

Improving Synergies across the Mediterranean for post 2020 IV. Tools and Themes

28/04/2021

Report

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I. Setting the context for the meeting.

With the new programming period there is a need for a more integrated approach to sectoral and/or territorial policy implementation. In this context, the Commission through the Orientation Papers encourages a stronger cooperation between Interreg programmes operating within the same geographical area. Based on this reality, improving synergies and inter coordination of the operations implemented by the most appropriate geographical scale (TN-CBC-IPA-NEXT) can increase its efficiency when giving response to territorial challenges.

A constant dialogue between the programmes is, therefore, essential, to agree on challenges and type of actions /interventions. This should be addressed from an early stage of the programming, as a basis for long term coordination during the programme's implementation.

There have been several meetings so far, where discussions on WHAT theme programmes could work jointly, WHO does what to ensure programme inter-coordination and How to improve interprogramme coordination across Interreg programmes have been taken. This fourth meeting focused on Tools and Themes, is based on the information to be provided in sections 1.2 and 2.1.2 of the programme's template. In particular:

- Information and update on programmes thematic choice
- Information and discussion on existing tools that could ease future activities on synergies.

Disclaimer: This meeting had a technical purpose for exchange and brainstorm ideas. Decisions are only to be taken under the different programme's Task Force meetings.

Interprogramme coordination in the Programming Phase.

Section 1.2 template

Recommendation: a standard text on coordination which can be inserted in all Mediterranean and Adriatic/Ionian programmes

- Who? Programmes involved (focus on Interreg) with clear reference to MRS or sea-basin strategy
- What? Overview table with PO's and SO's per programme: early identification of common interests with opportunities for cooperation and synergies (Common excel table)
- How? Potential for cooperation activities: Sharing ToR/studies, joint programming, joint events per theme/policy, combined calls or studies, capitalisation calls, timetables and deadlines for implementation, participation in MC's, regular exchange MA's/JS, interprogramme staff training, joint virtual library
- Use of harmonisation tools: Jems monitoring, HIT, Keep.

Section 2.1.1 template

- Justify the selected actions in relation to their territorial benefit/impact: reference to territorial/maritime frameworks.
- EUSAIR programmes: reference to relevant territorial challenges and prioritized actions of MRS action plan
- References to relevant parts of Mediterranean sea basin strategies
- Reference to overview table in section 1.2 .

II. European Commission updates.

- Speakers: Pascal Boijmans and Jean Pierre Halkin. Head of Units D1 and D2.

Regulations: Coreper 16/12/2020 adopted a consolidated version “confirmation of the final compromise text” including the annex – programme template. The publication in official journal together with CPR, ERDF and ESF+ regulations is expected by June. Now Commission and MS still working in programmes' geography and budget.

Some recommendations to Interreg CBC programmes (Strand A) based on the audit by **Court of Auditors**, which will be published by the end of May.

1. To avoid supporting the same kind of operations financed by the mainstream programmes. Also avoid mirror projects in both sides of the borders.
2. Preserve the uniqueness of Interreg CBC projects and programmes. Interreg Projects should be characterized by joint planning, joint implementation and joint financing with a clear CBC or TN character.
3. Strong message emphasising that programmes do not work on isolation TN and CBC are complementarity. And an optimal coordination between them within or not in a MRS or SBS context is a must but also with the mainstreaming programmes.

How Interreg projects should strengthen the territorial dimension? Projects should not only not work in isolation but should be embedded in the programme strategy. For this, there is a new concept “**Functional areas**”, looking beyond the administrative borders of our regions or MS, focusing on common challenges/topics. In one territory, we could have several functional areas supported by different programmes and here we can speak about Coordination and synergies among programmes

Embedding of the Strategies in the Mediterranean, There are 2 in this area: EUSAIR (MRS for the Adriatic Ionian Region) and WestMed.

