

The Quality of Cooperation

How to measure cross-border cooperation
in the framework of Interreg programmes?



**Results from the Interreg Project
Crossquality and the first pilot application in
the Euregio Meuse Rhine**



Interreg
Euregio Meuse-Rhine



EUROPEAN UNION
European Regional
Development Fund

CROSSQUALITY



Research questions

Pages 6-7

- How can we measure the quality of *cross-border networks*?
- Do cross-border programmes and projects foster the *development of cooperation*?
- Does Interreg funding produce valuable and sustainable cross-border *networks*?

Defining the purpose of cross-border cooperation

- “European cross-border cooperation [...] aims to
- tackle common challenges identified jointly in the border regions
 - and to exploit the untapped growth potential in border areas,
 - while ***enhancing the cooperation process*** for the purposes of the overall harmonious development of the Union.” (European Commission)

How is CBC assessed?

Pages 10-14

Current methods for evaluating CBC:

- Territorial impact assessment (i.e. ESPON)
- Existing indicator systems (for Interreg Programmes)

Shortcomings:

- Mainly quantitative indicators (focus on growth potential)
- Focus on output, less on processes

Adapted Metcalfe's Policy Coordination

Scale

	Coordination Scale for CBC
1	Exchange of cross-border information
2	Consultation amongst cross-border partners
3	Avoiding conflicts
4	Formulating joint priorities/objectives
5	Possibility for the partners to establish and fund a joint coordination body
6	Possibility for the partners to fund future cross-border services

'Soft' CBC indicators

- 1 Personal cross-border contacts
- 2 Level of trust between actors
- 3 Coping with different languages
- 4 Coping with cultural attitudes

Instruments

1

Individual interviews

2

Sectoral expert workshops

3

Online survey

Expert interviews

Pages 14-15

- 30-60 min
- Each Crossquality-partner hold interviews in the own language
- Interviews are going deeper into single projects
- Interviews with CBC-experts outside Interreg
- Questions
 - See pages 15-16 for interview questions and explanations and p. 17 for a list of questions
 - Different aspects of cooperation – information, consultation, etc.?

Workshops/Focus Group

- 1:45 h
- Sectoral workshops (e.g., 'Research & Innovation' or 'Health and well-being')
- Workshops are going broader into a sectoral network (with different projects)
- Experts from one sector speaking the same 'sectoral language' and using the same sectoral structure, e.g., a secretariat
- Questions (excerpt)
 - How would you assess the quality of cooperation in your Interreg project?
 - Aspects of cooperation, information, consultation, joint objectives for future activities
 - What is your experience with administrative aspects of the Interreg programme such as payment on time, regulations, reporting obligations and other forms of administration?
 - See pages 20-21 for expert workshop schedule

Survey

Page 22

- The survey ensures that the qualitative findings are also quantitatively verifiable
- Survey with 'Qualtrics'
- With support of Interreg and the Regional Antennas
- The same questions as in interviews and workshops
- See pages 22-23 for survey questions



