

# Social innovation

made by Interreg

Period 2014-2020

**Interact**



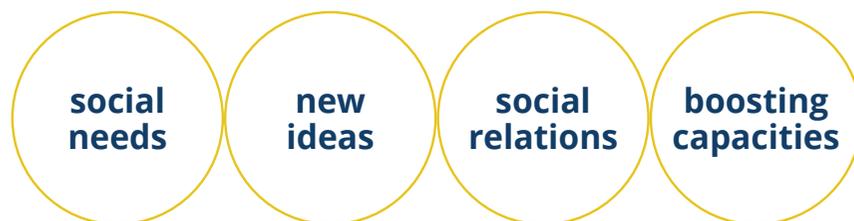
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# Social innovation projects improve citizens' lives by tackling social needs with new ideas

## WHAT IS 'SOCIAL INNOVATION'?

Social innovation means an activity that is social both as to its ends and its means and, in particular, an activity which:

- Implements new ideas that meet social needs.
- Renews social relations.
- Benefits society while boosting its capacity to act.



## AN INTERREG SOCIAL INNOVATION PROJECT

A typical social innovation project during the 2014-2020 period would have these characteristics:

### Themes

SME and entrepreneurship, social inclusion

### Thematic Objective

TO 1 / Strengthening research, technological development and innovation