The EU achieve its impact by designing policies. To implement such policies there are programmes and strategies. **What is the relation between Programmes and Strategies about?**

- The strategies are open to programmes to ensure not only the EU policies but they have been adapted to the needs of an specific region.
- It is important the strategies knows and follows the programmes decisions and developments and vice versa.
- Strategies should use the competitive advantage of each EU fund TN, CBC and also the mainstream programmes (incl IPA fund and neighbourhood fund) to ensure the impact of such investment in the relevant territory.
- There should be a win win approach between programmes and strategies.
- Strategies can provide extra visibility to our programmes results and opportunity for capitalisation.

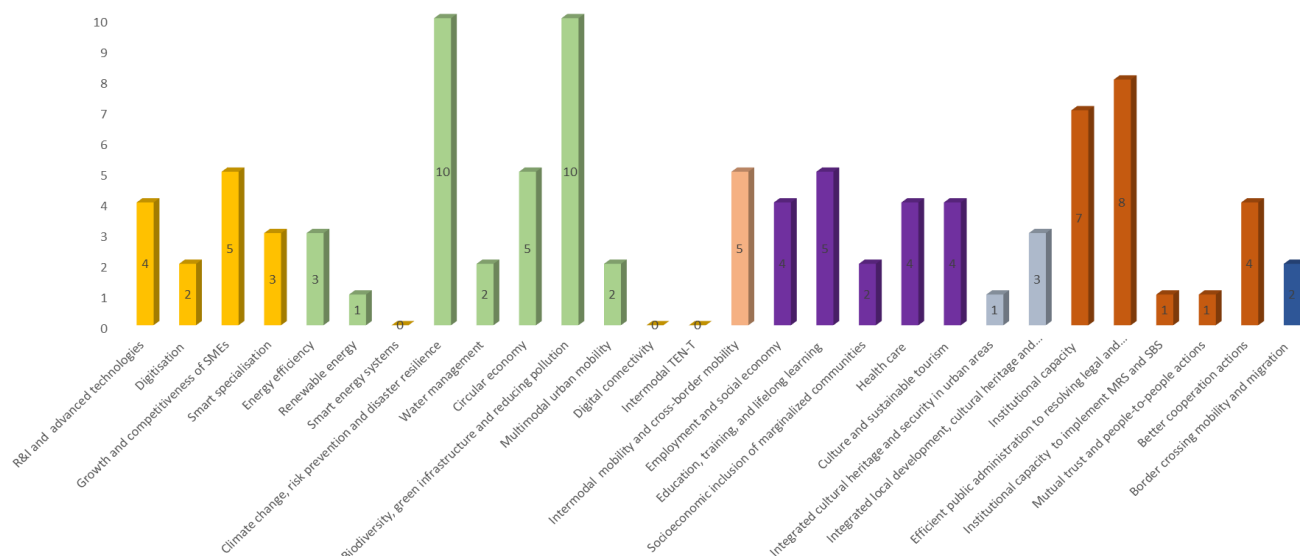
What is not about?

- No relation of hierarchy about cooperation on equality
- Not about diverting money from the programme to the strategy

Clarifications: ISO 1 is focus on strengthen public administrations and legal obstacle preferably should be tackled directly and not in a cross cutting way

III. Thematic Concentration.

- State of play on the SO and Themes on April 28th, provided by the Programmes MA based on TF meetings.



So far, the most Popular Specific Objectives are :

- Under PO2: **Climate Change and Risk Prevention** and **Biodiversity and Reducing Pollution**.
- Under ISO1: **Solving legal and administrative obstacles in border regions and Institutional capacity**.

Main Cross cutting themes mentioned

- Institutional capacity, Blue Growth and sustainability, inclusive and sustainable tourism, digitalization and security, pre-accession assistance.

When do programmes consider to submit their programme to the commission? (slido)

Most of the programmes showed tht they will submit their programme in the 2nd half of 2021. IPA and Interreg Next programmes would do it closer to 2022.

When do you think you will submit your Interreg Programme?

2021: 3Q



2021: 4Q



2022: 1st half



Group Discussions- Focus on PO2. Summary from all breakout rooms.

