Welcome to Vienna!

5th NCP network meeting

Besiana Ninka | Interact | 1-2.10.2024

Interact

Co-funded by the European Union
Interreg

Aim of the meeting

- ✓ Share knowledge and practices of the daily work of NCPs;
- ✓ Discuss challenges and practices related to the different stages of the project lifecycle;
- ✓ Learn from other EU funded programmes NCP networks
- ✓ Boost our exchange and strengthen the NCPs network

Let's agree on a few rules

- Be active – contribute, ask and share your thoughts and experience with the colleagues;
- This network meeting is informal and an open exchange;
- Be curious and patient with the colleagues;
- There is no right or wrong approach; and
- All questions and inputs are relevant for the group discussion.

Agenda/ Tuesday 1 October

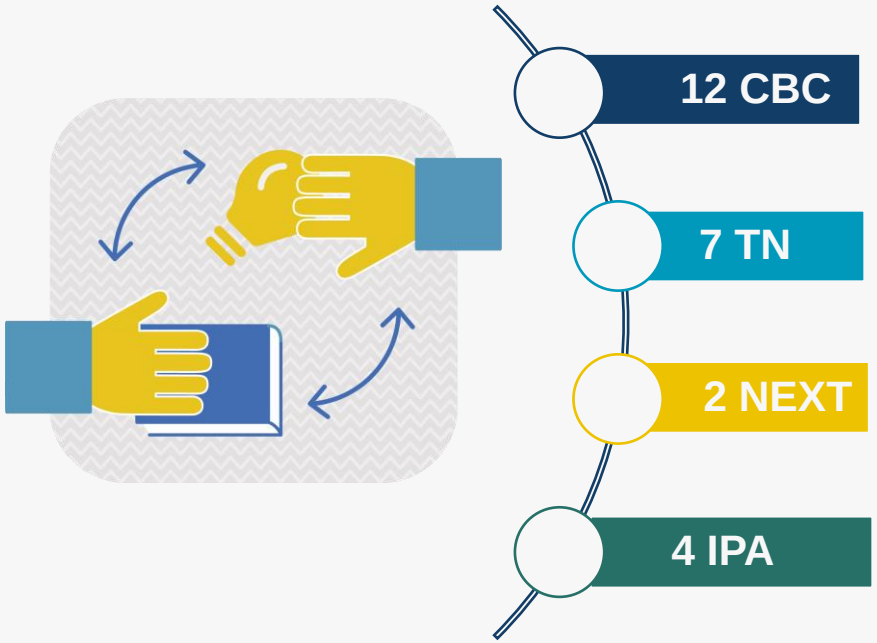
01	02	03	04	05
Intro and objective of the meeting	Current implementation challanges of NCPs	Learning from other NCP networks Horizon Europe and CERV programmes	Cooperation actions, tools and role of NCPs	Capitalisation activities to boost cooperation and communication tools for capitalisation

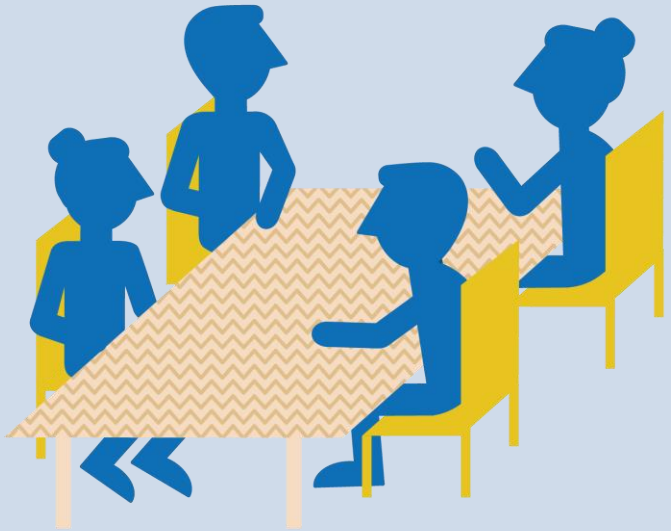
Agenda/ Wednesday 2 October

01	02	03
Current implementation challanges of NCPs (contination)	AOB	Wrap-up and future plans of the netwok

Who is in the room

23 Programmes





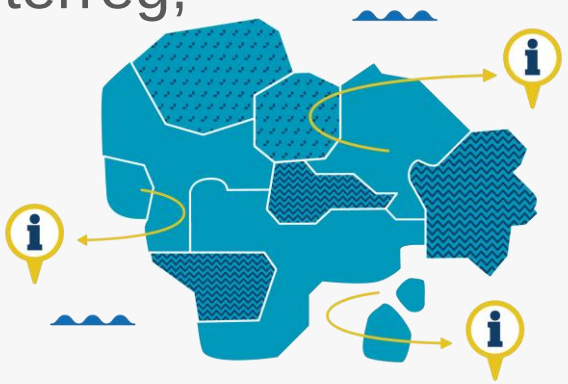
5th edition of the NCP network

2024

The role of regional & national contact points in 21-27

Background of the study

- Describe scenarios for structures in the 2021–2027 programmes;
- Provide a base of information and analysis for Interreg;



The research methodology

Three core components:

- Desk research;
- Survey: **2** online questionnaires:

 - 1st sent to all Interreg programmes.

