

# Small or Big? What next for small scale projects and SPF?

Interreg Knowledge Fair session report | March 2024

## Overview

The session focused on exchange with practitioners on three main aspects. Simplification practices; different models and methods - reflections after the first years of implementation; discussion on potential improvements of the dedicated articles in in the Interreg regulation.

## Methodology

A short introductory presentation followed by discussion with practitioners on:

- Different purposes of small scale projects
- Collection of simplifications
- Reflections after first years of implementation

## Key discussion points

### Different purposes of small scale projects:

Complementarity, pilot projects, introduction of new partners, seed money initiatives, tailored interventions, trust-building, support of bottom-up development models;

### Collection of simplifications:

Downsizing (less work packages, outputs, smaller partnerships, smaller budgets, shorter duration of projects);

Simplified budgeting (40% flat rate, unit costs for events, application of draft budget method);

Simplifications in processes (1-step approach, dedicated calls, simplified contracting);

### Reflections after first years of implementation:

Small-scale projects and SPF are clearly considered as valuable and supportive tools – supporting development of new ideas in programme, introducing programmes to new beneficiaries and ideas, building trust.

Easy-going, client-friendly, simplified and pragmatic approaches are key points to make it successful. Important insight can be gained from the start-up phase in TN programmes. E.g.

in Interreg BSR there are no specific partnership requirements for small-scale projects (“This will be regulated by the limited budget”).

SPFs in CBC programmes should be key instruments to attract civic society organisations. It may definitely increase the visibility of the EU in the border region. This was confirmed by experience from IT-AT but also when looking back to the pre-accession period. In PHARE the SPF was always the instrument providing higher visibility of the EU for people due to its numerous and diverse projects.

Analysis of the first results, in particular for programmes with no past experience, might be helpful to assess if small projects reached the envisaged target groups. They also might be helpful in better adjusting the small project instrument to programme's needs in the future.

#### Provisions in the Regulation:

The clear majority of participants in the dedicated session (about 40 persons) did not identify any problems with the legal provisions in Articles 24 and 25 of the Interreg Regulation.

More information and practical experiences on small (scale) projects can be found in the Interact dedicated community and during dedicated in 2024 webinar(s).

#### Follow up:

Several participants have expressed their interest in exchange on simplification measures for small-scale and small projects. We will start collecting examples of processes and documents along the project life cycle.

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

Interreg Regulation

Articles 24, 25

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