 2015 and Final report

No changes in the context of the operational programme implementation were noted in 2015 and during the whole programme implementation period.

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

Report 2015 and Final report

No substantial modification of an operation as referred to in Article 57 of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 is to be reported for 2015 and the whole programme implementation period.

2.6 Complementarity with other instruments

Report 2015

In 2015, the programme organised a number of events presenting achievements of INTERREG IVC projects and information on the transition to Interreg Europe. During these events, the programme staff underlined the differences with other ETC programmes and explained how the other programmes can benefit from the new interregional cooperation programme.

With lessons learnt from INTERREG IVC, the new programme set as one of its core actions establishment of policy learning platforms in order to facilitate a much wider capitalisation on the policy knowledge in European regions and generate synergies with other EU cooperation programmes and platforms such as the S3 platform in Seville.

Final report

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

Report 2015

In 2015, the MC held two meetings alongside meetings of the PC. The future cooperation programme was approved in June, so the second Programming Committee meeting set up the Monitoring Committee of Interreg Europe. 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 and Monitoring Committee meetings

Programming Committee	10/11 February 2015 Zagreb, Croatia	• Observations of EC on / finalisation of Interreg Europe cooperation programme • Programme Manual update • First call for proposals – application pack • Platforms • Rules of Procedure • Communication
Monitoring Committee	11 February 2015 Zagreb, Croatia	• TA expenditure 2014 / TA budget 2015 • National contributions to the TA budget • Financial situation of the programme & decommitment risk 2014+2015 • Audit • Programme closure
Programming Committee/ Interreg Europe Monitoring Committee	16 June 2015 Riga, Latvia	• Update on programme development and Monitoring Committee setup • MC Rules of Procedure • Approval of Programme Manual update • Approval of the first call for proposals and its application pack • Update on information campaign and assistance to applicants • Platforms – update on procurement procedure • Presentation of the new Certifying Authority • TA budget 2015
Monitoring Committee	17 June 2015 Riga, Latvia	• Updated on project achievements • Annual Report 2014 • Thematic programme capitalisation • Financial update/Audit

Final report

The INTERREG IVC Monitoring Committee (MC) had 21 meetings during the programme implementation. Following §4 of the Rules of Procedure (RoP), 21 decisions were taken via written procedure. Following §5 of RoP, nine Task Force meetings took place to assist the MC in decision-making. 14 Programming Committee meetings took place to prepare the future cooperation programme. An overview of all key meetings and written procedures together with the main issues addressed or decided on can be found in Annex 03 on MC and PC meetings.

The meetings were chaired by Member State representatives from the MC on a rotating basis according to the chairmanship of the European presidency as laid down in the rules of procedure.

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.

From 2011 onwards, the programme took major steps forward by further simplifying and streamlining the reporting of projects by processing all reports incl. final report and good practice annexes and request for changes online. The main advantages of this were 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 were numerous:

- Access could be granted to the project coordinators, for example, to facilitate their work.
- Accounts with varying user rights could be created for partners to access and input data, and even for first level controllers to verify data.
- The Lead Partner could 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.

The online reporting tool put into place under INTERREG IVC was a good preparation to comply with the e-cohesion requirements in the 2014-2020 period as the Interreg Europe programme's new data management system could build on the existence of and experience with the IVC online reporting tool.

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 EC approved the INTERREG IVC operational programme on 11 September 2007. 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 were approved during the IVC MC's first meeting on 11 September 2007. Since then they have been updated 3 times:

- Initially, the rules of procedure stipulated that decisions on management-related issues were taken by consensus. In 2008, the monitoring committee agreed to change this and to take decisions on management issues on the basis of a five-sixths majority in case consensus cannot be reached. This allowed to make the implementation of the programme involving 29 partner states more efficient.
- In 2009, the rules were amended regarding the question of abstention of Partner States during MC meetings. Both in 2009 and 2011, regarding the wording of the rules of procedure was slightly changed to precise the deadlines.
- In 2011, the MC approved updated rules of procedure to clarify questions on reaching the quorum and to tighten the programme's impartiality rules.

2.7.3.3 Management and Control System Description

The first version of the management and control system description was submitted on 11 September 2008. Due to the fact that some Member State first level control information was missing, the Audit Authority had submitted it with a reserve and the EC could not accept it. In 2009 the issue was solved. Therefore the Audit Authority was able to lift the reserves and re-submitted the management and control system description with a revised compliance assessment on 17 April 2009. The European Commission reviewed and approved it on 9 June 2009.

Since its re-submission and approval, the management and control system description was updated in the context of each annual control report regarding contact changes in the first level control system description and group of auditors membership list. The descriptive part was also updated in 2010 regarding organisational changes in the Certifying Authority. The separation between payment function and certification / quality check function had been reinforced (see Annual Control Report 2010 chapter 2.1 for further details).

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

The text of the Agreement between EU Member States, Norway and Switzerland, the Managing Authority and the Certifying Authority on the implementation of the INTERREG IVC Programme was approved during the first Interreg IVC Monitoring Committee meeting held on 11 September 2007. The last Agreement was signed in 2009, before first payments had been made to projects. The Agreements remained unchanged throughout the programming period.

2.7.3.5 First Level Control System

Annex 04 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 during the IVC period. 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.

The cumulative error rate for the programme is 0.39%. 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

Report 2015

The INTERREG IVC Group of Auditors (GoA) meeting took place in Lille, on 18 and 19 November 2015. As usual, it was a joint meeting including the representatives of the ESPON and URBACT programmes.

The meeting in 2015 covered the following points:

- The audit findings from the 2015 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 2016 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

Another meeting is held in February 2017 jointly with the Interreg Europe and Urbact group of auditors meeting to agree on the final closure documents.

Final report

The first Group of Auditors took place on 4 March 2008 in Paris and from then on once a year. It was each time a joint meeting including the representatives of the ESPON and URBACT programmes. This helped to create synergies, reduce cost, avoid overlaps and make better use of the time of the GoA members, who were in most cases the same for each programme. It also helped to develop joint approaches whenever faced with new challenges.

2.7.3.7 Annual control report and annual opinion

Report 2015

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 2015 report was submitted to the EC on 22 December 2015 and covered the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015.

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 2014 to 30 June 2015) was an unqualified one without any limitations.

Final report

The annual control reports were submitted timely before 31 December each year between 2008 and 2015. They were each time accompanied by an unqualified opinion without any limitations from the Audit Authority. They were accepted by the EC. The results of the 2016 round of audits are included in the final control report.

2.7.3.8 Audit methodology

Report 2015

The audit methodology was not amended in 2015.

Final report

The initial audit methodology had been approved by the group of auditors by written procedure on 17 April 2009. Since then, the methodology was amended once in 2010 to specify the sampling methodology related to the mini- programmes and their sub-projects in particular (see Annual Control Report 2010 chapter 2.3 for further details).

2.7.3.9 Audit strategy

Report 2015

The audit strategy was not amended in 2015.

Final report

The European Commission accepted the audit strategy with comments, related to on-the-spot checks, on 21 August 2008. The answers to the comments made by the European Commission were brought in the annual control report of 31 December 2008.

Since its re-submission the audit strategy was amended on the following occasions:

- In 2010, a threshold was added for the selection of project partners to be audited (see Annual Control Report 2010 chapter 3.2).
- In 2011, an additional step was added in the contradictory phase of audits of operations (see Annual Control Report 2011, chapter 3.2) to be implemented from 2012 onwards. Following this change, the external audit company proposed new documents for the monitoring of the audit process in 2012 (see Annual Control Report 2012, chapter 3.2).

2.7.3.10 System audit

Report 2015

No system audit was carried out in 2015.

Final report

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 2015.

2.7.3.11 Audits on projects

Report 2015

Audits regarding projects for which expenditure was certified in 2014 were carried out during the first semester of 2015. The error rate for 2015 is 0.23%. This rate is below the 2% toler-

ated by the EC. All amounts were deducted from a following certification to the EC and all the findings were closed.

The INTERREG IVC programme undertook the certification for the 2015 expenditure on 21 January 2016. The sample was agreed by the GoA on 15 February 2016. In total 10 projects and Technical Assistance were randomly selected and were audited in 2016. It was decided that a complementary sample would not be necessary in 2016. The random sample already covered 9.88% of the expenditure. The error rate for 2016 is 0.30%. The deductions are included in the final certification that is submitted to the EC with the closure documents in March 2017.

Final report

In line with the audit strategy, each year a sample was drawn covering a minimum of 10% of all projects for which expenditure was certified in the previous year. The sample automatically comprised the Lead Partner of the selected project. Another partner was randomly selected in a second drawing. In 2015, based on the EC's request, it was decided that besides the 10% sample , all operations representing more than 4% of the total expenditure certified in the reference year and all project partners representing more than 2% of the total expenditure certified in the reference year were also automatically included in the sample. In the Interreg IVC context this usually only concerned Technical Assistance in 2015 and 2016.

On three occasions (in 2011, 2012, 2013), a complementary sample was drawn to increase the number of states and the amount covered by audits.

Between 2010 and 2016, a total of 159 audits of operations (second level audits) took place, representing a total of 75 projects and Technical Assistance and covering all EU-Member States and Norway. The cumulative error rate for 2010-2016 for the random sample is 0.39%.

Considering that the Interreg IVC programme managed the funds on behalf of all the 27 EU-Member States as well as Norway, the externalisation of the audit activities to an audit firm was a good measure: it helped to overcome the challenge of conducting audits in a harmonised way within a short period of time (six months each year) across 28 states.

The programme was audited in 2014 by the European court of auditors (DAS control).This audit was concluded positively since no findings were identified.

2.7.3.12 Application pack

Report 2015

No changes were made in the application pack.

Final report

The application pack includes terms of reference, the programme manual, the application form, the co-financing statement. It was approved in its first version during the MC meeting on 11 September 2007.

The terms of reference included in the application pack were updated for the second call.
the application pack was also updated in 2009 in preparation for the third call, which was limited to Capitalisation projects. A template for a letter of support from the Managing Authority/intermediate body in charge of the policy to be addressed was added. Details are available in the 2009 Annual Report.

Furthermore, in preparation of the fourth and last open call, the application pack, was last updated in 2010. Details are available in the 2010 Annual Report.

2.7.3.13 Subsidy contract

Report 2015

No changes were made in the application pack.

Final report

The subsidy contract to be signed between the Managing Authority and the Lead Partner of approved projects was first approved during the MC meeting in Ljubljana, Slovenia on 24 April 2008.

It was then updated during the MC meeting in Stockholm, Sweden, on 4 and 5 November 2009 in order to clarify the requirements for projects concerning the publicity rules. No further update was carried out afterwards.

2.7.3.14 Partnership Agreement

The partnership agreement template as developed during 2008 remained unchanged.

2.7.3.15 Database System

Report 2015

Nothing to report.

Final report

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 in 2011 for the semestrial progress reports (incl. final report), in 2012 several new features were introduced to the monitoring system (see details in 2012 annual report), in 2013 the online reporting format was also introduced for the Request for Changes procedure and in 2014 for 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.

Finally, along the years constant improvements of functions and new exportable data were also made available with the aim to make the system as user-friendly as possible and adapted to the need of the various users ranging from Lead Partners, partners, first level controllers, Member State representatives and other programme bodies such as the CA, MA, AA and GoA members as well as the JS.

The move to an online reporting system already under INTERREG IVC was an important step towards e-administration and facilitated the new programme's preparation for meeting the e-cohesion requirements.

2.7.4 Thematic programme capitalisation

Report 2015

The implementation of the thematic programme capitalisation ended in 2014. 2015 was mainly dedicated to analysing the results of the survey launched at the end of 2014 and aimed at evaluating the success of this initiative.

Final report

Background

Over the seven years of the programming period 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.

After the approval of the last remaining funds to projects at the end of 2011 (204 projects, involving 2357 partners), the programme had reached a critical mass in terms of project achievements and could focus on the capitalisation of these results through the benchmarking and detailed content analysis of the approved projects.

In that context, in June 2012, the programme (following the MC decision in Oslo on 15 June 2011) launched the Thematic Programme Capitalisation initiative. 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.

Objectives

The overall scope of the initiative was 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 aimed 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 interregional 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 were:

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 could 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

The initiative could provide 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 could provided 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.

Implementation

The following 12 topics, each tackled by a minimum of five projects, were opened to Capitalisation under:

- 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

To implement this exercise, specialised thematic expertise was required, as it was not covered by the in-house capacities of the programme. Thus, through an Open Call for tenders, a specialised company per topic - 12 companies, gathering in total 26 thematic experts - was contracted on 22 June 2012 initially for 1 year (481 680 €). In 2013, the contracts were renewed for another 12 months (471 900 €) and in 2014 were renewed for a last phase of another 12 months (392 400€). The yearly mission of the experts involved mainly the following:

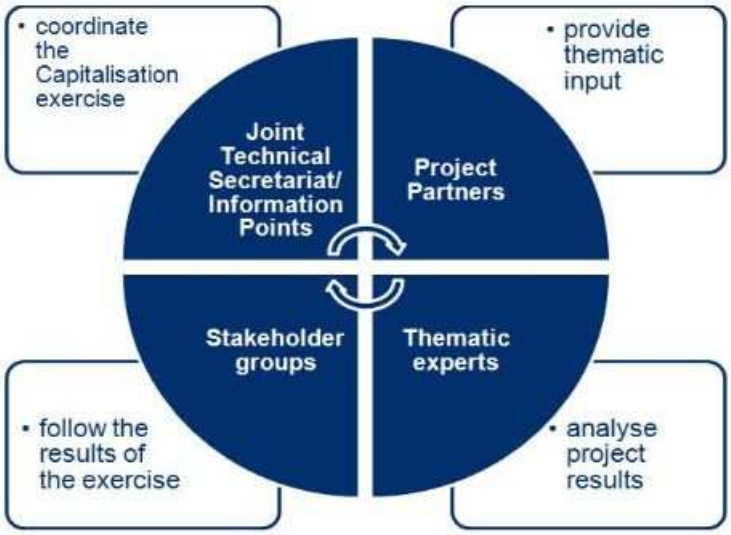
- collecting all relevant project and EU data
- conducting the in-depth content analysis of the project results,
- preparing the content and animating targeted thematic workshops with the involved projects,
- drafting and disseminating detailed thematic reports, policy papers and publications,
- presenting the results at programme and other EU relevant events,
- identifying and liaising with other key EU stakeholders in their policy field and establishing synergies
- 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. The group could contribute to the content discussions and was invited to meetings, workshops, project visits, events and thematic conferences that took place yearly within the framework of the exercise.

The overall coordination of the Thematic Programme Capitalisation was undertaken by a Capitalisation Officer in the JTS who ensured the general progress and quality of the initiative and worked in tandem with a Project Officer per topic who acted as a link between the expert team and the projects and provided intellectual and administrative support.

The following scheme illustrates the functional structure of the Thematic Programme Capitalisation initiative:



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 yearly 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.

Deliverables

The **yearly** deliverables of the initiative **per topic** were as follows:

Table 5: 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	2

The core deliverables of the initiative were the annual thematic reports that contained the following sections:

- background information about the topic tackled, including new developments trends,
- activities carried our during the year,
- links established between projects within and outside the programme,
- regional policies and good practices identified,
- relevance of findings for other regions in Europe,
- policy recommendations for national and European level.

Based on these report, an annual comprehensive publication and presentations were produced summarising the results.

Closure, evaluation and follow up

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 3rd year (2014-2015).

During this closure phase the experts focused on:

1. Disseminating the results and evaluating the impact of the Thematic Programme Capitalisation.
2. Using the Thematic Programme Capitalisation knowledge to prepare and pre-configure the work of the Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platforms in terms of content, users and functionalities.

The programme has also conducted in December 2014 an overall survey to evaluated the influence/ impact of the Thematic Programme Capitalisation initiative on the policy making process in the involved regions and to collect feedback for the developing the Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platforms. 426 policy makers around Europe responded to the survey and the programme analysed the input and published the Capitalisation Evaluation Report in May 2015.

The evaluation showed that this expert-driven macro analysis and benchmarking of the projects results was very successful, mainly because a wide audience of European regional policy stakeholders have profited from these results. The experts found a wealth of knowledge interesting for other regions, identified a series of tried-and-tested policies and practices examples and developed theme-tailored recommendations for all levels of

governance. This has contributed to increase the visibility of the projects' thematic achievements and the influence of the Programme's on the policy-making process.

The evaluation of the initiative has also drawn recommendations for the future "knowledge capitalisation and management" process; for example the need to:

- go beyond the 'usual' beneficiaries by engaging also stakeholders who are not necessarily involved in projects, but need support in the design and implementation of their regional development policies;
- strengthen the multidimensional learning process (i.e. a process that ensures policy learning at project, organisational, regional and wider EU level) as a driver for policy change;
- develop demand driven approaches and services, identifying and answering the real needs of the regions;
- achieve effective access to and re-use of the available knowledge and experience by the targeted regional policy stakeholders.

Having this approach as a vision and inspired by the experience of the Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3) platform run by the IPTS in Seville, Interreg Europe is developing the Policy Learning Platforms form the start of the new Programme to ensure continuous EU-wide policy learning and knowledge management.

2.7.5 Programme evaluation

Report 2015

The programme did not plan to carry out an evaluation in 2015. The European Commission selected INTERREG IVC as a case study for the ex post evaluation of Cohesion Policy programmes 2007-2013, focusing on the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund (CF). This evaluation took place between June and September 2015. See more on this evaluation below in the Final report on programme evaluation.

Final report

In 2009 the Monitoring Committee (MC) decided to carry out a programme evaluation before committing 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://interreg4c.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.

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.

In 2015, the European Commission (EC) launched an ex post evaluation of Cohesion Policy programmes 2007-2013, focusing on the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund (CF). INTERREG IVC was selected for this evaluation as a case study in the Work Package 11 on European Territorial Cooperation. This ex post evaluation took place between June and September 2015 and the evaluators gathered the material through desk research, interviews and focus group meetings. Their task was to reply to two evaluation questions defined by the EC:

1. Has the programme developed the capacity and structures to make knowledge and concepts gained in their projects available to other regions ("capitalising on knowledge")?
2. What evidence is there that other regions have used this knowledge? Who are the key partners for implementation in Member States and at EU level, in which sectors and geographical areas?

The final evaluation was not yet published at the time of producing this report.