Being PO2: A Greener Europe and its neighbourhood, a compulsory policy objective to all programmes, the exercise on thematic concentration, synergies and complementarities was built as an example in this PO.

So far all the Mediterranean programmes that have already discussed about the SO, showed their interest on Climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention (SO4) and on biodiversity and reducing pollution (SO7).

Nevertheless, few programmes also mentioned circular economy (SO6) and on energy (SO1 and2) and water related objective (SO5), as objectives also to be selected.

Bridging topics: Blue Economy, Green deal, Innovation, Circular economy

- **What the programme would finance in post 2020 in PO2? kind of activities/operations/deliverables...**

Programmes stated the following ideas...

Before discussing about operations/ actions for next period, programmes need to have a geographical confirmation on their programme area and budget.

Although some programmes have already identified the Specific Objectives to be tackled in the future, it is early for more detail. Therefore, the programmes wanted to focus on 2014-2020 results (their own or others) and capitalize them.

A right balance between the thematic prioritisation process and flexibility proves to be the correct mindset.

SO1-SO2: Renewable energy and Energy Efficiency

- Solar energy improvement and wind energy - testing pilots
- Development of systematic solutions
- Awareness raising of young generations (schools)
- Promote energy efficiency measures (green house emissions)

- Transition to renewable energies

S04: Climate Change adaptation and Risk Prevention

- Restoration of natural functions and improvement of sustainable management preservation natural eco system
- Improve legislation and EU policies on this topic
- People to People actions vs Government to Government approaches within this specific objective.
- Reduction of pollution emissions
- Oil spills prevention
- Floods and coastal erosion
- Fire and earthquake prevention
- Transition to renewable energies
- Sustainable Tourism
- Tools and models, joint strategies for awareness raising.
- Tools for impact evaluation
- Support to governance at CBC area, actions to support strategic plans, experimentation etc.
- Evaluation and modelling impact for some sectors
- Coordination capacity of key actors through governance actions, joint interventions, plans and investment in pilot projects.
- Capitalization on previous results on a marine/maritime angle

S05: Sustainable Water

- Water conservation
- Water supply and systems

S06: Circular Economy

- Protection and valorisation, awareness raising waste water management.
- Share solutions, capacity building along value chain.

S07: Biodiversity, Green infrastructure, Reducing pollution.

- People to People actions vs Government to Government approaches within this specific objective.
- Green Ports
- Cooperation between protected areas and sensitive sites due to human activity
- Sustainable fishing
- Marine protection
- Protection and use of natural capital
- Action supporting biodiversity conservation, protection of habitats, fight against invasive species
- Tools and practices, joint strategies for risk prevention
- **Possibilities for synergies, complementarities, bringing experiences. How far have you arrived in your discussions?**

Too early to give specific information on this right now. However, during the session participants agreed on the range of possible collaborations, from the opportunity of promoting synergies among actions insisting in the same topic/territories, to the challenge of creating complementarities among different actions for a broader impact. The option of creating bridges between actions surpassing the border of Policy Objectives has been also considered, for instance when addressing blue economy, sustainable

tourism, or smart energy solutions. Green deal came clearly as an overarching dimension and a crosscutting issue.

Some ideas:

- Some programmes are starting to have interviews with others to discuss more in depth about specific actions for complementarity.
- Organise the content around four pillars have been proposed, labelling actions under “technical”, “societal”, “regulatory” and “policy”.
- Sharing documents that could be beneficial to the rest. Interreg Med offers to share a synthesis of several topics done by their Horizontal projects.

IV. How Interact harmonization tools (HIT, Jems and Keep 3.0) can improve Interprogramme Coordination in the Mediterranean.

Which Interact harmonisation tools are you already using?

Harmonised Implementation Tools for the 2021-2027 (HIT)

31%

Joint Electronic Monitoring System (Jems)

13%

Keep.eu

75%

Not yet, but planning to use in the future

13%

The session started with a presentation on Interact **harmonised management tools** (HIT, Jems and Keep 3.0) and its use for better exchange of information during programmes’ implementation and consequently for interprogramme coordination.

