

Cooperation programmes under the European territorial cooperation goal

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| Major amendment (requiring EC approval - cf. Art. 96 CPR) | ✓ |
| Approved by monitoring committee | ✓ |
| Justification for amendment | <p>At its 9th meeting (3-4 December 2019, Bucharest, Romania), the Interact III Monitoring Committee agreed that Interact continues the preparation of the Interreg post-2020 monitoring system (successor of the current eMS system) to be offered to programmes free of charge in the 2021-2027 programming period. In order to support programmes interested in using the new system in launching their first call for proposals early enough, the first modules of the new system shall be available in 2021.</p> <p>Meeting this requirement makes it necessary to start the the development of the new system already under the current Interact III programme. In order to start development work (including the public procurement necessary), additional financial resources shall be made available to the beneficiary in charge of the monitoring system (i.e. the City of Vienna as the hosting institution of Interact Office Vienna). This additional funding can be ensured by way of reallocations from other beneficiaries from both priority axes of the programme (as all available funding has already been allocated to beneficiaries).</p> <p>Thus the main element of the amendment is reallocation of EUR 741,379 from priority axis 2 Technical Assistance to priority axis 1 Service delivery (this change affects several parts and tables of the document). Regarding the performance framework (table 5), the amendment includes a technical change: The type of the financial indicator (No. 4) is changed from "O" (Output) to "F" (Financial) and its 2023 target is adjusted in line with the budget reallocation. Finally, the contact details of programme authorities and bodies carrying out control and audit tasks (tables 21 and 22) are also updated.</p> <p>The above changes were approved by the Monitoring Committee on 3-4 December 2019 at its 9th meeting in Bucharest, Romania.</p> |
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| MS amending decision date | |

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| MS amending decision entry into force date | |
| NUTS regions covered by the cooperation programme | AT - ÖSTERREICH BE - BELGIQUE-BELGIË BG - БЪЛГАРИЯ (BULGARIA) CH - Schweiz/Suisse/Svizzera CY - ΚΥΠΡΟΣ (KÝPROS) CZ - ČESKÁ REPUBLIKA DE - DEUTSCHLAND DK - DANMARK EE - EESTI EL - ΕΛΛΑΔΑ (ELLADA) ES - ESPAÑA FI - SUOMI / FINLAND FR - FRANCE HR - HRVATSKA HU - MAGYARORSZÁG IE - IRELAND IT - ITALIA LT - LIETUVA LU - LUXEMBOURG LV - LATVIJA MT - MALTA NL - NEDERLAND NO - Norge PL - POLSKA PT - PORTUGAL RO - ROMÂNIA SE - SVERIGE SI - SLOVENIJA SK - SLOVENSKO UK - UNITED KINGDOM |

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1. STRATEGY FOR THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE UNION STRATEGY FOR SMART, SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND TERRITORIAL COHESION

1.1 Strategy for the cooperation programme's contribution to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and to the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion

1.1.1 Description of the cooperation programme's strategy for contributing to the delivery of the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and for achieving economic, social and territorial cohesion.

The strategic orientation of the INTERACT III 2014-2020 programme (henceforth referred to as INTERACT III) builds on the Regulation 1303/2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 (furthermore referred to as CPR), which defines the thematic objectives that are in line with the Europe 2020 Strategy.

INTERACT III is a cooperation programme of the European Territorial Cooperation goal, part of the interregional cooperation component (as per point (c) of Article 2(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation goal, henceforth referred to as ETC Regulation) and it is set up to reinforce the effectiveness of cohesion policy by promoting exchange of experience concerning the identification, transfer and dissemination of good practices and innovative approaches in relation to implementation of territorial cooperation programmes and actions concerning territorial cooperation and to the use of EGTCs. INTERACT III is a programme co-financed by the ERDF and it shall cover the entire territory of the Union, Norway and Switzerland. The selection of thematic objectives is limited to one in case of INTERACT III, in order to maximise the impact of cohesion policy across the Union. This reflects the aim of the operation, to get the most out of interregional cooperation for the reinforcement of the effectiveness of cohesion policy under the investment for growth and jobs and the European territorial cooperation goals.

The selected thematic objective is thematic objective 11: "Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration".

INTERACT III is set up for enhancing institutional capacity and an efficient public administration. It is to:

- address the smart, sustainable and inclusive growth of Europe 2020 Strategy by supporting Territorial Cooperation Programmes in implementing their activities in the most effective way by giving guidance and area-specific expert input in solving implementation bottlenecks;

- use networking methods that support cooperation as means to contribute to the innovative integrated approach.

INTERACT III ex-ante evaluation and additional assessments of needs do set the baseline for the strategic choice made in the INTERACT III programme. The following intervention fields/specific objectives have been defined for this programme on the basis of the ETC Regulation, as well as on the inputs received from the representatives of the Member States, the National Contact Persons and Monitoring Committee members of INTERACT II.

The INTERACT III cooperation programme, while enhancing institutional capacity and an efficient public administration focuses on 3 specific objectives:

1. to improve management and control capacity of ETC programmes,
2. to improve the ETC capacity in capturing and communicating the programme results,
3. to improve the cooperation management capacity to implement innovative approaches (EGTC, Revolving Funds, macro-regional strategies (MRSs), Article 96 of the CPR, ITI etc.)

1.) To improve management and control capacity of ETC programmes

The scope of this specific objective is to contribute to an efficient and effective implementation of Territorial Cooperation (ETC) programmes, addressing the shift towards simplified and standardised programme management.

Under this objective, INTERACT III will identify and support transfer of good practices, through research, training and networking activities related to the management of ETC programmes of all components. Management is to be understood in a broad sense and covers all aspects of the life cycle of ETC programmes: from the programming phase to the closure, including all programme and project management issues as well as finance, control and communication. It covers the strategic shift to results orientation as well.

INTERACT III activities do not only address the EU regulatory requirements, but also guidelines issued by the European Commission. Special attention is being paid to the exchange of good practices among the programmes on how to implement these requirements and recommendations. If national legislations are relevant on certain issues, INTERACT III will collaborate with the Member States to ensure that these requirements are properly addressed. A close cooperation with the European Commission, Member States and also other external stakeholders having relevant expertise on ETC and programme management is essential to maintaining good networks around the EU.

The capturing exercise in evaluation and the strategic changes in programmes is an important example of programme management activity, to be followed up by INTERACT III, as its scope is substantially included in the Commission guidelines.

Specific services are to be provided to the macro-regional strategies (already addressed by INTERACT II). The macro-regional strategies were launched in the 2007-2013 period in an experimental approach, as a strategic attempt to align policies and programmes' actions. A variety of programmes, not only territorial cooperation, but also other objectives and sectors, in the areas concerned had to adapt to them in the middle of programme implementation. In the 2014-2020 legislative package, the macro-regional strategies are specifically mentioned and they make part of the official delivery structure, thus they do necessarily impact on programme management. In this respect, INTERACT III support will only be horizontal for all macro-regional strategies and provide for exchange of experience and dissemination of best practices. Facilitating dialogue and knowledge sharing between ETC programmes and macro-regional stakeholders is beneficial for ETC programme managers, in order for them to understand how they could concretely contribute to macro-regional strategies, but also how they can benefit from these. INTERACT III activities for macro-regions will enhance cooperation between ETC programmes and programmes implementing activities for the Investment for Growth and Jobs Goal (objective 1), other sectoral programmes and stakeholders and coordinators of macro-regional strategies. The support to macro-regions, e.g. with networking, exchange of experience and communication activities across existing strategies, will necessarily complement the work of transnational programmes. Please also see section 4.4 for more details.

2.) To improve the ETC capacity in capturing and communicating the programme results

INTERACT has been increasingly requested to support the ETC programmes in the relevant thematic fields. With the legislative package for 2014-2020 this support is even more needed, as the thematic concentration and the focus on results do imply additional efforts for programme authorities. These authorities have experience with the implementation requirements, but are not always experts in the thematic objectives set out by the Regulations. Moreover, in the period 2014-2020, the thematic work is relevant throughout the whole implementation cycle.

INTERACT III provides for thematic support to ETC programmes, in line with the CPR and the ETC Regulation and the thematic objectives selected by the programmes. The aim is to support the ETC programmes in the various phases of the programme cycle, where a thematic input is needed: from the programming phase to the generation of projects or their monitoring and evaluation, and especially in capitalisation and communication of the results. The focus is to highlight the role of ETC in the relevant thematic objectives and therefore, a strong territorial approach will be kept. The thematic work started under INTERACT II is the basis for these activities. Each thematic objective (or a relevant selection) in the regulation will be addressed, and INTERACT III support is adapted both to the specificities of the strand of programmes and their geographical location – including the macro-regional and sea-basin approaches. The priority areas of macro-regions as such have been developed as thematic networks focusing on projects and actions financed by different programmes, including ETC.

A specific linkage is established with the INTERREG Europe programme, as their thematic platforms may include ETC programmes as well. The coordination between INTERACT III and INTERREG Europe will make sure that ETC programmes can benefit from the wider context offered by the four thematic platforms established by the programme, and also that all aspects of the cooperation are properly identified and

treated. INTERACT III will support ETC programmes in thematic objectives not covered by INTERREG Europe to the extent possible. Both programmes have established ways of working to benefit from each other and avoid a doubling of work.

ETC programmes will benefit from this knowledge and wider political support. Links are established with the relevant organisations, programmes and policies, including relevant EU policies, programmes under the Investment for Growth and Jobs Goal, ESPON, URBACT and Interregional Cooperation, the focus being the role of and the benefit for ETC. Strong collaboration with the European Commission and the Member States is needed in developing these activities further. Synergies with relevant organisations and networks working on specific territorial themes are being exploited, e.g. associations of regions and other competence centres.

The knowledge management initiative called KEEP, started during INTERACT II and providing a Europe-wide territorial cooperation project database, has a key role to play in the thematic work, therefore it is further developed. In order to enhance capturing the results of the ETC programmes and their projects the way of collecting ETC project results is to be structured and consolidated, with the support of ETC programmes.

Activities under this objective consist of research, networking and promotion. Networking is essential and INTERACT III builds the networks starting from the contacts already created under the 2007-2013 period. The analysis of project achievements in certain thematic fields leads to publications and other thematic promotional activities implemented by INTERACT III. INTERACT III provides territorial and place-based thematic support at an early stage.

For the promotion of achievements in cooperation INTERACT III builds upon its strong network of programme managers and its expertise in communication, reinforced in INTERACT II through the website, publications (newsletters etc.), PR work and European Cooperation Day. INTERACT III gives support to programmes for more efficient communication of their results. INTERACT III coordinates EU-wide joint communication efforts, in order to increase overall visibility of territorial cooperation.

Through all these interventions the INTERACT III contribution to the smart, sustainable and inclusive growth of the Europe 2020 Strategy is given by supporting Territorial Cooperation Programmes in implementing their activities in the most effective way by giving guidance and area-specific expert input in solving implementation bottlenecks. For identification of the bottlenecks INTERACT capitalises on the extensive knowledge and information gained during INTERACT I and II. This knowledge and information will be further enhanced in connection in assessing the programme implementation results from ETC.

3.) To improve the cooperation management capacity to implement innovative approaches (EGTC, Revolving Funds, MRSs, Article 96 of the CPR, ITI, etc.)

ETC/INTERREG was created as an innovative pilot more than 20 years ago and is constantly finding new ways for regions – and other stakeholders – to cooperate.

INTERACT II already started to explore new ways for cooperation and the ETC Regulation recognises the need to follow that path. The aim is to support ETC programmes, regions and stakeholders with innovative cooperation methodologies and to promote them in the relevant EU fora. Under this objective, INTERACT III will work closely with the relevant stakeholders in those innovative fields which are needed, but where neither regulation nor official guidance has yet been issued.

INTERACT III will focus its attention on the research, networking and dissemination activities on the innovative tools that can be used for cooperation purposes. Topics such as EGTCs, Revolving Funds, the alignment of funding, Integrated Territorial Investments will be the main issues to be addressed. Joint Action Plans and the Community-Led Local Development possibilities will be tackled if relevant for cooperation purposes. In addition, links will be established with other programmes and the constant contact with the European Commission will ensure consistency in the messages sent to the ETC community.

Besides these tools, the CPR mentions the cooperation possibilities in the Investment for Growth and Jobs Goal. INTERACT II has already been supporting the regions – and Member States – that were interested in implementing this kind of cooperation. INTERACT III does explore this possibility of cooperation and focuses on the methodological and innovative aspects. Close links are established with the INTERREG Europe Programme. This implies close coordination in order to ensure full complementarities of action by the two programmes and no overlaps (INTERREG Europe policy learning platforms tackle thematic objectives 1. Strengthening research, technological development and innovation, 3. Enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), 4. Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors, and 6. Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency) and synergies already established with the networking programmes in INTERACT II.

Macro-regional strategies introduce a new component in the cooperation dimension and broaden its scope. INTERACT III will contribute to analysing, promoting and disseminating innovative practises and actions developed in the macro-regional framework and in other territorial strategies for the benefit of ETC stakeholders.

The above-mentioned innovative activities within INTERACT III are not exhaustive as other innovative approaches for cooperation may arise during the implementation period and be requested by the target groups, the European Commission and the Member States.

The INTERACT III contribution to economic, social and territorial cohesion is given in the same manner, supporting all ETC programmes in implementation of their activities. Furthermore this support is open for all European-funded cooperation programmes to draw from, including the programmes that operate across and beyond the European external border, as the ETC experience can offer valuable lessons to learn in those environments too, thus enhancing the economic, social and territorial cohesion at the borders. The impact is indirect and can only be viewed within the overall context of cooperation in Europe.

