Bringing territoriality into Interreg
The territorial dimension of Interreg programmes and projects

Fiche #3: A truly territorial project – Some examples

How does a truly territorial cooperation project look like in reality?

While concepts and definitions are a nice starting point, they often become clear only if applied in everyday life. In the Interreg context this would mean, in the cooperation on the ground happening among the partnership of an Interreg project. In this fiche, we use real Interreg projects as showcases for territoriality really happening on the ground – along the aspects and criteria outlined in the other fiches (esp. #2 and #8). The projects presented here should be taken as examples – there are many more out there – and as inspiration for more truly territorial Interreg projects!

Features of a primarily spatially (territorially) relevant project
The starting point are for example cross-border functional areas or cities or regions with similar challenges (including urban districts, rural municipalities, etc.). Actors are local and regional authorities, local organisations, NGOs, associations, the civil society, but also companies and scientists. They work integratively: based on the challenge, relevant sectors (e.g., transport, environment, economy) are involved, and solutions are worked out advancing a region both economically and sustainably. Results should support the implementation of regional strategies hence projects should be set up and implemented in accordance with regional strategies and actors.

Some examples of truly territorial projects

Please find below a few examples of projects which could serve as best practices how the different aspects of a truly territorial project are reflected in a real cooperation project. As mentioned in Fiche #2 *Territoriality – What is it all about?* and as you can also see below, it does not mean that every single project has to respond to all five approaches of a truly territorial project – but the more approaches covered, the better.

FIRSTLY, the project is built on a **place-based approach**. This would mean:

- The project focuses on issues and themes which are of high relevance for the territory in question, like regions or cities.
- The project's activities are specific for the programme area or the territories involved and the project can contribute to creating a relevance for the programme area: what makes it specific for my programme area or could it be done elsewhere?
- The project addresses common territorial challenges or a joint asset of the programme area – there is a real need for the project (well justified, reasonable, well explained).
- It has a relevance for the programme area, e.g., by its intervention logic linked resp. corresponding to Territorial Agenda 2030 priorities relevant for the programme area (*see fiche #4 Interreg and the Territorial Agenda 2030*).
- The project is created in a territorial context (through the planned activities and involved partners).
- It will (contribute to) reduce (regional) disparities.
- (CBC project) It addresses problems which are "there", tangible on the ground affecting the quality of life.

Place-based approach: The **Valga-Valka twin town centre and recreational area projects** (both Interreg Estonia-Latvia Programme, LINK 1 and LINK 2) ensure a place-based approach. As overarching objective, the projects tackle the issue of population shrinkage caused by inhabitants moving to the capitals, in this case from Valga to Tallinn and from Valka to Riga. It seeks ways to increase the attractiveness of the former united and now divided cities at the border through joint development and refurbishment of the twin town centre. The aim is to retain and attract new inhabitants and to strengthen the image and identity of Valga-Valka as a joint town.
https://estlat.eu/en/we-support/valga-valka-central-urban-area

The **SmartEdge** project (Interreg Europe, LINK) addresses the potential for greenhouse gas emission reductions in smaller cities ('edge cities') within metropolitan areas. It gathers metropolitan areas from seven countries: Akershus, Barcelona, Brandenburg, Ilfov, Krakow, Milano and Stockholm. Edge cities are an integral part of the existing metropolitan fabric. Through smart urban planning (e.g., intelligent building, intelligent transport), they can play a crucial role in the low carbon economy by being laboratories for smart, green and economic solutions.
https://www.interregeurope.eu/smartedge/

The **Arrival Regions** project (Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE, LINK) is to enhance the capacities of decision-makers in nine rural areas previously subject to declining and ageing populations to successfully integrate young non-EU nationals into social life and employment to stabilise their demography. It thereby addresses the topic of demographic change and depopulation through place-based approaches, by testing and implementing social inclusion approaches in a participatory way in rural territories less used to such approaches. The project truly incorporates the Territorial Agenda 2030 principles as it has a clear strategic territorial focus, is breaking silos and leads to an improved governance through testing innovative solutions.
https://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/Arrival-Regions.html

SECONDLY, the project is built on an **integrated approach**. This would mean ...
- The project looks at the given challenge or opportunity from different (sectoral) perspectives and these different (sectoral) perspectives become part of the project.
- The project reflects and addresses the complexity, relation and integration of sectors and territory.

Integrated approach: Maritime spatial planning (MSP) by nature, aiming at balancing interests, addresses a vast number of sectors in an integrated way. The **NorthSEE** project (Interreg North Sea Region Programme, LINK) aiming at greater coherence in MSP processes and planning documents and developing recommendations for a multi-level MSP framework in the North Sea region looks especially at the three sectors of shipping, energy and environmental aspects.
https://northsearegion.eu/northsee

Another example is the **RegEnergy** project (Interreg North-West Europe Programme, LINK) taking an integrated view on renewable energy (RE). The project rests on three pillars:

1. Organising urban rural partnerships
The elaboration and implementation of optimal institutional and administrative arrangements - such as cooperation agreements between cities and countryside – is necessary to overcome administrative barriers preventing urban-rural cooperation for renewable energy.

2. Connecting producers and consumers
Producers of RE are increasingly diversified and decentralised. The development of infrastructure networks - such as networks for heat and pipelines for transport of biogas from rural to urban areas – is necessary to connect producers with consumers of renewable energy.