 Valid responses by **36** Interreg programmes

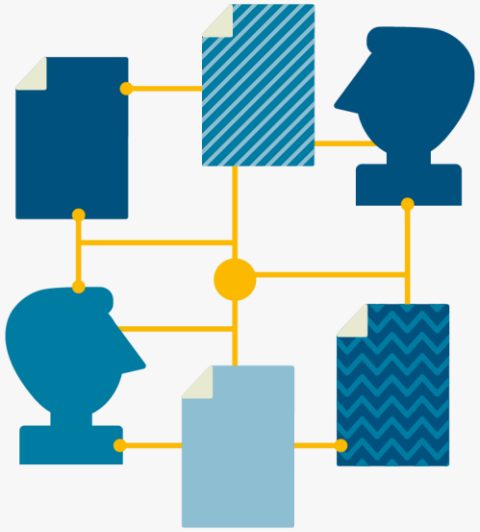
 - 2nd sent to the Contact Points.

46 valid responses from **27** programmes

- **10** Semi-structured interviews

Contact Points towards 21-27

- Well-established components of Interreg programme management and implementation;
- Vary in roles and function;
- 2021-2027 contact points not required for all Interreg programmes



Contact Points in Interreg

Advantages

- Decentralisation and proximity to stakeholders;
- Knowledge and expertise of the region and relevant policies;
- Programme visibility in the region;
- Support to the secretariat;
- More scope for a closer role/relationship with projects;
- Reduced language barrier and more targeted communication;
- Value of personal contacts and networks.

Disadvantages

- Lack of common approaches/standardisation of practices;
- Varying interpretations of issues;
- Variable links and communications with secretariats;
- Patchy involvement and engagement in the overall programme;
- Institutional resources needed to make the time to coordinate with RCP/NCPs;
- Complex relationship with host organisation;

New challenges for Contact Points in 21-27

(even) greater:

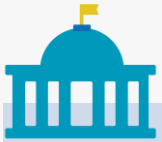
- expectations for project delivery and impact,
- emphasis on effective and efficient communications, synergies complementarity;

Regional economic impacts of coronavirus pandemic:

- travel restrictions and reductions.

- Pressures on budgets
- Concerns over levels of bureaucracy and need for simplification
- Established nature of many programmes
- Need for effective coordination

Contact Points setup in 21-27



Legal basis

Technical Assistance Contract;

Agreement MA/Host/National;

Territorial variation;

Funding

Technical Assistance;

National;

Mixed;

16-27% TA budget *(survey);*

Staffing

52% sole Member of staff (survey);

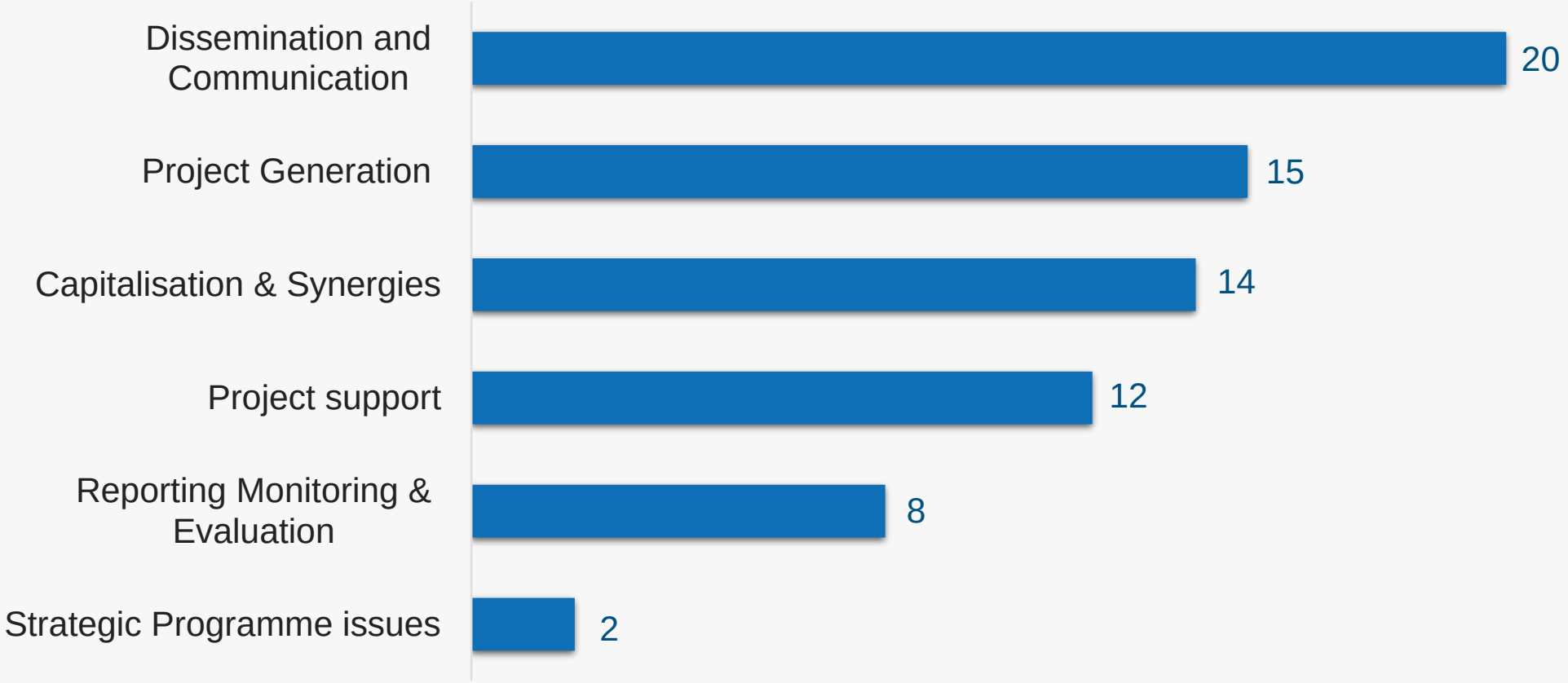
Part-time and full-time work;