1.1.2 Justification for the choice of thematic objectives and corresponding investment priorities, having regard to the Common Strategic Framework, based on an analysis of the needs within the programme area as a whole and the strategy chosen in response to such needs, addressing, where appropriate, missing links in cross-border infrastructure, taking into account the results of the ex-ante evaluation

Table 1: Justification for the selection of thematic objectives and investment priorities

| Selected thematic objective | Selected investment priority | Justification for selection |
|---|---|--|
| 11 - Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and an efficient public administration | 11e - Promoting the exchange of experience in order to reinforce the effectiveness of territorial cooperation programmes and actions as well as the use of EGTCs pursuant to point (3)(c) of Article 2 (ETC-IR) | <p>The selection of thematic objectives is limited to one in case of INTERACT III, to maximise the impact of cohesion policy across the Union and the reinforcement of the effectiveness of cohesion policy in particular in the European Territorial Cooperation Goal.</p> <p>This kind of increased effectiveness is reached by identifying and facilitating the transfer of good practices, providing guidance and expertise in solving implementation bottlenecks, as well as promoting the use of innovative instruments and strengthening the visibility of ETC.</p> |

1.2 Justification for the financial allocation

Justification for the financial allocation (i.e. Union support) to each thematic objective and, where appropriate, investment priority, in accordance with the thematic concentration requirements, taking into account the ex-ante evaluation.

The only selected thematic objective is thematic objective 11: “Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration“. The planned ERDF financial allocation for the thematic objective is 37,265,300 EUR, corresponding to 94.6% of the total ERDF allocation.

This financial allocation reflects the size of actions in order to address the smart, sustainable and inclusive growth of the Europe 2020 Strategy by supporting Territorial Cooperation Programmes in implementing their activities in the most effective and efficient way by giving guidance and area specific expert input in solving implementation bottlenecks and using networking methods that support cooperation as means to contribute to the innovative integrated approach.

Table 2: Overview of the investment strategy of the cooperation programme

| Priority axis | ERDF support (€) | Proportion (%) of the total Union support for the cooperation programme (by Fund) | | | Thematic objective / Investment priority / Specific objective | Result indicators corresponding to the specific objective |
|---------------|------------------|---|------------------------|------------------------|---|---|
| | | ERDF | ENI (where applicable) | IPA (where applicable) | | |
| 1 | 37,265,300.00 | 94.60% | 0.00% | 0.00% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 11 - Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and an efficient public administration ▼ 11e - Promoting the exchange of experience in order to reinforce the effectiveness of territorial cooperation programmes and actions as well as the use of EGTCs pursuant to point (3)(c) of Article 2 (ETC-IR) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 1.1 - To improve management and control capacity of ETC programmes. The aim is to contribute to an efficient and effective implementation of ETC programmes, addressing also the shift towards more simplified and standardised programme management. Management is to be understood in a broad sense and covers all aspects of the life cycle of ETC programmes: from the programming phase to the closure, including all programme and project management issues as well as finance, control and communication. ▼ 1.2 - To improve the ETC capacity in capturing and communicating the programme results. Smooth implementation of ETC programmes in regards to the thematic concentration and the focus on results. In addition, the effects of ETC on Cohesion Policy should be more clearly identified. Increased visibility of ETC as a whole, on the basis of the results achieved. Increased networking, also at a strategic level. ▼ 1.3 - To improve the cooperation management capacity to implement innovative approaches (EGTC, Revolving Funds, MRSs, Article 96, ITI, etc.). New mechanisms have emerged over time to simplify cooperation, make it more sustainable, effective and appealing for new partners. INTERACT III shall enhance this, in identifying and sharing innovative practices. Cooperation in objective 1, Integrated Territorial Investment, Community-Led Local Development, Revolving Funds, and EGTCs are only some of the tools. | [1.1/1, 1.1/2, 1.2/1, 1.2/2, 1.3/1, 1.3/2] |
| 2 | 2,127,294.00 | 5.40% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 2.1 - Effective implementation of the cooperation programme | [0] |

2. PRIORITY AXES

2.A DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIORITY AXES OTHER THAN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

2.A.1 Priority axis

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| ID of the priority axis | 1 |
| Title of the priority axis | Service Delivery |

- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments
- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments set up at Union level
- The entire priority axis will be implemented through community-led local development

2.A.2 Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one thematic objective (where applicable)

Not applicable

2.A.3 Fund and calculation basis for Union support

| Fund | Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure) |
|-------------|--|
| ERDF | Public |

2.A.4 Investment priority

| | |
|---|---|
| ID of the investment priority | 11e |
| Title of the investment priority | Promoting the exchange of experience in order to reinforce the effectiveness of territorial cooperation programmes and actions as well as the use of EGTCs pursuant to point (3)(c) of Article 2 (ETC-IR) |

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| ID of the specific objective | 1.1 |
|-------------------------------------|-----|

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|--|--|
| Title of the specific objective | To improve management and control capacity of ETC programmes. The aim is to contribute to an efficient and effective implementation of ETC programmes, addressing also the shift towards more simplified and standardised programme management. Management is to be understood in a broad sense and covers all aspects of the life cycle of ETC programmes: from the programming phase to the closure, including all programme and project management issues as well as finance, control and communication. |
| Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more widespread application of simplified and harmonised approaches with the aim of reducing the administrative burden, attracting new types of beneficiaries (e.g. private) and mitigating the risk of errors. This will require for example development of simplified and harmonised tools, guidance and direct work with the programmes and their decision makers in order to ensure the actual change in the programmes; • A more widespread use of identified good practice and quality standards, which could serve as a benchmark for evaluating performance of the programmes across ETC. This covers all aspects of programme management in line with the policy and regulatory requirements (e.g. results orientation, focus, sound financial management, quality assurance of management verifications). This will require extensive analysis, stakeholder involvement and constant reinforcement at the programme level in order to ensure the take up of the existing good practice and development of new one; • Improved communication between the ETC programme management bodies and the Member States representatives. On strategic level there is a need for improved communication in the decision processes with special attention to stakeholder involvement and buy-in. On operational level, there is a need for better information flows, especially in areas of MS responsibility. |
| ID of the specific objective | 1.2 |
| Title of the specific objective | To improve the ETC capacity in capturing and communicating the programme results. Smooth implementation of ETC programmes in regards to the thematic concentration and the focus on results. In addition, the effects of ETC on Cohesion Policy should be more clearly identified. Increased visibility of ETC as a whole, on the basis of the results achieved. Increased networking, also at a strategic level. |
| Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased thematic expertise / competence within the ETC programmes thanks to INTERACT III support. Territorial aspects and specificities will be addressed as well. This will require building thematic networks with experts, thematically specialised programmes and the ETC community. Knowledge management procedures within thematic fields will be established and operated (in close cooperation with other network programmes, especially INTERREG Europe); • A repository of ETC results is established, which can be used by the ETC community and the relevant decision makers at any time. This will require continuation, improvement and further development of the KEEP initiative but strongly linked to the thematic networks; • Leadership of integrated ETC communication strategy established. This will require establishing a strong |

| | |
|--|--|
| | communication network with acceptance of INTERACT’s role in it. |
| ID of the specific objective | 1.3 |
| Title of the specific objective | To improve the cooperation management capacity to implement innovative approaches (EGTC, Revolving Funds, MRSs, Article 96, ITI, etc.). New mechanisms have emerged over time to simplify cooperation, make it more sustainable, effective and appealing for new partners. INTERACT III shall enhance this, in identifying and sharing innovative practices. Cooperation in objective 1, Integrated Territorial Investment, Community-Led Local Development, Revolving Funds, and EGTCs are only some of the tools. |
| Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased knowledge about new and existing tools. This will require mapping the relevant target groups and monitoring of the implementation of these tools, appropriate knowledge management, and promoting this to the ETC stakeholders; • Workable models developed, adjusted to ETC context. Building on the body of knowledge gathered, this will require active work with relevant experts and ETC programmes in order to develop and test such models. Considering ETC resistance to higher risk initiatives, active support of the Commission and the MSs will be required; • Increased awareness in the ETC programmes about other EU funding schemes and their complementarities with their strategies (e.g. LIFE, COSME and HORIZON 2020 programmes). This will require establishment of a relationship with non-ETC programmes and creating sustainable networks around similar programme objectives; • Increased awareness of the mainstream programmes about the advantages of cooperation as an implementation tool. This will require monitoring the use of Article 96, promotion of its positive results and flagging the risks/challenges experienced. Macro-regional approaches might play an important role, if appropriately supported. |

Table 3: Programme-specific result indicators (by specific objective)

| Specific objective | | 1.1 - To improve management and control capacity of ETC programmes. The aim is to contribute to an efficient and effective implementation of ETC programmes, addressing also the shift towards more simplified and standardised programme management. Management is to be understood in a broad sense and covers all aspects of the life cycle of ETC programmes: from the programming phase to the closure, including all programme and project management issues as well as finance, control and communication. | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|---|----------------|---------------|---------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| ID | Indicator | Measurement unit | Baseline value | Baseline year | Target value (2023) | Source of data | Frequency of reporting |
| 1.1/1 | Satisfaction level of ETC programmes with INTERACT products and services aimed at improving the management and control capacity of ETC programmes | Number | 4,19/5,00 | 2013 | increase | Surveys + Evaluation tools | Every 2nd year |
| 1.1/2 | % of ETC programmes using INTERACT products and services aimed at improving the management and | % of programmes | 80% | 2013 | increase | Surveys+ Evaluation tools | Every 2nd year |

| Specific objective | | 1.1 - To improve management and control capacity of ETC programmes. The aim is to contribute to an efficient and effective implementation of ETC programmes, addressing also the shift towards more simplified and standardised programme management. Management is to be understood in a broad sense and covers all aspects of the life cycle of ETC programmes: from the programming phase to the closure, including all programme and project management issues as well as finance, control and communication. | | | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|--|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| ID | Indicator | Measurement unit | Baseline value | Baseline year | Target value (2023) | Source of data | Frequency of reporting |
| | control capacity of ETC programmes | | | | | | |

| Specific objective | | 1.2 - To improve the ETC capacity in capturing and communicating the programme results. Smooth implementation of ETC programmes in regards to the thematic concentration and the focus on results. In addition, the effects of ETC on Cohesion Policy should be more clearly identified. Increased visibility of ETC as a whole, on the basis of the results achieved. Increased networking, also at a strategic level. | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ID | Indicator | Measurement unit | Baseline value | Baseline year | Target value (2023) | Source of data | Frequency of reporting |
| 1.2/1 | Satisfaction level of ETC programmes with INTERACT products and services aimed at improving the ETC capacity in capturing and communicating programme results | Number | 4,19/5,00 | 2013 | Increase | Surveys + Evaluation tools | Every 2nd year |
| 1.2/2 | % of ETC programmes using INTERACT products and services aimed at improving the ETC capacity in capturing and communicating programme results | % of programmes | 80% | 2013 | Increase | Surveys + evaluation tools | Every 2nd year |

| Specific objective | | 1.3 - To improve the cooperation management capacity to implement innovative approaches (EGTC, Revolving Funds, MRSs, Article 96, ITI, etc.). New mechanisms have emerged over time to simplify cooperation, make it more sustainable, effective and appealing for new partners. INTERACT III shall enhance this, in identifying and sharing innovative practices. Cooperation in objective 1, Integrated Territorial Investment, Community-Led Local Development, Revolving Funds, and EGTCs are only some of the tools. | | | | | |
|---------------------------|--|--|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ID | Indicator | Measurement unit | Baseline value | Baseline year | Target value (2023) | Source of data | Frequency of reporting |
| 1.3/1 | Satisfaction level of programmes with INTERACT products and services aimed at improving the cooperation management capacity to implement innovative approaches | Number | 4,19/5,00 | 2013 | Increase | Surveys + Evaluation tools | Every 2nd year |
| 1.3/2 | % of programmes using INTERACT products and services aimed at improving the cooperation management capacity to implement innovative approaches | % of programmes | 80% | 2013 | Increase | Surveys + Evaluation tools | Every 2nd year |

2.A.6 Actions to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 A description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives, including, where appropriate, identification of the main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiariesTTT

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Investment priority | 11e - Promoting the exchange of experience in order to reinforce the effectiveness of territorial cooperation programmes and actions as well as the use of EGTCs pursuant to point (3)(c) of Article 2 (ETC-IR) |
|----------------------------|---|

Key lessons learnt from INTERACT II

The below lessons learnt during the implementation of INTERACT II have been considered when elaborating the actions of INTERACT III. These key points are based on a quantitative analysis of the outcomes of evaluations carried out after INTERACT II seminars, where participants were asked to reflect how much the meeting objectives were met, as well as how much of the guidance provided could be used in their daily work. All INTERACT meetings have a mutual exchange and learning objective. Moreover, written tools aim at enhancing quality and harmonised approaches in programme management.

- INTERACT networks enable an effective exchange of good practices among programme stakeholders and contribute to common approaches and understanding, i.e., to more efficient programme management;
- INTERACT tools, harmonised templates and handbooks enhance common approaches and understanding, they are used as a basis to develop programme documents and they contribute to more efficient programme management;
- INTERACT pilots and innovative approaches support a more efficient programme management;
- INTERACT efforts to capture and promote the added value of Territorial Cooperation as a whole effectively contribute to the overall objective of Territorial Cooperation;
- INTERACT thematic work (capitalisation, knowledge management, thematic linkages and macro-regions) has great potential in increasing the impact of cooperation projects.