3. Smart solutions for renewable energy growth
The development of technological solutions – such as smart grids or storage capacities – is necessary to manage the intermittent character of electricity production coming from regional wind and photovoltaic installations.
https://www.nweurope.eu/projects/project-search/regenergy-renewable-energy-regions/

THIRDLY, the project partnership reflects a **Quadruple helix approach**. This would mean ...
- The project involves (e.g., through its partnership) actors from different levels, local and regional actors, civil society and NGOs, academia and SMEs.
- The project will be territorial and involves sectoral partners (involvement of local and regional authorities).
- The project involves the relevant actors needed to address the territorial challenge or joint asset and the objectives specified.
- All partners play a defined role in the partnership and the territory benefits from this cooperation.
- With respect to the project's objectives the project partnership is balanced with respect to the levels, sectors, territory and consists of complementary partners.

Quadruple helix approach: The project **RegEnergy** (Interreg North-West-Europe Programme, LINK) has gathered a partnership consisting of NGOs, local and regional authorities, energy producers and technology providers. Pilot actions in nine regions of North-West-Europe demonstrate efficient and viable solutions. All partners contribute with their capacities and knowledge. Solutions range from institutional and administrative arrangements as matchmaking between production and consumption areas to the use of new technologies combining industrial production processes with renewable energy generation.
https://www.nweurope.eu/projects/project-search/regenergy-renewable-energy-regions/

The **RESTART_4DANUBE** project (Interreg Danube, LINK) deals with urban regeneration and the productive use of cultural and creative industries (CCI) in that process. The number of urban regeneration (UR) initiatives promoted by European cities is rising. The new status quo is that UR strategies should encompass an integrated approach. Cities face challenges to develop a culture that generates public/private synergies to promote SMEs & stimulate creative urban communities. They need to tailor their UR policies to local specificities and assets and integrate local stakeholders. The project includes a quadruple helix partnership to develop new types of governance and public policies in an innovative approach combining tandems and follower cities.
https://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/restart-4danube#

FOURTHLY, what the project is dealing with is **close to the citizens**. This would mean …
- that the project deals with issues of high relevance to the citizens.

Close to the citizens: The **Valga-Valka town centre projects** (Interreg Estonia-Latvia Programme, LINK 1 and LINK 2) are directly focusing on the inhabitants of the twin town. The projects are tackling the issue of population shrinkage by uniting both towns' citizens and making them recognise Valga-Valka as a joint town through joint urban development of a multifunctional town centre at the border and by improving the physical connectivity.
https://estlat.eu/en/we-support/valga-valka-central-urban-area

The **Healthacross for Future project** (Interreg Austria-Czech Republic, LINK) is ensuring that residents living on both sides of the border in the divided city of Gmünd (Austria)/České Velenice (Czech Republic) have equal access to quality healthcare. Without the expanded hospital for shared use the nearest emergency centre on the Czech side of the border would be 18 km away, the nearest hospital over 60 km. The projects meet immediate citizens' need and as the project above seeks to increase the attractiveness of small towns in areas quite remote from larger cities. Maintaining public amenities and Services of General Interest in rural areas facing population shrinkage is one of the pressing territorial issues!

FIFTHLY and last but not least, the project is based on a **strategic approach**. This would mean …
- The project, although developing and implementing projects on the ground, contribute to the implementation of regional strategies.
- The project clearly contributes to a wider strategy on one or more policy levels (EU / national / regional).
- The project has a policy relevance
- It has a relevance for the programme area, e.g., by its intervention logic linked resp. corresponding to Territorial Agenda 2030 priorities relevant for the programme area (*see Fiche #4 Interreg and the Territorial Agenda 2030*).

Strategic approach: The project **RegEnergy** (Interreg North-West-Europe Programme, LINK) seeks to contribute to local and regional renewable energy production strategies thus, at the same time contributing to one of the most challenging overarching policy goals for Europe: the shift from fossil energy production to sustainably produced energy from renewable sources. Results range from strategic alliances to practical demonstrators for new technologies.
https://www.nweurope.eu/projects/project-search/regenergy-renewable-energy-regions/

The **Islands of Innovation** project (Interreg Europe Programme, LINK) involves public authorities from seven island regions across Europe. These regions face similar challenges: loss of population, isolation, vulnerable environments and limited economic activity. But islands are also often more self-reliant, with strong community involvement that can provide resourceful environment for piloting innovations. Through investigating the best way to exploit these strengths, the project aims at improving the implementation of the Smart Specialisation Strategies in these regions so that they can keep the young, innovative and entrepreneurial people and maintain activities on the islands.
https://www.interregeurope.eu/islandsofinnovation/

The **Baltic Energy Areas – A Planning Perspective** project (Interreg Baltic Sea Region, LINK) brings together two perspectives: spatial planning as well as regional energy policy. It seeks to reconcile the needs of EU and national policies for an increase in the share of renewable energy with requirements and tools for territorial and spatial planning. Suitable areas for renewable energy installations such as wind parks, bio-energy units or solar panels need to be available. Spatial planners are tasked with making such space available. At the same time, they need to strike a balance between spatial claims for renewable energy with competing aims and land uses (e.g., nature protection, cultural landscapes, agriculture, tourism).
https://www.balticenergyareas.eu/project

This fiche is part of series of fiches on 'Bringing territoriality into Interreg'
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