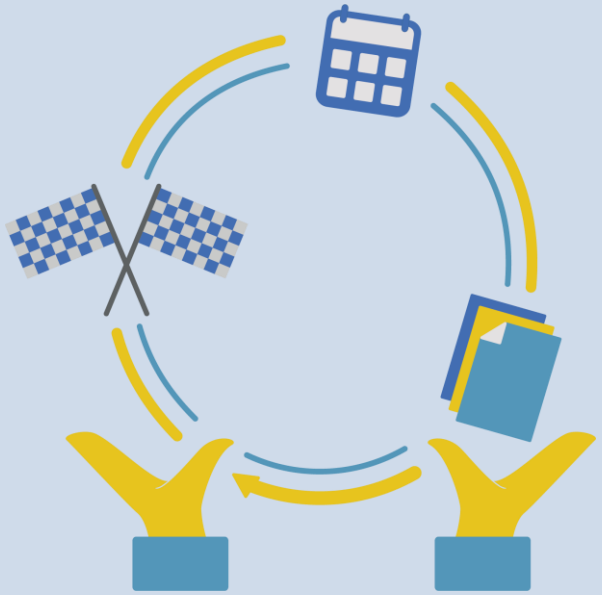
28% cover more than 1 Programme *(survey);*

Contact Points in 21-27: Key factors in retaining the structures

- Remain established parts of programme systems
- Vary in “title” (information point, regional contact point, national contact point etc)

Key roles of contact Points in 21-27





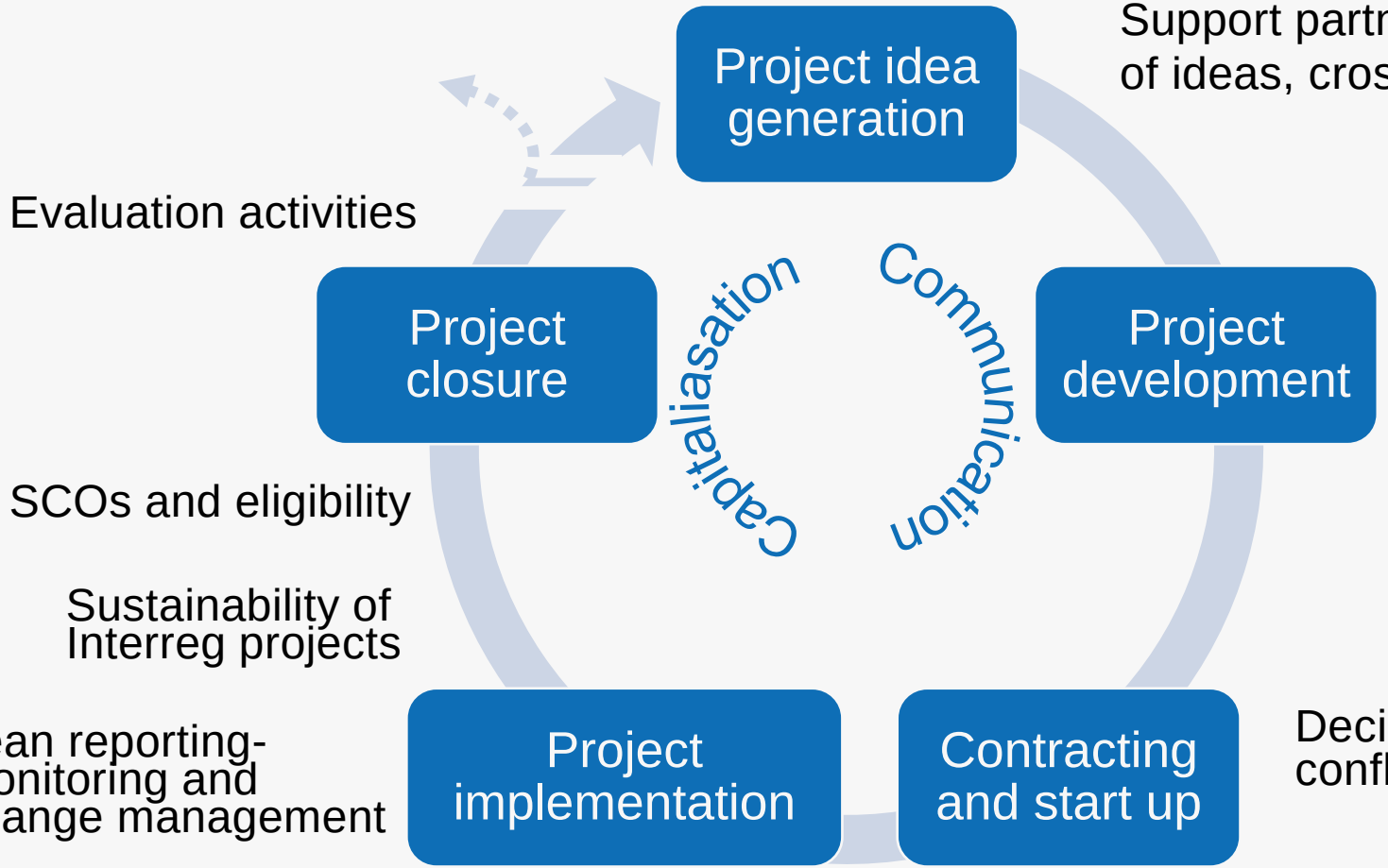
Now is your turn…

… to let us know in which stage of the project lifecycle are you involved as NCP?