### Outputs

Training, instruments and tools, and methodologies

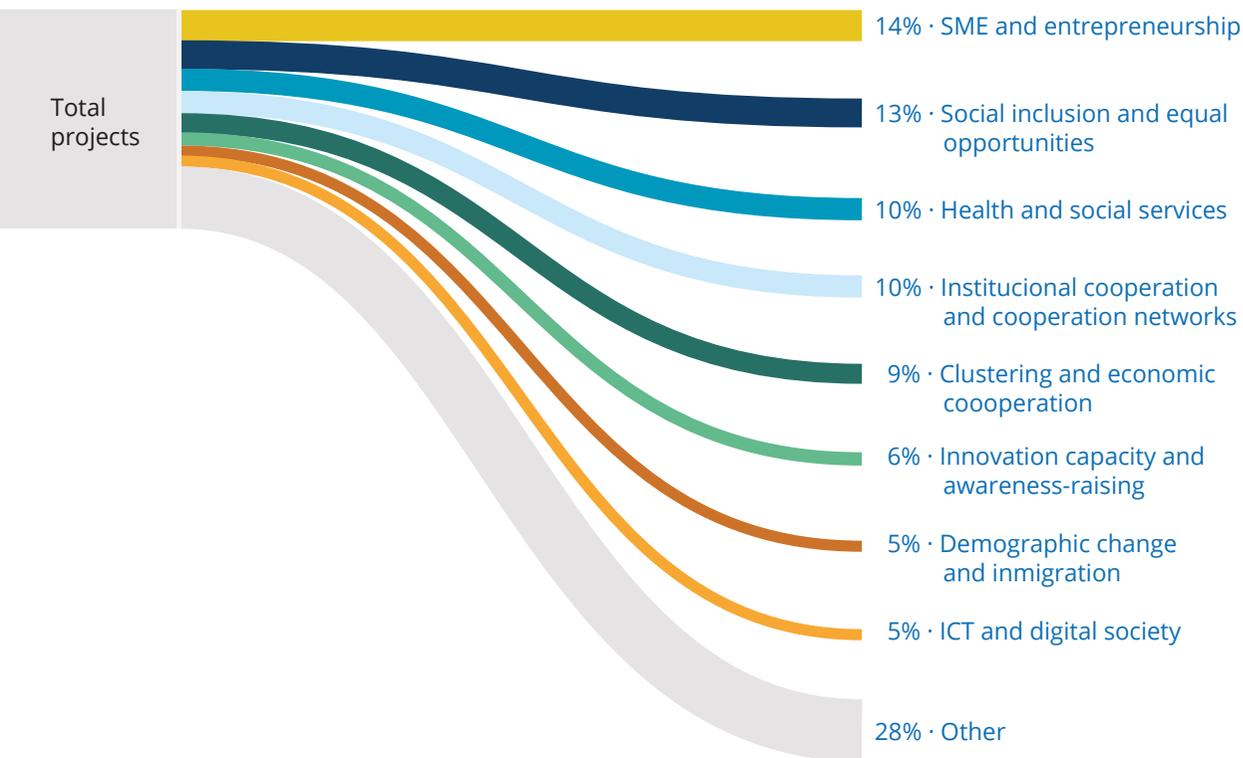
### Budget

€ 1,900,000

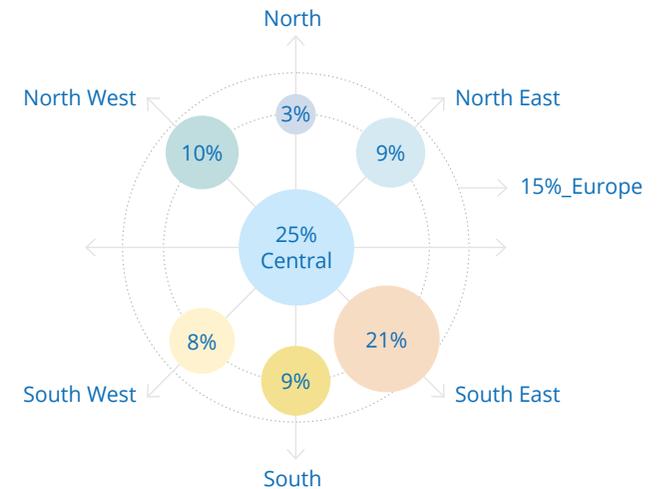
# Interreg has carried out more than 170 projects targeting social innovation during the period 2014-2020



## Projects distribution per theme

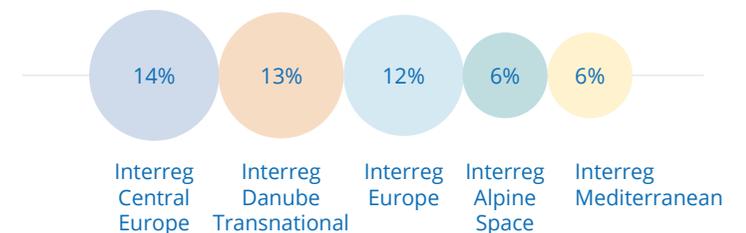


## Geographical distribution of projects



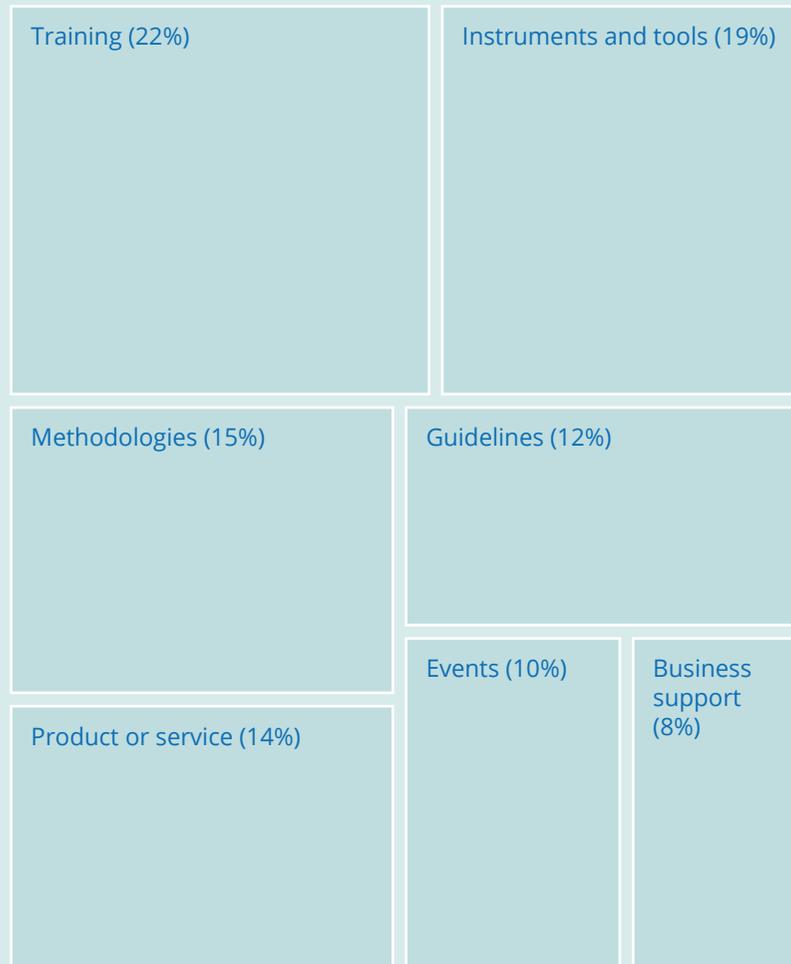
## The most active transnational programmes in social innovation

(% of projects funded contribute to social innovation)



# The main outputs of the projects are: training, instruments and tools, and methodologies

## Projects distribution per output



### Training

Education-oriented activities, such as proper trainings, workshops, skills acquisition and both formal and non-formal education.

