Harmonised implementation tools
Intervention logic fact sheet
(Version 3.0 - November 2023)

Purpose of the document

In this paper we present the steps required to establish the intervention logic of the Interreg Programme, and design its priorities. In the second part we offer guidance on developing project intervention logic and demonstrate how are the two intervention logics linked using the approach agreed for in Harmonised implementation tools.

Background

The regulatory framework for territorial cooperation published in June 2021 has established that programmes should have simplified, streamlined and logical performance frameworks that should be built from the following elements:

- Five Policy Objectives for ERDF and a pre-defined set of specific objectives for reaching these objectives (according to ERDF/CF Regulation, Article 3)
- Two Interreg-specific objectives (Interreg Regulation, Article 14)

How to build an intervention logic in an Interreg programme?

Selection of policy objectives (PO)

Based on the analysis of the programme area and identified joint needs and challenges, programmes have to select among the 5 Policy Objectives and the 2 Interreg-specific objectives.[1]

Interreg-specific objectives are considered as policy objectives. These are:

- "A better cooperation governance" (Article 14(4), Interreg Regulation) - mainly for "internal" Interreg programmes within the boundaries of the EU

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[1] The "Better governance objective" is for "internal" Interreg-Programmes within the boundaries of the EU, whereas the 'Safer Europe objective' is an option for external cooperation programmes

- "A safer and more secure Europe" (Article 14(5), Interreg Regulation) - mainly an option for external cooperation programmes.

For most Interreg programmes the actions contributing to one policy objective (PO) will be implemented through one corresponding priority.

The choice of policy objectives for cross-border and transnational cooperation programmes must respect the rules on thematic concentration (Article 15(1), Interreg Regulation).

For transnational cooperation programmes, the chosen policy objectives have to correspond to the priorities set in the relevant macro-regional strategies (Article 15(3), Interreg Regulation).

Selection of specific objectives (SO)

A priority must consist of one or more specific objectives as set in the Regulation where a Policy Objective based on the ERDF-Regulation has been chosen. Interreg-specific Objectives are considered as policy objectives – each of the Interreg-specific objectives covers several specific objectives.[2]

Description of types of actions

Actions to be supported that will deliver outputs and lead to the attainment of specific objectives and results have to be described. Corresponding categories of intervention should be listed.

Selection of output and result indicators

For each specific objective, a limited number of output and, corresponding, result indicators have to be either
- selected from the list of common indicators (Annex 1 of ERDF Regulation) or
- defined for the programme.

If possible, the common Interreg indicators should be used in the first place. These indicators already highlight the cooperation aspect required in Interreg. Specific objective, to which the indicators are linked, provides the additional information on the context; i.e., where cooperation takes place (e.g. in smart specialisation or climate change risk mitigation).

Where common output indicators cannot be applied or if the corresponding pair of indicators does not make sense, programme-specific indicators must be identified.

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[2] "A better cooperation governance" covers the following specific objectives:

(a) enhance the institutional capacity of public authorities, in particular those mandated to manage a specific territory, and of stakeholders (all strands);

(b) enhance efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens, civil society actors and institutions, in particular with a view to resolving legal and other obstacles in border regions (strands A, C, D and, where appropriate, strand B);

(c) build up mutual trust, in particular by encouraging people-to-people actions (strands A, D and, where appropriate, strand B);

(d) enhance institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders to implement macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, as well as other territorial strategies (all strands);

(e) enhance sustainable democracy and support civil society actors and their role in reforming processes and democratic transitions (all strands with involvement of third countries, partner countries or OCTs); and

(f) other actions to support better cooperation governance (all strands).

For programmes intending to merge several of the proposed objectives, or for those with their own ideas, it is recommended they choose point (f) other actions.

For output indicators the baseline must be set at zero and for result indicators, if possible and feasible, achievements in previous programme periods should be taken into account.

In the period 2021-27 the performance framework includes all indicators. A methodology paper should explain the choice of indicators. In the case of programme-specific indicators, the paper should include all relevant technical information on the indicators such as a concise definition and measurement unit, etc. The methodology paper should be available for the Commission upon request.

