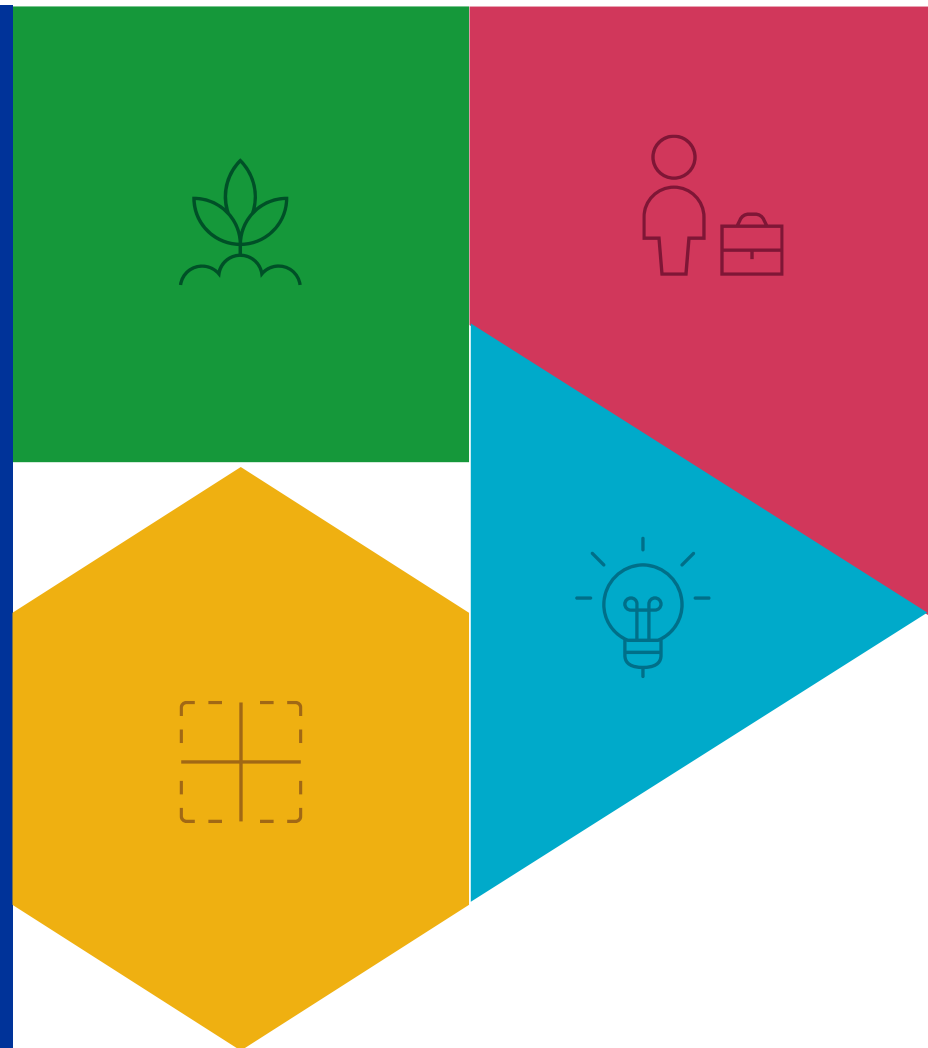




# SME participation in Interreg Belgium-Netherlands

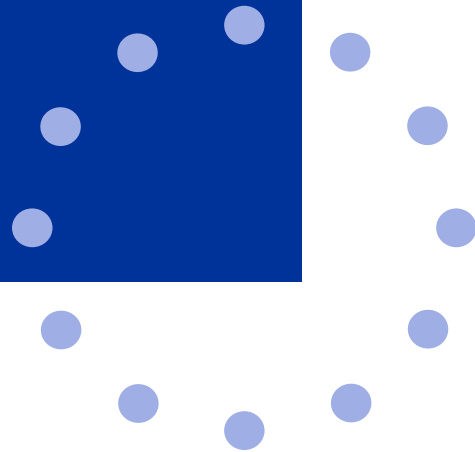
Article 25 – SPF model

24-05-2023



# Overview

- I. Interreg Belgium - Netherlands
- II. SMEs in Interreg V
- III. SMEs in Interreg VI
- IV. Questions