### Instrument and tools

Platforms, databases, and policy instruments, among others.

### Methodologies

Non-tangible outputs such as the establishment of methods through dialogue and stakeholder involvement and/ or new ways of proceeding and behaving.

### Product or service

Provision of a product or service emerging from a societal need that the project seeks to tackle.

### Guidelines

Issuing documents, templates and white papers for others to use and transfer a certain practice(s) and ease processes where specific documents are needed.

### Events

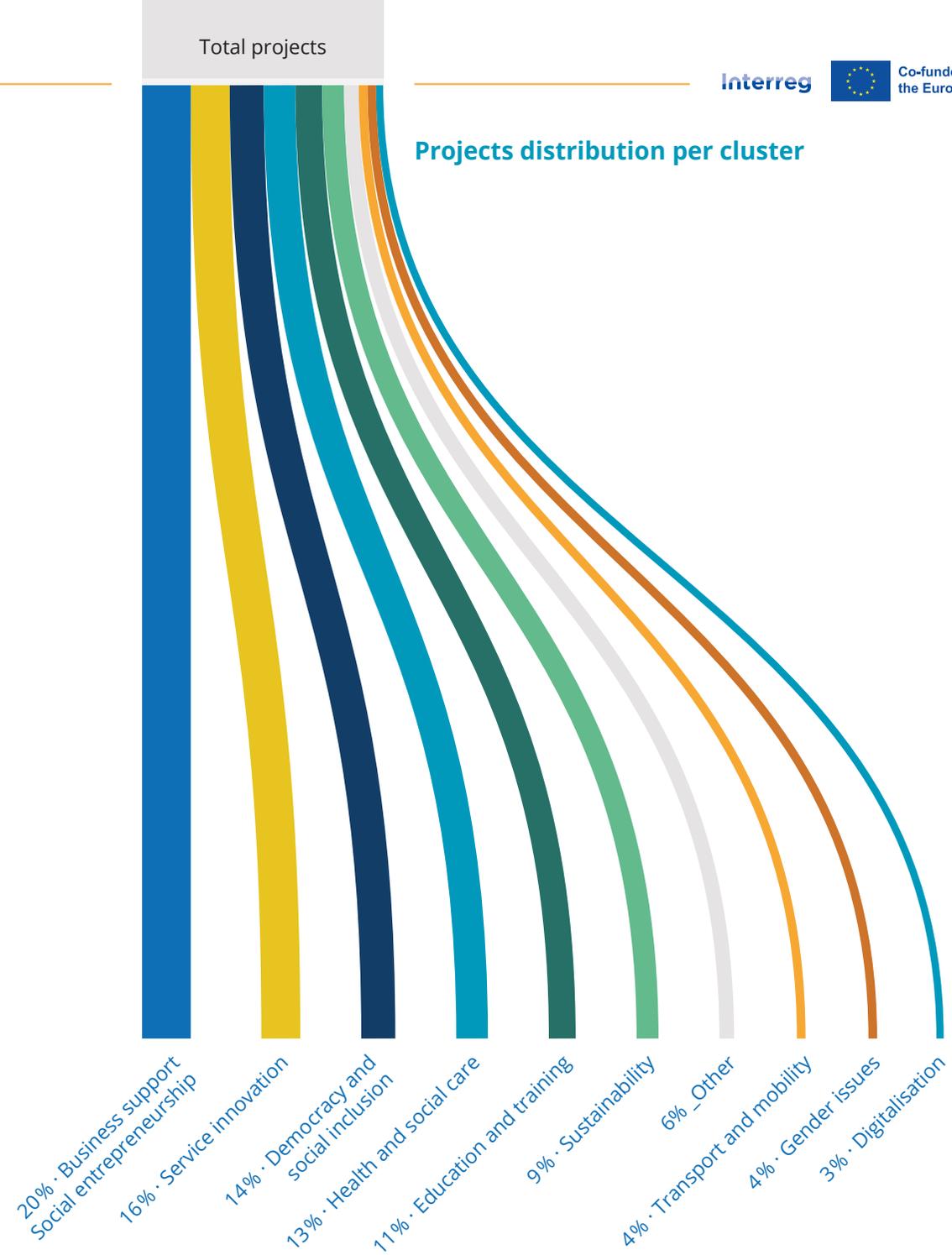
Celebration of meetings, get-togethers, Hubs, conferences to develop the project.

### Business support

Financing, advice and orientation services given to business or social entrepreneurs to further advance with their ventures.