Findings of the pilot application

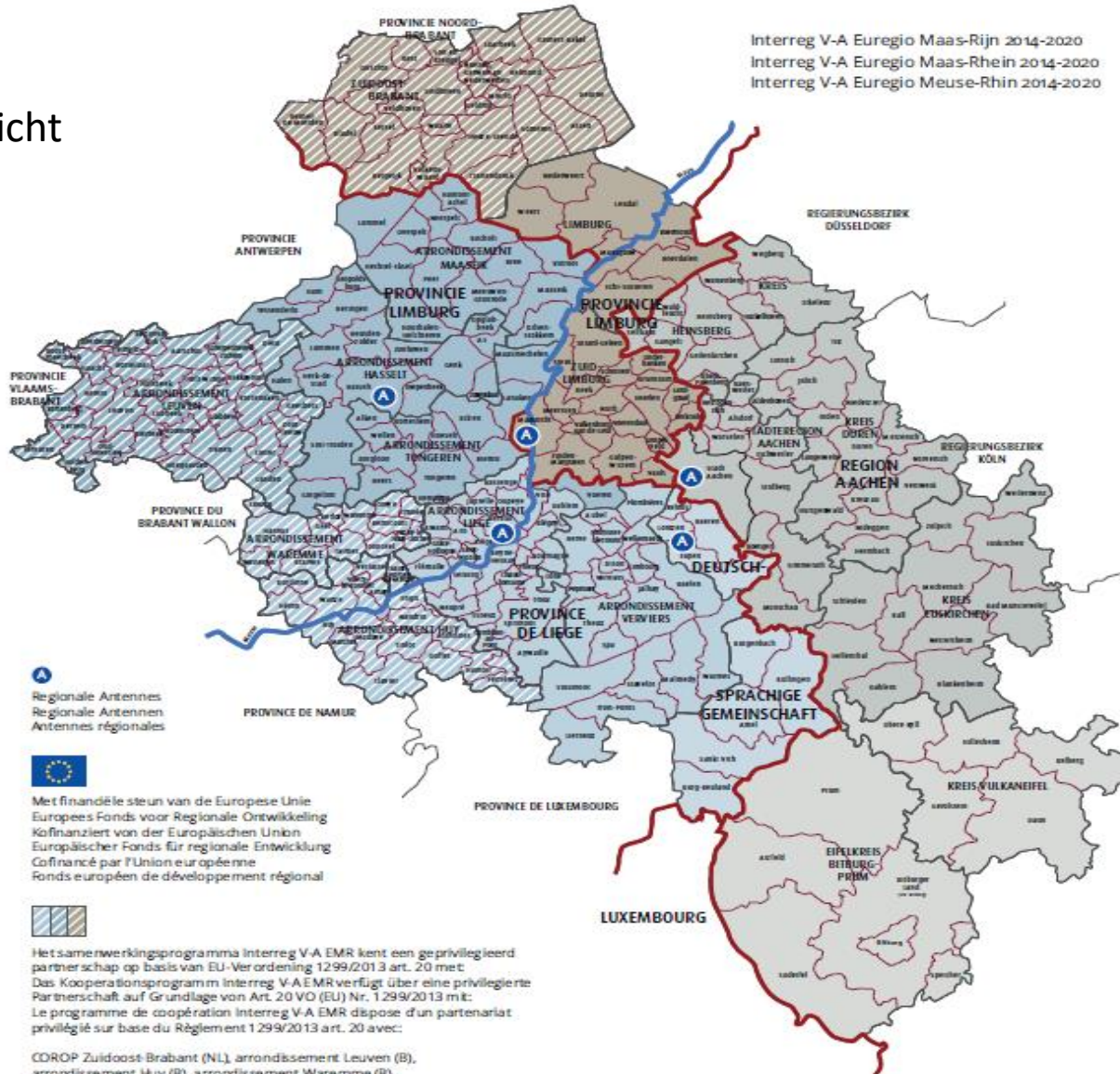
Interreg V-A Euregio Maas-Rijn 2014-2020
Interreg V-A Euregio Maas-Rhein 2014-2020
Interreg V-A Euregio Meuse-Rhin 2014-2020

Maastricht

Hasselt

Aachen (DE)

Liège (BE)



Assessment INTERREG Programme

Euregio Meuse-Rhine

Analysis of 5 sectors (nature of networks dealing with INTERREG)

- Public transport
- Health/Emergency Services
- Climate/energy/Innovation
- Education
- Labour market/business development