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. Assisted by the INTERACT programme, the Member States started shaping the new programme. They discussed the SWOT analysis of the current programme, reflected on the strategic orientation and the thematic focus, and agreed on the mission statement.

In 2013 the Programming Committee (PC) gave a name to the new programme – Interreg Europe, selected Nord-Pas de Calais region as Managing Authority, decided to focus on four thematic objectives (Research, technological development and innovation, Competitiveness of SME, Low carbon economy, and Environment and resource efficiency) with two types of actions (Interregional cooperation projects and Policy learning platforms).

In 2014 the Member States agreed on the technical assistance budget, eligibility of private non-profit partners, and the co-financing rates for projects. Before finalising the cooperation programme on 7 May 2014, they approved the ex ante evaluation and the Strategic Environmental Assessment. Public consultation on the programme took place and the report is available on our website. There was a delay during the signing process, so the cooperation programme was submitted to the Commission in November 2014.

The Commission approved the cooperation programme on 11 June 2015. The Programming Committee held a few days later set up the Monitoring Committee of the new programme, which in turn agreed on the terms of reference and the application pack for the first call for proposals. The call opened on 22 June 2015.

3. Implementation by priority

3.1 Priority 1 and 2

3.1.1 Information on the physical progress

3.1.1.1 Projects

The funds were committed as shown in the following table:

Table 6: 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
1. Innovation and the knowledge economy:	**169,071,627.74**	**176,726,969.00**	**95.67%**
• 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*
2. Environment and risk prevention:	**124,251,572.54**	**125,315,487.00**	**99.15%**
• 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*
Total	**293,323,200.28**	**302,042,456.00**	**97.11%**

Changes in running projects

The number of requests for changes approved by the JTS in 2015 was lower than the 59 requests treated in 2014. Indeed, 21 requests (related to 24 changes, as one request can cover more than one change) were approved in 2015 (see full overview in annex 05). These requests were all made in the first semester of 2015, well before the final deadline given to projects to submit their last progress report. Three types of changes occurred in 2015: Partnership, Budget/Finances and Activities. Obviously, no changes in project duration were made, since the fourth call projects had a mandatory closure date by 31st December 2014 at the latest.

The vast majority of changes were related to **budget** (87.5%). While the proportion of these has increased compared to the other changes, the actual number of requests has remained similar to previous years (19 in 2013; 21 in 2014; 21 in 2015). These changes were always made in compliance with the 20% flexibility rule stipulated in the Subsidy Contract.

Only two changes were related to **partnership.** Two projects had Irish regional authorities as partners in their consortia. Following the 2014 administrative reform of the regional authorities in Ireland, Tipperary County Council was integrated in the partnership of both projects to comply with all the archiving responsibilities and measures for projects closure.

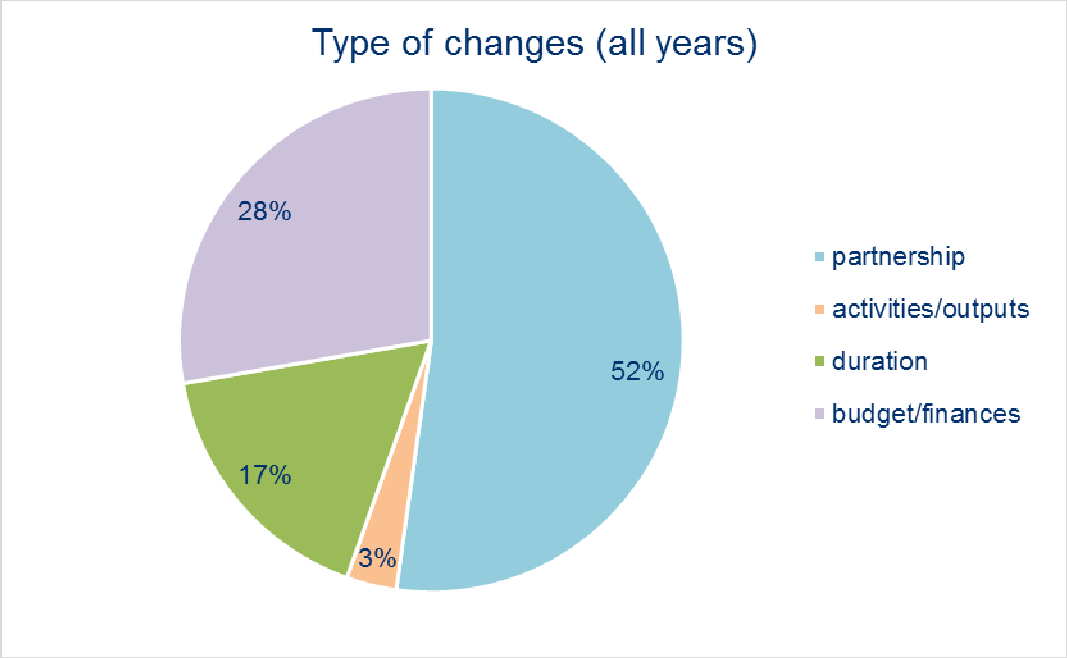
Finally, one change in **activities** was approved for the project Inno.V.Age (fourth call) in order to increase the impact of the project results, particularly of the implementation plans (creation of additional communication material and further interregional study visits to the partner 11 InnoHub – INTRAS Foundation, ES).

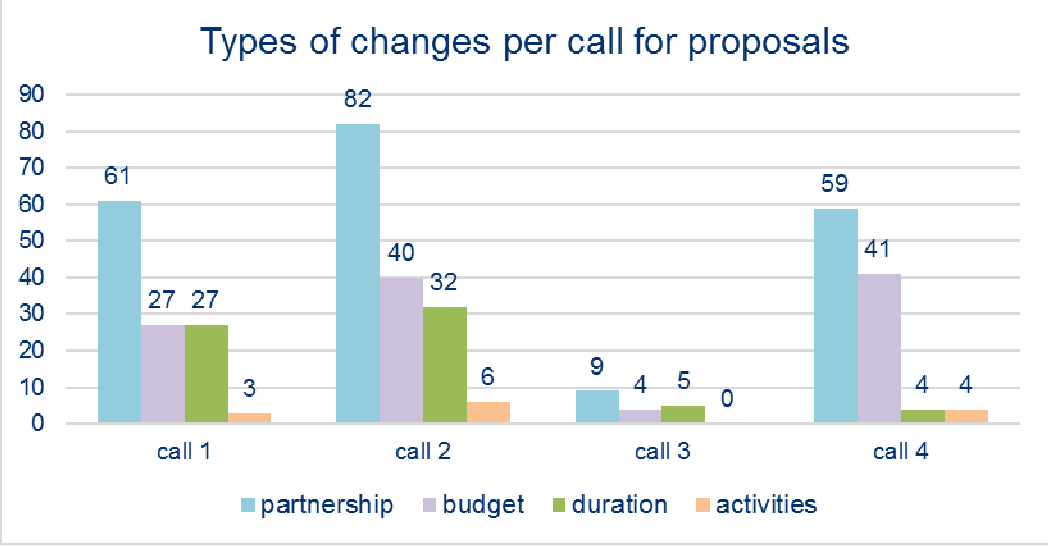
In Article 5.1 of the Agreement between the Member States, the Managing Authority, and the Certifying Authority, the Monitoring Committee (MC) gave the MA/JTS the mandate to approve the following changes:

- 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 2015 were within the limits mentioned above, they were approved by the JTS. Partner States were kept informed about the changes during MC meetings (i.e. meeting in Riga, Lithuania on 16 June 2015).

During the implementation of the programme, a total of 404 changes were requested by 179 projects. Only 12% of all projects never went through a request for change.
The highest number of changes refer to partnership (52%), followed by budget/finances (28%). 17% of the requests were related to project duration, while only 3% of the requests involved changes in activities and outputs.





When comparing projects approved in the different calls for proposals, there is no fundamental evolution in terms of requests for changes (see graph below). Across all calls, changes in partnership remain the highest number. Although such changes should be as much as possible avoided, they are in a lot of cases unavoidable. Certain partners may be inactive or they may face political changes implying that the issues tackled by the project are no longer included in the political priorities of the new administrations. These circumstances may weaken or slow down the activities of exchange of experience in the consortium. A new replacing institution being eager to learn and to bring its experience to the other members of the project may instead be of true added-value for the results of the policy learning.

3.1.1.2 Thematic Programme Capitalisation

Throughout the Thematic Programme Capitalisation, the Project Officers in cooperation with the Capitalisation Officer monitored and supported the work of the 12 teams of external experts who analysed 111 INTERREG IVC projects.

As a reminder, the following table summarises the number of INTERREG IVC projects and partners involved in the Thematic Programme Capitalisation initiative:

Table 7: 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
Total	**111**	**1,302**	

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 publica-

tion providing a snap-shot of the full report and its conclusions/ recommendations in each thematic field. The second year (until June 2014) the experts completed the analysis and updated the thematic reports with latest results of the projects, while a new publication was prepared focusing on the overall lessons learnt and policy recommendations reached for each topic. The last year of the initiative (2014-2015) focused on the evaluation of the impact of the initiative on the policy making processed and on the preparation of the first content for the future Policy Learning Platforms on the basis of the capitalisation results. Throughout the three years of the initiative a series of communication and dissemination activities took place, including thematic workshops, events, presentations in other relevant events, policy papers, newsletters and communication campaigns.

Results and indicators

There were two main interrelated results expected from 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 and third 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 regional, national and European governance. The second year was focused on the challenge of informing and involving the beneficiaries/ users of the capitalisation 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. During the third and last year the experts focused on the targeted dissemination of the final results of the Capitalisation, in particular the final reports and publications, to relevant networks and at suitable EU or project events. As a conclusion to the initiative and in view of the future Policy Learning

Platforms work was also done to evaluated the influence/ impact of the Capitalisation results on the policy making process in the involved regions and other beneficiaries through surveys and to pick up the lessons learnt for the preparation of the next programming period. Finally the experts have also prepared the first content of the future Policy Learning Platforms (i.e. Good Practices, policy recommendations and findings relevant for the new Thematic Objectives and brief analysis of the thematic orientation of the regions).

The indicators set to measure the expected results were 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 offered 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 were identified throughout the 12 final analysis reports for policymakers and practitioners at all levels – regional, national and European. In detail per topic:

Table 8: 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-government services	15
Demographic change	61
Rural development	12
Climate change	35
Energy efficiency	20
Renewable energy	25
Sustainable transport	13
TOTAL	343

- **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 and 4356 in 2015.

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 to 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 responders 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

In detail, the deliverables per topic for each year of the thematic programme capitalisation were:

Table 9: Overview of thematic programme capitalisation deliverables

Output indicator per topic in 2013	**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	2
Output indicator per topic in 2014	**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
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
Output indicator per topic in 2015	**Value**
N° of presentations made at other conferences (e.g. programme events, EU events) per year	2 minimum
N° of policy papers/ bulletins for awareness raising	1
N° of evaluation surveys (including report) on the Capitalisation results and impact	1
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
N° of Good Practice Database lists per Thematic Objective	1
N° of reports on first content for platforms: transfer of Capitalisation findings	1
N° of studies of Operational Programmes for Goal 1	1
N° of contributions on brainstorming for the platform developments	1

For the implementation of the initiative, as explained under the overview presentation in 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 Interreg Europe policy learning platforms.

In that framework during 2015, the following activities took place:

Capitalisation Events during Open Days 2015

During the Open Days 2015, the programme co-organised a thematic workshop with the S3 Platform to present the support offered to regions in this domain by the S3 Platform and the interregional cooperation programme Interreg Europe. During the workshop the 12 thematic publications were also displayed and presented as inspirational thematic material. In parallel the capitalisation results and publications were widely promoted through the programme's social media channels.

Picture: Interregional Cooperation in Smart Specialisation Strategies workshop

- *13 October 2015: "Interregional Cooperation in Smart Specialisation Strategies"*

The workshop was fully booked and attended by around 200 people. The focus was on demonstrating the importance of the outward dimension of smart specialisation strategies (S3) and on presenting the support offered to regions in this domain by the S3 Platform and the Interreg Europe interregional cooperation programme. Participants discovered the main re-

sults of a survey carried out by the Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) in this domain and saw examples of successful interregional R&I partnerships. It also provided an opportunity for regions to learn how they can benefit from the services offered by the Interreg Europe programme on innovation policy-related issues, and the links to the S3 Platform. In general the event met the participant's expectations and thus the feedback received was in majority very positive on all indicators.

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 10: Overview of the dissemination of capitalisation results in thematic events

Topic	Event date	Event official title	Event place	Event organiser
Demographic change	07/10/2014	CASA/INNOVAge final conference	Brussels, Belgium	Project LP
Energy Efficiency	29-30/10/2014	GreenITNet final conference	Rome, Italy	Project LP
Rural development	09/11/2014	Final conference of GRISI Plus	Moravske Toplice, Slovenia	Project LP
Entrepreneurship	18/11/2014	InCompass final conference	Brussels, Belgium	Project LP
Demographic change	25/11/2014	the Knowledge Network Demographic Change Conference	Utrecth, The Netherlands	
Climate change	27/11/2014	OrientGate project event	Athens, Greece	Attica region (Partner)
Innovation capacity of SMEs	18/03/2015	European Cluster Days	Stassbourg, France	European Parliament
Eco-innovation	23/04/2015	greenXpo event	Jyvaskula, Finland	Eurada

Thematic reports, publications and policy papers

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/ . In 2014 there were 7018 and in 2015 there

were 4,356 visitors on the Capitalisation library page. Finally in 2015 the final copies of the overall 1000 copies of the Capitalisation publications were distributed through the National Contact Points and during the Open Days.

Preparation of the work of the future Policy Learning Platforms in terms of content, users and functionalities.

During the last year of the initiative the experts used the Thematic Programme Capitalisation knowledge to prepare and pre-configure the work of the future Policy Learning Platforms. In particular they:

- screened and updated the information in the Good Practice Database about the projects involved in the Capitalisation and proposed how the information could be transferred in the Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platforms;
- identified the results, findings and lessons of the Thematic Programme Capitalisation that could fit in the Interreg Europe Thematic Objectives and Investment Priorities and adapted them for the first content of the Policy Learning Platforms;
- prepared a list of stakeholders involved in the management and implementation of Growth and Jobs and ETC Programmes or other stakeholders whose competences are relevant for the topics covered by the Interreg Europe Thematic Objectives;
- initiated a study on the content of the Goal 1 Programmes under the thematic fields covered by the Interreg Europe Thematic Objectives and mapped the thematic orientation of the regions (indicative examples, not exhaustive);
- advised the Programme on the development and pre-configuration of the future Policy Learning Platforms (e.g. on the content and functionalities of the online tool, proposed services, etc.).

At the end of 2015 the Programme was actively engaged in the discussions and processes for the development of the future knowledge management initiative, the Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platforms.

3.1.2 Qualitative analysis

INTERREG IVC supported 204 projects involving 2,285 partners. The latest INTERREG IVC projects ended their activities by December 2014. 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.

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 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 allows having a fairly good picture on the programme's achievements and success as reflected in the present chapter.

Based on this integrated monitoring system, the programme's achievements are impressive and, as far as the indicators are concerned, the vast majority of target values set in the initial Operation Programme were exceeded:

- **8,408 staff members with increased capacity - average of 3.7 people per partner** (initial OP target: 2,800)
- **684 good practices transferred – almost 12% of all practices identified** (initial OP target: 200)
- **770 policies improved – 37.8% of all policies addressed by projects** (initial OP target: 150)
- **627 spin-off activities** (initial OP target: 480)
- **MEUR 895 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 has achieved all its initial objectives. These results demonstrates 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 by far exceeded is the wrong 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 became 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 more aware of the opportunities offered by interregional cooperation and the demand between IIIC and IVC increased significantly (e.g. 159 applications submitted under the INTERREG IIIC first call compared with 498 application submitted in the INTERREG IVC first call) . The programme was therefore able to select the projects with the highest potential for policy impacts and in particular projects where policy makers were directly involved in the cooperation.
- Compared with IIIC, the number of mini-programme 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.

An overview of the achievements per country is presented in annex 06. 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 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). 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.

The present report includes a certain number of examples of project achievements in particular in terms of policy improved, good practices transferred and spin-off activities generated. This information complements the numerous examples already provided in the previous annual implementation 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 'dynamic' figures, reported in progress reports (e.g. 'number of interregional events organised', 'number of good practices successfully transferred'). In order to avoid any '**statistical bias**' with the dynamic data, 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 removed and is not included in the total final figure reported in the current analysis. 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).