Beneficiaries: The extensive knowledge and expertise gained since 2003 by INTERACT is its foremost asset and key to success. To keep this knowledge, INTERACT beneficiaries shall be kept and enhanced. No additional operations and beneficiaries shall be selected, in the meaning of the Regulation i.e. recipients of grants. Exclusively the four decentralised beneficiaries identified for the previous INTERACT II programme will implement the programme, involving all target groups. All activities and work packages (INTERACT III will not select and implement projects in its usual ETC meaning) shall be run by these, according to an annual work plan based on the needs of the target groups, approved and monitored by the INTERACT Monitoring Committee. Therefore, INTERACT beneficiaries may be defined as those public institutions, which are entrusted by Member States to implement the whole programme, through activities carried out by their four regional offices, in respect of the management functions of the

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Investment priority | 11e - Promoting the exchange of experience in order to reinforce the effectiveness of territorial cooperation programmes and actions as well as the use of EGTCs pursuant to point (3)(c) of Article 2 (ETC-IR) |
|----------------------------|---|

INTERACT Managing Authority. The joint human resources policy among INTERACT Offices shall also be focused on keeping and developing knowledge and skills as its foremost asset.

Territories: INTERACT supports cooperation in the whole territory of the European Union, Switzerland and Norway, including at the EU external borders. To assure proximity to the target groups and knowledge of their administrative settings, the four existing regional offices will facilitate regional and national networks of ETC stakeholders in their areas. Regional proximity to the target groups shall assure that regional administrative specificities and needs are taken into account in planning and implementing activities, especially where necessary e.g. for the support to macro-regions, on specific themes of cooperation, as well as for cooperation at external borders of the EU. The regional approach shall not be an obstacle to cross-area exchange and transfer of knowledge. This shall be assured e.g. with a joint service portfolio (see Annexe 5 INTERACT III Joint service portfolio chart).

Type of actions: In order to reach its three specific objectives, INTERACT shall effectively facilitate the identification and transfer of good cooperation practices. This will be done mainly through 1) events and 2) tools, tailor-made to the needs of the identified target groups (see below). Target groups may be involved on a long-term basis, through the work of 1a) networks. With the network, INTERACT will regularly bring together a specific target group, in order to develop joint products, approaches, templates, to test new and simplified approaches or to exchange good practices. Typical INTERACT networks involve ETC programme managers (MAs, CA, AAs, controllers, JSs staff, financial, communication managers), but also national ETC networks, which INTERACT addresses for specific national needs, such as for information or to address specific national laws and approaches. INTERACT events can be 1b) on a short term basis, in case of ad hoc and one-off meetings, seminars, trainings, workshops, conferences on specific themes and promotional events. These may be connected with a specific phase of the programme life cycle, such as closure or training new joint secretariats staff, or with regulatory changes. INTERACT products can – besides the default electronic format – 2a) be made available also in hardcopy (like studies and joint working papers, factsheets, survey outcomes, newsletters, promotional flyers, etc.) or, 2b) existing only in electronic format (online tools, including databases, online papers, IT applications for programme management and monitoring, e-learning tools, promotional tools like videos etc.).

Specific actions addressing the cross-cutting needs of various target groups and strategic goals are the following:

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Investment priority | 11e - Promoting the exchange of experience in order to reinforce the effectiveness of territorial cooperation programmes and actions as well as the use of EGTCs pursuant to point (3)(c) of Article 2 (ETC-IR) |
|----------------------------|---|

- initiating and guiding cooperation and networking processes by contributing working methods and tools for networking and alignment of policies, by coordinating, organising and supporting networks, by building thematic expertise, networking between ETC, other programmes and macro-strategies and actors and by organising the exchange of practices across existing and new macro-strategies stakeholders;
- capitalising on working methods and approaches by contributing with tools for cooperation process development and overview on macro-cooperation and by contributing to simplified management examples;
- enhancing communication flows by contributing to overall communication strategy together with EC and NCPs and by leading together with EC and NCPs (MSs), on macro-regions/sea-basin communication and visibility, especially in relation to ETC programmes.

Furthermore the issues related to EGTC will be tackled, especially the development and use and the exchange of good practices for it, as well as the use and role of the EGTCs in the following fields: as managing authorities of cooperation programmes or part of them, in macro-regions, in Join Action Plans, ITIs, CLLDs, administration of Revolving Funds, and the use of the EGTC following Article 96(3) point (d) of the CPR. The use of EGTC with third countries, in particular with IPA II and ENI in case it is allowed will be also explored.

Each action shall be tailor-made to the needs of the specific target groups, both at EU-wide or regional level (see below), which have to be clearly identified and may evolve over time.

The actions shall directly contribute to the achievement of the specific objectives, such as e.g. for seminars and trainings, target groups needs will be assessed in the planning phase, and target groups will be involved during the development, in order to ensure that the knowledge provided during the events can be effectively used and contribute to a more efficient management of cooperation (i.e. first and third objectives of INTERACT). Expert working groups, composed of experienced programme managers, will be gathered in order to enable knowledge sharing and transfer on management issues, innovative tools or thematic issues (first, second and third objectives of INTERACT). For effective knowledge management, it is important that concrete outcomes of these networks are recorded and disseminated, e.g. in joint working papers or studies available online (first, second and third objectives of INTERACT). Moreover the results of cooperation shall be captured, be made accessible and analysed (second objective of INTERACT). Databases or online tools are essential tools for this, as well as promotional activities, which shall increase the visibility of cooperation results, but also enable knowledge sharing on successful management practices and innovative tools (first, second and third objectives of INTERACT).

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Investment priority | 11e - Promoting the exchange of experience in order to reinforce the effectiveness of territorial cooperation programmes and actions as well as the use of EGTCs pursuant to point (3)(c) of Article 2 (ETC-IR) |
|----------------------------|---|

Target groups: INTERACT II activities targeted mostly ETC programme managers to achieve the over-reaching objective of an efficient and effective programme management. By the end of the 2007-2013 programming period, the need for a more thematic and strategic involvement of INTERACT has emerged, in relation to a more strategic embedding of ETC, to new cooperation opportunities in national and regional programmes, as well as in relation to the new concept of macro-regional strategies and to the thematic concentration requirements for the 2014-2020 period. These facts are also confirmed by the stakeholders consultation carried out in February 2013. Therefore new target groups have been addressed by INTERACT already in 2007-2013. The changed legal context for 2014-2020, which is more focused on strategic coordination of the structural funds objectives, also implies wider target groups for INTERACT III as it is visualised in the charts in Annexe 6 INTERACT III Target groups). Main target groups will be therefore:

1. Programme managers (ETC, IPA II CBC, ENI CBC, all components);
2. National / Regional cooperation stakeholders;
3. EU-wide stakeholders, who will be addressed only as far as appropriate for the benefit of cooperation.

1.) Programme managers (ETC, IPA II CBC, ENI CBC, all components): this target group covers the programme bodies involved in programme and project management, control/audit and communication, including the new intermediate bodies or beneficiaries of new territorial development instruments, which might be put in place by programmes. It will still remain the most important target group of INTERACT III. As programmes will still be managed with different approaches (e.g. centralised–decentralised), according to different regional or national realities, the way to approach these target groups might differ substantially. The decentralised structure of INTERACT III assures that its services take regional and national specificities into account.

2.) National / Regional cooperation stakeholders: this target group covers territorial cooperation and in general cooperation stakeholders (beyond ETC). The resources devoted to these target groups might be still limited to the requests and according to an evolving context. Even though these target groups have been addressed increasingly at the end of the 2007-2013 period, especially on the themes of cooperation and strategic embedding of cooperation, a systematic involvement of these groups is new for INTERACT. This also includes a specific support to the national networks of ETC stakeholders, which shall be provided to all countries, according to INTERACT resources, their specific needs and national circumstances.

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Investment priority | 11e - Promoting the exchange of experience in order to reinforce the effectiveness of territorial cooperation programmes and actions as well as the use of EGTCs pursuant to point (3)(c) of Article 2 (ETC-IR) |
|----------------------------|---|

3.) EU-wide stakeholders, who will be addressed only as far as appropriate for the benefit of cooperation: this target group covers an important part of the INTERACT community: INTERACT has always built strategic links between programme managers, working on the ground, and EU strategic players and decision-makers, such as the Commission, the Parliament etc. This target group has always been addressed also in INTERACT I and II, but it has never been explicitly defined as target group of INTERACT activities. Nevertheless, as it will strongly influence the implementation of programmes, it is an essential part of the INTERACT community and needs to be involved in many INTERACT activities. The resources devoted to this target group shall be still limited to the requests and needs to involve them for the primary benefit of the Cooperation programmes managers.

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for the selection of operations

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Investment priority | 11e - Promoting the exchange of experience in order to reinforce the effectiveness of territorial cooperation programmes and actions as well as the use of EGTCs pursuant to point (3)(c) of Article 2 (ETC-IR) |
|----------------------------|---|

In the overall programme specific nature (no projects; please see section 2.A.6.1) and in accordance with the preamble of the ETC Regulation, stating that due to the horizontal character of interregional cooperation programmes, the content of such cooperation programmes should be adapted, especially in regards to the definition of the beneficiary or beneficiaries, the INTERACT programme will continue to deliver its services through four permanent INTERACT Offices with their seats in Turku, Valencia, Viborg and Vienna.

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Investment priority | 11e - Promoting the exchange of experience in order to reinforce the effectiveness of territorial cooperation programmes and actions as well as the use of EGTCs pursuant to point (3)(c) of Article 2 (ETC-IR) |
|----------------------------|---|

Not applicable

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Investment priority | 11e - Promoting the exchange of experience in order to reinforce the effectiveness of territorial cooperation programmes and actions as well as the use of EGTCs pursuant to point (3)(c) of Article 2 (ETC-IR) |
|----------------------------|---|

Not applicable

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Investment priority | 11e - Promoting the exchange of experience in order to reinforce the effectiveness of territorial cooperation programmes and actions as well as the use of EGTCs pursuant to point (3)(c) of Article 2 (ETC-IR) |
|----------------------------|---|

2.A.6.5 Output indicators (by investment priority)

Table 4: Common and programme-specific output indicators

| Investment priority | | 11e - Promoting the exchange of experience in order to reinforce the effectiveness of territorial cooperation programmes and actions as well as the use of EGTCs pursuant to point (3)(c) of Article 2 (ETC-IR) | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|---|---------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| ID | Indicator | Measurement unit | Target value (2023) | Source of data | Frequency of reporting |
| 1 | Number of events | Number | 890.00 | Annual Implementation Report | yearly |
| 2 | Number of tools | Number | 250.00 | Annual Implementation Report | yearly |
| 3 | Participants to INTERACT events | Number | 13,240.00 | Annual Implementation Report | yearly |
| 4 | Financial | EURO | 43,841,530.00 | Annual Implementation Report | yearly |

2.A.7 Performance framework

Table 5: Performance framework of the priority axis

| Priority axis | | 1 - Service Delivery | | | | | |
|---------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|---|
| ID | Indicator type | Indicator or key implementation step | Measurement unit, where appropriate | Milestone for 2018 | Final target (2023) | Source of data | Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate |
| 1 | O | Number of events | Number | 197 | 890.00 | Annual Implementation Report | Specific events will be organised in order to bring target groups together and achieve INTERACT specific objectives |
| 2 | O | Number of tools | Number | 55 | 250.00 | Annual Implementation Report | Specific tools will be provided to target groups, to achieve INTERACT specific objectives |
| 3 | O | Participants to INTERACT events | Number | 2935 | 13,240.00 | Annual Implementation Report | The events to be organised by INTERACT aim to reach a number of participants similar to in the 2007-2013 programming period |
| 4 | F | Financial | EURO | 9,555,161.00 | 43,841,530.00 | Annual Implementation Report | Amount of certified expenditure of the priority axis allocation |

Additional qualitative information on the establishment of the performance framework

Key principles to identify the output indicators for INTERACT III are:

1. SMART indicators, as set in the Method for establishing the performance framework - Annex II CPR (Relevant, capturing essential information on the progress of priority; Achievable, with the given resources; Realistic, consistent with the nature of the specific objective; Transparent, i.e. easy to understand by any external observer, i.e. self-explanatory, with objectively verifiable targets and the source data identified, verifiable, without disproportionate administrative burden, as well as sufficiently flexible to accommodate emerging needs of the ETC context);
2. Based on the document discussed by the programming committee “INTERACT III Activities and outputs”;
3. The targets have to take into account:
 - ETC stakeholders’ limited capacity to actively participate in INTERACT activities;
 - the available budget (same budget as for 2007-2013, the actual increase is lowered by the average inflation);
 - INTERACT capacity at the end of the 2007-2013 period;
 - an on-going shift towards online services to ETC programme managers, instead of physical meetings (also due to travel restrictions);
 - a clear request by target groups to focus on quality, instead of quantity.

Background

1. The work flow of INTERACT has always been demand driven. Concrete needs of the target groups have widely determined the nature and the scope of INTERACT activities.
2. INTERACT II offered activities, which were not foreseen at the beginning of the programming period and could have not been fully programmed. INTERACT has anticipated ETC programmes’ needs. INTERACT also adapted to strategic needs, emerging during the programming period.
3. INTERACT’s flexibility has also been widely recognised by its target groups as one of the key assets and success factors for INTERACT.
4. The wide flexibility of the demand-driven approach has allowed INTERACT to adapt year-after-year to the changing ETC environment and shall be substantially kept in INTERACT III.