- **1 green sticky note - I am very much involved**
- **1 orange sticky note – I am less involved**

Please write the name of the programme you are representing.

Support to programme and applicants: project lifecycle



Support partner search, elaboration of ideas, cross-boarder partnership

Call for proposals and assessment

Decision making and conflict of interest

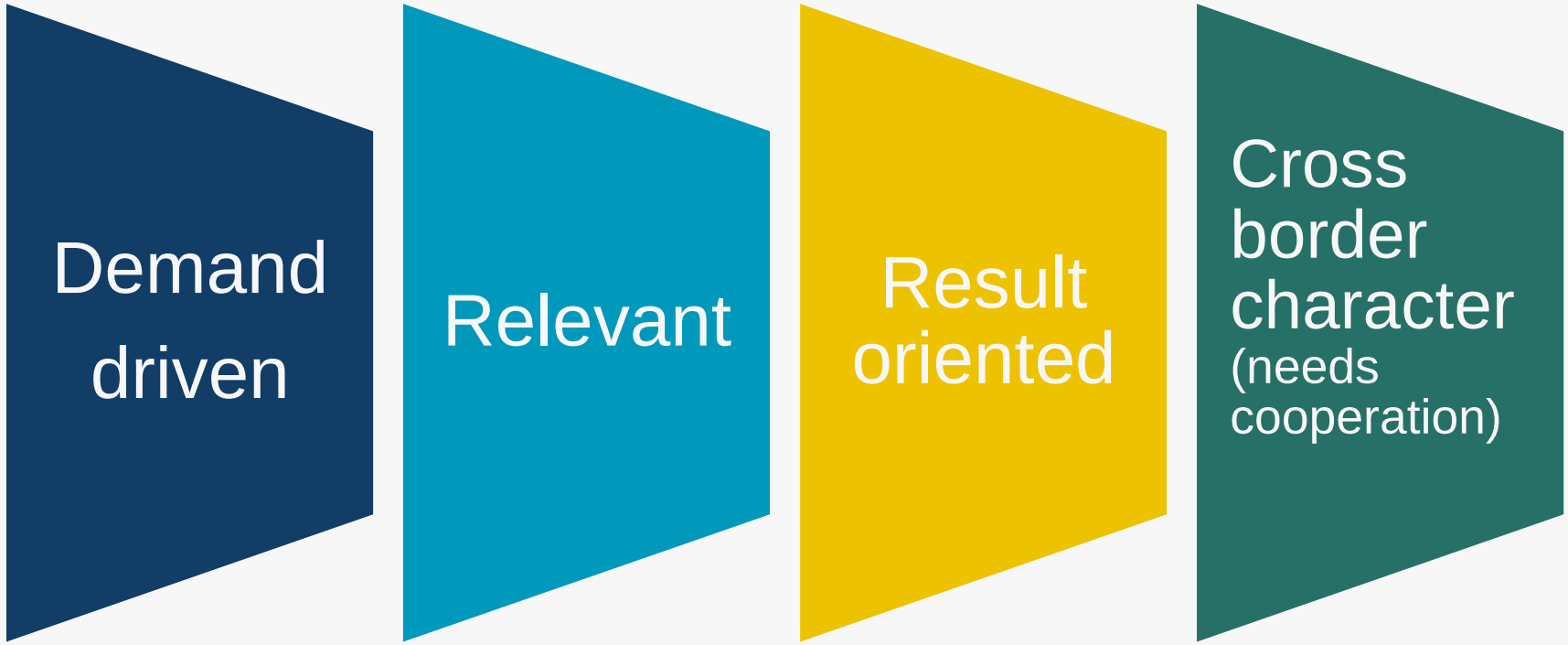
Lean reporting-monitoring and change management