- 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:
  - 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 MEUR 158 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 has regularly improved the definition of the indicators in annex 3 of the programme manual. In the latest recent version of the manual, the differences between the practice level and the policy level were 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) were usually checked by more than one person. The most interesting and tricky cases were 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[1]). 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

[1] http://admin.interact-eu.net/downloads/152/INTERACT_Study_Indicators_for_Monitoring_Transnational_and_ICP_06_2006.pdf

different forms such as:

- 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 has identified some of these outcomes through information provided in the reports (in particular under the spin-off activities) or during the final conferences. 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) had thought 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 were addressed by the 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). More importantly, 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, 176 projects directly contributed to the **improvement of 770 regional or local policies** in the following areas of regional development:

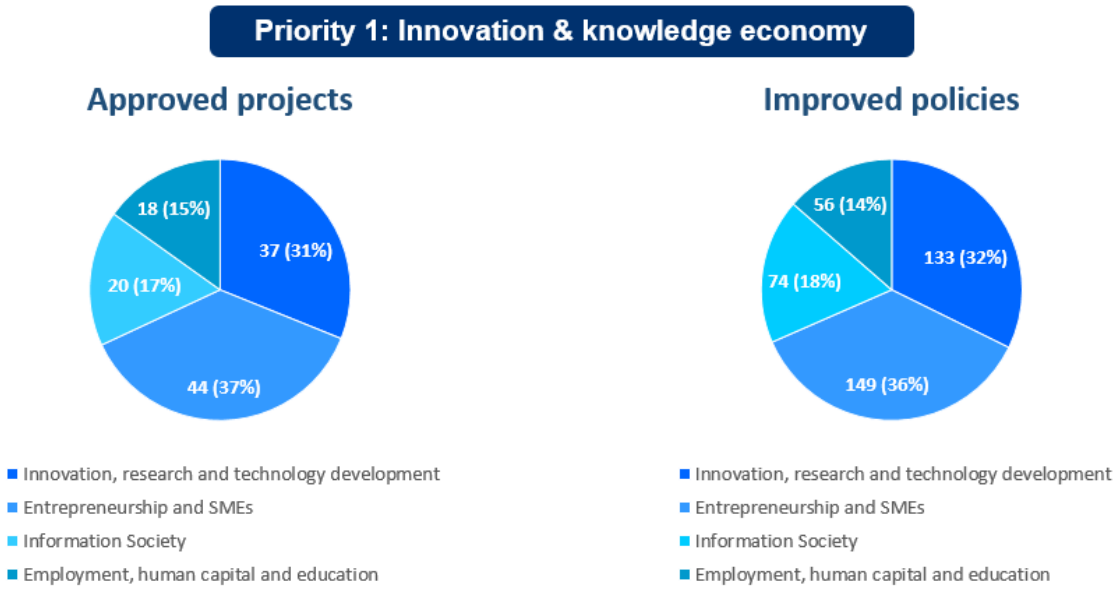
- **412 policies improved in Priority 1: *Innovation and the knowledge economy***
  - 133 under 'Innovation, research and technology development'

- 149 under ‘Entrepreneurship and SMEs’
- 74 under ‘Information Society’
- 56 under ‘Employment, human capital and education’

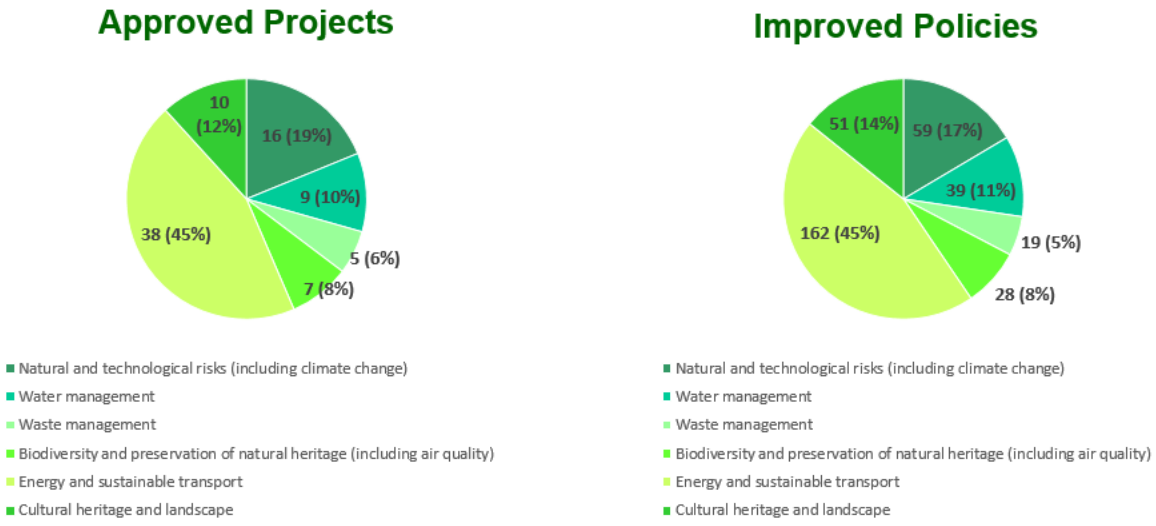
- **358 policies improved in Priority 2: *Environment and risk prevention***
  - 59 under ‘Natural and technological risks; climate change’
  - 39 under ‘Water management’
  - 19 under ‘Waste prevention and management’
  - 28 under ‘Biodiversity and preservation of natural heritage’
  - 162 under ‘Energy and sustainable transport’
  - 51 under ‘Cultural heritage & landscape’

The initial target set in the Operational Programme (150 policies improved) is exceeded by far.

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



Priority 2: Environment and risk prevention



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 few projects were approved. There is therefore no area of regional development policy which particularly over performs or under performs. 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.

Even if the programme monitors closely the number of policy changes and practices transferred as a direct result from 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 CAPITAL (where the transfer was planned at the application stage) or MINI EUROPE (see illustrations below):

Project: pimms transfer

Practice: Walk to school' – Encourage school children to walk to school rather than travel by car

From: Borrough of Bromley (UK)

To: Frankfurt am Main (DE)

Results: - 15 schools and 3,000 pupils involved

- 40 tonnes CO_2 (and 19,200 litres of oil) saved

Project: Mini Europe

Practice: Summer entrepreneur' – Stimulate entrepreneurial mindset among young people through the creation of their own business during summer vacation

From: Mid Sweden region

To: Flevoland region (NL)

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 is modified or that a practice is transferred is regarded as a success of the programme considering that the concerned regions and policy makers would not have decided it without expecting clear benefits from it.

With this final report, it is also interesting to look at the projects that were not successful in terms of policies improved. Out of the 204 projects, only 27 (13%) could not demonstrate any policy improvements although most of them were successful at other levels (e.g. good practice transferred, spin-off activities). The list of these projects is provided below:

	Acronmy	Sub-theme
1	PEOPLE	Employment, human capital and education
2	COMMONS	Biodiversity and preservation of natural heritage (including air quality)
3	DeltaNet	Natural and technological risks (including climate change)
4	ENSPIRE EU	Entrepreneurship and SMEs
5	ECREIN+	Innovation, research and technology development
6	IPP	Innovation, research and technology development
7	SolidarCity	Employment, human capital and education
8	Pre-waste	Waste management
9	ChemClust	Innovation, research and technology development
10	SURF-Nature	Biodiversity and preservation of natural heritage (including air quality)
11	POOLING4CLUSTERS	Entrepreneurship and SMEs
12	ORGANZA	Entrepreneurship and SMEs
13	Brain Flow	Employment, human capital and education
14	CivPro	Natural and technological risks (including climate change)
15	SHARP	Water management
16	EUFOFINET	Natural and technological risks (including climate change)
17	ECOREGIONS	Innovation, research and technology development
18	IMEA	Energy and sustainable transport
19	BOO-Games	Entrepreneurship and SMEs
20	ZEN	Cultural heritage and landscape
21	4 POWER	Energy and sustainable transport
22	CIE	Entrepreneurship and SMEs
23	DESUR	Entrepreneurship and SMEs
24	ETTBio	Innovation, research and technology development
25	LakeAdmin	Water management
26	CCIC	Innovation, research and technology development
27	Young SMEs	Entrepreneurship and SMEs

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

- Topics:

Apart from Information Society, all programme's sub-themes are covered under these 27 projects. Two projects are also directly related to improving Structural Funds programmes (i.e. SURF-NATURE and EUFOFINET).

- Types of projects

Both types of projects are concerned (i.e. 1 capitalisation project and 26 Regional Initiative Projects).

- Intensity of cooperation

All levels of intensity of cooperation are concerned: 19 with a low level, 6 with a medium level (ENSPIRE EU, IPP, ORGANZA, SolidarCity, IMEA and BOO-Games) 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. For the mini-programmes and despite their higher budget, it can reflect 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 policy makers are rarely represented.

And beyond the above elements, the 27 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 at mid-term (e.g. ECREIN +), the majority of the projects explained that it was too early to 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 the characteristic of the project itself (e.g. lack of direct involvement of policy makers in POOLING4CLUSTER which was initially not recommended for approval to the Monitoring Committee).

The main lesson learnt from the analysis of these projects is that, even when they are not able to demonstrate evidence of policy change, most of them were still able to demonstrate interesting developments at policy level. 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 interre-

gional 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 subprojects (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 policy makers 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.

Capitalisation Projects

The overall performance of the **20 Capitalisation Projects** can be considered as very good. Only one project (i.e. EUFOFINET) was not in a position to demonstrate any policy achievements. 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 of the implementation stage (see page 4 of the project's final report) was reached (meaning that the first measures to implement the Action Plan have started).

Despite this demanding approach, the 20 Capitalisation Projects have demonstrated 98 policies improved out of the 192 addressed. In other words, more than 50% of the policies tackled by these projects were finally improved thanks to the two-year cooperation.

The example below is extracted from the fourth progress report of ENTREDI. It gives a short but good overview on the results achieved in the seven participating regions and 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 Jonkoping. 2. Evaluate companies' potential and provide better and more efficient services such as the Kompass Profiling Tool, and Jonkoping SPS. 3. Ensure the continuity of the regional support to nascent entrepreneurship:

The LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership) has confirmed its support to 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 "WeTechOff" 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 Jonkoping. 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 organizations 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 third call Capitalisation Projects were approved in July 2010 only. The outcomes of their cooperation was 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 - 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 401.706,00 EUR). 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 different 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). 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 Development 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 Développment 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. Though 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.

- **SufalNet4EU**

The SufalNet4EU methodology for the reconversion of landfill 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

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, Paraquay, Indonesia, Cambodia, China, Jordan and UNDP participated in this conference

It should be noted that some of 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 import outcomes of the evaluation are the following:

- A majority of Actions 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 3 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

Some concrete examples of policy changes can be found in the next pages. They complement the numerous illustrations already provided in previous annual reports. Since 2009 Annual Reports, 111 examples of policy improvements were provided in the different annual reports. With the additional 31 examples provided in the current report, this makes a total of 142 policy changes illustrated. All results can also be retrieved from the monitoring system used by the programme.

Examples of policies improved from *Priority 1*

Sub-theme 'Innovation, research and technology development'

CLUSTERIX on cluster development

In its final reports, the project was able to demonstrate the following policy improvements:

- Lower Austrian Roadmap for Sustainable Public Procurement

The Roadmap is the region's framework strategy for sustainable public procurement. Thanks to the CLUSTERIX regional workshops on innovation procurement in 2014 the Regional Government Department of Energy introduced a new chapter on innovation in the Roadmap for Sustainable Public Procurement (p.43.). The Roadmap was officially approved by the Regional Government in May 2015.

- Smart Specialisation Strategy of the Province Bolzano / South-Tyrol

Based on the learnings in the CLUSTERIX project, the Province of Bolzano South-Tyrol recognised the role of cluster in promoting new cross-sectorial businesses and in implementing competence mapping as a tool to better identifying future potential for companies. As a result the "Smart Specialization Strategy per la Provincia Autonoma di Bolzano Alto Adige" explicitly defines the Competence Mapping tool as an instrument to improve cluster development (page 52).

- Cluster Internationalisation Initiative of the Regional Growth Forum Southern Denmark

The Regional Growth Forum of Southern Denmark decided at its meeting on 25 September 2014 to allocate EUR 660,000 for an instrument to finance the four clusters' international activities. The learnings from the CLUSTERIX project were used to define more specific objectives for this internationalisation measure of the clusters.

- Smarter City Karlsruhe Roadmap

CLUSTERIX project helped Karlsruhe to develop a common vision of businesses, researchers and policy makers from different sectors, disciplines and departments. It also contributed to the development of a roadmap for implementation which was adopted by the municipality on 2 July 2013 and assigned with a budget of EUR 200,000 for 2013 and 2014.

- Draft of the guide for “Innovation Clusters” Projects under Romanian SF for the “Competitiveness” Programme 2014-2020, Priority Axis PI 1, call “POC-A1-A1.1.1-2014-y” (www.poscce.research.ro; www.fonduri-ue.ro)

As a result of the exchange of experience during CLUSTERIX, a specific type of projects “Innovation Clusters” has been included in the final version of the Structural Funds Operational Programme “Competitiveness”. It allows the financing of infrastructure endowment, RDI projects and soft measures under one package with an amount of up to MEUR 7.

Sub-theme ‘Innovation, research and technology development’

EURIS on open innovation

- Innovation Strategy of Navarra

Adopted in January 2014, Navarra's Regional Innovation Strategy (RIS), the 4th Technology Plan of Navarra was defined during the implementation of EURIS. A final version was officially approved by a Government Agreement on the Government Council held on January 15 2014, with an estimated budget of MEUR 85 million for 2014 and 2015. This document does not stand as Navarra's Smart Specialization Strategy, embodied by the MODERNA NAVARRA Action Plan, but the RIS is considered as one of its implementing strategies. Impact of EURIS in the strategy can be read at different levels:

- Mainstreaming and visibility of Open Innovation concept on the strategy: EURIS has increased the knowledge and capacities of Navarra Government in relation to Open Innovation, leading to the explicit integration and visibility of the Open Innovation concept on the current RIS. Thus, Open Innovation is one of the 3 axis of the strategy, which strives to turn Navarra into an Open Innovation Ecosystem, looking for the involvement and engagement of all kind of stakeholders, including the society and end-users on all the stages of the innovation process.
- Instrument level: there are several instruments directly linked to Open Innovation, such as the Navarra Factory space, incepted as an Open Innovation environment, or the support to collaborative R&I projects, and the delivery of Innovation Vouchers for companies, who can buy the services by intermediaries and technology centres. These instruments have been included and have been impacted by the participation of Navarra on several EU funded projects, such as EURIS and Making Knowledge Work.
- Governance level: as a result of EURIS, the Navarra Policy Brief collects a number of policy recommendations for the further mainstreaming of Open Innovation into the RIS, of a governance level, related to the coordination of the regional policy efforts between stakeholders, whose implementation will be led out by the DG Industry,

Energy & Innovation of Navarra Government. These soft measures have not been specifically included on any kind of official documents. These recommendations and guidelines fall rather on the coordination and governance field, proposing the adaptation or further tailoring of existing instruments and governance model, in order to be more effective in the promotion of Open Innovation: creation of a new stakeholder coordination forum for promoting Open Innovation, the delivery of one stop shop information on Open Innovation at regional level, or the assessment of the financial aid and programmes for the support of open and collaborative R&I.

The Navarra ERDF 2014-2020 Operational Programme also specifically foresees the funding of Innovation Vouchers schemes, which is a direct impact of the EURIS project.

- Stuttgart Region 2030

Open Innovation was already present on the previous Stuttgart Region RIS. During EURIS, a new RIS, Stuttgart Region 2030 was defined and approved by the Regional Assembly on 23 October 2013 and submitted to the Baden-Würtemberg Regio WIN call on 31 October, 2013 which will be funded by the regional ERDF ROP 2014-2020. The strategy submitted was successful in the call, and following the call rules, a new proposal with detailed projects was submitted to RegioWIN on 30 September 2014, including the Central Business Acceleration Center initiative.

Sub-theme 'Innovation, research and technology development'

INN.O.V.Age on innovation in healthcluster development

- Marche Region: Regional Operational Programme – ERDF of Marche Region 2014-2020– Axis 1 – SO 1 Action 1.1

Thanks to the project and in particular the transfer of good practice through Pilot Action, Marche Region better defined an action within the ERDF ROP 2014 – 2020. This action matches innovation demand and offer trough collaborative research projects that reduces SMEs costs and risks for innovation access and for involving high qualified experts in the transfer of knowledge to project activities. In particular, the INNOVAge Pilot Action defined an Innovation Voucher scheme that is the core of the call for "Promotion of research and development in the smart specialisation fields" funded by the ROP and recently launched by Marche Region.

- Lithuanian Innovation Development Programme 2014–2020

The lessons learnt from partner regions on cluster policy development has been successfully transferred to the policymakers in Ministry of Economy of the republic of Lithuania. This min-

istry was one of the responsible institutions drafting The Lithuanian Innovation Development Programme 2014–2020. Due to the InnovAge project, the programme foresees delivery of specialised support for cluster development and *"…in addition to the development of business clusters, the inter-sectoral partnerships and networks will be encouraged to enable the development of innovative and community needs based settlement of social problems, the sharing of experiences and good practices..."*

Sub-theme 'Entrepreneurship and SMEs'

FIN-EN on financial instruments

The Regional Council of Auvergne decided to implement regional coaching program and incorporated it as one of the financial instrument in its ROP. The programme was voted by the Regional Council of Auvergne at end of June 2015. The original good practice from Denmark Region identified within FIN-EN was the trigger for Auvergne to set up such a program to support SMEs although it had to be adapted to the French legislative system ("actions collectives") and to the regional context (fewer SMEs and SMEs support organisations). This practice was very appealing for Auvergne since the applying companies have first to complete a 6 month qualifying acceleration program supervised by the funds manager. On the basis of programme results, selected companies are offered capital and a 12-18 month growth plan agreement is contracted. Companies that receive capital are followed closely by the fund manager who works actively with each company during the growth plan execution period.

Sub-theme 'Entrepreneurship and SMEs'

MESSE on social enterprises

- Veneto Regional Operational Programme

Based on the practices identified with MESSE, a financial measure dedicated to Social Enterprises has been introduced in to the new ROP 2014-2020 – FESR section of the Veneto region. The measure goes under the financing priority 3.a. named "Enhance SMEs competitiveness promoting entrepreneurship and enabling the economic exploitation of new ideas promoting new enterprises creation also through the use of incubators". This specific ROP action (3.5.1) is entitled "Interventions to support the creation of new businesses through direct awards or providing services or through micro-finance actions.

- Economic Development Strategy of Vas County 2014-2020

Pannon Business Netowork Association was responsible for the elaboration of the Economic Development Strategy of Vas County 2014-2020. Due to the experiences of the MESSE pro-

ject, the “Social Economy Program” was introduced in the document as a completely new measure. This program will be the basis for social enterprises development at regional level in the following 7 years. The Social Economy Program will also be integrated in the S3 Strategy of Vas County based on the Economic Development Strategy of Vas County.

Sub-theme ‘Entrepreneurship and SMEs’

EuroScreen on territorial marketing

- Apulia Regional Operational Programme

Thanks to the project, Apulia Film commission was able to demonstrate to the Regional Government the potential benefits of enhancing tourism through supporting screen productions and strengthening both Apulia’s assets as a screen location and the connections between the audio-visual and tourism sectors. As a result, the Regional Operational Programme of the European Regional Development Fund (2014-2020) for Apulia (approved in July 2014) now includes explicit references to the development of tourism through funding of screen productions: ‘*promotion and support of Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) sector across the region in order to promote screen locations’, ‘support for the audiovisual sector through the development and exchange of best practice amongst workers in the audiovisual sector and meetings to improve the mode of operation of the professionals involved and the local production system’* (linking them with projects such as Puglia experience and the Euromediterranean Coproduction Forum).