Assessment INTERREG Programme Public Transport

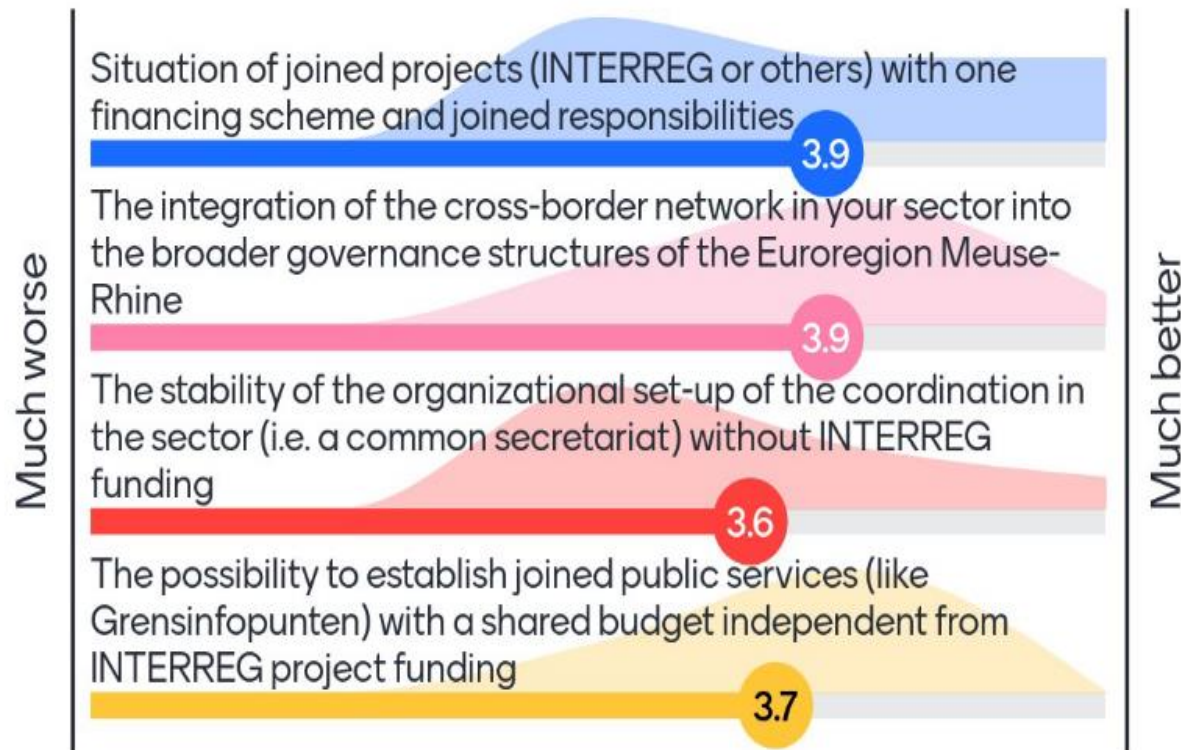


Source: EMRconnect

- one big Interreg project with all the relevant partners
- There is a coordination body funded without Interreg
- **Coordination body still there after programming period**
- Willingness: future joint services be also maintained after the programming period
- **Trust and quality of cooperation perceived as very good**

Transport Sector

What is your assessment regarding cross-border cooperation in general in your sector today in comparison to before 2013 (start of recent INTERREG)



Assessment INTERREG Programme Education

- Nine projects (two focusing on school cooperation)
- many projects during the last decades on languages, school exchange, traineeships...
- But no permanent cooperation body beyond the scope of single Interreg project