Sustainability of Interreg projects

SCOs and eligibility

Evaluation activities

Interreg project characteristics



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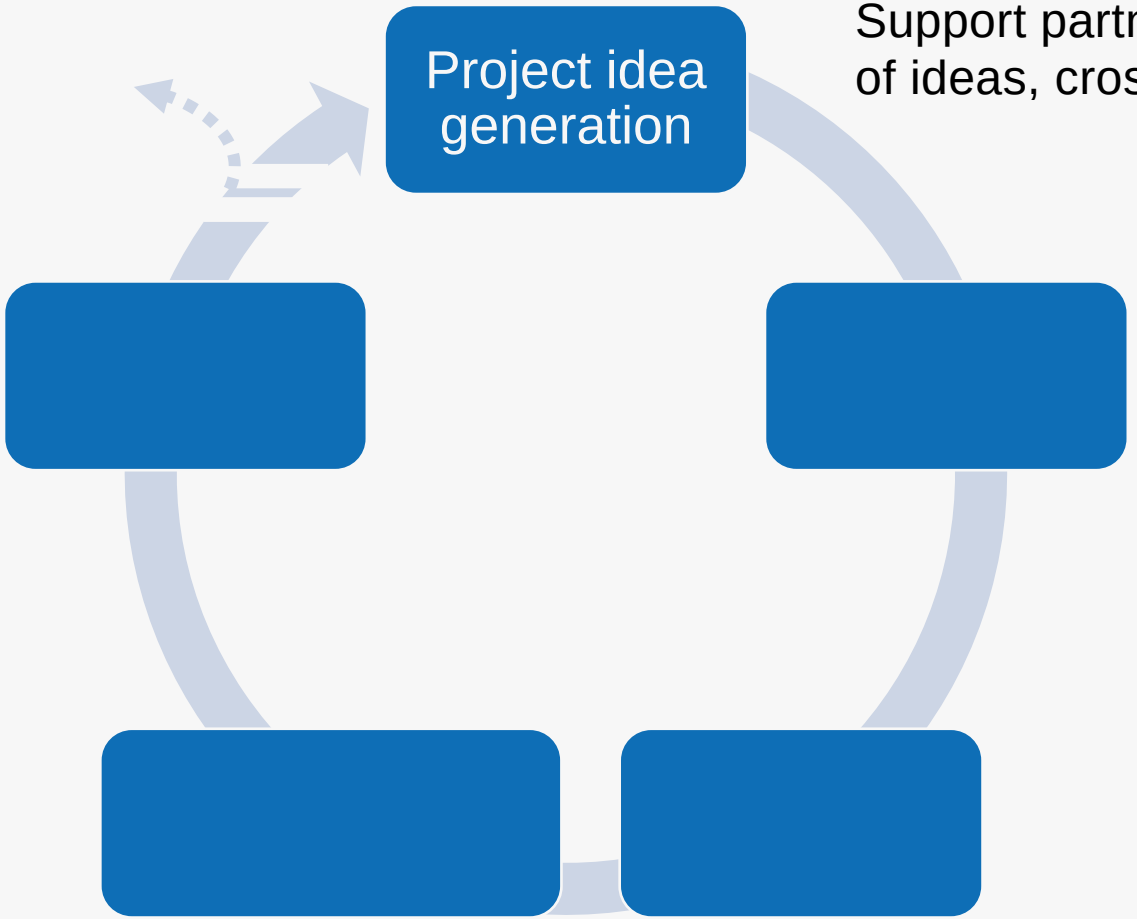

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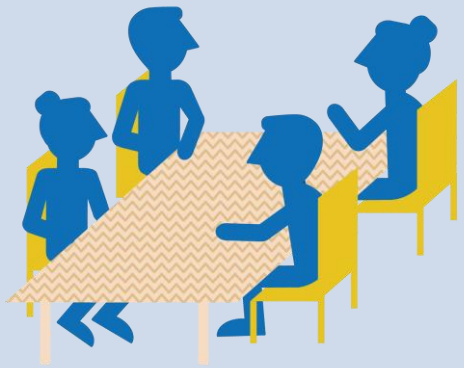


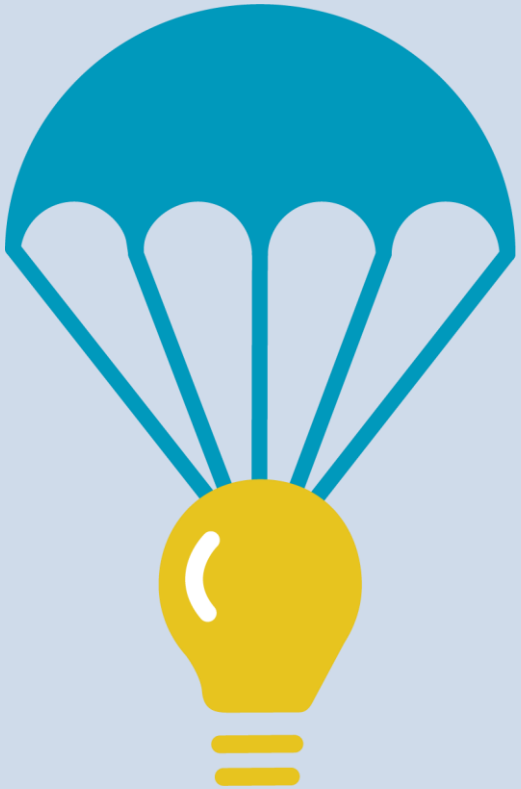
Now is your turn…

Which are the main challenges you are facing during this stage?

- Discuss the main challenges with your colleagues in the table;
- After the discussion, choose the **three** most significant challenges;
- Write each identified challenge on a separate sticky note (one sticky note per challenge).
- Assign a rapporteur to present the challenges in the plenary session.

Group work: You are the assessors

- **Read** the background information related to the *Terra-Nexus programme* example;
- **Review** the project proposal;
- **Discuss** the proposal with colleagues at your table;
- **Assess** the quality of the project proposal based on the three main criteria;
- **Choose** a rapporteur and be prepared to present your assessment in the plenary session.

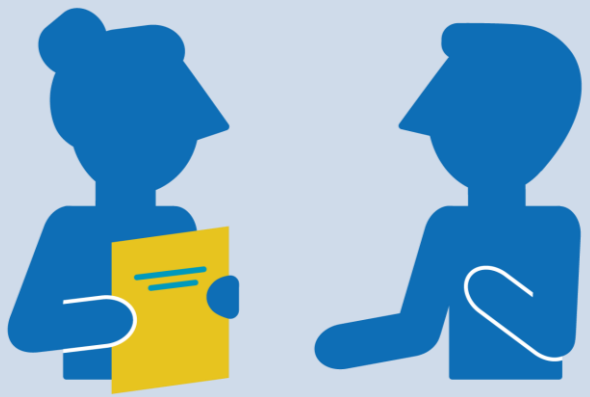


Programme experience:

