

Having more impact and stronger cooperation between CBC and TN

Interreg Knowledge Fair session report | March 2024

Overview

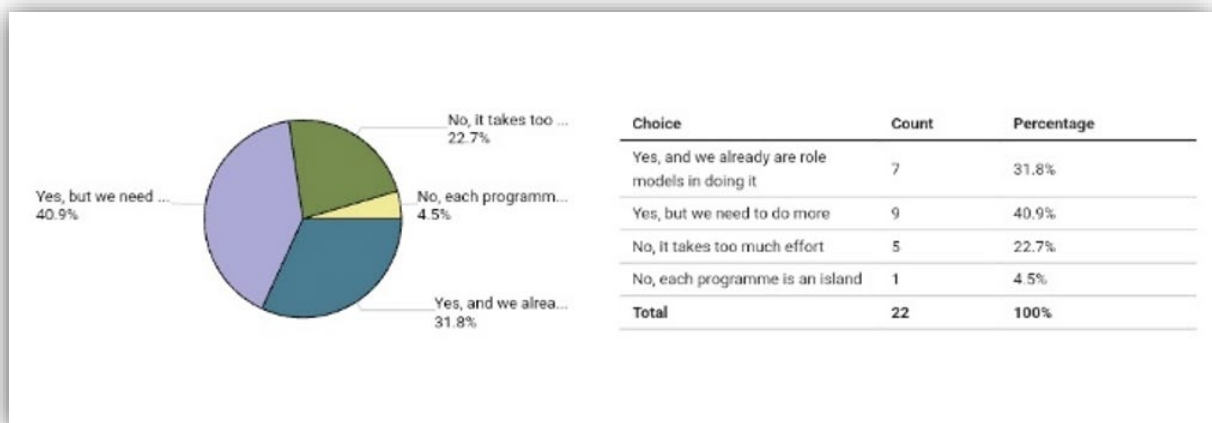
The current Interreg regulation stresses the importance of synergies and complementarities between different strands. However, this is not achieved, and only a few examples are starting to be highlighted, mainly coming from the initiative of TN programmes. Looking to post-2027, there is a need for extra cooperation efforts, particularly across Transnational and Cross-Border Cooperation in the same geographical area, aiming for greater effectiveness and territorial impact. How can this be achieved? What about MRS or SBS?

Around 20 Interreg participated in the discussion, including TN and CBC, as well as OMR and ESPON. The session counted on the active participation of Esteller Roger (DG REGIO), who shared some reflections.

Methodology

In early February, a survey was shared with programmes, which provided insights. One response was collected per programme for a total of 22 responses.

This was the result of the question: **You can achieve a more substantial impact in the territory if you coordinate your efforts with other programmes in the area.**



The topics discussed in the room were:

1. Setting the current context and regulations.

2. Key messages from Interact publications and events related to programmes cooperation, based on 3 questions: benefits of working across strands, main challenges, and good practices.
3. Programmes discuss current practices and what is missing or could be improved for post27.
4. Conclusions and feedback from EC

Key discussion points

What is working?

- Different levels of cooperation were mentioned (across programmes, between projects, cooperation on national platforms)
- The benefits of complementarities are clear. Significant knowledge and experiences have already been gathered, and capitalisation approaches have been designed and established (e.g., Sustainable Tourism Mechanism in the Mediterranean, Capitalisation calls getting CBC results in the area of Central Europe, MA network in the Atlantic Programme).
- In parallel, the chain of projects is natural and spontaneously existing, led by the project partners with no programme intervention. However, there is a potential for doing more and better.

What is missing? *Challenges faced by the programmes*

- Lack of interaction and exchange of information on the topic of complementarity due many times to a Lack of Resources – human resources and time were perceived as the most critical obstacles for building more substantial complementarities.
- A framework/strategy is needed in the cooperation area. The macro-regional strategies are perceived as „an umbrella” for all the programmes implemented in a specific area; their contribution to activating the synergies is seen as rather limited.
- Different levels of cooperation were mentioned (across programmes, between projects, and collaboration on national platforms).

What would be your vision for the future?

- Around the table were representatives of all strands and a national coordinator; therefore, it only came naturally that the first suggestion was to extend the discussion and refer to cooperation and complementarities across Interreg strands.
- The participants mentioned the Territorial Agenda and the need to understand its implementation provisions. In addition, they highlighted the role of URBACT and ESPON as providers of territorially relevant information.
- Clear terminology and no more buzzwords. what do synergies and complementarities across programmes mean? What is the role of capitalisation?
- Synergies should be a horizontal principle.
- So far, complementarities across strands appear in the Interreg reg. preamble (23) in the current regulation; however, the idea of including a specific article making it mandatory but not imposing a particular mechanism for cooperation was raised.
- **A proposal for the regulation** based on the preamble writing: *“Synergies and complementarities between the strands of Interreg should be strengthened (add the following) in order to maximise the impact of Interreg”*

- Incentives to ease the work on complementarities across programmes were mentioned: ex % of funding could be earmarked for capitalisation activities in the programme (like for the TA);
- TOOLS: All programmes should use standard essential tools (INDEX); the programmes should also be aware of the limitations of the tools and fill the gaps in identifying which other measures could be implemented to avoid the overlaps.
- SHARING MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES (WHO does what should also be mentioned in the regulation):
 - The National Authorities and the MC members could play a more significant role in the work related to the synergies, and this should also be mentioned in the regulations.
 - Where MRS/SBS exists, the role of relevant stakeholders in these frameworks could be encouraged and become more active.
 - DG Regio can be more active in supporting coordination across programmes during programming and implementation.
 - Creating a new position in the programme as liaison officer.
- The possible role of TN programmes as umbrella programmes to give a wider territorial dimension to the CBC working in their same geography/ area. Some CBCs were cautious, but others were comfortable with such a proposal.
- Interact: To provide guidance documents. Gather coordination across programmes existing practices. The geographical networks and the thematic networks managed by Interact could play a more prominent role in the work related to synergies and complementarities.

Regulations and articles of particular significance

Interreg Regulation.

- PREAMBLE: (23) The major part of the Union support should be concentrated on a limited number of policy objectives in order to maximise the impact of Interreg. Synergies and complementarities between the strands of Interreg should be strengthened.
- art 17.3 b) ii /
- Template for programmes

Conclusions, plans for followed up

The discussion highlighted the successes and challenges in promoting synergies and complementarity across different levels and programs. It emphasises the need for a more structured approach, precise terminology and roles, a specific article making it mandatory but not imposing a particular mechanism for cooperation was raised, as well as the possibility of giving incentives to promote the work on synergies. All to maximise the impact of Interreg programs.

All discussion elements will be followed at the next online event.

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