

**Interreg
Europe**



Co-funded by
the European Union

Key programme features

Jason Martinez

Coordinator Projects | Interreg Europe Secretariat

15 MAR 2024 | 15 Minutes

Poland info-day
Online



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Cohesion policy & Interreg programmes

- 4 strands, each strand with its own scope and objectives
- 86 programmes, 10 billion euros ERDF

A	Cross-border	64 programmes EUR 6.7 billion	
B	Transnational	13 programmes EUR 2.3 billion	
C	Interregional	4 programmes EUR 560 million	Interreg Europe Urbact, Interact, Espon
D	Outermost regions	5 areas EUR 330 million	

MEUR 384

PROGRAMME
BUDGET



Interreg Europe **objective**

To improve **regional development policy instruments**
(including Investment for jobs and growth goal programmes)

How?

Through 'exchange of experience, innovative approaches and capacity building' (based on the identification & transfer of good practices)

- Primarily dedicated to **policymakers**
- Focus on **exchange of experience**



Different from cross-border or transnational cooperation

What is a **policy instrument**



A means for **public intervention**:

- a strategy, programme or law
- developed by public authorities
- applied to improve a specific territorial situation

Investment for jobs and growth goal programmes are policy instruments.

What is a '**policy responsible authority**'



- The **organisation in charge** of the elaboration and/or delivery of a specific **policy instrument**
- In most cases, a **public** institution

Example of a **policy instrument**

policy responsible authority



eTrøndelag strategy is the policy for the digital development of the **Sør-Trøndelag County Council** in Norway. It was launched 10 years ago and is managed by the Unit in charge Regional Development. It promotes the use and exploitation of ICT across industries and sectors and consists of four areas: Digital Infrastructure, Digital Municipality, Digital Innovation and Digital Literacy.



What is a **policy improvement**



Our projects report **three types of results:**

- New projects
- Change in governance
- Change in the policy instrument itself

Example of a **policy improvement**



eTrøndelag strategy

The County Council launched two new projects:

1. Industry 4.0 Trøndelag: Increasing digital skills in small and micro businesses
2. The Library: a local digital technology hub

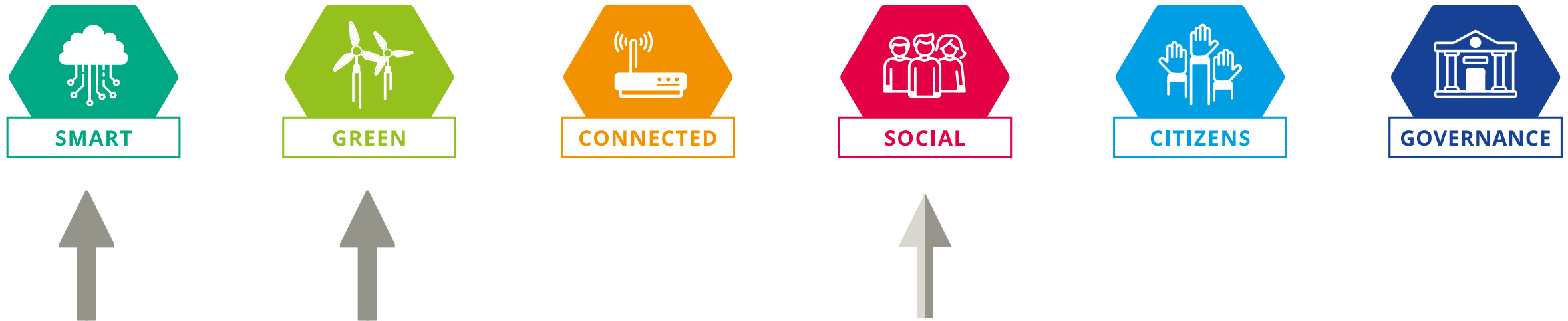
Funds influenced: 1.5 MEUR

Inspiration from:

Study visit in Germany with the presentation of ICT Strategy of Saxony-Anhalt & ICT Cluster Central Germany + good practice from Latvia (Ventspils Digital Centre)

Programme **scope**

1 cross-cutting priority on capacity building → **six topics**



Concentration principle (80%)

Two actions



Projects

Limited number of regions exchanging and transferring experience on a shared regional development issue



Policy Learning Platform

Further exploiting projects' achievements and opening up the programme benefits to all