# I. Interreg Belgium - Netherlands

- Context:
  - 10 million inhabitants
  - 23.746 km<sup>2</sup>



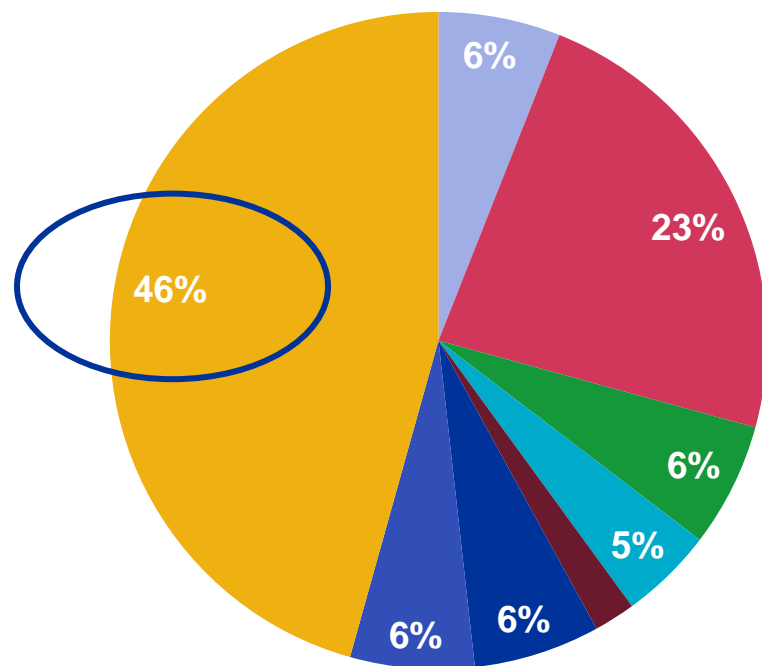
# I. Interreg Belgium - Netherlands

- Budget and projects Interreg V
  - 150 million EUR ERDF
  - 95 projects
- Budget and projects Interreg VI
  - 200 million EUR ERDF
  - 12 projects approved so far



# I. Interreg Belgium - Netherlands

Total



- civil society (sectoral or employer associations, environmental organizations,...)
- education or research institution

■ large enterprise

■ local authority

■ national or regional authority

■ other type of organization

■ provincial authority

■ SME



## II. SME participation Interreg V

Target group

Direct beneficiary  
(project partner)

# Participation

Open Projects  
(project partner light)



## II. SME participation Interreg V

Main difference for the participants is the administrative burden and the time investment



## II. Direct beneficiaries

- Characteristics:
  - Involved from the start in the full project
  - Relatively high administrative burden
  - State aid (de-minimis, art. 20 and 25 of GBER)





## II. Project Partners Light (open project)

- Project starts with an X amount of budget set apart for PPLs, which is (later) divided over participants
- Characteristics:
  - Involved in one part (work package) after the start of the overarching project.
  - Participation in the project for a certain set period.
  - Slightly lower administrative burden. More flexibility.
- About 10 projects with PPLs

## II. Project CrossRoads 2

- Goal: Stimulating cross-border cooperation on innovative projects between SMEs.
- 202 SMEs supported
- 75 innovation projects & 43 feasibility studies
- €19 mil. budget - €8 mil. ERDF



## II. Pros and cons of PPL involvement

- Benefits
  - Participation contributed to the development of the business.
  - Broadening of the (cross-border) network.
  - Often enterprises return in other projects.
- Areas for improvement:
  - Relatively high workload for lead partner.
  - Problems with transition from selection by project to adding to the monitoring system (e.g. undertaking in difficulty.)
  - Steep learning curve (short period) for successfully claiming expenses.
  - *Distance* between the project partner light and programme.



### III. SME participation Interreg VI

#### Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 – article 25 – Small Project Funds

- Only one project partner.
- A maximum of 20% of the budget for the lead partner.
- Participates during part of project period.
- Individual project within the overarching project.



### III. SME participation Interreg VI

Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 – article 25 – Small Project Funds

#### Challenges

- Only one partner
  - heavy workload (acquisition of SMEs)
  - limits the amount of competencies present with the lead partner to successfully support underlying projects
- 20% budget rule → little to no room for content-oriented cooperation at the level of the lead partner



### III. SME participation Interreg VI

Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 – article 25 – Small Project Funds

#### Consequences for Interreg VI

- Need for parallel projects to allow for acquisition
- When the project needs content-oriented cooperation between lead partner and other beneficiaries → does not fit the SPF definition



## III. SME participation Interreg VI

### In practice: CrossRoads 2.0 as a Small Project Fund

- Parallel project for the recruitment of participants
- Closer contact between the programme and the participants – “flattening” of multi-level governance
- Working mainly with SCOs – reducing financial risk at the level of declaring expenditure



## III. SME participation Interreg VI

### In practice: Open projects

- Multiple project partners
- Project partners light (often SMEs) join at a later stage
- Project partners light work on overall goal of the project, but participation might be limited to certain “work packages”.



Questions?