5. As described in the output paper, approved by the programming committee, it is not advisable to fix for the next 7 years precise numbers for long term network meetings and one-off events, or publications and online tools, because of the above mentioned needs-orientation of all INTERACT services and extremely changing environment (new strategic needs, new IT tools, etc.);
6. For all these reasons, INTERACT III output indicators include only events, tools, the number of participants to events and the mandatory financial indicator.
7. For calculating realistic targets for events (indicator No 1) and tools (indicator No 2), the events and publications list of the years 2011-2013 was considered:
 - Each event organised by INTERACT was counted always as one event as an average value, even though the resources used vary (from a small one-off workshop, requiring few days preparation, to a long-term working group on new tools or a wide conference, requiring several staff and weeks of preparation).
 - Each external event (not organised by INTERACT) was counted always as 0,5 event as an average value, even though the resources used vary (from a 15 minutes presentation, requiring few hours preparation, to the overall lead and draft concept and facilitation of workshops, requiring weeks or several staff members).
 - Current average No. of events per year is 128, based on the total amount for the period 2011-2013. Total for 2014-2020 is 890 ($\gg 128 \times 7$).
 - Each tool (guidance, paper, publication, online tool produced by INTERACT) was counted always as one tool as an average value, even though resources used vary (from a short fact sheet, requiring few days of preparation, to a wide study, requiring many months).
 - Each newsflash (regular info mail on activities by INTERACT) was counted always as 0,3 tool as an average value, because of the limited resources used.
 - Current average No. of tools per year is 36, based on the total amount for the period 2011–2013. Total for 2014-2020 is 250 ($\gg 36 \times 7$).
1. The output indicator No 3 was added based on a recommendation of the ex-ante evaluation and only covers the participants attending events organised by INTERACT, (both online and in presence). In compliance with the request of the target groups to focus on quality instead of quantity, the aim is to reach a similar number of participants as in the 2007-2013 programming period (i.e. no increase is planned). The baseline was established on the basis of the total number of participants of 2013 INTERACT events, eliminating the 3 events with the highest and the 3 with the lowest number of participants. This figure was multiplied by yearly coefficients reflecting the number of events compared to 2013 to get the baseline figure of 13.240.
2. Taking into account that the first implementation year of INTERACT III is 2016, the 2018 milestone target for the financial indicator is calculated by multiplying the average spending of INTERACT II in the years 2009-2011 (corresponding to 2016-2018 in the current programming life

cycle) per 2,5 years (i.e. taking into account that by end of 2018 expenditures from 1.1.2016 until 30.06.2018 will be certified at programme level). The 2018 targets regarding tools and events are calculated as a proportion to this financial target.

2.A.8 Categories of intervention

Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the priority axis, based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and indicative breakdown of Union support

Tables 6-9: Categories of intervention

Table 6: Dimension 1 Intervention field

| Priority axis | 1 - Service Delivery |
|--|----------------------|
| Code | Amount (€) |
| 096. Institutional capacity of public administrations and public services related to implementation of the ERDF or actions supporting ESF institutional capacity initiatives | 37,265,300.00 |

Table 7: Dimension 2 Form of finance

| Priority axis | 1 - Service Delivery |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Code | Amount (€) |
| 01. Non-repayable grant | 37,265,300.00 |

Table 8: Dimension 3 Territory type

| Priority axis | 1 - Service Delivery |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| Code | Amount (€) |
| 07. Not applicable | 37,265,300.00 |

Table 9: Dimension 6 Territorial delivery mechanisms

| Priority axis | 1 - Service Delivery |
|---------------|----------------------|
| Code | Amount (€) |

| Priority axis | 1 - Service Delivery |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Code | Amount (€) |
| 07. Not applicable | 37,265,300.00 |

2.A.9 A summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries and, where necessary, actions to enhance the administrative capacity of relevant partners to participate in the implementation of programmes (where appropriate)

| Priority axis: | 1 - Service Delivery |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Not applicable | |

2.B DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIORITY AXES FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

2.B.1 Priority axis

| | |
|--------------|----------------------|
| ID | 2 |
| Title | Technical Assistance |

2.B.2 Fund and calculation basis for Union support

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Fund | Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure) |
| ERDF | Public |

2.B.3 Specific objectives and expected results

| | | |
|-----------|---|--|
| ID | Specific objective | Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support |
| 2.1 | Effective implementation of the cooperation programme | The main result of the Technical Assistance priority axis will be the maximised effectiveness and efficiency of programme management, coordination and control, contributing to the effective and efficient delivery of INTERACT III services. All management and control systems shall be adequately and timely set up and all procedures executed in timely fashion in order to assure sound and smooth management of the programme. |

2.B.4 Result indicators

Table 10: Programme-specific result indicators (by specific objective)

| Priority axis | 2.1 - Effective implementation of the cooperation programme | | | | | | |
|---------------|---|------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| ID | Indicator | Measurement unit | Baseline value | Baseline year | Target value (2023) | Source of data | Frequency of reporting |
| 0 | not applicable | no | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 | not applicable | not applicable |

2.B.5 Actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives (by priority axis)

2.B.5.1 Description of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives

| Priority axis | 2 - Technical Assistance |
|---|--------------------------|
| <p>The technical assistance will cover a range of activities and tools of the MA/IS, CA and AA with its cooperating bodies in order to achieve maximised effectiveness and efficiency of programme management, coordination, control and audit; one of them being setting up and operating a small INTERACT Secretariat supporting the Managing Authority in the implementation and day-to-day management and coordination of the programme. The Managing Authority supported by INTERACT Secretariat will perform amongst others the management, financial and communication tasks related to the implementation of the INTERACT III Programme. For this purpose, there is a need of professionals with skills and competences to fulfil the following activities:</p> <p>Monitoring, control and reporting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• setting up, operating and maintenance of an electronic monitoring system covering all monitoring requirements and workflows of the programme (programme management, monitoring, audit and control);• providing guidance and support to ensure adequate control of the programme actions at all levels (institutions hosting INTERACT Offices, bodies responsible for management verifications) through guidance documents and advice;• setting-up and supervising the implementation of procedures for the quality assessment, monitoring and control of the activities implemented under the INTERACT Programme;• collecting data concerning the progress of the programme in achieving its objectives, as well as financial data and data relating to indicators and milestones, and regular reporting to the Monitoring Committee and the European Commission; <p>Support to the INTERACT Offices and other actors involved in implementation of the programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• providing tools and guidance documentation (manuals, supporting implementation of the programme). | |

| Priority axis | 2 - Technical Assistance |
|--|--------------------------|
| <p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • setting up and operating all internal communication systems with regards to the INTERACT staff in all INTERACT Offices and MA/INTERACT Secretariat, ensuring adequate coordination of activities • responsible for drafting and supervising the implementation of the programme communication strategy <p>Programme management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organisation, preparation and facilitation of meetings of the programme bodies, in particular the Monitoring Committee; • drafting and implementing the programme evaluation plan and the follow-up of findings of independent programme evaluations in order to support the improvement of the management and implementation. <p>Furthermore the TA priority axis will cover the INTERACT III-related activities of the Certifying and Audit Authority with its cooperation bodies (internal costs and external services related to performance of audits, such as for example: externalization of audits, salaries, travel costs, IT services, education, technical equipment and other facilities, etc.), as indicated under section 5.3.</p> | |

2.B.5.2 Output indicators expected to contribute to results (by priority axis)

Table 11: Output indicators

| Priority axis | 2 - Technical Assistance | | | |
|---------------|---|------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| ID | Indicator | Measurement unit | Target value (2023) | Source of data |
| 2.1/1 | Number of Monitoring Committee Meetings | Number | 14.00 | Programme monitoring |
| 2.1/2 | Joint Annual Work Plan approved | Number | 7.00 | Programme monitoring |

| Priority axis | | 2 - Technical Assistance | | |
|---------------|---|--------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| ID | Indicator | Measurement unit | Target value (2023) | Source of data |
| 2.1/3 | External interim programme evaluation carried out | Number | 1.00 | Programme monitoring |
| 2.1/4 | Progress/activity reports of the INTERACT Offices | Number | 70.00 | Programme monitoring |
| 2.1/5 | Annual Implementation Report | Number | 9.00 | Programme monitoring |

2.B.6 Categories of intervention

Corresponding categories of intervention based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and an indicative breakdown of Union support.

Tables 12-14: Categories of intervention

Table 12: Dimension 1 Intervention field

| Priority axis | 2 - Technical Assistance |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Code | Amount (€) |
| 121. Preparation, implementation, monitoring and inspection | 2,127,294.00 |

Table 13: Dimension 2 Form of finance

| Priority axis | 2 - Technical Assistance |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Code | Amount (€) |
| 01.Non-repayable grant | 2,127,294.00 |

Table 14: Dimension 3 Territory type

| Priority axis | 2 - Technical Assistance |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Code | Amount (€) |
| 07.Not applicable | 2,127,294.00 |

3. FINANCING PLAN

3.1 Financial appropriation from the ERDF (in €)

Table 15

| Fund | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | Total |
|--------------|-------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| ERDF | 0.00 | 4,806,819.00 | 4,074,185.00 | 7,402,837.00 | 7,550,893.00 | 7,701,910.00 | 7,855,950.00 | 39,392,594.00 |
| Total | 0.00 | 4,806,819.00 | 4,074,185.00 | 7,402,837.00 | 7,550,893.00 | 7,701,910.00 | 7,855,950.00 | 39,392,594.00 |

3.2.A Total financial appropriation from the ERDF and national co-financing (in €)

Table 16: Financing plan

| Priority axis | Fund | Basis for calculation of Union support (Total eligible cost or public eligible cost) | Union support (a) | National counterpart (b) = (c) + (d) | Indicative breakdown of the national counterpart | | Total funding (e) = (a) + (b) | Co-financing rate (f) = (a) / (e) (2) | 100% CO-FINANCING RATE FOR ACCOUNTING YEAR 2020-2021 (3) | For information | |
|--------------------|-------------|--|----------------------|--------------------------------------|--|------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| | | | | | National public funding (c) | National private funding (d) | | | | Contributions from third countries | EIB contributions |
| 1 | ERDF | Public | 37,265,300.00 | 6,576,230.00 | 6,576,230.00 | 0.00 | 43,841,530.00 | 84.9999988595% | | 135,343 | |
| 2 | ERDF | Public | 2,127,294.00 | 375,405.00 | 375,405.00 | 0.00 | 2,502,699.00 | 84.9999940065% | | 10,187 | |
| Total | ERDF | | 39,392,594.00 | 6,951,635.00 | 6,951,635.00 | 0.00 | 46,344,229.00 | 84.9999985975% | | | |
| Grand total | | | 39,392,594.00 | 6,951,635.00 | 6,951,635.00 | 0.00 | 46,344,229.00 | 84.9999985975% | | 145,530 | 0 |

(1) To be completed only when priority axes are expressed in total costs.

(2) This rate may be rounded to the nearest whole number in the table. The precise rate used to reimburse payments is the ratio (f).

(3) By ticking the box the Member State requests to apply, pursuant to Article 25a(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, a co-financing rate of 100% to expenditure declared in payment applications during the accounting year starting on 1 July 2020 and ending on 30 June 2021 for all /some of the priority axes of the operational programme.

3.2.B Breakdown by priority axis and thematic objective

Table 17

| Priority axis | Thematic objective | Union support | National counterpart | Total funding |
|---------------|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and an efficient public administration | 37,265,300.00 | 6,576,230.00 | 43,841,530.00 |
| Total | | 37,265,300.00 | 6,576,230.00 | 43,841,530.00 |

Table 18: Indicative amount of support to be used for climate change objectives

| Priority axis | Indicative amount of support to be used for climate change objectives (€) | Proportion of the total allocation to the programme (%) |
|---------------|---|---|
| Total | 0.00 | 0.00% |

4. INTEGRATED APPROACH TO TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

Description of the integrated approach to territorial development, taking into account the content and objectives of the cooperation programme, including in relation to regions and areas referred to in Article 174(3) TFEU, having regard to the Partnership Agreements of the participating Member States, and showing how it contributes to the accomplishment of the programme objectives and expected results

The main focus of INTERACT III is on increased effectiveness of territorial cooperation, as well as cooperation in its widest sense. The integrated approach relates to all three specific objectives of INTERACT, because cooperation as such is one of the main tools for an integrated territorial development of all regions of the European Union. Through a more effective cooperation they may more effectively reach common goals, address common challenges and exploit joint potentialities.

Main needs and challenges identified by territorial target groups identified in section 2, as well as included in the CSF, are addressed by all three objectives of INTERACT III, like this:

1. To improve management and control capacity of ETC programmes: ETC needs to become more strategically focused and results-oriented; ETC shall be better embedded in the new logical framework; ETC needs to increase the effectiveness and skills of public administration in cooperation activities, especially by encouraging the exchange of experiences; ETC needs an improved governance and quality, e.g. through greater standardisation of rules and procedures across MSs; ETC needs simplified approaches and clear rules, to reduce administrative burdens, increase transparency, accountability and to reduce errors;
2. To improve the ETC capacity in capturing and communicating the programme results: There is a need to strengthen links with Investment for Growth and Jobs and ETC programmes; ETC needs to be recognised by a wider audience as a key contributor to the EU 2020 strategy; good practices in cooperation, also outside ETC shall be disseminated and used; results of cooperation, including macro-regional approaches, shall be more widely recognised;
3. To improve the cooperation management capacity to implement innovative approaches (EGTC, Revolving Funds, MRSs, Article 96, ITI, etc.): ETC, as the second objective of Cohesion Policy and a key policy tool, is a natural innovative tool, subject to the Regulations, but with some room for innovation; ETC should be able to use innovative tools and approaches; cooperation should be enhanced in all sectoral policies and programmes, with a clear territorial approach, i.e. the use of cooperation tools in other programmes shall be enhanced.