**The main topics are common to all strands of Interreg programmes,** but interregional and transnational are more focused on strategic approaches, while cross-border programmes aim at tackling regional challenges

Interregional and transnational programmes are effective and suitable to develop common policies and frameworks with a more strategic approach, as they aim to overcome big common challenges, as well as test and develop new solutions and tools. Cross-border programmes have a stronger regional and local focus and excel at the implementation level when facing concrete local and/or regional challenges.





## Long-term outputs and the involvement of stakeholders from several regions and typologies are the main achievements

### Achievements

- Conducting needs' analysis
- Involvement and engagement of local actors
- Participative methods (co-creation and co-decision)
- Exchange of practices between international actors
- Involvement of diverse stakeholder typologies
- Long-term outputs

### Strengths

- Close and continuous communication
- Stakeholders' track record and expertise
- Flexibility to deliver tailored actions



## Lack of common understanding and consensus regarding the social innovation concept hinders the development and implementation of many projects

### Weaknesses

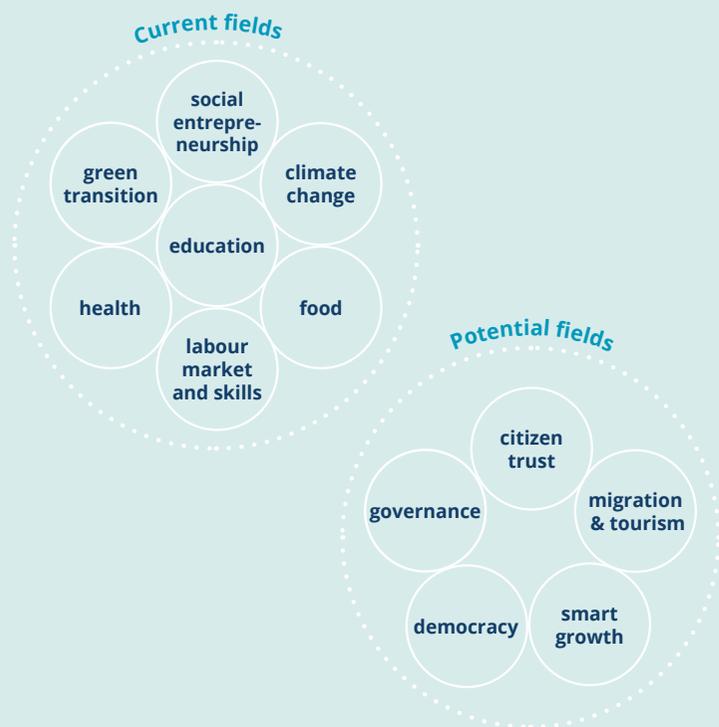
- Lack of general understanding, clear definition, and consensus regarding social innovation concept

### Implementation challenges

- Politically sensitive topics
- COVID-19
- Engagement of crucial stakeholders sometimes lacking financial and infrastructure capacities
- Support from local politicians and public administrations
- Social needs change and evolve over time
- Temporary nature of projects

# There are important synergies between Interreg and other European funds in the field of social innovation, both around the usual topics and new trends

There are areas for synergies between Interreg and other EU funds as well as new areas that are not covered by other EU funds that can be taken up by Interreg.