- Podkarpackie policy

Rzeszow Regional Development Agency worked closely with the Podkarpackie Voivodship in the EuroScreen project. As a result, the resolution of the Podkarpackie Voivodship Board n°316/7539/14 from 28 January 2014 on the acceptance of the tasks for the Department of Promotion, Tourism, Sport and International Cooperation of Marshal Office of Podkarpackie Voivodship included an explicit reference to a Regional Film Fund within its 2014 budget. Funding has been allocated to attract film productions to the region was assigned. This action was taken with a view to capitalising on film production in the long term and developing screen tourism in Podkarpackie.
http://www.bip.podkarpackie.pl/attachments/article/946/Uchwa%C5%82a_Nr_316_7539_14.pdf (page 3)

Sub-theme ‘Entrepreneurship and SMEs’

InCompass on creative industries

InCompass has influenced the Lithuanian National Action Plan for Entrepreneurship promotion 2014-2020. InCompass recommendations were delivered and presented to Ministry of Economy which together with Ministry of Culture are responsible for development of creative industry sector. In particular, the Ministry of Economy is responsible for the implementation of The National Action Plan for Entrepreneurship Promotion for 2014-2020. This plan now refers to the recommendations and analysis resulting from the InCompass project as guidelines for further development of creative incubators in Lithuania.

Priority 1 - Sub-theme ‘Information Society’

PIKE on e-government and wireless broadband

The association of local authorities in Västernorrland County (Sweden) has successfully imported the online planning service practice developed by Donegal County Council (Ireland). As a result of the good practice transfer, Västernorrland got EUR 2.5 million euros for a 3-year development project that ended in a common e-service platform for the 7 municipalities in the region. This common e-service platform was also nominated to the E-diamond award for the best 2015 e-service in Sweden. It won the award despite tough competition from a number of national departments and authorities. Västernorrland has also started in 2015 a process (named eSamverkan or “eCooperation") to create a common organisation for public e-services in the region based on the platform. The goal of eSamverkan (apart from the common organisation) is to create by 2017 a total number of 100 new services where 10 of them shall be common services for all 7 municipalities.

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

CeSR on employment services for rural development

The Olomouc region has used outcomes (regional analysis, good practices) of the CesR project to update the Agricultural and Rural Development Policy of its region. The Olomouc region participates to the elaboration of the Integrated Territorial Investment of Olomouc agglomeration. Thanks to the CesR project, this policy document includes now financial support dedicated to social cooperatives and social businesses. The Olomouc region also supported the creation of strategies for Community led local development (CLLD), which include support to entrepreneurship, cooperation, clustering in rural areas. On the basis of CesR results,

Olomoux asked the local action groups from the region to include activities focused on social enterprises (cooperatives) and services sharing. This is the case in the following policies:

- CLLD strategy of the LAG Partnership Moštěnka operating in the districts of Přerov and Kroměříž.
- CLLD strategy of LAG Moravian Gate operating in the district of Přerov
- CLLD strategy of LAG Vincenz Priessnitz for Jeseníky region operating throughout the whole district of Jeseník.

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

Working4Talent on brain drain

The Buskerud Regional Plan (Norway) for value creation and regional business development was adopted on 12 November 2014. The part of the strategy dedicated to talent attraction builds directly on the outcomes of the Working4Talent project and in particular on the project Local Analysis Study investigating how regions can maximise their attractiveness to talent and what policies or initiatives can be introduced to help retaining local talent or attracting highly qualified human capital.

Examples of policies improved from *Priority 2*

Priority 2 – Sub-theme 'Natural and technological risks; climate change'

CLUE on climate change

The topics tackled by CLUE especially the participatory process, directly slipped into the development work of the Smart City Wien Framework Strategy. The Smart City Wien Framework Strategy provides a common orientation for the "Smart city" initiatives of the city. The CLUE project has influenced the initiation of the "communal probes" participatory process, which helped translate the terms "climate neutrality" and "Smart Cities" into everyday language through the help and input of citizens. This was an important first step to drive the development of the Smart City and the realisation of climate neutral cities forward.

Priority 2 – Sub-theme 'Water Management'

TRAP on river management

- West Macedonia ROP

One of the practices identified within the project impacted the land use planning in Western Macedonia. This practice provides an operational way to combine fishing tourism with good water status and protection. Based on this approach, the Water Management Authority, the Decentralised Administration of Epirus and the region of Western Macedonia re-classified certain areas of the land use plan around lake Polyfytos from 'protected' 'to light tourism development & compatible land uses' status.

Through participation in the project, Ecosystem Services (ESS) applications were also analysed. As a result, these applications were included into the new ROP for Western Macedonia. ESS is endorsed as an indicative action under the investment priority 6d: Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through NATURA 2000, and green infrastructure.

- Goriska region (SI)

The project has resulted in the establishment of an NGO ("foundation" status), with water management delegation from the Slovenia Ministry of Environment for localised water management (replicating the Rivers Trust model. The NGO named 'Fundacija za Sočo' or 'Soča river foundation' was established on 6 August 2014. It was endorsed by the Slovenian Ministry of Environment (http://www.uradni-list.si/1/objava.jsp?urlurid=20143353).

Priority 2 – Sub-theme 'Water Management'

AQUA-ADD on water management and spatial planning

Some of the project recommendations were directly integrated into the following policy instruments:
In the Trans-Tisza region (HU), a section in the new Integrated Urban development Strategy 2014-2020 is dedicated to a multifunctional approach of water (in environmental, social and economic sense). The aim is to better incorporate water related activities in local/urban and regional spatial planning and development.

Similarly the Imperia municipality in Italy has incorporated an incentive plan in the Building code of the municipality, in order to promote sustainable solutions for the rainwater harvesting in buildings. The Municipality of Imperia wants to promote the issue of regional law to codify the reuse of rainwater in house settlements and the possible rewards for the projects aiming at the environmental protection and sustainable development in the field of water management.

On 18 August 2014, the municipality of Bremerhaven (Germany) adopted a resolution based on the experience of "Aqua-Add" recognising water as a vital planning component in urban space. Through this resolution, the integration of "water" aspects in the local and regional planning and policy have to be ensured in all future urban plannings.

Priority 2 – Sub-theme 'Biodiversity and preservation of natural heritage'

GreenInfraNet on the development of green infrastructure

Until 2011, the nature policy programme of Flevoland was very much focused on creating a robust national ecological corridor of 2000 hectares, with limited additional focus on ecosystem services. This project was aborted by the central government at the time 850 hectares had already been acquired. This legacy was the basis for a new programme that started in 2013, Programme New Nature (PNN). Under this programme, 12 criteria have been defined to select viable ideas that can be worked out with the support of the province (knowledge, network and finances) to business cases. 4 Criteria focus on biodiversity itself while 8 deals with generating higher outcome for ecosystem functions. Some of these criteria have been identified during the study visits and exchange workshops of the GreenInfraNet project.

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

R4GG on energy efficiency and renewable energy

- Lazio region approved the Regional Development Strategy 2014-2016.

In Lazio, the Regional Development Strategy 2014-2016 was adopted on 21 December 2013. The part that can be attributed to R4GG is the "Energy and Sustainable Development" in the "Macro-area di intervento n. 5: Una Regione Sostenibile" (Great Area of action n°5 : A Sustainable Region). The following policy goals are mentioned in the strategy:

2.3 Promote the transition to a green economy:

2.3.1 promote the transition to a low carbon economy

2.3.2 increase the number of SME's in green product and technology

2.3.3 upgrade Green Public Procurement

The project R4GG has increased the knowledge and awareness on sustainable energy strategies among regional officers and politicians, who were involved in upgrading regional policies. This has resulted in a more prominent place for energy and sustainable development in the Regional Development Strategy.

- Västernorrland (SE) approved the Environment and energy plan for the County Council 2015-2020

Västernorrland has adopted the Environment and energy plan for the County Council 2015-2020 in May 2014. In this policy document, the influence of R4GG can be seen in the integration of the peer review recommendations on sustainable transport, the use of public procurement as an instrument to realise sustainability goals, the use of communication tools to influence sustainable approaches, and on the development of cooperation and R&D internationally (this last recommendation has been taken forward through the good practice exchange between Noord Brabant and Västernorrland).

- Észak-Alföld (HU) approved the Smart Specialisation Strategy and the Territorial and Settlement Development Operational Programme

Észak-Alföld has used the recommendations of the R4GG peer review to improve their Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3). The strategy does not only refer business development, commercialization and financing of ideas but it also included now environmental and energy concerns. The strategy also refers to the role of public sector as paving the way for implementing renewable energy and energy efficiency measures and introducing green public procurement. The S3 was not formally adopted in the region, but used as input to the national S3. In addition, the peer review recommendations of R4GG and the regional S3 strat-

egy were used for the development of the Territorial and Settlement Development Operational Programme of Hungary, submitted to the European Commission on 20 November 2014.

- Manchester (UK) approved the Climate Change Implementation Plan 2015-2020

Manchester has upgraded its policies by integrating the peer review recommendations in the work plans 2014-2015 of the Great Manchester Low Carbon Hub Board and the refreshment of the Climate Change Implementation Plan 2015-2020 (approved by the Board on 6 June 2014). The main action was the initiation of the Greater Manchester Project Development Unit (PDU) and appointing an Investment Director. The lessons learnt from the project helped to develop and prioritise a package of clustered schemes across the Great Manchester area. Other recommendations like direct involvement of citizens, improvement of the information on funding and technologies, the implementation of a monitoring system were all taken forward in the works plans and the Climate Change Implementation Plan.

Priority 2 – Sub-theme 'Cultural heritage and landscape'

CHARTS on sustainable tourism

The recommendations deriving from the CHARTS projects were directly integrated in the Regional Operational Programme (ROP) of Veneto Region. For the 2014-2020 programming period, the Veneto ROP refers to sustainable tourism under its axis 3 Objectives 3a) Promoting entrepreneurship refers to the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms. In particular action 3.3.4 aims at the preservation and protection of cultural heritage especially by involving all stakeholders, including SMEs operating in sustainable services, as a tool to protect and revitalise the natural environment of the Venetia lagoon islands and their cultural heritage. The objective is to diversify the tourism base over time and space, notably by extending the tourism period and promoting alternative forms of sustainable tourism, including culture and heritage tourism in remote areas to help create new employment opportunities.

Priority 2 – Sub-theme 'Cultural heritage and landscape'

R4R on waste recycling

In Ireland, waste management plans were evaluated in 2012 and the decision was made to revise these plans for the newly configured waste management regions. The process for preparing new draft plans for the three new waste Regions in Ireland was already well advanced in 2014. In the preparation process, the Southern Waste Region (project partner)

was responsible for preparing the data indicators guide for all three Regions. The Southern Waste Region with the experience gained from working with the partners in the R4R Project realised that the limited information on waste sorting plants was a major issue in Ireland. Indicators used so far (amount of household waste recycled or amount municipal waste recycled) were focusing on the amount actually recycled but not on the total amount of waste going to sorting plants. Therefore, the Southern Waste Region proposed to adopt the DREC ('Destination Recycling') approach that was identified within the R4R project and that was mainly developed by OVAM (Public Waste Agency of Flandes). The 3 Irish regions had to agree nationally on indicators to be used in new waste management plans and on methods to calculate the indicators. The national consultation process ran from 18 November 2015 until 30 January 2015. It involved lead authorities, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Environment. The Southern Waste Region was responsible for preparing the data indicators guide for all 3 Regions. Finally, all regions agreed to use the DREC indicators to monitor household, municipal and commercial waste.

Related action were officially formalised in the implementation plan:
http://www.regions4recycling.eu/upload/public/Reports/R4R_Implementation_Plan_South-West-Region.pdf

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**; few projects like PADIMA, 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).

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) 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 of these 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).
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 7th 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 deliver high speed network and services.
- Joint 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 to 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 BB 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 4th 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 raise awareness on the actions made in favour of gender equality across Europe, and are meant to be 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 in Brussels to a joint COCOF (Coordination Committee of the Funds) and ESF Technical Working Group meeting on Gender Mainstreaming in the Structural Funds. 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

CITEAIR II aims to improve regional polices in the domain of air quality protection, sustainable transport and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. CITEAIR II is continuously coop-

erating 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://eyeonearth.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 and develop the potential of innovative solutions for environmental sustainability. The Commission considers that C2CN demonstrates on the ground 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 introduce the concept of 'circular economy' 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).

SURF-NATURE is a second 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 27 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

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

PADIMA is a second call project focusing on depopulation in mountain areas. On 20 May 2016,
the EU Parliament adopted a report on Cohesion policy in mountainous regions of the EU: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+REPORT+A8-2016-0074+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN
In its paragraph 17, the report explicitly mentions the INTERREG IVC project PADIMA as a source of inspiration for good practices aiming at finding solutions for a better cohesion in mountain areas. The report pleads for a specific Agenda on mountain areas, to be adopted in time for the 2020+ Cohesion Policy.

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

Conclusion on policy improvements

It is not possible 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.

These success factors were integrated in the different requirements set for the Interreg Europe programme.

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

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 16 interregional events to exchange experiences were organised per project (3,278 interregional events in total). 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 84,000 participants in these interregional events which means an average of 25 participants per interregional event.

More than 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 as 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 ap-

proved 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 inversely a majority of 'convergence regions' involved in the cooperation. This is in particular the case of NEEBOR and of ICHNOS PLUS.

In terms of geographical area covered by the projects, 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 were represented in the programme. Norway is represented by 21 partners (one of them being Lead Partner) and Switzerland by three partners. Finally, seven third-countries (i.e. Albania, Belarus, Croatia, Iceland, Serbia, Russia, Ukraine) are represented by eight partners (two of them coming from Croatia before its adhesion on 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 2 out of the 204 approved projects (SEE and POOLING4CLUSTERS) have no public authorities directly represented in their partnership.

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 projects although the core requirement of the INTERREG IVC is met since each of the regions is represented by its policy maker.
- 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 partners has been officialised under Interreg Europe under the name of 'advisory partner'.

Within the 204 projects, the exchange of experience has contributed to increase the capacity (competence) of **8,948 staff members** involved in the projects. This represents an average of 43.8 people per project who have increased their skills thanks to their involvement in inter-regional activities. This indicators covers only the staff members of the partner organisations who were regularly involved in the interregional activities.

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) incrLeased 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 stake-holders have actively participated in interregional events and increased their capacity in the three semesters."

The programme has also achieved its objective in terms of spin-off activities. This is a good news considering that, during the first years of programme's implementation, this indicator was one of the few areas where the programme was under performing. Since 2012, the curve has changed and finally the 204 projects were able to demonstrate **627 new projects / activities / approaches resulting from the interregional exchange of experiences**. The initial target value of 480 set in the operational programme is therefore exceeded. 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's 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 spill over 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 Cultual Centre*
- *"Business Plan Competition": Economists Association of Koroška, Chmber 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. The 6 previous annual reports provided 51 examples of spin-off activities. With the additional 13 provided be-

low, this means that a total of 64 examples were provided since the start of the programme. All results can also be retrieved from the monitoring system used by the programme.

Priority 1 – Sub-theme Entrepreneurship and SMEs

TOURAGE on senior tourism

Regional Council of North Karelia, FI (LP) prepared a new application with the Centre of Innovations for Independent Living (ISAK) and a university from Poland. The idea deals with accessible tourism offer that takes into account the needs of people with disabilities. Partnership and activities are based on observations, experiences & results of the TOURAGE project. North Karelia council, Vidzeme Planning Region and the Association of Polish Communes of Euroregion Baltic, are be partners in this project. The project application was submitted to the Interreg Baltic Sea programme in 2014.

Priority 1 – Sub-theme Entrepreneurship and SMEs

EUROSCREEN on territorial marketing

In the framework of the project, the municipality of Ystad in Sweden has forged links between Ystad Studios (managed by regional film refund centre Film in Skane) and Ystad Film Museum Cineteket (managed by Municipality of Ystad). They now jointly fund a staff post focused on developing screen tourism products.

Partly thanks to its participation in the project, the Lund University, Department of Service Management due to a raised profile in screen tourism, has been asked to host the International Tourism and Media (ITAM) conference in June 2016.

Priority 1 – Sub-Theme Information Society

ENGAGE on broadband in rural areas

Two DG CONNECT Connected Communities proposals (https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/node/70418) were submitted by the ERNACT partners:

- The first one was based on the ERNACT/Donegal County Implementation Plan
- The second one on the Nièvre Numérique implementation plan.

Similarly, the region of South Ostrobothnia successfully applied for Connected for Health" pilot project proposal from DG Communications Networks Contect & Technology, under Sustainable and Secure Society/Health and Well-Being. Knowledge from ENGAGE activities and practices had provided significant input for this application.

Priority 2 – Sub-theme 'Water management'

ERCIP on European river corridors

Geological Institute of Romania (partner 6) and the Town of Harsova (partner 7) have become co-founders of the Platform of the Local Authorities on the Danube River.

Borough of Lewisham have been invited to become members of the national Catchment Based Approach Working Group on urban rivers reporting to the Government Department for the Environment - a direct result of the ongoing dissemination of the ERCIP project in the UK.

Priority 2 – Sub-theme 'Biodiversity and preservation of natural heritage'

NOSTRA on straits management

Thanks to NOSTRA, a new cooperation was born between the Fehmarn Belt and the Gulf of Finland on the question of fixed links. It gave birth to the TALSINKFIX project, in the framework of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR Seed Money Facility co-financed the project at 85%). The project total budget is 100 000€. This project involves Harju County Government (EE), the City of Helsinki (FI), Tallinn City Office (EE) and Fonden Femern Belt Development (DK). A feasibility study and final report were published in February 2015.

The two provinces of Reggio Calabria and Messina have decided to sign a Memorandum of Understanding in 2013 and to adopt of a joint "Metropolitan strait area" strategy.

The project "Green Bridge Through Adriatic" was created between the Province of Lecce, Region Vlora and Legambiente Puglia thanks to the exchanges during the territorial meetings.

Priority 2 – Sub-theme 'Biodiversity and preservation of natural heritage'

R4R on waste recycling

The project submitted a new proposal for funding under the LIFE Sub-Programme for Environment. The project is entitled "Recycling for Regions" (proposal reference: LIFE14 ENV/FR/001129; acronym: LIFE R4R). Recycling for Regions capitalises on R4R results. It aims at showing the relevancy of improving local waste management strategies beyond the

improvement of recycling rate, through the enhancement and demonstration of the effectiveness of the R4R methodology.

Priority 2 – Sub-theme 'Cultural heritage and landscape'

CHARTS on sustainable tourism

Thanks to the project, the topic 'Industrial heritage tourism' was adopted by the European Cultural Tourism Network (BE) as the theme for their international conference in 2015, as part of the 'European Year of Industrial & Technical Heritage 2015', led by the European Federation of Associations of Industrial & Technical Heritage (E-FAITH).