4.1 Community-led local development (where appropriate)

Approach to the use of community-led local development instruments and principles for identifying the areas where they will be implemented

Not applicable

4.2 Integrated actions for sustainable urban development (where appropriate)

Principles for identifying the urban areas where integrated actions for sustainable urban development are to be implemented and the indicative allocation of the ERDF support for these actions

Not applicable

Table 19: Integrated actions for sustainable urban development – indicative amounts of ERDF support

| Indicative amount of ERDF support (€) |
|---------------------------------------|
| 0.00 |

4.3 Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) (where appropriate)

Approach to the use of Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI) (as defined in Article 36 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013) other than in cases covered by 4.2, and their indicative financial allocation from each priority axis

Not applicable

Table 20: Indicative financial allocation to ITI other than those mentioned under point 4.2 (aggregate amount)

| Priority axis | Indicative financial allocation (Union support) (€) |
|---------------|---|
| Total | 0.00 |

4.4 Contribution of planned interventions towards macro-regional and sea basin strategies, subject to the needs of the programme area as identified by the relevant Member States and taking into account, where applicable, strategically important projects identified in those strategies (where appropriate)

(Where Member States and regions participate in macro-regional and sea basin strategies)

The EUROPE 2020 growth strategy sets, among others, that the full range of EU policies and instruments (including the European Regional Development Fund) should be used more effectively to reach its goals, i.e. that synergies should be explored better. Two Commission communications were released in 2010 and 2011 outlining the contribution of regional policy to Europe 2020 – and making reference to ETC programmes as instruments that support the delivery of the Union’s objectives. The same is stated in the Territorial Agenda 2020 (TA 2020) and in the 5th Cohesion Report.

Both in the legislative package and the Common Strategic Framework, the macro-regional strategies make part of the official delivery structure, thus they will necessarily impact on ETC (cross-border, transnational and interregional). This concept has been launched back in 2009 with the endorsement of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea

Region and in 2010 with the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. In 2014-2020 territorial cooperation and macro-regions are integral part of the EU and national strategic frameworks, therefore included in the national Partnership Agreements. On the other hand, it is clear that ETC is not the sole instrument expected to implement territorial cooperation, but also national and regional programmes of the Growth and Jobs objective are going to contribute to territorial cooperation and thus to macro-regions.

INTERACT National Contact Persons, representing the Member States views, have expressed their support for INTERACT III to continue to act as a networking and learning platform for the promotion, development and support of the cooperation process and as the bridge between the different institutions and organisations involved, as well as to promote more partnership, communication and exchange between ETC and the Investment for Growth and Jobs goal and other programmes with a clear cooperation dimension. Accordingly, INTERACT III support to macro-regional approaches is focused on the strategic benefits resulting from cooperation activities implemented with the support of different financing sources and contributing to cooperation in a wider strategic context. The means to achieve this target is the networking and communication support INTERACT III is offering to partners of multi-level governance structures in macro-regional strategies and across strategies, complementing the work of transnational programmes.

Based on the above INTERACT III is to build on the achievements of the period 2007-2013 in all these areas, developing further its role of catalyst for effective cooperation. The aim then will be better development and implementation of macro-regional and sea-basin strategies and better exploitation of further enforced coordination of EU financial instruments. Based on these elements the INTERACT III structure will strengthen further the cooperation dimension overall of Cohesion Policy, addressing gaps to overcome borders and other barriers, and to give a wider EU perspective to regional development approaches. For achieving this, complementing the work of the Commission in this respect, INTERACT III will deliver support to ETC programmes, macro-regional and sea basin strategies and for operations using the potentials of Articles 70 and 96 of the CPR in their cooperation in country specific programmes.

INTERACT III will contribute to facilitating the successful implementation of macro-regional strategies by

- Being an active partner in the overview, analysis, follow-up, exchange and dissemination of good practises and actions developed in the macro-regional framework as regards the common issues all macro-regional strategies have to deal with (e.g. governance, monitoring systems, funding, ...);
- Supporting placing the strategies in the overall EU policy approach, e.g. by contributing to ensuring their links to other EU policies and programmes (Horizon 2020, Connecting Europe, etc.);
- Facilitating embedding of the perspective in the strategic design of relevant ESIF programmes, in particular ETC, and by promoting the use of all outward-looking provisions (Articles 70 and 96, etc. of the CPR);
- Providing KEEP databases and facilitating the information on possible financing sources.

5. IMPLEMENTING PROVISIONS FOR THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME

5.1 Relevant authorities and bodies

Table 21: Programme authorities

| Authority/body | Name of authority/body and department or unit | Name of the person responsible for the authority/body (position or post) | Address | Email |
|----------------------|---|--|--|------------------------------|
| Managing authority | Bratislavský samosprávny kraj / odbor INTERACT | President / Head of INTERACT Department | Sabinovska 16, P.O.BOX 106, 820 05 Bratislava, Slovenská republika | petra.masacova@region-bsk.sk |
| Certifying authority | Ministerstvo financií SR / sekcia európskych fondov | Mgr. Marcela Zubriczka, Director General, Section of European Funds | Štefanovičova 5, 817 82 Bratislava, Slovenská republika | marcela.zubriczka@mfsr.sk |
| Audit authority | Ministerstvo financií SR / sekcia auditu a kontroly | Ing. Vladimír Urmanič, Director General, Section of Audit and Control | Štefanovičova 5, 817 82 Bratislava, Slovenská republika | vladimir.urmanic@mfsr.sk |

The body to which payments will be made by the Commission is:

- the Managing authority
 the Certifying authority

Table 22: Body or bodies carrying out control and audit tasks

| Authority/body | Name of authority/body and department or unit | Name of the person responsible for the authority/body (position or post) | Address | Email |
|--|--|--|--|----------------------------------|
| Body or bodies designated to be responsible for carrying out audit tasks | Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic, Section of Audit and Control | Ing. Vladimír Urmanič, Director General, Section of Audit and Control | Štefanovičova 5, P.O. BOX 82, 817 82 Bratislava, Slovak Republic | vladimir.urmanic@mfsr.sk |
| Body or bodies designated to carry out control tasks | Bratislava Self Governing Region | President | Sabinovska 16, P.O.BOX 106, 820 05 Bratislava, Slovak Republic | predseda@region-bsk.sk |
| Body or bodies designated to carry out control tasks | City of Vienna, Magistrat der Stadt Wien, Abt. 27 Europ. Angelegenheiten | Municipal Department 27 for European Affairs EU-Fundings – First level Control | Schlesingerplat z 2, 1082 Wien, Austria | gabriele.springinklee@wien.gv.at |

| Authority/body | Name of authority/body and department or unit | Name of the person responsible for the authority/body (position or post) | Address | Email |
|--|--|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| | | Dezernatsleitung für EU-Förderungen – EU-Finanzkontrolle | | |
| Body or bodies designated to carry out control tasks | Danish Business Authority, Regional Development Unit | Niels Bjerring Hansen, Chief Councillor | Vejlsovej 29, DK-8600 Silkeborg, Denmark | nibjha@erst.dk |
| Body or bodies designated to carry out control tasks | Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Innovations and Enterprise Financing, Administration and Development, Finland | Tuula Manelius | P.O.Box 32, 00023 Government, Finland (Visiting address: Aleksanterinkatu 4-10, FI-00170 Helsinki, Finland) | tuula.manelius@tem.fi |
| Body or bodies designated to carry out control tasks | Ministry of Finance, Spain | Sub-General Directorate for Inspection and Control | Paseo de la Castellana, no 162, 21st floor, 28071 Madrid, Spain | sginspeccion@sepg.hacienda.gob.es |

5.2 Procedure for setting up the joint secretariat

The Managing Authority will be assisted by a small joint secretariat (INTERACT Secretariat) and will contract the decentralised implementing bodies, henceforth called the INTERACT Offices, actually delivering the programme to the target groups.

There will be strong organisational ties between the Managing Authority, the INTERACT Secretariat and the INTERACT Offices concerning the joint elaboration and the implementation of a Multi Annual Work Plan and the Joint Annual Work Plans.

The implementation arrangements will be only slightly modified in comparison to the INTERACT II programme, with the aim of continuing the successful service delivery by decentralised INTERACT Offices (known as INTERACT Offices).

According to the nature of the programme (INTERACT III will not implement projects within the usual ETC sense; please see section 2.A.6.1), there is no need of providing information to beneficiaries and thus the small secretariat unit, set up within the MA, in the organisational structure of the Bratislava Self Governing Region (INTERACT Secretariat, IS), shall mainly assist the managing authority and the monitoring committee in carrying out their respective functions, fulfilling both coordination (under Priority 1)

and technical management (under Priority 2) functions and primarily being responsible for the below tasks:

- setting up the framework of service delivery: elaborating and further developing programme-level procedures and related templates (e.g. annual work planning) and key documents (e.g. the Multi Annual Work Plan and rules of procedures of internal working groups);
- coordinating the actual implementation of programme-level processes, including facilitating the annual work planning exercise, compiling on the basis of INTERACT Offices' inputs the Joint Annual Work Plans, as well as organising and following up coordination meetings, etc.;
- collecting and compiling inputs of INTERACT Offices into programme-level documents;
- contributing to the financial and activity monitoring tasks under the responsibility of the Managing Authority;
- contributing to and fulfilling programme-level reporting obligations;
- providing (setting up, maintaining and further developing) the joint IT infrastructure for INTERACT Offices including the programme monitoring system, online collaborative work platform, etc.

INTERACT Secretariat tasks, responsibilities and working arrangements will be detailed in the Multi Annual Work Plan.

5.3 Summary description of the management and control arrangements

Role and tasks of the Monitoring Committee

According to the Article 47 of the CPR, the Monitoring Committee (MC) is to be set up within three months of the date of the notification of the decision adopting a programme, to monitor implementation of the programme.

The Monitoring Committee will consist of representatives of each Member State and the associated non-member countries Norway and Switzerland. They shall be nominated by each Member State and the associated non-member country according to its constitutional and organisational requirements.

The Monitoring Committee is composed of the following members and representatives:

1. Members: 1-3 representatives per country (EU Member States, Norway and Switzerland);
2. Participants in an advisory capacity:
 - representative(s) of the European Commission;

- representatives of the Managing Authority/INTERACT Secretariat;
- representatives of the INTERACT Offices;
- representative(s) of the Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic;
- representative(s) of the Committee of the Regions (when general policy aspects are discussed);
- representatives of the acting Certifying Authority and representatives of the acting Audit Authority as an independent observer.

Decisions by the Monitoring Committee shall be taken by consensus whereby each Member State and the associated non-member countries Norway and Switzerland shall have one vote. Voting principles will be laid out in the rules of procedure. The working language of the INTERACT III Programme is English.

The Monitoring Committee will carry out the functions laid down in Article 49 and 110 of the CPR and in addition will examine, discuss and approve key programme documents including the Multi Annual Work Programme, the subsidy contracts with the hosting institutions of the INTERACT Offices, the Joint Annual Work Plans of the INTERACT Offices and the Managing Authority/INTERACT Secretariat and any other key document as proposed by the Managing Authority.

The MC can decide to set up other advisory groups or decide on other organisational arrangement in order to support the efficient implementation of the programme.

Role and tasks of the Managing Authority / INTERACT Secretariat

The Managing Authority, assisted by the INTERACT Secretariat (supporting the Managing Authority in the implementation and day-to-day management and coordination of the programme) will carry out the functions set out in Article 63(4) of Regulation (EU, EURATOM) No 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 (Financial Regulation), Article 125 of the CPR, Article 23 of the ETC Regulation and will

- organise the Monitoring Committee meetings and to prepare, implement and follow-up decisions of the Monitoring Committee;
- communicate with the implementing authorities and European Commission;
- monitor progress of the programme by collecting and checking progress reports, monitoring outputs, results and financial implementation;
- provide the joint IT infrastructure for INTERACT Offices for the purpose of coordination, reporting and planning;
- coordinate the contributions and compiling INTERACT Offices inputs into the programme level documents;
- organise external evaluation process related to the delivery of the programme;
- contract and supervise INTERACT Secretariat staff;
- contract and supervise INTERACT Offices.

Roles and tasks of the Certifying Authority

The Certifying Authority will carry out the functions set out in Article 126 of the CPR and Article 21 of the ETC Regulation.

Roles and tasks of the Audit Authority

The Audit Authority will carry out the functions laid down in Article 124 (2) and 127 of the CPR and will carry out audits in accordance with Article 25(1) of the ETC Regulation.

INTERACT Offices

The four INTERACT Offices in Turku (FI), Valencia (ES), Viborg (DK) and Vienna (AT) will be maintained and will be actually developing and delivering the INTERACT III services. The efficient service delivery is based on the expertise of INTERACT Offices, very closely and regionally connected to the target groups. Joint working groups of staff members from all INTERACT Offices with clear leadership/responsibility (via specific split of tasks among the INTERACT Offices) would assure the same level of service in all zones. INTERACT Offices shall be the first contact for the stakeholders located in its geographical area. Each service provided by INTERACT III is meant to be for the benefit of all immediate addressees and all Member States, Norway and Switzerland.

The definite attribution of responsibilities to the INTERACT Offices will be laid down in the Multi Annual Work Plan.

The INTERACT Offices will continue to be embedded in the same public institutions as this is the case of INTERACT II. The INTERACT III Managing Authority will conclude new contractual agreements with the legal body of the hosting institution, which acts as beneficiary in the meaning of Article 2(10) of the CPR. The INTERACT Offices will be endowed with their own annual budgets and be consistently staffed both in terms of number of employees and professional/academic profiles required. They will contribute to the development of the Multi Annual Work Plan and be drafting their parts of the Joint Annual Work Plans.

Implementing provisions

Article 8 agreement

The Member States, Switzerland and Norway signed the Article 8 agreement, concerning the content of this cooperation programme and the national co-financing shares, in annex to this cooperation programme.

By signing the agreement, participating countries explicitly agree on

- all provisions contained in section 5.3;
- in particular the liabilities in case of systemic irregularities in the programme management system as specified below under point "Arrangements on liability in case of irregularities";
- as well as on the timetable for paying their national co-financing. The timetable for payments of national contributions is contained in the programme agreement.

Subsidy contracts

Subsidy contracts shall be signed by the Managing Authority and each individual beneficiary responsible for the INTERACT Offices, within 3 months from the approval of the CP.