Financial allocation per priority

The scope and targets of each priority should be proportionate to the amount of funding available.
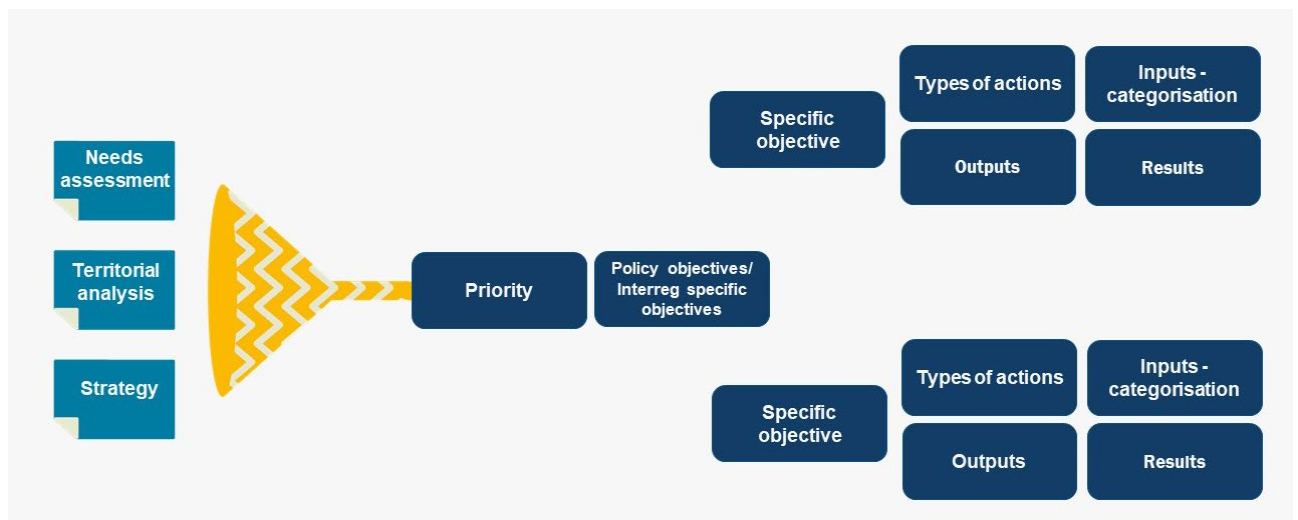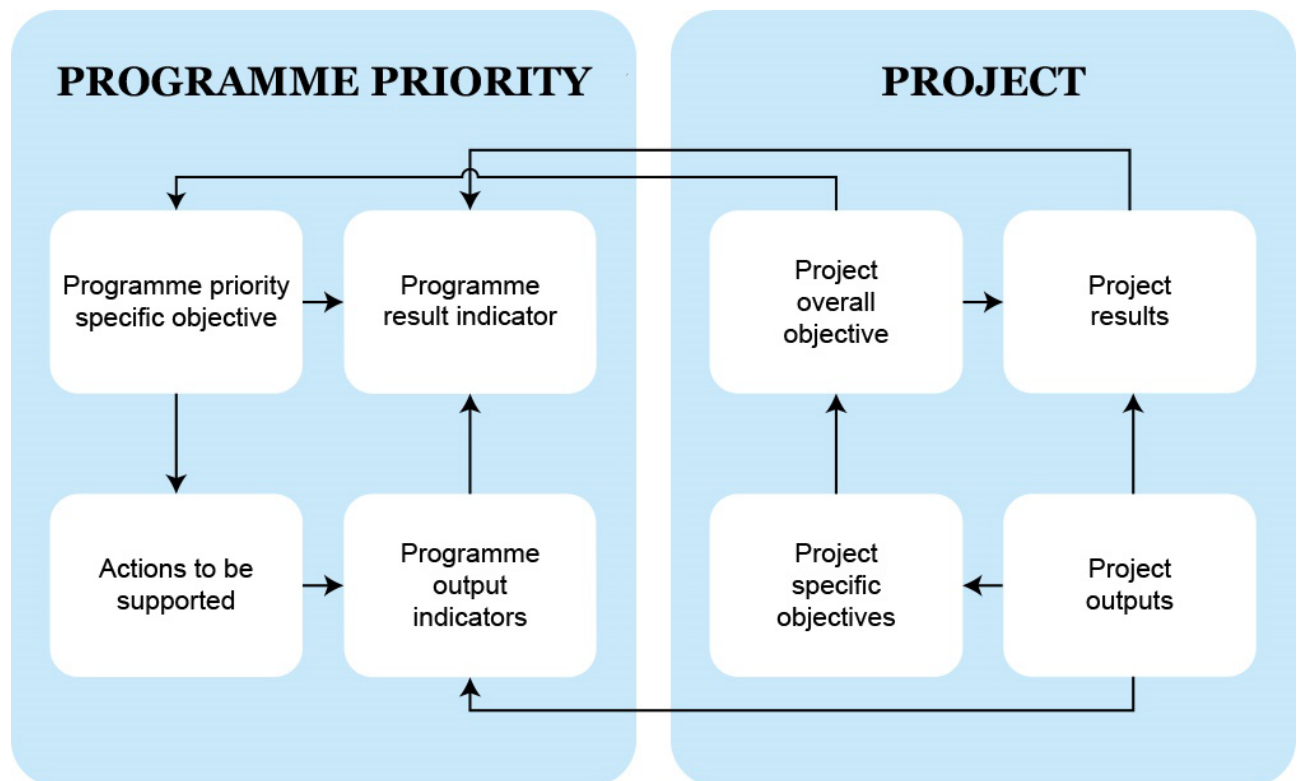
Project intervention logic

The programme intervention logic should be mirrored in the project's intervention logic. That is to say, each project applying in an Interreg programme should be able to define outputs and results that will feed into the programme output indicator and programme result indicator. The HIT application form allows each project to define its own outputs and results. However, in order to be able to aggregate indicator data at programme level, projects must use the same measurement unit as used for programme output and result indicators.