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 EU Structural Funds mainstream programmes

If one considers the target values of the Operational Programme, this programme objective is also achieved. In total, **5,782 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 includes 1,437 good practices. Each project had to submit a minimum of four descriptions of good practices during its lifetime.

As far as results are concerned, a total of **684 practices have now been successfully transferred** amongst the partners. This exceeds the Operational Programme's target value of 200. The good practices (GP) were transferred in the following areas of regional development:

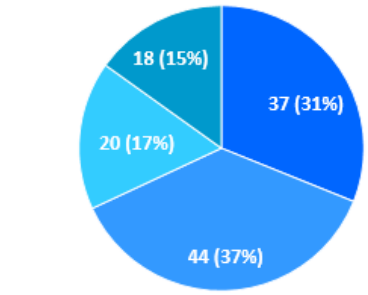
- **362 practices transferred in Priority 1: *Innovation and the knowledge economy***
  - 103 under 'Innovation, research and technology development'
  - 159 under 'Entrepreneurship and SMEs'
  - 69 under 'Information Society'
  - 31 under 'Employment, human capital and education'
- **322 practices transferred in Priority 2: *Environment and risk prevention***
  - 60 under 'Natural and technology risks; climate change'
  - 52 under 'Water management'
  - 7 under 'Waste prevention and management'
  - 136 under 'Energy and sustainable transport'
  - 15 under 'Biodiversity and preservation of natural heritage'
  - 52 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 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.

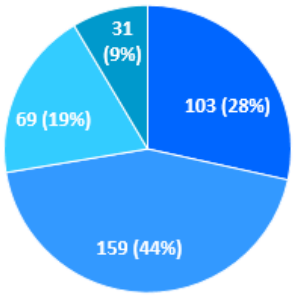
Priority 1: Innovation & knowledge economy

Approved projects



- Innovation, research and technology development
- Entrepreneurship and SMEs
- Information Society
- Employment, human capital and education

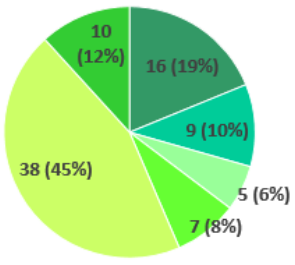
Good practices transferred



- Innovation, research and technology development
- Entrepreneurship and SMEs
- Information Society
- Employment, human capital and education

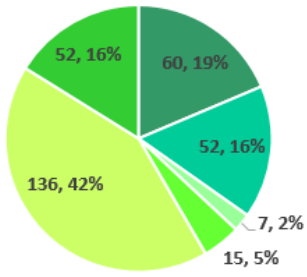
Priority 2: Environment and risk prevention

Approved Projects



- Natural and technological risks (including climate change)
- Water management
- Waste management
- Biodiversity and preservation of natural heritage (including air quali
- Energy and sustainable transport
- Cultural heritage and landscape

GP transferred



- Natural and technological risks (including climate change)
- Water management
- Waste management
- Biodiversity and preservation of natural heritage (including air quality)
- Energy and sustainable transport
- Cultural heritage and landscape

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 competiveness’ are particularly successful and over performed compared with the other sub-themes (i.e. 44% of the result for 37% of the projects approved). Reversely, the projects under ‘Employment, human capital and educations’ under performed. They are responsible for 9% of the practices transferred although they represent 15% 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 (10% of projects achieving 16% of transfers) and cultural heritage (12% of the projects for 16% of the transfers) appear more successful than projects under waste management (6% of the projects for 2% 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 related to the number of practices identified, it refers to the number of practices transferred and not to the number of transfers themselves. In other words, if the same practice is transferred to several partners (e.g. in the CLUSTERIX example below, the ‘Competence mapping’ practice was transferred to three different regions), only 1 good practice transferred (and not 2 transfers) is 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 not sufficient and evidence of implementation on the territory is required. Despite this demanding approach, 83% of the Regional Initiative Projects (153 out of 184) were able to report good practices transferred.

It is also interesting to look at projects that were not successful in terms of practice transferred. In total, the following 32 Regional Initiatives Projects were not in a position to demonstrate any transfer of practices before the end of their activities although most of them were successful at other levels (e.g. policy improved, spin-off activities):

	Acronmy	Sub-theme
1	FUTUREforest	Natural and technological risks (including climate change)
2	PRESERVE	Cultural heritage and landscape
3	PEOPLE	Employment, human capital and education
4	NANO4M	Innovation, research and technology development
5	PRoMPt	Natural and technological risks (including climate change)
6	UNICREDS	Employment, human capital and education
7	DeltaNet	Natural and technological risks (including climate change)
8	B2N	Entrepreneurship and SMEs
9	ECREIN+	Innovation, research and technology development
10	CATCH_MR	Energy and sustainable transport
11	SuPorts	Water management
12	YES	Entrepreneurship and SMEs
13	OSAIS	Entrepreneurship and SMEs
14	SURF-Nature	Biodiversity and preservation of natural heritage (including air quality)
15	Brain Flow	Employment, human capital and education
16	CREATOR	Employment, human capital and education
17	EURIS	Innovation, research and technology development
18	INOLINK	Innovation, research and technology development
19	IN-EUR	Innovation, research and technology development
20	IMEA	Energy and sustainable transport
21	e-CREATE	the Information Society
22	PLUSTEX	Entrepreneurship and SMEs
23	CesR	Employment, human capital and education
24	ZEN	Cultural heritage and landscape
25	4 POWER	Energy and sustainable transport
26	IMAGINE	Energy and sustainable transport
27	ECOTALE	Energy and sustainable transport
28	I4Food	Entrepreneurship and SMEs
29	CLUE	Natural and technological risks (including climate change)
30	POSSE	Energy and sustainable transport
31	BORDWIIS+	Innovation, research and technology development
32	CCIC	Innovation, research and technology development

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 are covered under these 32 projects.

- 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 32 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 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 does not mean at all 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 23 out of these 32 projects were still able to demonstrate policy improvements.

A sample of interesting transfers is provided below. 111 examples of good practices transferred were already provided in the six previous annual reports. With the additional 25 illustrations of the current report, this mean a total 136 examples provided throughout the programme's life time. All results can be retrieved from the monitoring system used by the programme.

Examples of good practice transferred from *Priority 1*

Sub-theme 'Innovation and the knowledge economy'

ETTBIO on technology transfer in biotechnology

The Summer School on Technology Transfer in Biotechnology, which took place for the first time in summer 2013 in Dresden, Germany, was successfully transferred as "1st CRG BioBusiness School" to the region of Cataluna in Spain. Both the Dresden Summer School as well as CRG's BioBusiness School consists in one week programme to introduce Life Scientists (PhD students and Postdocs) to technology transfer and to train them in field like intellectual property, business models and pitching. All theoretical knowledge is directly applied in teams on real life science projects from the participants, and at the end of the week, the developed concepts are pitched in front of a team of experts including venture capitalists,

technology transfer experts, cluster managers, and entrepreneurs who provide the pitching parties with feedback. Both programmes in Dresden as well as in Catalonia will be repeated during the next years also beyond the ETTBio project funding.

Sub-theme 'Innovation and the knowledge economy'

TRES on Smart Sepcialisation

The good practice 'Demolia, New Factory' was developed by the Baltic Institute of Finland (partner 9). The mission of the New Factory is to create the possibility to transfer passion and ideas into businesses. The services of New Factory, acting both locally and through international networks, engage stakeholders to contribute to innovation co-creation and entrepreneurship development. The process of customer relationships creation is multi-stage, covering all actions necessary to put the product on the market: 1) Demola brings together students of different disciplines and businesses to develop products and services and to solve real-life problems; In Demola (1), university students develop product and service demo concepts together with companies and create new solutions to real-life problems. Demola was recognised with the Assembly of European Regions (AER) Innovation Award in 2010 and the BSR Innovation Award in 2012. Since October 2014, DEMOLA has been established in the BASQUE COUNTRY. Other partners have also included this practice in their implementation Plans (Scotland, Stuttgart, Valga, Lubleskieà.

The practice 'Interface' was founded by the University of Edinburgh and 23 partner universities. The objective of this good practice is to: 1) provide an access point to knowledge, research, services and infrastructure available in the Scottish universities and research institutes to industry and trade organisations; 2) provide detailed information on the capabilities and capacities of the science sector, in response to questions / needs of companies; 3) stimulate demand among businesses of all sectors and sizes (in particular SMEs) for expertise and business opportunities; 4) select and direct inquiries directly to individual research groups and monitor progress in reaching a consensus, including supporting and identifying funding opportunities. This practice was implemented by the Lubelskie Voivodeship. The implementation of the mechanism of broker for innovation definitely fits in the RIS3 strategy for the Lublin region, in particular in pilot programmes implemented in the first period of RIS3 implementation and dedicated to all smart specialisation fields.

Sub-theme 'Innovation and the knowledge economy'

CLUSTERIX on cluster development

Competence Mapping (Lower Austria)

The Good practice “Competence Mapping” (developed within the Mechatronics Cluster in Lower Austria with regional support) deals with a systematic approach to identify strategically significant innovation potentials and to develop emerging regional economic fields of strength. In intensive workshops, companies learn to change their view from product related development to a clear definition of their competences and identification of completely new applications and markets. The cluster organisation identifies within the process unexplored topics of interest for several companies and can better support them going new ways, while gaining in-depth knowledge on the competencies of companies and working them into a mapping tool. The policy level acknowledges the potential of the initiative and supports the transition from an experiment towards a regional next practice.

This practice was transferred to four partners:

1/ South-Tyrol, Italy

Techno Innovation South Tyrol (TIS, partner 7) learned about the Competence Mapping tool in the CLUSTERIX kick-off meeting and deepened its knowledge in the staff exchange in Lower Austria (04/2013) and in Sweden (06/2013). In March 2014 TIS decided to implement the tool also in South-Tyrol and organised in June 2014 a training workshop (regional reflexion meeting) with all cluster managers in the region, the external expert on Competence Mapping from Lower Austria and, as a testimonial, the cluster manager of the Plastics-Cluster in Lower Austria. As a result the tool was implemented in 2015 with 10 companies financed through regional innovation vouchers to fine-tune and adapt the methodology. It is planned to extend it to a broader range of companies represented in the clusters. The tool is explicitly mentioned in the RIS3 of the Province of Bolzano South-Tyrol.

Furthermore, this approach was also applied for defining new application fields and niches into the new Technology park at Bolzano – to enrich the already strategically chosen areas such as Alpine Technologies, food and energy / environment.

2/ Värmland, Sweden

Tillväxtverket (partner 9) made substantial efforts to promote the CLUSTERIX project at national level and also directly to the regions, succeeding to attract the interest and actively involve the region of Värmland in the project’s activities. Representatives of region Värmland and the Steel and Engineering cluster Stalverkstad already participated in the Peer Group meeting in Malmö in June 2012. As the region was highly interested in the Lower Austrian good practice “Competence Mapping”, they also participated in the staff exchange in Lower Austria (04/2013) and co-organized with

Tillväxtverket a staff exchange in Sweden (06/2013). The Competence Map tool was discussed in detail in both meetings with the Lower Austrian Mechatronics Cluster Manager and the Austrian external expert.

In Karlstad the tool was also presented to potential beneficiaries in Sweden.

As a result the Steel and Engineering Cluster Stalverkstad in Värmland included the Competence Mapping tool in a collaborative project with Swedish and Norwegian clusters (project “iComp”). They participated in an in-depth training how to use the tool in Austria (March 2014), “translated” it to Swedish context and implemented the tool as a pilot activity in 10 cluster member companies (April – December 2014).

Experiences from these pilots have been shared also with other clusters in Sweden. Summary of experiences from the implementation process can be found below:

- A higher insight in the companies in the importance of knowing what the company offer and how to communicate it, especially when entering a new market.
- This has been crucial for the companies in the process before they enter collaboration with other companies on the export market.
- It takes time, the companies have to spend time and be active but it has been a good process for them, leading to strategically discussions in the companies.
- It is an advantage when the person doing the Competence Mapping has a good knowledge about the company; this has shortened the process considerably.

In the process of the project iComp, with Competence Mapping Steel and Engineering revealed that complementary companies were needed to put together an offer to the Norwegian Offshore industry. The contact with the initiative Offshore Väst financed by Vinnova has resulted in a presentation of Competence Mapping at their yearly meeting for all companies and plans for a closer collaboration between this organisation around Competence Mapping.

The exchange of experience between the Swedish and Austrian partners is being continued along the implementation process. The region of Värmland plans to extend the implementation of the Competence Mapping tool to a broader range of clusters.

3/ Lund, Sweden

The University of Lund (partner 2) learned about the mapping tool in the CLUSTERIX kick-off meeting and deepened its knowledge in the staff exchange in Sweden (06/2013). They decided to implement the tool as a pilot in one of the university institutes. Early December 2014, Lund University organised an open workshop and training session on how to use the tool with the help of the external expert from Lower Austria. Staff from clusters (water, student Innovation, ICT and open innovation) together with 2 staff member from the Steel and Engineering Cluster in Värmland par-

ticipated in the training. It is planned to use the tool also for the competence analysis of other institutes at the Lund University.

4/ Romania

National Institute of Research (partner 8) in close collaboration with the Romanian Cluster Association 'Clustero' and with the Romanian Ministry of Economy also identified the need for competences analysis in Romanian clusters. They organised an in-depth training on how to use the tool with the help of the external expert from Lower Austria in Bucharest in 10-13 November and on 12 December 2014. Following the "train of trainers" session, the competence mapping was applied at following levels:

- at the level of INMA and innovative SMEs: 8 to 16 enterprises in the field of textiles and agro-industry will be mapped in the period 2015-2016;
- at the level of the Cluster Association: establishment of the 2 cross-sectorial cluster networks, i.e. "creative industries" and "green technologies".

"France Green Plastics"

France Green Plastics (FGP) is an association created by three French clusters: Plastipolis, IAR and Céréales Vallée. The three clusters are situated in the different positions in the value chain of bio-plastics, from plant-based resources to finished plastic products. FGP is designed to combine the competencies of the clusters, and thus to facilitate innovation of biobased materials and their industrial application. This is achieved through regular meetings, a common communication platform and collaborative R&D projects. So far, the association represents about 150 members and has labelled 19 R&D projects.

- Lower Austria,Austria

  The Plastics-Cluster manager of Lower Austria learned about France Green Plastics in the peer group meeting in Bucharest (11/2012). The concept of this cross-sector R&D platform combined with joint internationalisation activities inspired him to set-up a cross-sector R&D platform for the plastics, the mechatronics and the textiles industry. Whereas there were already collaborative projects involving plastics and mechatronics experts, there was no collaboration with the textiles industry. Cross-sector collaboration provides a new opportunity to the textiles sector looking for new markets aside apparel and furnishing and helps to prevent from forever losing know-how with a long tradition. The set-up of the platform including coordination activities of the related cluster managers, 4 workshops for companies and researchers as well as first joint appearance on international trade fairs were financed in a project called PlasTexTron financed by the Austrian Ministry of Economy. As the interest of companies in continuation of the platform was high, the Plastics-Cluster of Lower Austria, in

agreement with the Regional Government Department for Economy and Technology, committed to continue its coordination activities in its annual Working Plan 2015 and further on if requested.

Cluster management association (Romania)

The Romanian Cluster Association 'Clustero' was founded in 2011 encompassing 20 founding members, including P8 (INMA) out of which 15 clusters. By the end of 2014 the number of cluster members had doubled. The aim of the association consists in advertising Romania and in the country's economic recovery and development, by supporting the creation, development and cooperation between clusters at regional, national and international level. In the Romanian understanding of the term, a cluster must consist of the following pillars: industry, academia, public bodies and catalyst institutions, the so called "4 leaves clover model".

Donor region: Romania

- Western-Transdanubia / Hungary

  West Pannon Region learned about the Romanian Cluster Association Clustero in the peer group meeting in Bucharest (11/2012) and in several other project meetings. At the occasion of the staff exchange in Györ/HU in April 2014; West Pennon region managed to enlarge the target group and invite cluster managers and policy makers from all over Hungary, as well as international cluster experts to exchange experience on cluster internationalisation and cross-sector collaboration. At the meeting the Hungarian cluster managers clearly expressed their need for closer collaboration within Hungary and decided to set-up – based on the Romanian example - the Hungarian National Alliance of Innovative Clusters (HNAIC) enabling cross-cluster meetings at a regular basis. So far Hungary lacked a permanent platform that a) provided a unified voice for clusters to help position them in policy, b) coordinated efforts to transfer knowledge and practices among innovative clusters, fostering cross-cluster cooperation and innovation, and c) helped in the internationalisation of clusters with methodologies and consultation.

  Using the above practice as a theoretical board to jump from, HNAIC is a bottom-up initiative aiming to be the No1 cluster development hub in the country. It is based on voluntary activities, a shared knowledge pool and focuses on organic development and providing meaningful services to all members. Also, learning about the many of the ERAI good practices related to internationalisation, HNAIC set itself the goal to provide internationalisation knowledge transfer and matchmaking services to all members and stakeholders. One such good practice that served as inspiration for HNAIC is the Internationalisation Action Plan that was developed by 2 Hungarian clusters from the West Transdanubian Region (PANFA Pannon Wood and Furniture

Cluster). The Ministry of Economy is in the process of assessing the possibilities to award extra points in future SF-funded calls for international cluster activities.

Business Roaming Agreement (BRA), Skâne (Sweden)

The “Business Roaming Agreement” (BRA), originally initiated by Cluster 55/Lund University, is a tool to support the internationalisation of SMEs. The BRA currently connects 67 clusters and cluster-like organizations with the goal of visualising the cross-border links between the participating networks and by doing so to support in particular SMEs in their internationalisation efforts. It involves 58 partners from Europe, 3 partners from America, 5 partners in Asia and one partner in Australia. The BRA allows all members of the participating clusters to access the infrastructure (e.g. offices or conference rooms) of the other partners for a certain period of time. There, they can become acquainted with their target market and establish contacts with potential business partners. They are supported in their business activities by local staff who shares its long-time experience in the regional economy. The BRA promotes internationalization activities and thus global competitiveness, particularly of IT and high-tech companies and lowers barriers to enter into new markets especially for SMEs. The BRA acts in this way as a kind of an exchange programme, in which companies around the world can access existing networks and premises and gain (local) knowledge of the industry. Member companies of the BRA partners therefore gain access to events, venues and offices from Malmö to London to Hong Kong.