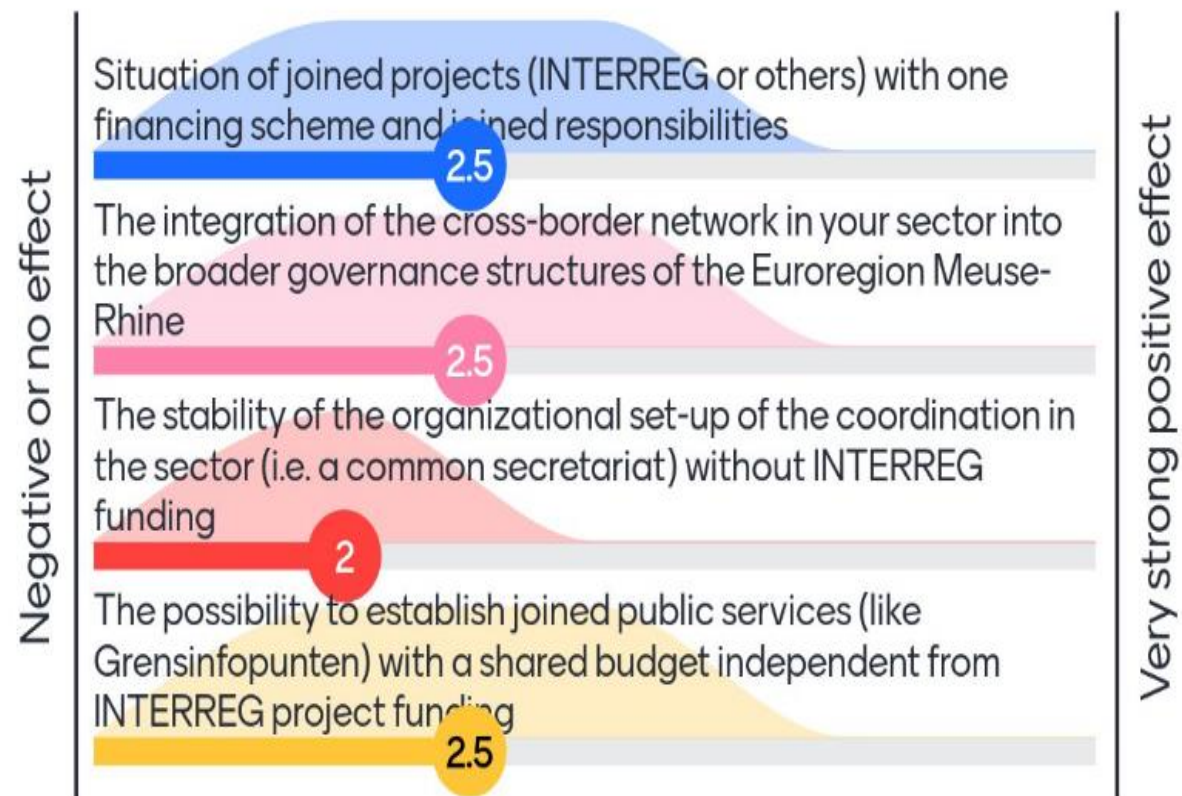
Source: EURfriends

Education

- **More negative than in the transport sector: lack of a permanent cross-border coordination body outside the Interreg framework.**
- Frustration about stop-and-go
- The cooperation still perceived as very useful for the own network and different aspect of information and communication
- partners point out that the extra efforts on administrative tasks are to some extent jeopardizing the focus on real work under the Interreg projects.



What is your assessment regarding cross-border cooperation in general in your sector today in comparison with 2013 (start of recent INTERREG)



Labour market, business development

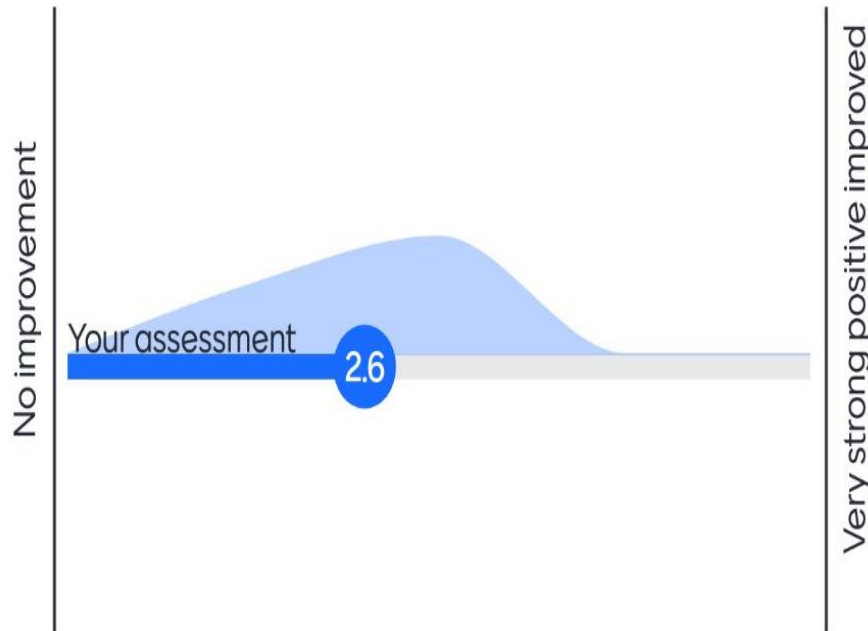


- rather stable networks of stakeholders established in the framework of Interreg projects for many years with respect to the support of businesses
 - Rather new networks in the field of employment/information services
- **quality of cross-border cooperation in the sector less positive than in other sectors.**

Labour market, business development

What is your assessment with respect to the development of cross-border cooperation in your sector over time?

Mentimeter



Labour market, business development

- Frustration about stop-and-go: why not having funding periods that last for the whole programming period (more time needed)
- **questioned the need for innovation: it could be more helpful to invest in solid structural cross-border cooperation**
- less short-term approach would be in particular interesting for companies (not much interest in short-term cross-border projects).

Findings?

- influence of Interreg EMR is **assessed as an important factor** (very positive in the field of innovation)
- **Existing network structures are key for sustainable cooperation**
- Project management skills are decisive for the quality (**Interreg skills**)
- Project “Stop and go” described as a problem, **networks do not often survive, timeframe too short, innovation?**
- Problem of project design: **too many partners** (political interventions), no clear objectives after financing...
- Cultural and language problems, seen as **modest problem** – institutional cultures can matter
- **Administrative burden**: reason to avoid INTERREG in the future (not only SMEs)

Recommendations

1. Make **sustainable cross-border networks** an essential objective
2. Cross-border cooperation can be actively supported: **less but the right partners**
3. **Active measures to overcome the stop-and-go phenomena**
 - Reconsider Innovation/short periods
4. **Proactive assistance:** Interreg participation requires specific Interreg know-how – **more coaching**