Diede Streng, Interreg North Sea programmme

Challenges encounter/best practices in project development

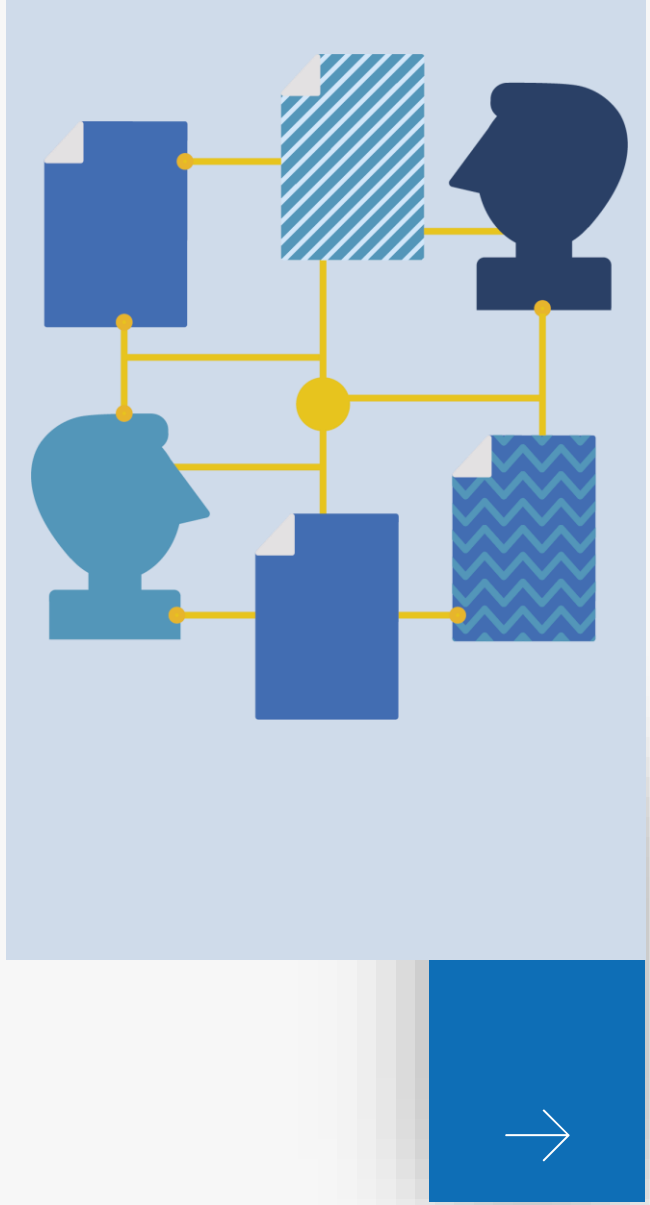
Lunch Break



Learning from other NCP networks

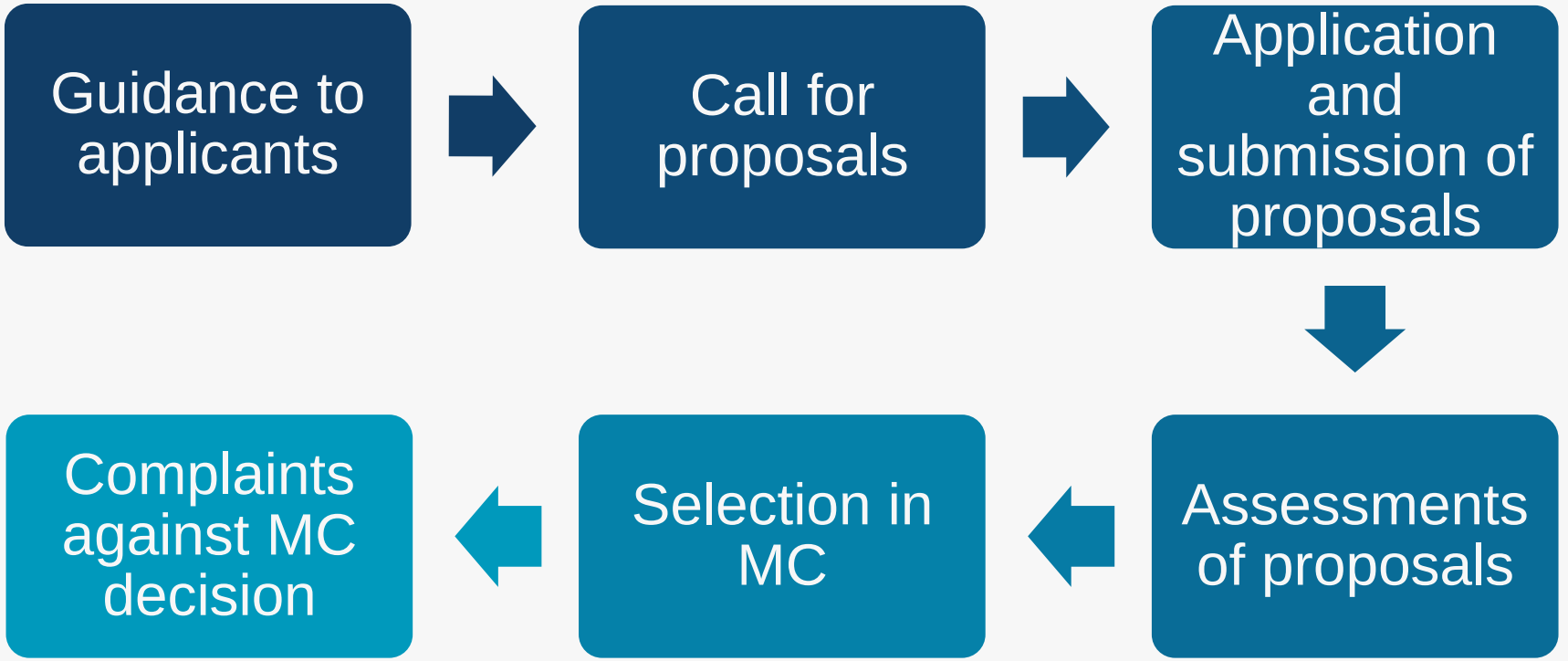
Birgit Steininger, Horizon Europe programme

