

# Programme Closure 2014- 2020: the finishing touches

Interreg Knowledge Fair session report | March 2024

## Overview

The session for Programme Closure 2014 – 2020 was fully booked two weeks prior to the event. All in all, 60 Interreg specialists joined to learn from programmes that had opted for early closure. For those, the accounting year 1.7.2022 – 30.6.2023 was the final accounting year. Only 3 programmes finally selected the early closure, so for majority of the programmes this is a major theme for the current year and the beginning of the next year.

The novelty for 2014 – 2020 period was the annual closure. Therefore, the closure of the final accounting year is in many ways a regular process. In addition to the submission of the accounts, the closure package includes also Final Implementation report, that needs to be submitted together with the accounts. The recommendation from the early closing programmes was to allocate enough time for the final closure – a bit more than for any other accounting year and have a regular exchange between MA, CA and AA.

The freshly approved STEP Regulation brings along two major possibilities also for Interreg programmes. First, the deadlines for submitting the application for final interim payment and consequently the closure package are extended with one year. Second, there is a possibility to opt for 100% co-financing for the final accounting year (1.7.2023 – 31.6.2024) on priority axis level. More guidance from Commission is expected in April.

## Methodology

There was no specific methodology used for the session. The short introduction was prepared together with Commission colleagues, especially the parts presenting STEP regulation. Interact also presented the available guidance for Interreg and IPA programmes and TESIM for ENI/NEXT programmes.

The session heavily focused on lessons learnt from closing the programme and to collect the questions that programmes have for the task ahead of them. During the session, Estonia-Latvia Programme and Central Baltic Programme gave brief presentations of the process.

## Key discussion points

Article 129 referring to public spending and indicators were themes of interest. Also, the calculation of final balance and the importance of co-operation between programme authorities and lead partners were topics that raised interest.

In terms of the indicators the most of the exchanges concentrated on the proper reporting to the EC in case of underachievement or overachievement. It was underlined that in both cases some sort of justification would be necessary.

### **Regulations and articles of particular significance**

Guidelines on the closure of operational programmes adopted for assistance from the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and cross-border cooperation programmes under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II) (2014-2020)

(2022/C 474/01)

Guidelines on the closure of ENI Cross-Border Cooperation Programmes 2014-2020

(C/2023/1338)

CPR for 2104-2020

(Interreg) ETC Regulation

FAST CARE Regulation

STEP Regulation

Also 2 Q&A documents from EC

### **Conclusions, plans for followed up**

The session continued the line of events and meetings that have discussed programme closure. For the first time it was possible to learn form programme colleagues.

The discussion on programme closure will continue in the upcoming financial network meetings. – next in the network meeting of Certifying Authorities and Bodies performing Accounting Function, that will take place in Vienna in April.

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