- Karlsruhe / Germany

  Lund University (partner 2) presented the Business Roaming Agreement as a good practice tool for the support of SME internationalisation at the project meeting in Malmö and Lund in June 2012. The Economic Development Department (EDD) Karlsruhe identifies this good practice as very relevant for clusters in Karlsruhe, especially the IT cluster CyberForum e.V. and facilitates the communication and exchange of experience between CyberForum and Cluster55. In 2013 CyberForum and the EDD became partners of the Business Roaming Agreement. The resolution of Cluster 55 end of 2013 made it necessary to find new coordinators. In order to continue the BRA in a sustainable way and thus support the internationalisation efforts of companies, the EDD Karlsruhe and CyberForum e.V. decided to take over the coordination of the Business Roaming Agreement. The official handover of the network coordination from Lund University (formerly hosting Cluster 55°) to EDD Karlsruhe and CyberForum took place on 22 Octobe 2014 in Vienna, during the final conference of the CLUSTERIX project.

  It is also envisaged to further develop the tool with international partners in a future EU project.

Sub-theme 'Entrepreneurship and SMEs'

FIN-EN on financial instruments

'Investment process: Customer Relationship Management (CRM)' from DLGK (UK)

The Good practice transferred is related to 'Investment process: Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software' developed by DCLG (partner 13, UK). The key to any customer relationship management system is to ensure that reporting is clear, accessible and consistent. This applies also to funds managers. Through a proper CRM, applications for funding come go directly through the CRM system. They are automatically allocated to the most relevant Fund Manager. The Fund Manager updates progress of the application on the CRM system and can link this to emails, so when the manager sends email to applicant a copy can be attached to the CRM record. The Fund Manager can also put reminders on records of when monitoring and output information is due. The CRM system has improved the effectiveness and efficiency of monitoring the investment process and reporting. The Holding Fund at any time can see how many applications have been received, where from, source of referrals etc. and have designed reports within the system which enable them to quickly and accurately run progress monitoring reports. The CRM software is therefore a best practice that can be easily transferred to any interested region or country. The software that was purchased is a standard piece of software which can be easily adapted to each individual fund.

- Lombardy (IT)

  Finlombarda decided to transfer this good practice into its Regional Operational Programmes: in 2014, the Lombardy Region MA took the decision to change its monitoring system of Financial Instruments from the old system (called GEFO) to a new one (called SIAGE), in order to better manage data for the new ESIF programming period 2014-2020. In choosing a new IT system, the MA was inspired by the good practice of DCLG, the CRM software. Similarly to the good practice of Jeremie North West England, the SIAGE software allows applications to the Fund to go directly to the system and to automatically allocated these applications to the Fund Manager (Finlombarida). The Fund Manager updates progress of the application on the system. The Managing Authority can see at any time how many applications have been received, where from, etc. and have designed reports within the system which enable them to run progress monitoring reports quickly and accurately. The system has also been beneficial in providing assurances to the Managing Authority that the data they receive from the Fund Manager is reliable, up to date and with an ability to respond to information requests quickly.

Priority 1 – Sub-theme 'Entrepreneurship and SMEs'

TOURAGE on senior tourism

Senior Games (PL)

Lake Balaton Development Coordination Agency, HU (partner 4) imported the "WarmiaMazury Senior Games" good practice from the Association of Polish Communes of Euroregion Baltic, PL (partner 7). The aim of the practice is to promote sports and healthy lifestyle among people aged 45 and over. As the basis of the practice transfer, partner 4 used a sports event "Move Balaton" that is organised annually in the region. Inspired by the same practice, the Move Balaton sports series 2014 was extended with sport disciplines and competitions designed for seniors. These included penalty kicking and basketball throwing. The Move Balaton event will organise specific sports games for seniors in the future as the games of 2014 were successful. Partner 4 organised an extra study visit to the WarmiaMazury Senior Games held in August 2014. The representatives of Move Balaton and partner 4 participated in the study visit. The reason of the visit was to see how Senior Games event is organised and to discuss with the organisers about their financial mechanism and marketing solutions.

Nordic walking trails

Bourgas Regional Tourist Association, held several meetings with regional stakeholders where they discussed TOURAGE practices. As a result and based on the experience of Podkarpackie Region, PL, the association created the "Nordic Walking Centre around Lake Myczkowce". This centre has different Nordic walking trails and hires out sticks for the activity. Inspired by the Polish practice, the directorate of Nature Park Strandzha has developed Nordic walking trails and routes, attracting tourists interested in outdoor activities. Also some regional hotels have bought Nordic walking sticks which they hire out to customers.

Priority 1 – Sub-theme 'Entrepreneurship and SMEs'

DIFFASS on SME access to finance

Internet Based Micro Finance System (HU)

The practice 'Internet Based Micro Finance System' developed by Zala County Foundation for Enterprise Promotion in Hungary was successfully transferred to the Autonomous Region of Sardinia (IT) and to Castile and León 5ES). In both cases, the Hungarian online tool for managing micro loans has been adapted to regional needs, translated to the national lan-

guages of the transferring partners and launched in order to facilitate the management of micro loans in Sardinia and Burgos.

Priority 1 – Sub-theme 'Information Society'

DANTE on tourism in rural and mountain areas

Crete branding

During study visit in Crete, a practice called "Crete Branding" was presented as a public political initiative led by the region with main purpose to become recognised not only as place of "sea & sun & sand" but also as place for "green products and services". The partners from Crete shared their standards, control system and certifying system which was an important base for development of labelling system for quality products in the area of Heart of Slovenia. The Development Center of the Heart of Slovenia partner 10) has transferred the "Crete Branding" approach to develop its own labelling system in Central Slovenia.

Platform for tourist users

Partners InKnow Com (NL) and Bauernhofferien (D) worked together to stimulate cross border tourism in the Niedersachsen area (D) and the province of Drenthe and Groningen (NL). Good practices from the Dante project ware incorporated and adapted to local situation in the Joomla open source web platform. Special focus is given to the social media tools based on the practice "Listening Platform of the tourists users needs" from Piedmont Region while the practice "Arcipelago Campano Project" from Crete inspired the new functionalities booking and ecommerce module for stimulation of SMEs' entrepreneurship.

Priority 1 – Sub-theme 'Information Society'

ENGAGE on broadband

Mapping broadband demand

The practice developed by Lower-Saxony broadband competence Centre was transferred to Ernact and Donegal County Council. The practice on mapping broadband demand in Lower Saxony as a precursor and to accompany infrastructure roll out (this was first observed in study visit and then formed a key visit and discussion point of ERNACT staff exchange to Bremen/Lower Saxony) was incorporated when mapping demand analysis through the ICT context survey carried out in Donegal. The results of the survey have almready impacted Implementation the wider Donegal Digital Strategy.

Priority 1 – Sub-theme 'Employment, Human Capital, Education

Working4Talent on brain drain

The Rubicon Center practice developed by Cork Institute of Technology was transferred to the Sunrise Valley in Lithuania. Following the Rubicon centre, Sunrise Valley has approached local international companies to be a part of Sunrise valley Start Up space, just in the smaller scale for the beginning. The Sunrise Valley Start-Up space has worked as planned with the support of the Western Union Foundation. By 2015, the centre has attracted 21 innovative free-lancing talents in the space and 4 start-ups.

Examples of good practices transferred from *Priority 2* 'Environment and risk prevention'

Priority 2 – Sub-theme 'Natural and technological risks'

ERCIP on river corridor plans

Role of local political involvement in promoting and delivering River Corridor Improvement Plans

This practice was transferred from partner 6 (Geological Institute of Romania, RO) to partner 3 (Erft River Association, DE). The possibilities and benefits offered though multi-agency working was brilliantly illustrated through the example of Harsova Town in Romnania. Based on this experience, the Erft River Association has now included this external process in its working methodology, seeing both the synergy and financial benefits of jointly working with other organisations with similar aims and objectives. This 'two heads are better than one' approach is central to the philosophy of the ERCIP model.

River Focused Public Consultation

This practice was transferred from partner 1 (London Borough of Lewisham, UK) to partner 2 (Erft River Association, DE). Before the involvement of the project, the planning process organised by the Erft River Association have been very much expert driven. Based on the UK experience, the potential of involving local people in both the planning and implementation processes led to a more innovative public focused process - including the production of a film, participation in other public events such as local fairs, and through the opening of a Water Experience Centre - a place to engage local people in the impact of water in their area.

Priority 2 – Sub-theme 'Water management'

Aqua-add on water management (spatial planning)

Organise the opponent

Trans-Tisza region (partner 2, HU) has adopted a strategy to 'organize the opponents' (Trefpunt Groen), which is a good practice imported from Eindhoven. For Trans-Tisza, this means a shift from 'informing the public' to 'engaging the public'. The good practice was transferred in the specific context of Tócó developments, where two local events organised to consult residents and non-governmental organisations. It was a very effective to get different stakeholder/public opinion and recommendations, to improve the plan and to create support for it.

Stakeholder involvement

Imperia (IT) has adopted a good practice from Bremerhaven (DE), concerning stakeholder involvement through big on-site public events. The case study of "the new city center in Imperia" was presented at the exposition held during the international race "Vele d'epoca 2014" (more than 200,000 visitors during 5 days).The aim was to promote the multifunctional blue-green approach of this project to a broad public, suggesting how such an intervention can modify lifestyle for a large amount of people and not only for the residents in the neighbouring area.

Confluence practice

Sofia has adopted the good practices of Greater Lyon called “Confluence” and “Porte-des-Alpes”. These examples have shown that continuous cooperation is necessary to develop sustainable solutions such as a separate sewerage system. Due to the flat terrain of the Sofia field it is appropriate to apply the Lyon practice: Sofia is using the Lyon experience to develop a similar separate sewerage system in Krivina, Kazichene.

Priority 2 – Sub-theme ‘Waste management’

R4R on waste recycling

Sofia Municipality (partner 11) started a gradual introduction of bio-waste collection based on the system currently in place in Limerick (partner 7). Both the phases for introduction of bio-waste collection in Sofia (gradual introduction) and the methods for separate collection are inspired by the practice developed in Limerick. Currently bio-waste is collected only from commercial centres (shops), cafeterias, and maintenance of the green areas in the municipality but separate collection from households is planned as a next step. The experience gained for Limerick was crucial in particular related to waste types to be targeted, system equipment and collection schemes to be applied

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

GreenInfraNet on green infrastructure

"Integrating Green Infrastructure Information into spatial plans at local level"

This practice was transferred from Fingal County Council (IE) to Provincial Council of Barcelona (ES). The objective of the practise is to integrate biodiversity conservation aims and objectives into the spatial planning framework at local level. Barcelona focused their initiative on how to identify and analyse ecosystem services, as the main way to incorporate Green Infra-

structure and benefits into land planning a local scale. To do so, Barcelona has established different agreements with University Departments and Research Centres working with ecosystem services from different approaches. By the end of 2014, they have obtained the first maps of ecosystem services at the Provincial level and they have developed a pilot example in one municipality about how to apply this information for local planning. In 2015, Barcelona finalised the maps for the identification and assessment of the main ecosystem services at the Provincial scale.

"Landscape planning and participatory processes"

This practice was transferred from Emilia Romagna Region (IT) to Regional Development Agency for Small and Medium Sized Enterprise, BG), to Stara Zagora Regional Economic Development Agency, BG) and to Ghajnsielem Local Council (MT). The objective of this practice is the involvement of local communities in landscape planning and design. The Bulgarian Regional Development Agency applied this approach in the city of Plovdiv and along the Maritsa River in Plovdiv district. The area will be transformed in an attractive area with places for alternative tourism, education, 'green art' and sport. This will improve the relationship between nature and the city. Stara Agora is applying the practice in the municipalities of Stara Zagora and of Kazanlak. Both municipalities are preparing routes in semi urban and rural areas that are connected with the local landscape, traditions and culture. Ghajnsielem Local Council is applying the practice through several activities: the development of a network of pedestrian and cycle routes to improve access to the countryside and coast; the planting of trees to mark footpaths and cycle routes leading out of the village into the rural environment and the launching of an annual festival to encourage community participation and ownership and to promote Ghajnsielem and its attractions.

"Sustainable forest management practices in protected nature and private forest areas"

This practice was transferred from the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development (LV) to the Generalitat Valenciana (ES). The objectives of the practice are to create special measures for biodiversity protection on forest territories which are situated in protected nature areas and to demonstrate sustainable forest management to private forest owners. The practice was applied in the LIFE project "Renaix el Bosc" of Valencia since the spring of 2014. There is one demonstration site of 12 ha where elements of the practice were put into practice: reducing competition in key stands to improve seed production of broad leave species on the Tilio Acerion habitat in degraded areas (abandoned cropland and grassland with new hyper sense pine forests).

Priority 2 – Sub-theme 'Energy and sustainable public transport'

D-AIR on reducing CO2 emissions in airports

Energy management system

Based on the Mitteldeutsche Airport Holding in German, Malta International Airport plc (via Transport Malta, MT), the main Maltese airport operator, has implemented several measures including the replacement of incandescent lamps by chokes, the introduction of inverters in high load motor control centres, replacement of terminal building air-conditioning chillers by more efficient chillers and the introduction of highly efficient air conditioner units.

Priority 2 – Sub-theme 'Energy and sustainable public transport'

INVOLVE on mobility

Making public transport attractive

Prague (partner 9) has developed a Music in the Metro programme, inspired by the practice 'Public Transport: Culture On-Board' from Livorno (partner 6). Classic music concerts (14 concerts of 12 music bands/children or adult choirs/music schools) were held in metro station, accompanied by exhibitions of children's art on 18 December 2013. The event was organised in cooperation with public transport provider. Concerts were held inside four very busy metro stations (3 are the busiest in Prague).

No car to school

The city of Prague has adopted a travel-to-school action plan to promote walking and cycling based on several practices identified within INVOLVE (in particular 'Bicibus' from Reggio Emilia, 'Letzgogreen' from West Midlands and 'STARS' from Madrid). Prague runs 5 basic schools and 10 kindergarten with 3,122 children aged of more than 6 (the target group). The action plan was adopted on 7 October 14. By the end of 2014, walk-to-school initiatives, cycle training and education for pupils were organised in 3 schools (87 pupils) and one kindergarten (15 pupils). These activities were continued in 2015 and 2016..

Priority 2 – Sub-theme 'Cultural heritage and landscape'

CHARTS on cultural heritage added value for tourism sustainability

'Railway Heritage'

The practice was implemented in North Wales and it relates to the restoration, preservation and reopening of narrow gauge, steam hauled, historic railways for tourism development purposes. Enthusiasts acted to save and preserve the railway heritage and to show its impact on cultural and social history, restoring railway artefacts & buildings to their former glory.

Operating heritage trains requires teamwork and administration is usually implemented through organisations whose constitutions prohibit the distribution of profit, thus ensuring that any surplus is reinvested in the heritage railway. This good practice was transferred from Wales to South Pelion (EL) and Vidzeme Tourism Association (LV) through dedicated study visit to Ffestiniog & Welsh Highlands Railways, North Wales, in September 2012. The visit was dedicated to understanding the procedures, publicity, marketing and promotion, as well as investigation of restoration and preservation practices. Study visits to the recipient regions followed in June 2013 to South Pelion (Little Train of Pelion, Greece) and in September 2013 to Vidzeme (Gulbene Aluksne Banitis, Latvia). These two heritage railways have had a twinning arrangement (part of good practice), since they share the same inauguration year of 1903 and celebrated their 110 years anniversary with joint participation and festivals. The marketing and preservation practices from North Wales were invaluable to Pelion 'Trainaki' (Little Train) and Vidzeme 'Banitis' heritage railways and the regions they serve. The improved image of the heritage railways and their role in attracting all year round cultural tourism has been strengthened as a result.

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.

- 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 numerous examples where the transfer goes in the other direction (e.g. in MINI EUROPE where the Veneto region gets inspiration from the Hungarian Regional Knowledge Centre or in PERIRUBAN where Lille in France benefited from the experience of the Bulgarian partner, or in ERCIP where the river corridor approach is transferred from Romania to Germany).

- 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) For instance, the DART project dealing with demographic changes or the SIGMA for Water project tackling wetlands management have demonstrated transfers related to an ICT tool. The success achieved in this regards 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 that 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+ in the 2014 Annual Report or with DIFASS in the 2013 Annual Report illustrate this difficulty. The DIFFASS 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 practices transferred and policies improved.

As far as the **capitalisation projects** are concerned, 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 Actions 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
B3 Regions*	1,525,947.00	393	599,390,000.00	12	3
C2CN*	1,748,940.00	2	3,699,000.00	10	5
CO2FREE*	1,174,632.00	7	8,374,074.00	12	7
EFFMIS	1,294,072.00	10	13,557,710.00	9	2
ENTREDI	978,321.00	1	1,256,990.00	7	7
ERIK ACTION*	1,417,103.00	18	25,386,125.00	11	6
ESF6 CIA*	932,661.00	55	51,300,000.00	8	2
EU2020 going local	939,819.00	1	100,000.00	11	3
EUFOFINET	1,444,264.00	5	7,439,368.00	13	0
GEO.POWER	1,373,883.00	1	763,580.00	11	4
ICHNOS PLUS	734,037.00	1	927,800.00	6	2
IMMODI*	1,238,359.00	13	15,520,100.00	7	5
MKW*	1,347,461.00	25	34,033,750.00	11	7
PIKE*	1,145,714.00	6	7,272,900.00	9	4
PIMMS CAPITAL*	1,174,700.00	33	38,468,700.00	12	7
PLUS	1,219,600.00	3	3,354,613.00	11	7
RAPIDE*	1,194,558.00	38	44,998,000.00	17	11
SCINNOPOLI*	1,273,872.00	5	6,131,113.00	9	9
SufalNet4EU	1,370,116.00	22	29,806,527.00	15	5
WINNET 8	1,532,185.00	2	3,265,100.00	9	2
TOTAL (EUR)	**25,060,244.00**	**36**	**895,045,450.00**	**210**	**98**
TOTAL (without B3 Regions)	**23,534,297.00**	**13**	**295,655,450.00**		

** Fast track projects*

The amount of mainstream funds influenced is one of the very few indicators where the initial target set in the Operational Programme will not be met (MEUR 895 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 25 million that was invested into the 20 Capitalisation Projects may have an impact on EUR 895 million of national / regional funds (mainly ERDF). This means a leverage effect of 36. 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 13.