The contracts shall regulate:

- the subject of the agreement, i.e. the delivery of the CP INTERACT III, as well as procedures for developing and approving the activities to be implemented, through the Multi Annual Work Plan and the Joint Annual Work Plans;
- reporting obligations and procedures, including a reporting timetable;
- the overall budgetary allocation, including rules on the annual work plan allocations, flexibility rule for budget shifts, de-commitment arrangements;
- procedures for the advance and the interim payments, including a payment profile to ensure adequate cash flow depending on liquidity on the CA accounts to implement the contract, as well as accounts to be used;
- procedures for final payments;
- obligation to comply with the applicable eligibility rules at EU, programme and national levels;
- provisions on management verifications, specifying the rights and obligations of the beneficiaries and Managing Authority;
- provisions on audit, including rights and obligations of the beneficiaries and the Audit Authority including deadlines for submission of documents to the auditors, in order for them to be able to conclude their audit work timely;
- liabilities in case of irregularities (including systemic irregularities), procedures for reporting irregularities to the certifying, national and EU authorities, as well as procedures for withdrawal and recovery of unduly paid amounts. It shall also specify liabilities for flat rate cuts, due to systemic errors, which cannot be traced back to the beneficiary, as well as arrangements in case of suspension of payments by the European Commission;
- the use of an electronic monitoring system and provisions on the audit trail, such as the deadlines for keeping proves of expenditure;
- obligations and rights related to information and publicity, durability, as well as regulation of the copyright for INTERACT products;
- closure arrangements, in particular financing for reporting activities after the eligibility period;
- applicable law, assignment, legal succession and litigation.

In addition, the subsidy contracts will include details on the four partnership principles that will guide the performance of INTERACT Offices:

- joint development of the annual work plans and activities;
- joint implementation of the activities, following common quality standards;
- joint staffing principle, including a joint human resources policy among INTERACT Offices focused on keeping and developing knowledge and skills as INTERACT's foremost asset, in compliance with national labour law and without prejudice to beneficiaries individual responsibilities to fulfil their contractual obligations;
- joint financing, in the sense that joint activities to which each individual INTERACT Office contributes are jointly planned, budgeted and implemented. This principle allows the individual offices to take over specific tasks and related costs of other offices, whenever necessary and within the limits that will be established by the Monitoring Committee.

Monitoring system

As stipulated in Articles 74 and 112 of the CPR, data exchange between the programme and the European Commission will be carried out electronically (by means of the SFC 2014 system).

On the side of the programme, the monitoring system (according to Article 72 of the CPR) shall provide data and information needed to fulfil the management, monitoring and evaluation requirements.

In accordance with Article 122(3) of the CPR, INTERACT III will ensure that no later than 31 December 2015, all exchanges of information between beneficiaries and the Managing Authority/Certifying Authority and Audit Authority can be carried out by means of an electronic data exchange system.

The monitoring system – among others – will provide for the fulfilment of the below key functions:

- recording of work packages (as the basic unit of work planning) based on the Joint Annual Work Plan as approved by the Monitoring Committee;
- online submission of expenditures to the controller and online validation of expenditure;
- online progress and financial reporting;
- online progress and financial monitoring of INTERACT Offices;
- online certification and payments;
- reporting and administration of irregularities and implementation of recoveries;
- online provision of information for audit purposes;
- online exchange of data with the Commission.

Furthermore it will comply with the following requirements:

- data integrity and confidentiality;
- authentication of the sender within the meaning of Directive 1999/93/EC4;
- storage in compliance with retention rules defined in accordance with Article 140 of the CPR;
- secure transfer of data;
- availability during and outside standard office hours (almost 24/7, except for technical maintenance activities);
- accessibility by the Member States and the beneficiaries either directly or via an interface for automatic synchronisation and recording of data with national, regional and local computer management systems;
- protection of privacy of personal data for individuals and commercial confidentiality for legal entities with respect to the information processed (according to Directive 2002/58/EC concerning the processing of personal data and the protection of privacy in the electronic communications sector and Directive 1995/46/EC on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data).

In order to transfer data to the European Commission, the administration system of the e-MS shall facilitate interoperability with the Union frameworks as required by Article 122(3) of the CPR.

The computer system used shall meet accepted security and reliability standards. Accepted procedures that ensure reliability of the accounting, monitoring and financial reporting information in computerised form will be implemented.

The Managing Authority, assisted by the Secretariat, shall be responsible for setting up and running the electronic monitoring system. In particular, the electronic monitoring system developed by INTERACT II (called e-MS) shall be adapted and configured according to the needs of INTERACT III.

Annual and final implementation reports

In accordance with Article 14 of the ETC Regulation, the Managing Authority shall compile annual implementation reports, by 31 May 2016 and by the same date of each subsequent year until and including 2023 (except for the years 2017 and 2019, for which the deadline is set as 30 June). All reports shall be approved by the Monitoring Committee of the programme and sent via the SFC 2014 system to the European Commission. To this purpose, the data collected in the monitoring system is compiled as described above.

Evaluation plan

In compliance with the CPR, INTERACT III will develop an evaluation plan, which shall include:

1. Arrangements and timeline for an external evaluation. The Managing Authority, in charge of the evaluation, will involve relevant actors, especially the Monitoring Committee in all phases of the external evaluation. The external evaluation will deliver facts and recommendations about the achievement of the intended results (results indicators set in this CP), as well as deviations and follow-ups. As a management tool, evaluation will be used for steering INTERACT, in particular for strategic discussions of the programme decision makers, such as the Monitoring Committee.
2. Internal on-going evaluation and quality assurance. Processes for constant quality checks will be set-up and agreed on by all programme implementers, under the responsibility of the Managing Authority, assisted by one INTERACT Office. This includes, among others, a systematic collection of information on the users satisfaction, as well as on the final use of INTERACT products. The information collected will also form the basis for the external evaluation.

Communication strategy

INTERACT III shall develop its own communication strategy, in compliance with Article 116 of the CPR, within 6 months from the approval of the CP and based on the INTERACT II experience and evaluation. The communication strategy will be approved by the Monitoring Committee and will be implemented jointly by all programme implementers.

The Communication Strategy shall ensure transparency towards and information to relevant partners and stakeholders, taking account of the extended target groups of INTERACT III (see section 2.A.6.1. of the CP), identifying for each target group specific communication tools.

The strategy will define specific communication objectives, target audiences, messages as well as tactics and tools to support the achievement of wider programme goals. It will take into account detailed rules concerning information and communication measures laid down in Article 115 and Annex XII of the CPR. The strategy will be valid for the whole programming period, complemented by annual work plans. The programme shall have a unique visual identity, which will enable an easy ownership of the programmes for each product and service. The Communication Strategy shall cover both the communication to INTERACT target groups on INTERACT products and services, as well as a strategy for improving ETC communication to all non-ETC target groups.

Being the overall responsible, the Managing Authority shall satisfy itself that all programme implementers are complying with the communication strategy and take corrective measures if necessary. In doing this, it shall be assisted by the INTERACT Secretariat and two INTERACT Offices.

Management verifications

In compliance with Article 23(4) of the ETC Regulation, each Member State hosting the Managing Authority or the beneficiaries shall designate the body responsible for carrying

out verifications under point (a) of Article 125(4) of the CPR in relation to the beneficiary/beneficiaries on its territory, according to its own institutional setting.

Each Member State hosting the Managing Authority or the beneficiaries shall bear the legal responsibility for its own system of management verifications. Nonetheless, the Managing Authority shall satisfy itself, that the systems are set up and functioning. To this purpose it will collect information, which will be included in the Description of the Management and Control System in compliance with Article 72 of the CPR. The system audit, audit of operations and audit of accounts, as provided in the programme audit strategy to be endorsed by the Audit Authority shall also support this assurance. Each Member State hosting a beneficiary shall ensure that the MA/IS is regularly informed on the control system set up by each Member State and of any changes thereto.

In order to ensure coherence among controllers from all Member States hosting a beneficiary, the Managing Authority shall develop a methodological guidance, including a programme report/checklist and certificate for management verifications. These standard documents will be used as minimum requirements.

All expenditures of the programme will be subject to management verifications. Controllers shall verify and certify that all expenditures comply with EU and programme rules and in areas not covered by these, with national legislations. The management verifications report shall specify the expenditures found ineligible, the kind of controls carried out and any follow-up.

Each Member State shall ensure that the expenditure of a beneficiary can be verified within a period of three months of the submission of the documents by the beneficiary concerned.

Performance of audits

The audits will be carried out in accordance with Article 25(1) of the ETC Regulation. The Member States participating in INTERACT III authorize the Audit Authority to carry out directly the functions provided for in Article 127 of the CPR on the whole of the territory covered by the cooperation programme. They shall specify when the Audit Authority is to be accompanied by an auditor of the respective Member State. The details of cooperation between the Audit Authority and Member States will be laid down in a separate document.

The Audit Authority shall be functionally independent from the controllers, the Managing Authority, the Certifying Authority, the INTERACT Secretariat and the INTERACT Offices.

Arrangements on liability in case of irregularities

The Managing, Certifying, Audit Authority, the Secretariat and the four beneficiaries are liable for any irregularity they may have caused. The Managing Authority is responsible

for reimbursing the amounts concerned to the general budget of the Union. Any unduly paid amounts are recovered from the specific beneficiary by the Managing Authority.

If the recovery procedure by the Managing Authority is repeatedly unsuccessful, the Managing Authority recovers the amount from the Member State hosting the specific beneficiary, signing the Article 8 agreement. Each participating Member State hosting the specific beneficiary, by signing the Article 8 agreement explicitly agrees to have this subsidiary liability and to timely pay back any unduly paid amount to the account of the programme. Any such occurrences and measures will be timely discussed and agreed upon in the first subsequent meeting of the Monitoring Committee.

Upon detection of the irregularity, the Certifying Authority will report it to the European Commission in the first subsequent claim, as amount to be withdrawn, deducted or recovered. The Certifying Authority will supervise the recovery of the amount and report it in the claim to the European Commission.

In case of flat rates cuts or financial corrections, the provisions of section 5.4 shall apply.

When any relevant authority of the Member State detects an irregularity, it will timely inform the Managing Authority and the Audit Authority. The Electronic Monitoring System will include a specific form and procedure, to report on irregularity, which will also be part of the description of the management and control system.

In case of suspension of payments by the European Commission, due to errors, irregularities or even external factors, such as cash flow gaps at European level, the Managing Authority shall inform the beneficiaries and the MC about the suspension and the reasons for it immediately after being notified.

With this information the Managing Authority shall also convene all bodies directly affected by the suspension, in particular the beneficiaries, in order to develop an action plan to address the causes of the suspension, in line with the indications provided by the European Commission. The Monitoring Committee shall be informed in all steps, in particular on the measures agreed with the European Commission, on the progresses and on the consequences of the suspension in the service delivery by INTERACT.

Arrangements for programme closure

All bodies implementing the INTERACT III programme, the Managing Authority, the Certifying and Audit Authority commit to assure appropriate resources for closing the Programme.

In case INTERACT will not be continued after 2023, the institutions hosting INTERACT authorities shall make sure that the reporting and closing activities can be performed within the eligibility period. For residual audit activities after the final date of eligibility, they will make sure that the knowledge of the existing INTERACT staff will be timely

transferred to own staff. To this purpose, they shall explicitly identify to the European Commission their office in charge.

Beneficiaries hosting the four offices shall close their activities at least six months before the end of the eligibility period, in order to be able to timely submit the final report and final request for payment. For any residual reporting or audit activity, they shall make sure that the knowledge of the existing INTERACT staff will be timely transferred to their own staff. To this purpose, they shall explicitly identify to the Managing Authority their office in charge.

Resolution of complaints

- Complaints related to the national control system

A beneficiary that have any complaints related to the national control system can file a complaint to the relevant Member State body following national procedures set in place. In accordance with the hierarchy of the rules, for complaints regarding national control procedures on the programme rules, the complaint should be filed with the Managing Authority, which should then contact the national control body.

- Complaints related to Audit Authority findings

Following the contradictory procedure and the issuing of the final audit report referring to an audit carried out by the Audit Authority, the concerned beneficiaries that disagree with the final decision of the Audit Authority can initiate legal proceedings as specified in the subsidy contract.

- Complaints related to the monitoring carried out by the Managing Authority

Any complaints in relation to the monitoring of beneficiary's progress carried out by the Managing Authority shall be submitted by the beneficiary to the Managing Authority that will examine and provide an answer. Where required, remaining complaints can be put forward by the beneficiary to the institution representing its country in the Monitoring Committee.

- Other complaints

For any other complaints not falling within the categories listed above, the concerned beneficiary can file complaints to the Chair of the Monitoring Committee. According to the type of complaint the beneficiary will be guided as to the relevant procedure to be followed.

5.4 Apportionment of liabilities among participating Member States in case of financial corrections imposed by the managing authority or the Commission

The Managing Authority shall ensure that any amount paid as a result of an irregularity is recovered from the beneficiary. For INTERACT III, beneficiaries are understood as the hosting institutions of the Member States hosting Managing Authority/INTERACT Secretariat, Certifying Authority, Audit Authority and INTERACT Offices.

If the Managing Authority does not succeed in securing repayment from one of the beneficiaries, the Member State on whose territory the beneficiary concerned is located shall reimburse the Managing Authority any amounts unduly paid to that beneficiary. The Managing Authority shall be responsible for reimbursing the amounts concerned to the general budget of the Union.

Even though Member States not hosting an INTERACT body will not be beneficiary of programme funding, they will share the benefit from programme services. In accordance with point 4(a)(vi) of Article 8 of the ETC Regulation, the cooperation programme shall identify the implementing provisions which set out the apportionment of liabilities among the participating Member States in the event of financial corrections imposed by the Managing Authority or the Commission. For INTERACT III, all Member States have therefore agreed to sharing liability in proportion to their share of co-financing, but not exceeding the amount of their respective national contribution, in case of flat rate corrections occurred from systemic errors or irregularities, caused by decisions made by the programme Monitoring Committee. Programme bodies and/or beneficiaries are liable for irregularities, including those ones having a systemic nature, they caused.