HIT(Implementation tool) will provide the information to the monitoring system (Jems) based on the beneficiaries application forms. Jems will allow the exchange of data via external communication (API) and will provide information to Keep.eu in a harmonised structure of data.

To improve synergies among programmes and projects we need to compare data and to compare data we need to establish common and harmonised criteria

What kind of data would you need to improve interprogramme coordination? Slido.com

1. Programmes were clear that the most important data to start talking of interprogramme coordination is a **common understanding: Glossary**.
2. Need for a **common categorization/clusterisation of the following concepts Actions/Activities/Results/outputs/Indicators**, which should be taken into account in Interact harmonization tools from HIT to Keep 3.0.
3. Secondly, working on a **thematic and/or sub geographical basis**.

Other needs were highlighted as:

- **Common calendar** to share the different calls.
- **Digital library** to share tangible projects results. Interreg is not well known outside of our world, in this context showing joint achievements in specific policies can be useful to be more visible.

For inspiration:

EUSAIR stakeholder platform has developed a visual database adding these information:
https://datastudio.google.com/u/0/reporting/82d943ab-4b40-41b4-9d36-a2074581d116/page/cntjB?s=poB_KHvT2Rg

What kind of joint actions you foresee to work together? Group Discussions- Joint view.

- **List of possible joint actions on how to work together.**

Joint programming on topics of strategic relevance:

- Proposal of a Common ToR in a specific topic, based on the current programmes results as a starting point.
- The ToR is the strategic framework, with different parts and shared by different programmes who will launch their call in their own time but always considering the common needs agreed in the ToR. If ToR is not feasible, at least define common targets.

Share information during the project preselection and selection phase:

- Good starting guidance documents.
- Sharing programmes strategy during the Lead seminar meetings by inviting other programmes.
- Projects, in the application form should inform on what are they capitalising and to how are they transferring the results.
- Sharing the project Evaluation

Calls: Joint calls, consecutive calls, capitalisation calls, clustering calls.

Project implementation phase:

- Share evaluation studies on what happen so far (thematic issues- output-results. Visibility, joint events and thematic clusters.
- Policy meetings where projects from different programmes are represented and share what is being done in that programme on a specific theme.
- Harmonising Concepts discussed with all the actors.
- Common list of outputs - already predefined

- **Suggestions**

HIT glossary can be a good starting point which can be further elaborated and adjusted, also adding defined clusters of outputs, developing a guidance document. This would help programmes form a joint way to guide beneficiaries (through monitoring and closure, as well as would help to collect information in a more harmonised way on synergies etc.). In order to have comparable data and share info on applications, running projects and their results, calls, applications and reporting have to contain/collect these aspects. Harmonised data fields, could also be used for automatic data exchange as well.

Are these harmonised tools only a “neutral” repository of information or are they something more? An added value exists if best practices could be filtered. A thematic approach with intelligent filters could prove to be interesting for national authorities and other final users (ANCT France).

Following steps.

- I. Next meeting 7 of July
- II. Focus on closing the joint programming phase.
- III. Template sections 1.2 and 2.1.2: a) sub thematic meetings b) What do you need to fill in the template?.

Annex 1. [Presentations](#)

Annex 2. [Template for sections 1.2 and 2.1.2](#) of Interreg programmes

Annex 3. [PO and SO Table](#)

Links to Interact documents mentioned during the meeting:

TOOLS:

- HIT: <https://www.interact-eu.net/#o=post-2020/hit-2021-2027> or email hit@interact-eu.net
- Jems: Take a look into Jems: <http://jems1.interact-eu.net:8080>
- Login: admin@jems.eu
Password: Jemsjems123
Please send us an e-mail with request to join it - jems@interact-eu.net

IDEAS on Interprogramme coordination:

- check this out: Compilation | Coordination - plans vs. reality <https://www.interact-eu.net/library#3368-compilation-coordination-plans-vs-reality>
- Publication | Coordination and cooperation: how can we achieve these in Interreg? [Interact | cooperation works | Library \(interact-eu.net\)](#)