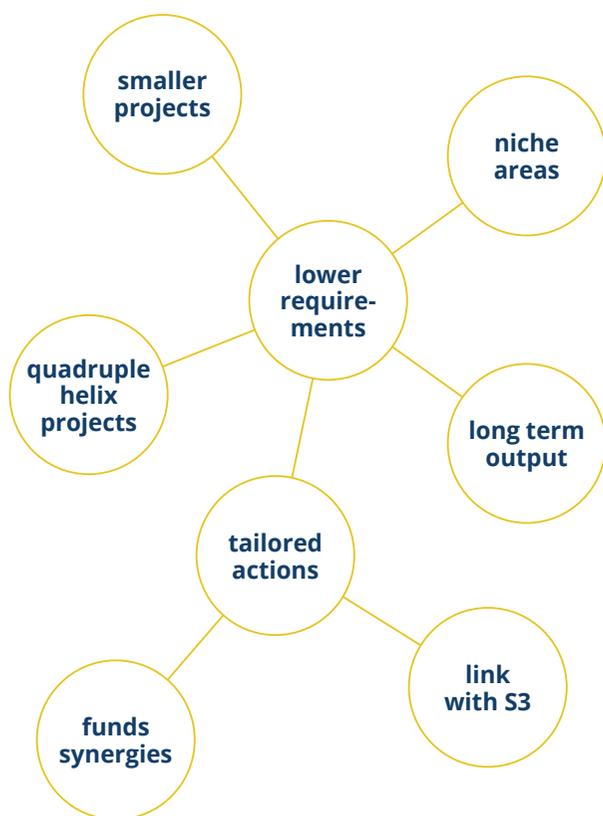


## Synergies between Interreg and other funds

Interreg synergy level	Programme	EU Fund	Beneficiaries	Main policy areas
●●● High	ESF & ESF+	European Social Fund	Individuals and organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Skills</li> </ul>
●● Medium/High	Horizon 2020 & Horizon Europe	Horizon Europe	Scientists, researchers and business	Research and Innovation on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Culture &amp; Inclusive Society</li> <li>• Civil Security for Society</li> <li>• Digital, Industry &amp; Space</li> <li>• Climate, Energy &amp; Mobility</li> <li>• Natural Resources, Agriculture &amp; Environment</li> </ul>
●● Medium/High	Erasmus & Erasmus+	Erasmus+	Individuals and organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Youth</li> <li>• Sport</li> </ul>
● Low	InvestEU	InvestEU fund	Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable infrastructure</li> <li>• R&amp;I</li> <li>• SMEs</li> <li>• Social investment and skills</li> </ul>

# Some of the key recommendations for the period 2021-2027 are: smaller projects, focus on niche areas and lower requirements for organisations, mainly NGOs

Building on the analysis of projects supported during the 2014-2020 funding period, and taking into account the new opportunities provided by in 2021-2027, and the unique Interreg niche among other funding programmes, the following actions could strengthen Interreg role in delivering social innovation solutions:



- Development of **smaller projects** to react timely and better (shorter delay between application and implementation)
- Interreg strength can be best achieved through focus on the **niche areas** (smart growth, governance, citizen trust, democracy, migration, health, and tourism) and comparative advantage of having political authorities involved
- **Lower requirements** for organisations lacking infrastructure and financial capacity, which are mainly NGOs (flexibility within the existing scope of rules, support through training)
- Seek and promote a strong **quadruple-helix approach in projects**, support co-creation of solutions together with relevant stakeholders
- Highlight **long-term output** (guidelines, repositories, methodologies, action plans, piloted and tested solutions) planning is an attempt to overcome the temporary nature of projects
- Room for flexibility to deliver **tailored actions** for each participating region throughout the project
- Synergies and **collaboration with other funds** that have greater financial and infrastructure capacity are highly valuable (mainly ESF+, Horizon Europe and Erasmus+)
- Further development and implementation of the link between social innovation and S3, through projects that **align the regional strategies** with the latter



# Inspiring projects with innovative solutions

## AlpSib

### Interreg Alpine Space

The AlpSib project is addressing NEET and senior's needs by introducing innovative solutions. The project is set to accelerate social impact investments (SII) and focuses especially on social impact bonds (SIB). **AlpSib methodology is a useful tool for all wishing to launch a SIB project.** It provides information and a comprehensive guide to SIB journey but also helps more experienced project managers hints on how to make their SIB project even more successful.

**Budget:** 2.15M€ (total) / 1.8M€ (ERDF)

**Website:** <http://alpsib-project.eu/en/>

## Social Plate

### Interreg Greece-Bulgaria

The idea for Social Plate was developed by Thessaloniki Central Market (TH.C.M.). The goal of the project is to **provide food for weaker social groups, give work to the long-term unemployed and limit food waste.** Every day, traders of TH.C.M. deliver non-marketable fruits and vegetables to the Social Plate platform and under supervision of the quality control manager. The products are suitable for consumption are repackaged and provided to vulnerable groups with the help of volunteers from the agencies that benefit from the project.

**Budget:** 0.55 M€ (total) / 0.47 M€ (ERDF)

**Website:** <https://www.socialplate.eu/en>

## Co-AGE

### Interreg Austria-Hungary

Project Co-AGE takes an innovative turn to e-volunteering, and tackles one of the most disturbing and saddening aspects of being old, loneliness with online solutions. The introduction of **virtual caring communities** and giving the key the online world, which can increase seniors' life quality, hotline and all other activities of Co-AGE focus on well-being of the ageing population of the rural areas in the ATHU border region.

**Budget:** 1.46 M€ (total) / 1.24 M€ (ERDF)

**Website:** <https://www.interreg-athu.eu/en/coage/>

## DANOVA

### Interreg Danube Transnational

DANOVA aimed to **improve the accessibility** of airports, seaports, train/bus stations **to blind and partially sighted people** by developing a set of new services and competences to allow them to have a full access to all transportation information, facilities and services. Three pilot ideas working on solutions for safe and independent mobility were selected: a video assistance system (Guide me), DANOVApp, and a portable guidance system GUIDE-Walk 2.0

**Budget:** 2.19 M€ (total)

**Website:** <https://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/danova>

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