The project intervention logic should present a coherent and logically-correct progression from activities, work packages, outputs and all the way to results. Projects must provide, already at application stage, the necessary information for programmes to assess their contribution to the achievement of the programme-specific objectives by contributing to the achievement of programme output and result indicators.

The whole HIT application form has been designed to support this need and has been developed specifically for the project intervention logic. All fields are linked to allow data to be entered only once to maximise data consistency and reliability, and to comply with single-entry requirements. In the long-term, this ensures that the data is manageable and can be aggregated – both for projects during their reporting, and for programmes to monitor progress towards their expected milestones and results.

The figure below shows the causal linkages in the HIT application form. Please note that the section names and numbering may change when implemented in an electronic system.

How to build the project intervention logic?

Link to the type of action

- The programme has defined types of actions which intend to frame the major types of projects supported in a priority, respectively, under a specific objective.
- The project should link to one type of action (in many programmes these are considered indicative; thus, this is not necessarily a pre-requirement).

Define the project overall objectives and link it to the programme priority specific objective

- Project defines a project overall objective, if this is required by the programme[3].
- Choose a programme priority specific objective to which the project contributes and describe how it will contribute. It is important to secure consistency between the project overall objective and the programme priority specific objective, as this will help focus the reach of the project and underline what impact the project will make.

Define project specific objectives

- The project can define a number of project specific objectives. Each project specific objective will be supported by a work package.
- The project specific objectives need to show a direct contribution to the project overall objective. If the project has not defined a project overall objective, the project specific objectives should clearly demonstrate how they will contribute to the achievement of programme priority specific objective.
- Each work package, created to support the delivery of the project specific objectives, outlines and describes which activities and outputs support the achievement of this objective.
- It should be possible, at least to some extent, to measure the achievement of project specific objectives by monitoring the delivery of project outputs.

Define project outputs and link them to the programme output indicators

- Project outputs are specific elements that can be quantified and that align with a programme output indicator. Project output and programme output indicators need to have the same measurement unit to be able to aggregate them and monitor progress on programme level.
- An aggregation of project outputs based on programme output indicators is essential for the achievement of output targets set on the programme level. Project specific output indicators are not encouraged, because they fall out of programme intervention logic and therefore don't contribute to the achievement of programme objectives and indicators.
- It is mandatory for the project to contribute to at least one programme output indicator.
- It is possible for several project outputs to contribute to the same programme output indicator.

Develop a work plan

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[3] This is not mandatory in all Interreg programmes.

- The project work plan must explain what needs to be done to deliver project outputs and results, in order to achieve project specific objectives.
- The work plan is divided into a number of work packages, which are based on project specific objectives and are further broken down into activities.
- A side-product of the project that contributes to the development of a project output can be listed as a deliverable of an activity in the work package. However, not every activity has to have a deliverable. Deliverables are not a part of the intervention logic, as there is no causal link between them and project outputs.

Define project results and link them to the programme result indicators

- Indicate to which programme result indicator, corresponding to the chosen programme priority specific objective, the project will contribute.
- Define project results that will contribute to the chosen programme result indicators.
- The measurement unit is pre-defined by the programme result indicator.

Project intervention logic glossary

Term	Definition
Project overall objective	Provides overall context for what the project is trying to achieve, and aligns to programme priority-specific objective. It relates to the strategic aspects of the project.
Project specific objective	A tangible statement describing what the project is trying to achieve. It refers to the project outputs. It can be evaluated at the conclusion of a project, to see whether it was achieved or not.
Project result	The immediate advantage of carrying out the project, telling us about the benefit of using the project outputs. It should indicate the change the project is aiming for.
Project output	The project output is the outcome of the activities funded, telling us what has actually been produced for the money given to the project. It can be captured by a programme output indicator, and directly contributes to the achievement of the project result.
Project work package	A group of related project activities required to produce the project outputs.
Project activity	Specific task performed for which resources are used. It's a work package component which may or may not result in a deliverable or an output.
Project deliverable	A side-product or service of the project that contributes to the development of a project's main output.