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 were 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), there was not systematic follow-up on the implementation of these Action Plans. In other words, most of the fundings indicated in the last column were not spent yet at the time the project closed. There were a few noticeable exceptions like 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 horizontal EU 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 CO2 calculator to encourage the dissemination of good practice in carbon reduction for the actors participating in the mini-programme (used to gauge CO2 savings across the programme). This calculator is used to assess the CO2 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

As demonstrated by the indicators related to publicity activities, the projects were very active in disseminating their projects and results. Most of the target values set in the Operational Programme are exceeded by far.

823 brochures were published and more than 3,500 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 5,400 '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 14,900 appearances in press and media. It is estimated that almost 625,000 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). 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

3.2 Priority 3

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

4. Technical assistance

Report 2015

In 2015, an amount of EUR 3,879,766.49 was spent on technical assistance. This amount allowed the financing of 27 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. Their activities were dedicated to tasks related to the closure of the Interreg IVC programme such as the monitoring of the progress reports submitted by the projects of the 4th call, making the final payments to projects and capturing and disseminating the projects' outputs and results. The preparation of the new Interreg Europe programme was also part of the JS activities in 2015. The new programme was approved by the EC in June 2015 and the first Interreg Europe projects approved in December 2015.

In addition to the staff costs mentioned above, the JTS 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 (hosting, maintenance and archiving of the website) as well as the Interreg Europe programme (developing Interreg Europe communication strategy, online strategic report, videos & social media campaigns, hosting maintenance and development of the Interreg Europe website).
- Organisation of the following communication events: 1 thematic capitalisation event in Brussels, 2 Lead Applicant Workshops in Prague & Brussels, 30 national info days (21 PS) and a National Contact Points meeting in Zagreb
- Expenditure for JTS office rental 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: investments in IT software and hardware, IT material maintenance and the programming of the project administration database and iOlf (further development and maintenance).
- Organisation and facilitation of programme meetings: 3 Monitoring/ Programming Committee meetings, 1 Group of Auditors meeting.

- 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 2014/2015 under the Group of Auditor's supervision and Audit Authority's responsibility

Final report

During the whole progamme lifetime a total of EUR 27,442,235.92 (incl. Norwegian and Swiss contribution) was spent on technical assistance out of a total available budget of EUR 28,081,886.00. This represents 98% of the TA budget available.

EUR 2,814,443.09 (10.02% of the total budget) was dedicated to the financing of the information points.

Table 12: TA budget allocation overview

	Total budget	Total Expenditures	
Total	€28,081,866.00	€27,442,235.92	Budget consumption rate: 98%
JS		€24,627,792.83	JS share in relation to total expenditures: 90%
IP		€2,814,443.09	IP share in relation to total expenditures: 10%

The JS expenditure, EUR 24,627,792.83 (90% of the total TA expenditure), was dedicated to the following activities:

EUR 18,096,273.07 was spent out of a budget of EUR 18,292,393.29 for Staff, Office, travel & accommodations & support services:

- Staff costs resulting for team of 8 persons in 2007, growing to 27 person in 2015 (after the integration of the Information Points tasks). Before IP closure in 2013 the TA budget was financing 23 JTS and 10 IP staff members.
- Office costs (rent, equipment, stationery, maintenance and utilities)
- Travel & accommodation costs
- Coordination and implementation of accounting, public procurement, paying and certifying procedures with the legal employer of the secretariat (GEIE GECOTTI) and the Certifying Authority

The actions focused on project advice, project monitoring, capitalisation and fulfilling regulatory requirements applying to the programme. In this context, the TA budget served to finance the following:

- EUR 363,187.59 for Programme meetings: 21 Monitoring Committee meetings, 10 Task Force meetings, 9 Group of Auditors meetings, 12 Programming Committee meetings to prepare the Interreg Europe programme
- EUR 803,553.38 for IT project administration database and project online reporting tool
- EUR 1,200,000.00 for the Certifying Authority
- EUR 676,189.73 for Programme evaluation, external expertise and Programme studies: drafting the Interreg Europe cooperation programme and carrying out its ex-ante evaluation (incl. strategic environmental assessment)
- EUR 900,091.00 for external audit: responsible for carrying out the audits on projects, preparing the content of the GoA meeting and drafting the annual control report and annual opinion under the Group of Auditor's supervision and Audit Authority's responsibility (an additional amount of EUR 116,488 for the IVC project audits having taking place in 2016 will be financed from interests)
- EUR 2,588,498.06 for Communication and dissemination:
    - Participation in awareness-raising events such as the Open Days; promotion of results through a travelling exhibition displayed in different programme Partner States.
    - 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:
        - 8 annual events,
        - Thematic programme capitalisation events
        - 37 information seminars in the field of finance & first level control, communication, exchange of experience, Lead applicant & Lead Partners seminars
        - 6 National Contact Points briefings

The information points expenditure, EUR 2,814,443.09 (10% of the total TA expenditure) was dedicated to

- A team of 10 staff members in 4 locations until 2013: Rostock (DE), Katowice (PL), Valencia (ES) and Lille (FR).
- Related office costs
- Communication tasks as above with a focus on the organisation of national information and dissemination seminars and support to the national contact points
- Support to the JS regarding the project advice, assessment and monitoring.

5. Information and publicity

Report 2015

Activities in 2015 clearly made the transition from INTERREG IVC to Interreg Europe, focusing on the similarities between the programmes and – more crucially – the differences for existing INTERREG IVC partners.

Particular support was given to national contact points to organise information seminars on this transition. In total, 34 events were organised in 22 countries – details below.

Final report

INTERREG IVC's communication strategy was approved in January 2008 and updated once in June 2011. Its overarching aim was to raise awareness of the programme, its activities and its impacts, in particular through attracting potential applicants, ensuring timely information for project partners/applicants, demonstrating how EU funds were being spent and promoting the added-value of the project results.

The main channels used to achieve the results were Events, Publications, Website and Media. A total of ten indicators measured the outputs and results of the communication activities, and all but one were exceeded during the programme implementation (see Performance table in annex 01, section 2.5).

The mid-term programme evaluation in 2010 and its update in 2013 also looked at the performance of communication. The remarks on differentiated messaging, specific tools for specific target groups and contacts with strategic communication partners were taken on board in the communication strategy update of 2011.

Recommendations from the 2013 evaluation update were mainly incorporated into the communication planning for Interreg Europe programme.

5.1 Programme results communication

Report 2015

2015 saw the dissemination of the INTERREG IVC story (whose development was described in 2014 Annual report). It is an online report, designed to be the legacy of INTERREG IVC. Published at http://report.interreg4c.eu it has attracted 11,663 sessions since it launched

(May 2015). Its seven sections cover the main features of the programme, each one illustrated with a case study project. One section focuses entirely on the benefits perceived per country, with an interactive map illustrating this.

Two applications for the European Commission's Regio Stars award were made to promote the successful projects Imagine and Green IT Net. Unfortunately they were not selected as finalists, but still contributes to awareness-raising of interregional cooperation.

The ENGAGE project was selected to represent INTERREG IVC in the project slam event, organised by INTERACT and the Luxembourg presidency on the occasion of the 25 years of INTERREG celebrations.

Final report

Showing the tangible results of interregional cooperation and demonstrating the value it adds to regional policy development was one of the key strategic objectives for the INTERREG IVC programme. Given the nature of cooperation and its focus on policy exchange and improvement (not investment or implementation), the immediate qualitative results can be sometimes difficult to quantify, while the policy impact can happen much later after the project ends. The programme aimed to use qualitative examples of how interregional cooperation benefitted the participating regions in various channels: events, publications, web tools etc. This took the form of:

- Interactive good practice exhibition: created in 2012 and displayed in Brussels during the Open Days week, the exhibition travelled to several programme member states for further display and dissemination. There were ten panels, corresponding to the programme sub-themes, and each panel had an audio-visual or interactive element: touchscreen, video, game allowing visitors to explore in detail the project results.
- Webdocumentary: www.changing-regions.eu published in 2013 explored through journalistic videos the impact interregional cooperation had in four regions. It provided a jargon-free look at cooperation from the point of view of a 'regular citizen'.
- Regions for Economic Change: INTERREG IVC contributed to the agenda of this conference organised yearly by the European Commission from 2007 until 2011, showcasing project results.
- Regio Stars award: INTERREG IVC projects (or INTERREG IIIC in 2008-09) were finalists in almost every Regio Star competition from 2008 to 2015, and won the award in 2012 with the GRaBs project. This award is organised by the European Commission to showcase good practices in regional development projects, and the

independent jury has consistently recognised the value of interregional cooperation projects.

5.2 Events

Report 2015

Since the INTERREG IVC closure event together with the new programme Interreg Europe launch event happened on 2-3 December 2014, the programme did not organise events on INTERREG IVC in 2015. The programme focused on promoting Interreg Europe and attracting relevant applicants during its first call for proposals. During the various events to present the new Interreg Europe programme, examples of successful the INTERREG IVC projects were presented.

5.2.1 Events for applicants and approved project partners

Report 2015

No events were organised.

Final report

In the course of the programme implementation INTERREG IVC programme has organised various events to support the approved project partners during their project implementation:

- Lead applicant workshops / seminars (20)
- Lead partner seminars (5)
- Communication seminars (3)
- Finance seminars (4)
- Online reporting (3)
- Exchange of experience seminars (2)
- Capitalisation workshops to present project results (12)

Lead applicant workshops / seminars were organised by the Information Points to assist potential applications to prepare their proposals. Participation was upon submission of a relevant project idea.

Lead partner seminars were organised a few month after the project approval of the new projects and were aimed to provide guidance on the project implementation. Joint Technical Secretariat gave financial and administrative information on carrying out project activities and explained face to face session conditions set with the approval on how to fulfil them.

Communication seminars were dedicated to give partners the tools and skills needed to communicate simply and effectively on their activities. They were held in cooperation with external experts who contributed to train the project partners on such topics as:

- Stakeholder mapping and messages
- Writing skills for different supports
- Social media tools
- Media relations
- Public speaking & presentation skills
- Organising events

Finance seminars were useful for project partners to understand the reporting process, auditing procedures and requirements and prepare well their progress reports.

Online reporting seminars were organised once the INTERREG IVC programme presented the new online reporting system and there was a need to explain to the projects how the new system will work.

Exchange of experience seminars were highly appreciated by projects and allowed them to exchange on the internal project management processes. The objective of the seminar was to understand and discuss the way the exchange of experience among partners was carried out, and how it could directly influence the policy frame-work of the participating regions.

- **Event for Capitalisation type of projects 'INTERREG IVC achievements in mainstreaming good practices'**
  28 November 2012, Larnaca (CY) – (80 participants)
- **Exchange of experience seminar 'Improving policy-making through learning'**
  25 June 2013 - Dublin (IE) (74 participants)

One-day **thematic capitalisation workshops** were organised (one 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 types of events were highly attended and appreciated by the participants. As the technology and internet connection quality towards the end of the programme implementation was advancing in the EU regions, observing the new trends and needs, the programme started to

change the concept of the events and started to preparation works to shift some of the physical event activities to the virtual environment.

5.2.2 Events participated in

Report 2015

In 2015 the programme actively participated in many other EU events where the opportunities to present the results of INTERREG IVC were combined with an introduction to 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
3 February 2015	Presentation at CORAL (Community Regions for Assisted Living) Network meeting	Brussels (BE)	45 participants
11 February 2015	Presentation at Action Cluster kick-off event	Brussels (BE)	60 participants
12 February 2015	Stand at DG Regio – internal raising awareness event about INTERREG	Brussels (BE)	100 participants, DG Regio personnel
19 February 2015	Presentation at Cluster Excellence Day	Brussels (BE)	60 participants from cluster support organisations
26 March 2015	Webinar for the European Federation of Agencies and Regions for Energy and the Environment	-	50 participants
15 April 2015	The European Regions Research and Innovation Network (ERRIN) - Interreg Europe info and brokerage session	Brussels (BE)	35 participants representing 35 regions
23 April 2015	Presentation at SMARSPEC (FP7 project) seminar	Brussels (BE)	20 participants
27 April 2015	Participation at GROW your REGIOn conference	Brussels (BE)	350 participants, including European Commission, EU networks, regional policy makers, managing authorities and cluster organisations.
30 April 2015	Presentation at EUROCITIES webinar	-	50 participants
7 May 2015	Presentation at the CoRs lunchtime briefing on Interreg, ENI-CBC and Interreg Europe	Brussels (BE)	130 people in the room, 150+ people following live on the web
26 May 2015	Participation at the Launch of European Smart Specialisation platform on energy (S3P-Energy)	Brussels (BE)	170 (+webstream): mostly representatives from different regions/regional offices in Brussels
3 June 2015	Presentation at Healthy Ageing conference	Brussels (BE)	80 participants from Public regional authorities

Date	Title of the event, contribution	Location	Number and profile of participants
3-4 June 2015	Presentation at the Week of Innovative Regions in Europe (WIRE)	Riga (LV)	60 participants
17 June 2015	Stand during Sustainable Energy week	Brussels (BE)	100 participants EU institutions and Regions
7-8 July 2015	The Meeting show 2015: Presentation of a case study - Interreg Europe hybrid event	London (UK)	100 event planners from Europe
15-16 September 2015	25 years INTERREG conference – INTERREG IVC project (ERUDITE) performance	Luxembourg (LU)	426 participants from 38 countries (programmes, MAs, etc.)
September 2015	Mobility challenge of Nord-Pas de Calais Region of France	Lille (FR)	Internal initiative, 60 participants from Secretariats located in Lille.
23 September 2015	Participation at CoRs workshop 'Policy learning and transfer between EU regions and cities: Success, learning stories and trends'	Brussels (BE)	25 practitioners from EU institutions, networking programmes and associations
20 October 2015	Presentation at Annual meeting of Europe Direct Information Centers	Brussels (BE)	500 Europe Direct Information Centres, Network Correspondents (EC Representations from 28 countries), COM Units from all DGs
20 October 2015	Presentation at Water task force for or Association of European Border Regions	Brussels (BE)	9 members or representative of bodies interested in the task force activities
26-27 October 2015	Presentation about Hybrid event during the workshop of V4 Countries on EU Funds Communication	Lednize (CZ)	10 representatives from HU, PO, SK, CZ in charge of Structural Funds communication
17-18 November 2015	IBTM World: showcasing Interreg IVC / Presentation of a case study - Interreg Europe hybrid event	Barcelona, ES	100 event planners from all over the world

In total, over 2300 people were informed about the INTERREG IVC achievements and the Interreg Europe programme during all the external events in the course of 2015.

Final report

Participating in external events has always been an important pillar in raising awareness of the INTERREG IVC programme and its results. A total of 217 events were participated in with presentations or stands, reaching a conservative estimate of 20,000 people.

Developing close links and partnerships with institutions who influence EU regional policy, such as the Committee of the Regions, DG REGIO and other partners, was important to

reach as wide an audience as possible and showcase the projects and good practices. The most important external events for the programme were:

- Open Days (CoR): the partnership with the Committee of Regions grew stronger each year so that by 2011 we were asked to present an exhibition of our results, and finding ways to make the programme more participative.
- European Sustainability week
- Summit of Regions and Cities (CoR)
- Regions for Economic Change event (EC): from 2007 to 2011, INTERREG IVC contributed to the programme with presentations and projects to showcase good practices.

In the early years of programme implementation, the JS and IPs attended a significant number of information events, organised by partner states, mainly to raise awareness of funding possibilities but later also to showcase project impacts. More details in section 5.3 below. A special focus was put on newcomers Bulgaria and Romania.

The later years of programme implementation offered many opportunities to work with other cooperation programmes, in particular the pan-European ones, and with thematic programmes or initiatives such as WIRE (DG INNOVATION).

5.2.3 Major information activity

Report 2015
The major information activity in 2015 was the publication and dissemination of the online report “The INTERREG IVC Story” (further detailed in section 5.1).

Final report
INTERREG IVC organised different types of annual activities during the implementation of the programme. The concept of the annual events evolved together with the needs of the programme and its stakeholders.

At the beginning of the programme implementation, INTERREG IVC organised large scale partner search events:

- **INTERREG IVC launch event ‘EU Interregional Cooperation Forum** in Lisbon (PT)’.
  21 September 2007 (800 participants)

- **Second EU Interregional cooperation forum** in Lille (FR)

27-28 October 2008 (over 1,000 participants)

- **Capitalisation conference** (Third EU Interregional cooperation forum) held in Gothenburg*, Sweden (SE)*
  8-9 December 2009 (150 participants)

- **Fourth EU Interregional Cooperation Forum**, Budapest (HU)
  3-4 February 2011 (500 participants)

Note: Due to the dates of the fourth call (December 2010-April 2011), the 4th EU Interregional Co-operation Forum (partner search event) was fixed for February 2011. There was no such forum in 2010.

As soon as projects started to show achievements, the focus of events changed and the programme started to organise good practice fairs and exhibitions in order to promote its projects:

- **Good practice fair** in Krakow (PL)
  24 November 2011 (225 participants)

- **Exhibition on INTERREG IVC Good practices during the Open Days** *in Brussels (BE)*
  8-11 October 2012 (1000 participants)
- **Joint exhibition with other programmes (INTERACT, URBACT, ESPON)** in Brussels (BE)
  7-10 October 2013 (1000 participants)

- ***INTERREG IVC thematic capitalisation event 'Policy learning, policy sharing'*** *in Brussels (BE)*
  22 May 2014 (300 participants)

At the end of the programme implementation, a closure event was organised together with the launch event of a new programme. Its success and innovative format of a hybrid event (combining physical and online audiences' active participation) was presented in several international events and meetings event.

- ***Interregional cooperation forum 'Europe, let's cooperate!'***
  2-3 December 2014 (850 participants on the spot, 1270 online participants)

INTERREG IVC annual events were well attended. Participants were highly satisfied with the format and the content of the events. Innovative tools (spot-me, event mobile application) were introduced used to improve the interaction between the participants and to help them to make relevant connections.

5.3 Information and National Contact Points

5.3.1 Information points

Report 2015

The information points (IPs) closed in 2013 so there are no activities to be reported.