5.5 Use of the Euro (where appropriate)

Method chosen for the conversion of expenditure incurred in another currency than the Euro

By way of derogation from Article 133 of the CPR, and in accordance with Article 28 of the ETC Regulation, expenditure incurred in a currency other than the euro shall be converted into euro by the beneficiaries using the monthly accounting exchange rate of the Commission in the month during which that expenditure was submitted for verification to the controller.

The conversion shall be verified by the Managing Authority or by the controller in the Member State in which the beneficiary is located.

5.6 Involvement of partners

Actions taken to involve the partners referred to in Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 in the preparation of the cooperation programme, and the role of those partners in the preparation and implementation of the cooperation programme, including their involvement in the monitoring committee

The identification of the relevant stakeholders is a task of the Member State (MA of the ETC programme, in consultation with the countries participating in the programme),

which will build the partnership according to the policy priorities and on territorial circumstances. The organisations should be able to influence or to be affected by the preparation and implementation of the programme, as the Preamble of the CPR states.

As a result of these elements, INTERACT has established the partners' identification criteria on the following 4 principles: linkage to the policy priorities, the territorial circumstances, the principle of proportionality and the ability to influence or be affected by the programme.

In a programme like INTERACT III, where no projects in the usual ETC sense are financed and services are offered to the Cooperation community, the majority of the members of our partnership are the target groups of our services (see section 2.A.6.1).

The linkage to the policy priorities.

INTERACT III only tackles the thematic objective 11 and therefore, the type of partners will be rather institutional and related to public authorities and public administration.

Three specific objectives have been identified by INTERACT III: to improve the management and control capacity of ETC programmes, to improve the ETC capacity in capturing and communicating the programme results, and to improve the cooperation management capacity to implement innovative approaches.

Bearing in mind the above, the members of the partnership should be the authorities in charge of the management, implementation and control of ETC programmes (Managing Authorities, Joint Secretariats, Certifying Authorities, first level controllers, Audit Authorities and members of the Groups of Auditors, national representatives, project owners) as well as specific cooperation stakeholders (coordinators of the macro-regional and sea-basin strategies, the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, EGTCs authorities).

In addition, to cover the training part of the programme, INTERACT creates linkages with similar bodies established at national level (Europ'ACT in France) and at EU-levels (EIPA, for instance).

As for the territory, INTERACT III covers the whole of the EU plus Norway and Switzerland.

The partners will cover the whole of the EU, plus Norway and Switzerland.

The principle of proportionality.

The application of this principle to our programme will keep the number of partners adapted to its size. The funding available for the programme is of around 45M€, which means that the programme is of reduced size.

In the preparation and implementation phases, the programme will be able to keep quite a number of partners involved. However, the participation of the monitoring committees will be reduced to a representation of the umbrella organisations, as included in the Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 240/2014 of 7 January 2014 on the European code of conduct on partnership in the framework of the European Structural and Investment Funds. In fact in Article 10.2 of the Delegated Act, it is very clearly stated that interregional and transnational programmes may limit the participation in monitoring committees to the “umbrella organisations” at EU level, and that the partnership principle is respected through the prior involvement of partners in the preparations of the committees.

Ability to influence or be affected by the programme

The influence or level of impact can vary from partner to partner. The main partners identified are

- Group 1: partners with which the Programme has connecting activities (ESPON, INTERREG Europe, URBACT);
- Group 2: partners affected by INTERACT, as they are recipients of the activities (programme managers, cooperation stakeholders, including EU institutions).
- Group 3: partners indirectly affected by INTERACT (organisations dealing with cooperation such as CPMR, AEBR, MOT, etc.)

In the specific case of group 1 and in support of regional and urban development and investments, a continued cooperation on harvesting complementarities between the pan-European Cooperation Programmes INTERREG Europe, URBACT III and INTERACT III shall take place during 2014-2020. The cooperation shall build on the good experience gained in the programme implementation 2007-2013 and include joint activities harvesting synergies between territorial evidence, regional and urban experience and efficient implementation procedures leading to results.

Actions taken to facilitate a wide involvement and active participation of the partners in the preparation of the programme

The objective is to support the programming process, and the partners have been asked to give precise input for the drafting of the cooperation programme.

Group 1 has been involved in the preparation of the programme from an early stage. Since the publication of the draft proposals of the 2014-2020 Regulations, INTERACT has had specific meetings with INTERREG Europe in order to clarify the complementary activities that each programme will be implementing. In addition, joint meetings with Member States representatives and/or programme drafters of INTERREG Europe,

ESPON and URBACT have taken place in the programming process to discuss the outlines of the respective interregional programmes.

In regards to Group 2, a stakeholder consultation (online survey) was carried out in February 2013 to gather preliminary input from them as recipients of our services. The outcomes served as a basis to start drafting the specific objectives of the programme. The survey focused on the needs and challenges of territorial cooperation, key assets of INTERACT and the main focus, objectives and target groups of INTERACT III, but stakeholders could also express their opinion regarding the links with other programmes, the support to be provided to IPA II CBC and ENI CBC programmes and the structure of the programme. The survey results reconfirmed the direction in which the programme was developed, especially regarding the objectives and fields of intervention. A second online stakeholder consultation was launched the 9 April and closed the 5 May 2014. In this consultation, the 3 groups of stakeholders were addressed for their final input to the drafting process. The public survey was also made available on the programme's website. Survey participants were requested to express their opinion on the strategy, the specific objectives and the proposed actions of the programme and could provide feedback on the use of INTERACT products and services and the valuable aspects of INTERACT work and aspects that could be improved.

The feedback received from the stakeholders was varied; some proposals concerned the programming documents, and other referred to implementing documents. Therefore, the relevant proposals were incorporated into the final version of the CP and several others will be taken into account during the development of other programme-level documents, especially in the Multi Annual Work Plan.

Description of how the relevant partners will be involved in the implementation of the programme

INTERACT aims to take on board the partners' opinion in the implementation and evaluation of INTERACT III. Therefore, their feedback will be included in the various proposals to be discussed when planning and assessing INTERACT activities, and also when the programme will be evaluated.

As for the involvement at the Monitoring Committees and in view of the proportionality principle, the partner programmes (group 1) will receive both the draft agendas of the MC meetings and a summary of the minutes (only relevant issues for them to be included). This will allow them to send any specific input and to be updated on the latest developments of INTERACT. In several cases, the same institution, unit or office (sometimes even the same person) represents a specific Member State in all or more than one programme of group 1.

In case the ETC community (groups 2 and 3) would be interested in sending input to the MC discussions, the stakeholder should contact the national contact person, who will centralise the inputs from the respective territory. ETC community's needs are constantly assessed. The members of the INTERACT MC are often staff of institutions, unit or offices in charge of the coordination of the ETC community in their respective country, therefore they are aware of specific needs and practices.

The MA will publish a summary of the relevant decisions of the Monitoring Committee meetings.

As for the involvement in the programme implementation, all partners (3 groups) will be given the opportunity to participate at the needs assessment carried out every year for the development of targeted services, which are part of the Joint Annual Work Plan approved and monitored by the MC. Besides, they will be able to assess of the specific activities in which they have participated. Finally, they will be considered for the participation in the evaluation process (via targeted surveys).

6. COORDINATION

The mechanisms that ensure effective coordination between the ERDF, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and other Union and national funding instruments, including the coordination and possible combination with the Connecting Europe Facility, the ENI, the European Development Fund (EDF) and the IPA and with the EIB, taking into account the provisions laid down in the Common Strategic Framework as set out in Annex I to Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013. Where Member States and third countries participate in cooperation programmes that include the use of ERDF appropriations for outermost regions and resources from the EDF, coordination mechanisms at the appropriate level to facilitate effective coordination in the use of these resources

ERDF-ESF-EAFRD-EMFF coordination: The specific objectives 2 and 3 of INTERACT directly contribute to the coordination between funds. A more effective and enhanced cooperation, even beyond ETC, will increase coordination among countries in specific policies, funds and programmes. Coordination may be also increased through the use of innovative approaches, e.g. ITIs, CLLD, Revolving Funds, as well as through increased thematic links between ETC, other funds and policies, to be exploited in the framework of the macro-regions and other thematic platforms.

Support services to EU macro-regional strategies include activities that address cooperation aspects within the concept of alignment of funding. This approach to cross-programme cooperation brings all the ESI funding sources closer together and places new coordination demands on the programmes. The conceptual setup is new to cooperation programmes as well as to the regional programmes. INTERACT III brings the possibilities and methods of coordination to the awareness of the programme management bodies, enabling them to make necessary strategic choices that provide for more effective programme implementation.

ERDF-IPA II coordination: There are specific lessons to be learnt from the coordination of cooperation programmes along external borders of the EU with accession and pre-accession countries (IPA CBC between Member States and Candidate and Potential Candidate Countries). Compared to the 2000-2006 period, the 2007-2013 Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) lead to a major step towards assimilation of CBC programmes between Member States and IPA beneficiary countries with the ERDF European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) programmes. One of the explicit objectives of the IPA is to help IPA countries to adopt and implement the *acquis*, as well as to prepare for EU funds upon accession. In this framework, 8 out of 10 IPA CBC programmes with Member States opted for the shared management and thus applied rules, which mirror to a great extent those of ERDF ETC programmes and have Structural Funds approach. This assimilation has been supported with shared responsibilities inside the European Commission, i.e. DG Enlargement with DG Regional Policy. This approach is included also in the 2014-2020 regulatory framework.

Within this framework, the INTERACT support to IPA II CBC programmes has been translated into:

- helping IPA II CBC programmes in learning from ETC programmes, in particular from the transition recently occurred in the new Member States, through an increased integration in the ETC community;
- still tackling some specificities applicable to the IPA II-context;
- but also in adopting a new mind set, i.e. an increased responsibility on the correct use of funds by the concerned IPA II countries. The IPA II CBC programmes run by Member States in shared management have been therefore fully integrated into the INTERACT II target groups and services, especially through the Vienna INTERACT Office. Member States approved the creation of an IPA-specific full time position, as well as the development of specific knowledge and tools on some specificities of IPA CBC, such as public procurement. These INTERACT activities are for the benefit of the Member States, which can count on a smoother programme management. In 2007-2013, INTERACT has been able to meet the needs and requests of IPA CBC programmes at a fully satisfactory level. The services are being seen as necessary by all relevant actors.

Accordingly, for INTERACT III, activities in support to IPA II CBC programmes between Member States and IPA II countries shall be still implemented in an integrated way with all other INTERACT services, with project managers dedicated to IPA II programmes and using management rules of ERDF. Especially this shall take new needs into account, e.g. of the new Member State Croatia and emergence of new IPA II CBC programmes. The support to IPA II CBC will be in addition important in areas where macro-regional strategies are being implemented across the programme areas and IPA II CBC programmes. In these macro-regions, IPA II CBC will be an important asset to implementation of the Strategies.

A number of major developments have taken place since the European Neighbourhood Policy was launched and the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument were set up in 2006. These include a deepening of the relationship with the partners, the launch of regional initiatives and democratic transition processes in the region. This triggered a new European Neighbourhood Policy vision set out in 2011 as a result of a comprehensive Strategic Review of the Policy. It outlines key objectives for Union cooperation with Neighbourhood countries and provides for greater support to partners committed to building democratic societies and undertaking reforms, in line with the ‘more for more’ and ‘mutual accountability’ principles.

Support under European Neighbourhood Instrument and the European Regional Development Fund should be provided for the Cross-Border Cooperation programmes along the external borders of the European Union between partner countries and Member States to promote integrated and sustainable regional development between neighbouring border regions and harmonious territorial integration across the Union and with neighbouring countries. Furthermore, it is important to foster and facilitate cooperation for the common benefit of the Union and its partners, notably through pooling of contributions from internal and external instruments of the Union budget, in particular for Cross-Border Cooperation.

Based on this principle mentioned in the Regulation (EU) No 232/2014 of 11 March 2014 establishing a European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI Regulation) INTERACT III programme is opening its services for ENI CBC programmes integrated

into INTERACT III services under the three specific objectives of: a) Improving management and control capacities; b) Improving capacities in capturing and communicating programme results; c) Improving cooperation management capacities to implement innovative approaches.

The target groups for the interventions in this case are the 17 ENI CBC programmes referred to in Article 6(1c) of the ENI Regulation and listed in the draft CBC Programming Concept Note from November 2013 to be included in the ENI CBC Programming Document. The Main service provision consists of horizontal activities covering all programmes while direct advisory and support services to individual programmes are provided by a complementary project implemented by DG NEAR.

Integrated service provision on the level of horizontal activities as part of INTERACT III is based on the experience and knowledge gained during INTERACT ENPI Project in INTERACT II. The programme management bodies have expressed their wish to receive similar networking and information services as the ETC programmes have received in INTERACT II. In particular this refers to joint capitalisation activities, joint conferences addressing programme management issues, joint communication and joint programme and project database in KEEP.

A further justification for the integrated service portfolio for ETC and ENI CBC is emerging in context to MRS implementation. An extensive information exchange is necessary to put in place between all programmes, different funding initiatives and their stakeholders, including also the cooperation programmes with Partner Countries and the Russian Federation.

Coordination with EU programmes and financial instruments in addition to the ones mentioned above (e.g. LIFE, COSME or HORIZON 2020 programmes) will be also ensured throughout the programming period in order to raise awareness to these initiatives among other territorial cooperation programmes.

7. REDUCTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN FOR BENEFICIARIES

Summary of the assessment of the administrative burden for beneficiaries and, where necessary, the actions planned accompanied by an indicative timeframe to reduce the administrative burden.

In order to reduce the administrative burden of Beneficiaries and of programme bodies the programme-level eligibility rules will provide for the application of flat rate financing for indirect costs (office and administration) up to 15% of eligible direct staff costs in accordance with Article 68(1)(b) of the CPR. Implementation of the provisions of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 481/2014 will be based on the programme level eligibility rules and facilitated by making use of relevant Harmonised Implementation Tools (HIT tools) including the fact sheets of budget lines, matrix of costs and the Guidance on Simplified Cost Options for ETC programmes.

8. HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES

8.1 Sustainable development

Description of specific actions to take into account environmental protection requirements, resource efficiency, climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster resilience and risk prevention and management, in the selection of operations.

The INTERACT III programme has pre-selected operations and beneficiaries, as laid down in the programme document itself, therefore the nature of the programme and its thematic scope doesn't primarily allow to consider sustainable development as the focus of the programme. Nevertheless, the programme will contribute to the goal of sustainable development by offering e-learning opportunities to its target groups in order to reduce the need for long-distance travel. As far as internal coordination is concerned, video and teleconferencing will be used on a wider basis.

8.2 Equal opportunities and non-discrimination

Description of the specific actions to promote equal opportunities and prevent any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation during the preparation, design and implementation of the cooperation programme and, in particular, in relation to access to funding, taking account of the needs of the various target groups at risk of such discrimination, and in particular, the requirements of ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities.

The principle of equal opportunities and non-discrimination is primarily applicable in case of events organised by INTERACT, during which the principle is ensured to the maximum extent. As for the programme bodies, all are embedded in public institutions of EU Member States, therefore the above principles are naturally applied during the staff selection procedures.

8.3 Equality between men and women

Description of the contribution of the cooperation programme to the promotion of equality between men and women and, where appropriate, the arrangements to ensure the integration of the gender perspective at cooperation programme and operation level.

The nature of the INTERACT programme and its thematic scope doesn't primarily allow to consider the equality between men and women as the focus of the programme. The thematic objective and specific

objectives chosen have no direct link to the gender equality. This principle can be followed on internal level, by using staffing procedures that will ensure gender equality.

9. SEPERATE ELEMENTS

9.1 Major projects to be implemented during the programming period

Table 23: List of major projects

| Project | Planned notification / submission date (year, quarter) | Planned start of implementation (year, quarter) | Planned completion date (year, quarter) | Priority axes / Investment priorities |
|---------|--|---|---|---------------------------------------|
|---------|--|---|---|---------------------------------------|

9.2 Performance framework of the cooperation programme

Table 24: Performance framework (summary table)

| Priority axis | ID | Indicator or key implementation step | Measurement unit, where appropriate | Milestone for 2018 | Final target (2023) |
|----------------------|----|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1 - Service Delivery | 4 | Financial | EURO | 9,555,161.00 | 43,841,530.00 |
| 1 - Service Delivery | 1 | Number of events | Number | 197 | 890.00 |
| 1 - Service Delivery | 2 | Number of tools | Number | 55 | 250.00 |
| 1 - Service Delivery | 3 | Participants to INTERACT events | Number | 2935 | 13,240.00 |

9.3 Relevant partners involved in the preparation of the cooperation programme

INTERACT consulted its stakeholders during the CP development process twice.

At the beginning of the process, in February 2013 an online programming survey was conducted targeting MAs, JTSs, CAs and AAs of ETC programmes, national networks and EU institutions.

The whole range of INTERACT stakeholders were asked again for their opinion about the draft cooperation programme and to provide further input during the public consultation process. The online survey opened on 9 April and closed on 5 May 2014 was sent to all partners of the INTERACT contact database and was also published on the website.

Please find below the list of the main INTERACT stakeholders which are directly affected by the programme and were consulted. The Managing Authorities, Joint Technical Secretariats, Certifying Authorities, Audit Authorities of all Territorial Cooperation programmes, as well as IPA CBC and ENPI CBC (as listed below) were involved in the consultation process.

In addition, the EU institutions and the INTERACT national networks were included in this consultation phase.

CBC Programmes

- NL/BE/DE - Euregio Maas Rhein
- AT/CZ - Austria/Czech Republic
- AT/SK - Austria/Slovakia
- AT/DE - Austria/Bavaria

- ES/PO - Spain/Portugal
- ES/FR - Spain/France
- PT/ES - Madeira-Acores-Canarias
- DE/CZ - Bavaria/Czech Republic
- AT/HU - Austria/Hungary
- PL/DE - Lubuskie/Brandenburg
- PL/SK - Poland/Slovakia
- PL/SE/DK/LT/DE - South Baltic
- SE/NO - Sweden/Norway
- DE/CZ - Saxony/Czech Republic
- DE/PL - Saxony/Dolnoslaskie
- DE/PL-MV-BB/Zachodniopomorskie
- RO/BG - Romania/Bulgaria
- DE/NL - Germany/Netherlands
- AT/DE/CH/LI - Alpenrhein-Bodensee-Hochrhein
- CZ/PL - Czech Republic/Poland
- SE/DK/NO - Oresund/Kattegat/Skagerrak
- SE/FI/NO - Botnia-Atlantica
- SK/CZ - Slovakia/Czech Republic
- LT/PL - Lithuania/Poland
- SE/FI/NO - Nord
- IT/FR - Italy/France maritime
- IT/FR - Alcotra
- IT/CH - Italy/Switzerland
- IT/SI - Italy/Slovenia
- IT/MT - Italy/Malta
- FR/NL/BE/UK - Les Deux Mers
- FR/DE/CH - Rhin supérieur
- FR/UK - Manche
- FR/CH - France/Switzerland
- UK/IE - Ireland/N. Ireland/Scotland
- EE/LV - Estonia/Latvia
- IT/AT - Italy/Austria
- SI/HU - Slovenia/Hungary
- SI/AT - Slovenia/Austria
- DK/DE - Syddanmark-Schleswig-K.E.R.N.
- DK/DE - Sjaelland-Ostholstein-Lübeck-Plön
- GR/CY - Greece/Cyprus
- GR/BG - Greece/Bulgaria
- GR/IT - Greece/Italy
- UK/IE - Ireland/Wales
- BE/FR - France/Wallonie/Flandres
- BE/DE/FR/LU - Grande Region
- BE/NL - Grensregio Vlaanderen/Nederland
- FI/SE/EE/LA - Central Baltic
- HU/RO - Hungary/Romania
- HU/SK - Hungary/Slovakia
- LV/LT - Latvia/Lithuania
- FR/BR/SU - Amazonie
- ES/FRONTEX - Spain/External Borders
- SI/HR - Slovenia/Croatia

Transnational Programmes

- Mediterranean
- South-West Europe
- Madeira-Acores-Canarias
- Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013
- Northern Periphery Programme 2007-2013
- North Sea
- Alpine Space
- Atlantic Area
- North-West Europe
- Central European Space
- South-East European Space
- Carribean
- Reunion

Interregional Programmes

- Interregional Cooperation IV C
- ESPON
- URBACT

IPA CBC Programmes

- IT/GR/SI/HR/BA/ME/AL/RS - ADRIATIC
- SI/HR - Slovenia/Croatia
- HU/HR - Hungary/Croatia
- HU/RS - Hungary/Serbia
- RO/RS - Romania/Serbia
- BG/RS - Bulgaria/Serbia
- BG/MK - Bulgaria/FYROM
- BG/TR - Bulgaria/Turkey
- GR/MK - Greece/FYROM
- GR/AL - Greece/Albania

ENPI CBC Programmes

- ENPI Baltic Sea
- ENPI Black Sea Basin
- ENPI Hungary/Slovakia/Romania/Ukraine
- ENPI Italia/Tunisia
- ENPI Karelia
- ENPI Kolarctic
- ENPI Latvia Lithuania Belarus
- ENPI Lithuania/Poland/Russia
- ENPI Mediterranean Sea Basin
- ENPI Poland/Belarus/Ukraine

- ENPI Romania/Ukraine/Moldova
- ENPI South East Finland/Russia
- ENPI Estonia/Latvia/Russia

EU institutions

- European Commission
- European Parliament
- Committee of the Regions

National representatives

- Austria: Federal Chancellery of Austria, Department IV/4; Magistrat der Stadt Wien, MA 27 - Europäische Angelegenheiten, Dezernat für EU-Förderungen; Regionalmanagement Burgenland GmbH;
- Belgium: Ministry of the Brussels Capital Region, Direction des Relations extérieures, Coordination européenne City centre; Wallonie-Bruxelles International; Agentschap Ondernemen | Enterprise Flanders, Afdeling Europa Economie;
- Bulgaria: Ministry of Regional Development, Territorial Cooperation Management DG;
- Croatia: Sector for Territorial Cooperation, Directorate for Management of Operational programmes, Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds;
- Cyprus: Directorate General for European Programmes, Coordination and Development;
- Czech Republic: Ministry of Regional Development, Department of European Territorial Cooperation;
- Denmark: Danish Business Authority;
- Estonia: European Territorial Cooperation Bureau, Regional Development Department, Estonian Ministry of the Interior;
- Finland: Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Regional Department, Structural Change and International Cooperation;
- France: DATAR-CGET Commissariat Général à l'Égalité des Territoires;
- Germany: Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, Division EB5 - Relations with Scandinavia, EFTA, EEA, Council of the Baltic Sea States, European Territorial Cooperation; Lower Saxon State Chancellery, Ref. 402 - Interreg, Metropolitan Areas; Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development within the Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning, I 3 - European Spatial and Urban Development;
- Greece: MA of European Territorial Cooperation Programmes - Ministry of Development and Competitiveness;
- Hungary: Office for National Economic Planning / Ministry for National Economy; Prime Minister's Office, Department for International Affairs;
- Ireland: EU Policy Unit, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform;
- Italy: Direzione Generale Politica Regionale Unitaria Comunitaria, Dipartimento per lo Sviluppo e la Coesione Economica / Department for development and economic cohesion;
- Latvia: Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development; Development Instruments Department, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development; Territorial Cooperation Unit Development Instruments Department, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development;
- Lithuania: Ministry of the Interior;
- Luxembourg: Département de l'aménagement du territoire; Ministère du Développement durable et des Infrastructures;

- Malta: Funds and Programmes Division, Ministry for European Affairs and Implementation of the Electoral Manifesto, Territorial Cooperation Unit;
- The Netherlands: Team Regional Development and Mobility, Netherlands Enterprise Agency;
- Norway: Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, Department of Regional Policy;
- Poland: Ministry of Infrastructure and Development, Territorial Cooperation Department;
- Portugal: Agencia para o Desenvolvimento e Coesao I.P., Cohesion Development Agency, P.I.;
- Romania: Unit of National Authorities for European Programmes, Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration; General Directorate for European Programmes, Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration;
- Slovakia: Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic, Department of the Programme and Supporting Activities of the SF, Supporting Programmes Section;
- Slovenia: Government office for development and european cohesion policy, Republic of Slovenia;
- Spain: Ministerio de Hacienda y Administraciones Públicas, DG Fondos Comunitarios / Ministry of Finance and Public Administrations, G.D. of European Funds;
- Switzerland: State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO, Regional Policy;
- Sweden: Tillväxtverket; Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions Growth and Community Development Division; Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications, Division for Regional Growth;
- United Kingdom: UK Territorial Cooperation Programmes and Policy, Department for Communities and Local Government; Interreg 2007-2013, Local Economies, Regeneration and European Programmes Directorate, Department for Communities and Local Government.

9.4 Applicable programme implementation conditions governing the financial management, programming, monitoring, evaluation and control of the participation of third countries in transnational and interregional programmes through a contribution of ENI and IPA resources

Not applicable

DOCUMENTS

| Document title | Document type | Document date | Local reference | Commission reference | Files | Sent date | Sent By |
|--|---|---------------|-----------------|----------------------|--|-------------|----------|
| Decisions of the 9th Interact III Monitoring Committee meeting | Confirmation of agreement in writing to the contents of the cooperation programme | 05-Feb-2020 | | Ares(2020)1401707 | Decisions of the 9th Interact III Monitoring Committee meeting | 06-Mar-2020 | nmasacpe |

Submitted annexes by the Commission implementing regulation laying down the model of the programme

| Document title | Document type | Programme version | Document date | Local reference | Commission reference | Files | Sent date | Sent By |
|--|---|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------------|--|-------------|----------|
| Ex-ante Evaluation of the Cooperation Programme INTERACT III 2014-2020 | Report of the ex-ante evaluation | 1.0 | 30-Jun-2014 | | Ares(2015)1658136 | Ex-ante Evaluation of the Cooperation Programme INTERACT III 2014-2020 | 19-Apr-2015 | njelemja |
| INTERACT III 2014-2020 - A Citizen's Summary | Citizens' summary | 1.0 | 20-Dec-2014 | | Ares(2015)1658136 | INTERACT III 2014-2020 - A Citizen's Summary | 19-Apr-2015 | njelemja |
| Decisions of the 9th Interact III Monitoring Committee meeting | Confirmation of agreement in writing to the contents of the cooperation programme | 2.0 | 05-Feb-2020 | | Ares(2020)1401707 | Decisions of the 9th Interact III Monitoring Committee meeting | 06-Mar-2020 | nmasacpe |
| Programme Snapshot of data before send 2014TC16RFIR002 2.0 | Snapshot of data before send | 2.0 | 06-Mar-2020 | | Ares(2020)1401707 | Programme Snapshot of data before send 2014TC16RFIR002 2.0 sk | 06-Mar-2020 | nmasacpe |

LATEST VALIDATION RESULTS

| Severity | Code | Message |
|----------|------|---------------------------------------|
| Info | | Programme version has been validated. |