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Content

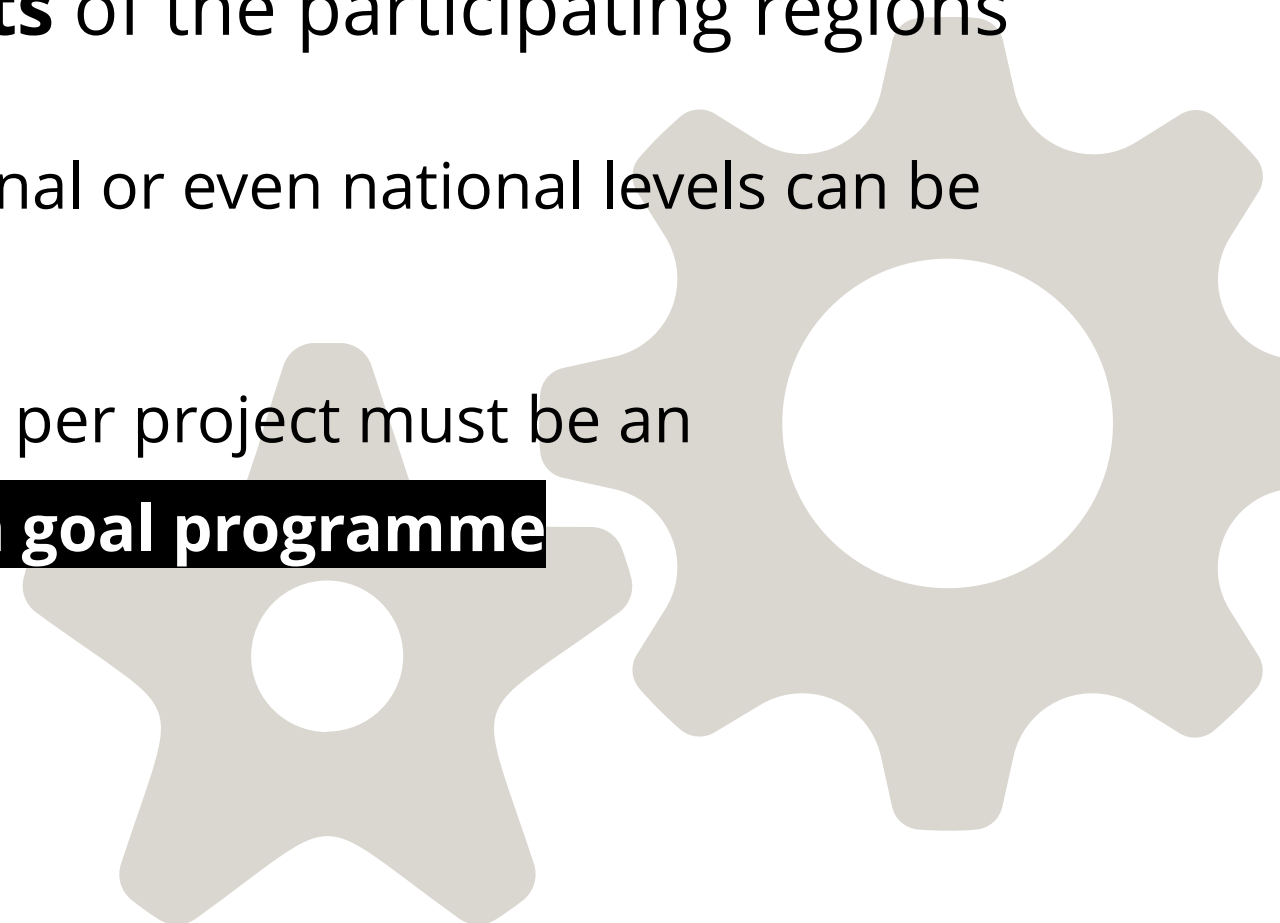
1. Project **objective** and **activities**
2. **Partnership** requirements
3. Project **finances**

1. Project **objectives & activities**

Project **objective**

Improve the **policy instruments** of the participating regions

- Public interventions at local, regional or even national levels can be addressed
- But at least **one** policy instrument per project must be an **Investment for jobs and growth goal programme**



Project **activities**

- Exchange of experience & **capacity building** through identification and transfer of **good practices**
- **Pilot actions** possible from the start of the project or at mid-term (but maximum one per policy instrument)



What is a **good practice**



- A **policy-related** initiative
- Proved to be **successful** in a region
- Potential **source of inspiration** for other regions

Ventspils Digital Centre (VDC)



About this good practice

Ventspils Digital Centre (VDC) is an institution of Ventspils City Council working in close cooperation with other support organisations. It has established knowledge centre and infrastructure, as well as IT support tools to assist SMEs modernisation and digitalization, help to obtain necessary skills and knowledge, and facilitate the involvement of the Ventspils municipality, its residents and entrepreneurs in the information community and e-Government.

Main support directions for businesses:

- training for improving digital competence starting from basic up to complex skills, such as CAD, Adobe and others;
- offering businesses a possibility to use the VDC optical data transfer network, which includes a range of services: optical internet, IP telephony, etc. It also offers a possibility to rent a server space and cloud services, as well as consultations, rent of a server space, etc.;
- running more than 300 free wireless Internet access points across the city;
- VDC organises the competition of ICT Pilotprojects Programme, where businesses can receive up to EUR 15 000 for developing different ICT solutions.

With the support of municipality VDC has developed such products as speaking garbage containers, interactive floor games for teaching programming, oxygen sensors for education institutions, etc.

Resources needed

Financing of the Pilotprojects' Programme and support for the Business Centre constitute around EUR 100 000 annually. Additional financing comes from participation in different projects.