Philippe Ternes, Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme



Decision making and conflict of interest

The selection process: key steps



The selection process: potential risks 1/3

Stage	Potential risk	Initial risk assessment	Adverse consequences
Guidance to applicants	Biased view on topics, guidance shaped by specific regional interests, "human factor"	High	Specific calls can lead to preferences for topics in the interest of MC members

The selection process: potential risks 2/3

Stage	Potential risk	Initial risk assessment	Adverse consequences
Quality assessment	Biased view of assessors (internal, external) driven by personal interests, missing four eyes principle	High	Biased view in the assessment could lead to the selection of preferential projects driven by personal interest of individuals or small groups

The selection process: potential risks 3/3

Stage	Potential risk	Initial risk assessment	Adverse consequences
Selection in the MC	The selection is in mostly linked to the assessment results – thus CoI inherent to assessment will be transported to decision-making	High	JS might not want to have risky projects, thus recommendations for approval might favour well-known applicants, new applicants with innovative but difficult approaches might have lower chances for approval

What is conflict or interest (CoI)?

A conflict of interest exists where the *impartial and objective exercise of the functions* of *a* ***person involved in implementing the EU budget*** is ***compromised*** for reasons involving family, emotional life, political or national affinity, economic interest or any other direct or indirect ***personal interest****.*

Ref: Article 61 of the Financial Regulation.

Example 1:

D is a director in a managing authority and responsible for the final approval of project awards, after rigorous and transparent assessment by a panel composed of external experts, appointed by D. In line with the recommendation of the panel, D awards a project to a beneficiary where D's spouse/partner is a senior manager.

Example 2:

The economic department within a ministry sends a voting member to a selection committee:

Scenario 1: The environmental department of a ministry applies for a project, the selection of which is to be decided by the economic department of the same ministry.

Scenario 2: The economic department applies for a project.

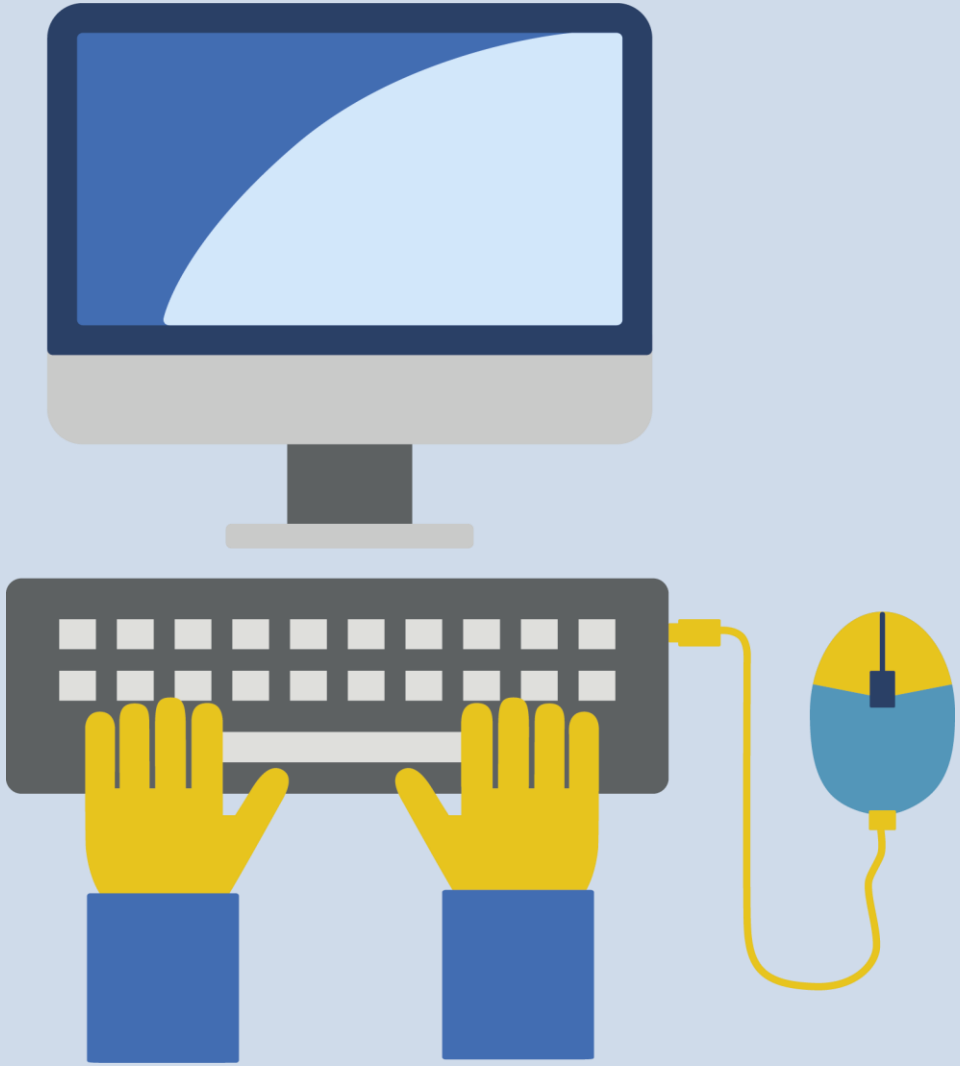
Examples of measures in Interreg programmes