Final report

The information points (IPs) North, South, East and West were set up respectively in Rostock, Germany; Valencia, Spain; Katowice, Poland; and Lille, France, and operational from 1 November 2007. From then on, they all contributed significantly to the information and consultation activities of the programme linked to all the calls for proposals. IPs organised seminars for lead applicants from their areas, provided consultations either at the national information events or through a project assistance form. In 2008 for example, more than 350 project ideas received written feedback from the IPs. With the fourth call, close to 1100 individual consultations on project ideas were provided either in a written form or at the information events (JTS and IPs staff combined).

The IPs contributed to the development and implementation of the programme communication strategy, tailoring it to the specific features of the calls and their regions. Before the last call for proposals in 2010, the IPs mapped the 'under-represented' areas of the programme in order to better target the communication activities linked to that call. A series of information seminars dedicated to introducing the programme to regions not yet represented in the programme took place in late 2010. At these events, partners from the respective geographical area of the programme, who already participated in INTERREG IVC projects, shared their experience on how they became involved, what the benefits were and what challenges they faced in such a project.

The tasks of the IP staff developed in the course of the programme implementation. From the start, they were contributing to the information and consultation activities of the programme in their respective areas. They organised lead applicant and lead partner seminars in their areas as well as information days, often in cooperation with the NCPs. In 2008, the monitoring committee approved the participation of IP staff in the assessment of applications. Since 2009, they were monitoring respective share of the approved projects. From 2012 till the closure of the IPs in mid-2013, the staff contributed to the programme thematic capitalisation ini-

tiative acting as liaisons between the capitalisation experts and the projects in their allocated topics and providing intellectual and administrative input.

All IPs published a brochure on the experience and achievements of the INTERREG IVC projects in their area: IP East in 2009, IP North in 2011, IP West in 2012 and IP South in 2013.

In 2013, the four IPs gradually wound down their activities and the offices in Valencia (ES) - South, Katowice (PL) - East, Rostock (DE) - North, and Lille (FR) – West, closed before July 2013.

5.3.2 National contact points

Most Member States set up national contact points in 2007 to help in promoting the programme and assist the Managing Authority, the Joint Technical Secretariat and the IPs in implementing the information and consultation activities in their countries.

5.3.2.1 National contact point coordination

Report 2015

On 12 February 2015, the JTS organised the last briefing for the national contact points of INTERREG IVC programme. The briefing focused mainly on the organisation of final dissemination events presenting the achievements of INTERREG IVC projects in respective countries. These achievements were to serve as an inspiration and a transition step for potential beneficiaries of the future programme - Interreg Europe.

At the briefing, the JTS clarified the funding rules for the dissemination events and provided the NCPs with a number of tools for their information activities in 2015, such as a template of event agenda and a power point presentation with the programme achievements' overview. The NCPs were introduced into a number of updates on the programme website for idea and partner search as well as good practice database. The transition to Interreg Europe and related support tools for applicants were also discussed during this briefing.

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In the course of the programme implementation, the JTS with the IPs organised six briefings for the NCPs in order to coordinate the information and communication activities across all 29 Member States.

The first coordination meeting was held in Marseille on 17 Septeber 2008, focusing on the roles and responsibilities of the programme bodies, an overview on the first call for proposals, tricky issues coming up in project activities, and a discussion among each of the IP areas on NCP activities.

The second meeting took place in Gothenburg on 7 December 2009 in the view of the third call for project proposals, which targeted Managing Authorities of the Structural Funds programmes. The NCPs received an update on financial issues such as the organisation of first level controls and second level audits simplification, and a training in assistance to applicants for that special call. The training focused mainly on identifying good practices and help in partnership building and Managing Authority involvement. They discussed a communication campaign targeting Managing Authorities with a brochure developed specifically for that call. The NCPs became informed of, and whenever possible also included in, an extended feedback on a project idea given at a consultation or with a project assistance form.

At the third meeting in Berne in 2010, the IPs presented and discussed with their respective NCPs the results of the underrepresentation mapping, a geographic analysis of (non)participation in the programme by NUTS2 regions, and agreed on the timing and location of national or regional seminars targeting the underrepresented regions.

In 2011, the NCPs started playing a stronger role in advising applicants on the letters of support needed from a regional organisation not involved in a project but in charge of a policy addressed by the partnership. The NCPs also carried out a policy relevance check on the information provided in project applications.

In December 2011, the JTS with the IPs sent a questionnaire to all NCPs in order to evaluate the support of the IPs provided to NCPs and better identify the INTERREG IVC promotion possibilities in each Member State. The communication and support from IPs was evaluated as good (4/5). The results of the questionnaire highlighted a need for country specific information for each Member State.

The fourth NCP briefing took place in June 2012 in Copenhagen and focused on the possibilities to promote the programme's achievements in each country. Results of the meeting turned into several activities conducted in the second half of 2012 and the first half of 2013, for example, preparation of national dissemination workshops (see more in the section be-

low), country-specific articles, and a fact sheet on the 11 thematic objectives defined by European Commission for the future funding period.

The fifth briefing presenting information about the future programme was in Rome in October 2014. The NCPs received a support pack for their information and communication activities including standard presentations on the achievements of INTERREG IVC and the 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 last briefing in February 2015 focused mainly on the organisation of final dissemination events presenting the achievements of INTERREG IVC projects in respective countries and coordinating the transition to Interreg Europe.

5.3.2.2 National events and other initiatives

Report 2015

In 2015, the NCPs organised 34 national and regional seminars presenting the achievements of INTERREG IVC projects, providing inspiring examples of interregional cooperation and first insight into the requirements of the INTERREG IVC successor programme Interreg Europe to its potential beneficiaries. An overview of events is provided in the table below.

Table 14: Overview of national events

12-Jan-15	Lyon	France
21-Jan-15	Midland region	Ireland
04-Feb-15	Sliema	Malta
06-Feb-15	Lille	France
26-Feb-15	Madrid	Spain
03-Mar-15	Poznań	Poland
04-Mar-15	Ljubljana	Slovenia
12-Mar-15	Katowice	Poland
17-Mar-15	Toruń	Poland
18-Mar-15	Riga	Latvia
20-Mar-15	Stockholm	Sweden
25-Mar-15	Sofia	Bulgaria
31-Mar-15	Bucharest	Romania
15-Apr-15	Rome	Italy
22-Apr-15	Berlin	Germany
23-Apr-15	Linz	Austria

24-Apr-15	Brussels	Belgium
28-Apr-15	Budapest	Hungary
29-Apr-15	Sliema	Malta
25-Jun-15	Lisbon	Portugal
06-May-15	Prague	Czech Republic
06-May-15	Warsaw	Poland
06-May-15	Bratislava	Slovakia
11-May-15	Paris	France
12-May-15	Nicosia	Cyprus
12-May-15	Paris	France
12-May-15	Vilnius	Lithuania
19-May-15	Sofia	Bulgaria
26-May-15	Helsinki	Finland
27-May-15	Zagreb	Croatia
27-May-15	Ljubljana	Slovenia
11-Jun-15	Tullamore	Ireland
22-Jun-15	Thessaloniki	Greece
30-Jun-15	Bucharest	Romania

In addition to organising the seminars, national contact points also carried out their own national promotional or information activities, according to each country's needs and capacities, such as:

- Providing national specific information to potential beneficiaries
- Disseminating programme information to their general contact list
- Assisting in partner search and project idea tools offered by the programme.
- Offering bilateral meetings to prospective applicants upon request.
- Issuing press releases

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The national contact points supported the programme implementation with a number of information and communication initiatives and events, very often linked to the upcoming calls for project proposals. In several Member States, the NCPs organised national information events already to promote the first call for proposals. With the second call, information days in 14 Member States had a JTS representative present. 16 national information seminars organised in cooperation with the JTS and IPs took place in 2011 before the fourth call for proposals closed.

The NCPs organised also other kinds of seminars. In 2010, NCPs of Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany and Poland organised seminars for their first level controllers and project partner finance staff from running projects.

As the programme implementation progressed and the projects had first results to show, the NCPs held national and regional dissemination events. First such events took place in 2013 in the Netherlands, Slovenia, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Poland and France. In 2014 and 2015, the NCPs had more achievements to present and also give an overview of the funding opportunities in 2014-2020 period. 13 NCPs held a dissemination event in 2014 and 22 NCPs in 2015.

Most of the dissemination events were solely devoted to INTERREG IVC/ Interreg Europe target audience, but some NCPs decided to hold the dissemination events for a combined audience including also potential beneficiaries of the transnational cooperation programmes in their countries (for example, Central Europe, Baltic Sea Region, North West Europe and North Sea Region programmes). One of the events was organised by Croatia, not a Member State of INTERREG IVC, to present the achievements of the former programme to potential beneficiaries of Interreg Europe.

The NCPs supported the JTS and IPs in a number of publication activities. They linked their institutional websites to the programme website and informed their national audience about important programme updates, events and promotional tools, such as the web documentary or the INTERREG IVC story. In 2010, they helped in proofreading the national language programme leaflets before print and later distributed them widely at their national and regional events linked to the fourth call for proposals. In 2014, the NCPs in France decided to translate 12 thematic capitalisation brochures and make them available at their national website.

The programme's experience, confirmed by the mid-term evaluation and its update, was that national programme representatives are crucial for providing programme information in national language, and for reaching specific groups of beneficiaries. The different levels of resources and capacities to implement activities led to the proposal for Interreg Europe to finance some contact point activities from technical assistance budget.

5.4 Website and Social media

5.4.1 Website

Report 2015

2015 marked the transition between INTERREG IVC and Interreg Europe. In the first half of the year wwww.interreg4c.eu remained the main source of information for both entities until www.interregeurope.eu was launched in October 2015. By end of 2015, no further updates were made on the INTERREG IVC website.

In 2015 new modules for partner search and project ideas were developed and successfully used to help applicants to prepare for the first call under Interreg Europe. By October 2015, this tool benefited from **3441 registered users and 145 ideas were submitted online**.

In terms of traffic analysis, specific campaigns (mainly launch of the assistance to applicants and first call for projects) and production of 'The INTERREG IVC story' online activity report increased the traffic to the website significantly. While the web visits for 2014 totalled 189,212, in 2015 it was close to 335,000.

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 co-operation. This section attracted over 18% of the visitors to the programme website. The newly developed partner search and project idea gained another 6% of the visitors.

The challenge of a smooth closure and switch towards Interreg Europe was backed by actions such as:

- Launch of an online activity report that presented in a clear and visual way the main achievements of INTERREG IVC and what will follow next: http://report.interreg4c.eu/
- Static Interreg Europe website released before the launch of the first call for projects

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The INTERREG IVC website was launched in 2007 and developments evolved considerably over time to respond to the audience needs. From providing a partner search and project idea sharing function while calls were open, to publishing focus articles on project results. If initially the website was a one-way communication tool, from the programme towards its public, in time this evolved in a more bidirectional model (interactive tools were integrated). The importance of online communication increased in the recent years in an exponential way and the programme tried, throughout its website, but as well by producing other digital publications, to provide a rich online experience.

The best way to evaluate the success of the INTERREG IVC website is to look into the traffic details. A clear analysis can be performed starting only in 2012 – the moment when the pro-

gramme changed its website provider and put in place different monitoring tools (Google Analytics). A constant progression of traffic can be observed between 2012 and 2015: **if in 2012, 41,851 sessions[2] per year were counted, in 2016 this reached 334,241 (almost 8 times more)**.

Over time and with the development of features such as project idea and partner search tools, the programme managed to increase the number of returning users. This is a very positive aspect given that it corresponds to a change in our communication strategy: more focus on keeping the website updated and giving the users reasons to return to consult it.

Apart from www.interreg4c.eu, our programme produced additional online products such as:

- Stories of changing regions webdocumentary - www.changing-regions.eu: based on a series of videos, this digital product shows that at the heart of cooperation are the men and women who want to do more, or do better, by building links and learning from others.
  3,606 sessions since launched (end of 2014)
- The INTERREG IVC story - http://report.interreg4c.eu/ : a different kind of activity report that summarises the results after seven years of implementation, and presents concrete examples of projects.
  11,663 sessions since launched (May 2015)

If the website itself kept a quite classical presentation of information, these side initiatives modernised our image towards our public and transformed INTERREG IVC in a more accessible/friendly organisation.

Initiatives such as facilitating the networking between people in order to improve the quality of partnerships were declined offline (events) and online (project idea and partner search tool). The success of the online tool made us realise the importance of building a community around our future programme – idea that was taken on board for the new www.interregeurope.eu website. This would create a good basis for the further development of the policy learning platforms.

[2] *A session is the period time a user is actively engaged with a website. When using Google Analytics as tool to monitor website performance, the number of session seems to be the most relevant one.*

5.4.2 Social media

Report 2015

Activities on INTERREG IVC social media accounts in 2015 related mostly to disseminating the final output 'the INTERREG IVC Story' and preparing the transition to Interreg Europe social media accounts, opened in October 2014.

INTERREG IVC twitter account, updated with specific cover image to direct followers towards Interreg Europe

Some facts and figures about the evolution of our social media presence by end of 2015:

Table 15: INTERRG IVC presence on social media

Channel	Objective	2014	2015
Facebook: www.facebook.com/interreg4c	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.	679 fans	1,248 fans
Twitter:	Primarily aimed at developing an 'expert' community around the		

@interreg4c	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.	1,354 followers	2,057 fans
LinkedIn groups INTERREG IVC projects group	Build a professional community around project management. Discussion topics, relevant issues for project partners: project closure, final events etc.	419 members	419 members (restricted to IVC project partners)

Table 16: Interreg Europe presence on social media

Channel	Objective	2014	2015
Facebook: www.facebook.com/interregeurope	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 ('behind the scenes'), partner activities alongside relevant official information. Works very well when relevant content is shared (photos, videos) or major news announced: opening of call. Informal tone.	692 fans	3,323 fans
Twitter: @interregeurope	Particularly useful to stay informed with what is happening in our field (thematically, on projects side) and engage with people that are interested in the same topics. Gain visibility among influencers. The emphasis was on 'live-tweeting' programme events and therefore opening the discussion with people that can't be present on spot.	397 followers	1,881 followers
LinkedIn company page www.linkedin.com/company/interreg-europe	Create a business presence inside the professional community that Interreg Europe has vocation to gather around it. Updates related to important moments in the life of the programme - approval, launch of call, jobs, major events etc. & associate groups for more targeted communication (e.g. groups per thematic interest).	596 followers	2,313 followers

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In the field of online communication, social media is for some years now a necessary channel for organisations that aim to disseminate information effectively. It was therefore only natural for INTERREG IVC to join the family of EU programmes in the field of territorial cooperation that use with success this type of online communication tool (URBACT, INTERACT – especially through EC Day). Being convinced by the added value of such tools, the programme decided to establish accounts on social media channels such as facebook and twitter (starting from Autumn 2013), and continued its activity on LinkedIn and youtube (pre-existing accounts).

When establishing the social media accounts, the programme had as objective the harmonisation in terms of brand awareness throughout the web: the same logo, cover image, website reference and description were used for describing INTERREG IVC entity. Following the logic of digital communication and interconnectivity between various online presences, all social media accounts were connected to interreg4c.eu website (icons at the right top corner of our homepage). INTERREG IVC was present on social media for an easier reach of its audience, but the end objective was always to direct people towards our website.

If in 2013, our plan of action on social media was much based on experimenting, in time our knowledge got deeper and the best practices multiplied.

The approach towards establishing a community management was reinforced over time:

- actions were in-line with findings from **close monitoring and analysis** throughout use of special tools such as Hootsuite;
- with a goal of **expanding the community and reach**, links with influential and affiliated online presences were established
- the main focus was not only on disseminating information, but rather on **creating opportunities for conversation and easy interaction**. In this sense, offline actions and events were supported by a strong interactive aspect on social media.

  E.g.: special dedicated hashtags were associated to our biggest events (e.g. #europecooperates) and people were invited to join the conversation even if not present on spot.
- special attention given to having a **prompt response** for all social media interactions with our followers and fans
- a constant research for providing **relevant content** to our audience

The monitoring records show that presence on social media is growing at a regular pace and that followers find updates relevant (good engagement and share rates).

5.5 Media and institutional relations

Report 2015

Networking programmes

One meeting of the four networking programmes took place in May 2015, in Valencia, hosted by INTERACT.

Both communication and capitalisation activities of the four programmes were discussed. A joint activity – a workshop during Open Days 2015 - was successfully carried out.

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. The programme assisted the managing authority with the organisation of the May 2015 meeting of the network which happened in Lille, and a presentation was made to the participants by the programme director.

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Media monitoring through a Google alert keyword search tool, and via the cooperating national contact points, uncovered 429 appearances in local or national media over the course of the programme implementation.

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 ac-

tions. 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

The programme's partnership with the Committee of the Regions has been nurtured and developed for mutual benefit during the implementation. As a regular contributor to the Open Days, often with innovative and participative workshops and sessions, the CoR organisers regularly debriefed with INTERREG IVC, and built on our participation year after year.

In 2013, we partnered with CoR to provide project examples for their series of events on the EU2020 strategy; and attended the bi-annual Summit of Regions and Cities in Athens in 2014. We also have agreements to disseminate public consultations which we have done on two occasions and the CoR disseminated the public consultation for Interreg Europe.

European Parliament

Following recommendations from the external programme evaluation, more attention was paid to developing relations with the European Parliament from 2011. The programme presented in a hearing to the REGI committee that year. In 2013, the four pan-European programmes presented a paper on complementarities. Rapporteurs from that committee were invited to present at INTERREG IVC annual events.

European Commission

Beyond the expected cooperation between the programme and its desk officer from DG REGIO, there have been many opportunities for the programme to work with thematic and geographic units. While an optimum information flow was difficult to achieve, the programme strived to keep channels open with DG REIO, DG MOVE, ENTR, INNOVATION and so on.

From 2007-2011, the programme contributed to the Regions for Economic Change initiative.

- **External cooperation**

Networking programmes

From the programme's inception, finding synergies with the other pan-European programmes has been one of the more important networking activities. From information exchange on processes and procedures, to coordinated thematic activities, there has always been a fruitful cooperation. Twelve meetings in total took place, and an annual plan of joint activities implemented: from joint workshops during the Open Days, to a joint strategic paper on the complementarities of the four programmes, presented to the European Parliament in 2013. These meetings have also allowed the programmes to distinguish themselves while carrying out activities that could potentially overlap, such as capitalisation exercises.

INTERACT

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