

# Let's HIT the road again!

**Kick-off meeting of HIT 2021-2027**

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**Berlin, Germany**

## Report of the meeting

**Author** Péter Rácz

### Aim of the meeting

The aim of the meeting was twofold:

1. To collect lessons learnt from the development process and the use of HIT in the 2014-2020 period. This was done in the frame of the case-based impact evaluation of Interact.
2. To kick-off the development process of HIT for the 2021-2027 programming period.

### Participation

30 Interreg programmes were represented by 53 participants, covering all strands and funds in Interreg. One third of the participants had been personally involved in the development of the current HIT package.

### Preparation of the meeting

In preparation of the meeting, Interact:

- launched a survey on 30/10/2018 in the frame of Interact's case-based impact evaluation. This survey provided input for the presentations and the discussions during the meeting. By the time of the meeting 24 programmes answered the survey.
- included HIT-related questions in the registration. These questions covered personal involvement in the previous development phase, using of HIT tools and challenges identified in applying HIT. The answers were used to fine-tune the event's content.
- asked the registered participants - prior to the meeting - to discuss with their colleagues internally what tools should be part of the HIT 2021-2027 development

process. In other words, what templates/documents/procedures of programme/project management should be developed together, in a harmonised way.

## **Agenda points, main outcomes of the discussions**

### **Use of HIT 2014-2020: Challenges and opportunities identified by programmes**

The outcomes of the impact evaluation survey were briefly presented before the participants reflected on the development of HIT and its use. The presentation can be found [here](#).

### **Reflection on the current use of HIT**

With the help of external experts working on the case-based impact evaluation of Interact, we aimed at finding learning points to consider when developing the next generation of HIT. The presentation can be found [here](#).

In summary, the participants agreed that:

- Overall effect of HIT is very positive and the commitment to further development could be clearly identified.
- HIT development is not a "pilot" anymore, the current package is a strong basis of further development.
- The process to prepare HIT strengthened the cooperation bonds between participating Interreg programmes.

As conclusions for both the process and the tools themselves, participants came up with potentials for the future development:

There is certain potential to correct of shortcomings of the past HIT process:

- More streamlined management of HIT process
- More focus on content and communication elements
- Greater alignment between TN and CBC programmes
- Clearer mandate and decision making

Also, the potential to correct of shortcomings of the current HIT package were identified:

- Better alignment between HIT and eMS and programming
- Remove redundancies/inconsistencies and simplify the tools
- Develop common guidance and training material
- Clarify expectations on degree of harmonisation (e.g. focus on legal requirements)

The input collected in this session will be analyzed in the next months.

The results will be reflected in the Impact Evaluation final report, due in April 2019.

## **Vision of HIT 2021-2027**

As the result of the discussions during this session, a common vision for HIT 2021-2027 was formulated:

"The HIT 2021-2027 project aims to increase the efficiency and the quality of the implementation of Interreg programmes and projects through harmonized approaches."

## **Elements of the HIT 2021-2027 package**

The elements of the current HIT package were presented by Interact. It was agreed that HIT 2021-2027 should include all existing HIT tools, which need to be updated and if necessary further developed.

In addition participants identified more than 60 new potential elements of programme/project implementation, which could be developed in the frame of HIT process. The most popular new elements/topics to consider in the HIT 2021-2027 development process were:

Project selection:

- State Aid checklist/assessment procedures
- Pre-defined project management and communication activities
- Simplification of administrative and eligibility check
- Communication tools: Go beyond the joint branding!

Project implementation:

- Modification request procedures
- Monitoring of results (guidance)
- Project closure guidance (check durability of results)
- Communication tools: Go beyond the joint branding!

Financial Control and Audit:

- Catalogue of financial corrections
- Guidance on shared procurements
- Guidance on FLC procedures (e.g. on-the-spot checks)

Eligibility:

- One "Interreg" staff cost calculation
- SCO, standard scale of unit costs
- More flat-rate, lump sum

Other elements proposed:

- Type of outputs
- Unique partner ID across Europe
- Small Project Funds related elements

The list created a "pool of ideas", which can be used later on when the actual development work starts. On the first meeting of HIT core group we will try to complete the list and fine-tune the prioritisation to follow programme preparation and implementation cycle.

### **Development process and time plan**

Participants agreed that the HIT development process should be process-driven and thematic knowledge can be channeled from the existing, or newly established thematic networks. There should be one HIT core group, which will have the mandate to decide on the priority of the tools. The HIT core group will develop the tools and also involve more thematic expertise, if needed (in the form of involvement of thematic networks, or asking Interact to organize separate thematic meetings addressing HIT related questions). It has been agreed that the existing tools will be used as a starting point. The work will consist in updating them and further developing them or, if possible, simplifying them.

Interact will map the existing/non-existing thematic groups and draft a plan, how to proceed with the establishment of the HIT core group.

Early next year an invitation will be sent to all Interreg programmes asking for their expression of interest to be involved in the HIT core group and nominate a person, who will be delegated to the future discussions. Being involved in this group means a great commitment to the process and also resources (human, financial – in terms of travels).

The first round of HIT core group will be organized around the first two weeks of April 2019, the exact dates will be decided by a Doodle poll.

### **eMS and HIT**

Participants strongly expressed that they need clarity regarding the future of eMS. Programmes need to know how to proceed with their own planning and whether they can count on a future community monitoring system.

Interact reflected that the development of a new community monitoring system has different possible scenarios. One is adapting of the currently functioning eMS, one other is to start the development of a new system from scratch. All scenarios have pros and contras. In this regard one of the main concerns is the timing. Interact MC is due in spring 2019, where the decision should be made, which scenario will take place.

It has been agreed that:

- programmes convey the message to their member states regarding the need of the above decision and a clear plan regarding the next steps.
- HIT and eMS development should be closely coordinated processes and colleagues having thorough knowledge about monitoring systems should support HIT wherever necessary.