- “Reminder”
- Declaration of impartiality
- Abstention from voting
- Refrain from participation in debate, expression of opinion
- Guidance to avoid conflict of interest
- Ethics referent within the Managing Authority
- Whistleblowing system
- Code of conduct for Programme staff

Interact publication: Risk management in project selection in Interreg

Your suggestions from the registration

Did we cover all of them or are there topics to be still discussed?



- How to implement a closer cooperation between nCPs from different programmes.
- Collaborations with other EU programmes
- Again, the possibility of drafting a manual for NCP's of TNP's :)
- How do NCPs help approved projects in the start-up phase?
- Do other NCPs organise seminars with basic information? How do NCPs exchange knowledge with each other in their NCP programmes?
- Implementation challenges: consultant driven projects? (do other NCPs also see the risk of consultants support/developing proposals)?
- Do other NCPs have best practices in sharing project results (easy and visually pleasing, not long reports)
- How to promote projects results
- First level of control of project and NCP

- I would like to use opportunity to discuss certain topics of the agenda with my peers, and to hear different perspectives.
- I would have 'how' questions for capitalization, and for example where are the pros and cons for digital platforms we use as NCPs, how or should those be used?
- AI
- Synergies between EU Funding Programmes
- Project writing consultancy
- Procurement cases.
- How to be more approachable as a contact point
- Better capitalisation of the results of Interreg projects, how to communicate about Interreg projects avoiding too technical aspects
- How to manage a group of contact points
- Cooperation between funding programmes?

INTERACT

Autumn Calendar

Certified Training course programme

September 2024

- Interreg for beginners
- Interreg programme evaluation (Practitioners level)
- Video making in Interreg*

October 2024

- Interreg project assessment, monitoring and verification*
- Interreg management verifications
- SCOs for practitioners (Practitioners level)*

November 2024

- Generative AI for Interreg communication
- Interreg project management
- Programme introduction for beginners

* Certified Training includes an in-person meeting

Academy.Interact.eu
Academy@Interact.eu

Upcoming events

You can share this information with interested colleagues!
Or you can visit our programme website: https://www.interact.eu/about-interact/our-service/events
And have a look to our Newsflash and social media channels to keep up with us!

Greener Europe Community meeting – future outlook

Online
03 October
14.00-16.00

Maximising Impact: Capitalisation and Policy Integration for Interreg
Paris
23 - 24 October

Harvesting event launch webinar

Online
05 November
13.30-15.30

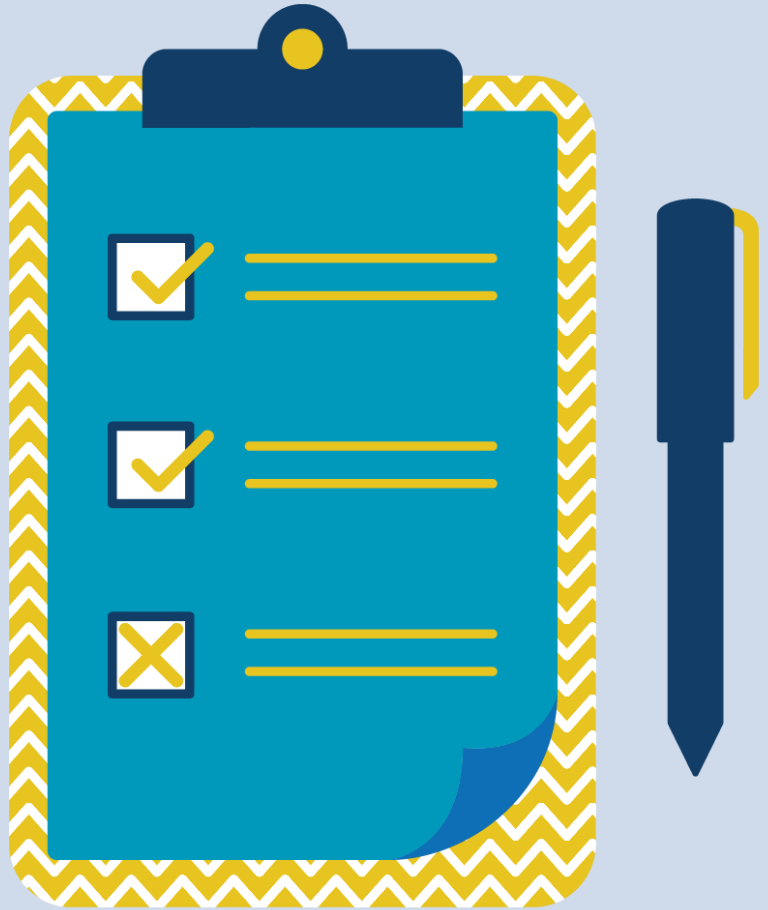
IPA Financial Lab
Tirana
3 - 4 December

Next meeting?

Thank you for being here!

Your opinion matters to us.

Please take a few minutes to provide us with feedback to help us improve our services.



Cooperation works

All materials will be available on:

Interact library / 5th National Contact Point (NCP) network meeting