Evidence of success

VDC is annually supporting around 30 SMEs from different sectors. They are planning to increase support for the ICT development to multiply a number of active ICT companies more than twice (67 in 2012 -> 150 in 2020) and quintupling the number of people employed in ICT (217 in 2012 -> 1,150 in 2020), including local start-ups, spin-offs, subsidiaries of local and foreign companies (incl. multinationals), and anticipate the attainment of 10% of the overall economy of the city in the long run.

Potential for learning or transfer

Other EU regions can learn from the Ventspils experience in establishing and running the VDC, which has gradually evolved in a modern digital regional hub in Latvia. VDC is a good example of a successful cooperation with Ventspils municipality, Ventspils University, Ventspils High Technology park and business incubator to promote digitalization of businesses of this region. VDC through its services has helped to promote digitalization of SMEs, as well as increasing skills and technological competences of Ventspils citizens and businesses. VDC also is a good example on how a modular VDC container data centre can be expanded and placed in a far more economically attractive location as it does not require capital construction, thus, increasing a range of services provided by VDC with a variety of electronic and digital services.

Good practice owner

Organisation



Ventspils City Council

Latvia
Latvija

Contact



Zane Zeibote

Director, Project Manager

+371 29417214

Send an email

What is a **pilot action**



Implementation-related activities dedicated to **testing** a new public intervention approach.

Possible only under certain conditions:

- Clear contribution to policy improvements
- Clear interregional & testing character

Example of a **pilot action**

Autonomous shuttle service

The aim of this pilot action is to **improve the transport connectivity of suburban areas** in Vilnius and to provide access to public transport stops located outside of people's walking reach.

The pilot action will test in **three selected suburban areas** of Vilnius a 12-seat L4 autonomous electric shuttle service to escort children to/from local schools and connect adults to/from bus stops. It will **test the viability of the service**.

The Vilnius City Municipality will explore many aspects of the service before deciding **whether to scale up the solution** and include it in their **SUMP**. They will explore, for example, the vehicle model selection criteria, the impact of adverse weather conditions, the infrastructure requirements, optimal charging and routes, or operational costs.



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EMBRACER

Implementation of activities

2 phases over 4-year implementation

CORE	FOLLOW UP
3 years	1 year
Exchange of experience to achieve policy improvements	Monitor policy improvements

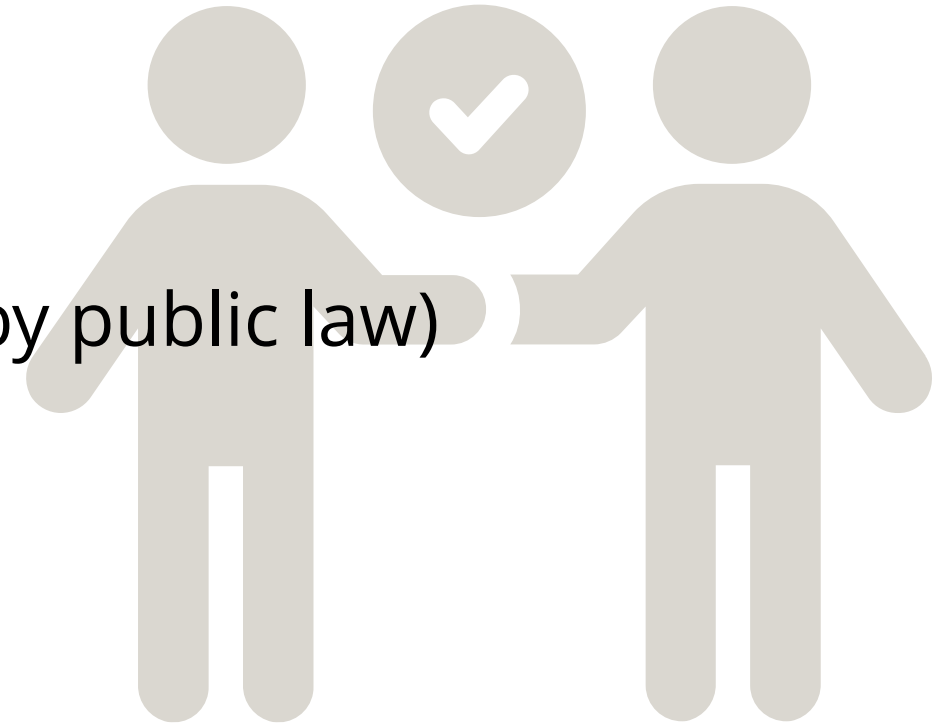
Implementation of activities

- **Action plans** no longer needed (only for regions which do not achieve results by end of core phase)
- Some **flexibility** in the follow-up phase:
 - Up to each project to define the exact activities
 - Exchange of experience still possible

2. Partnership requirements

Who is **eligible**?

- **Public authorities**
- **Public law bodies** (bodies governed by public law)
- **Private non-profit bodies**



Policy relevance of partnership

Policy responsible authorities must be involved in the project:

- As **partners** for at least **50%** of the policy instruments addressed
- As '**associated policy authorities**' for the remaining policy instruments

Creation of a **stakeholder group** in each region



What is an **'associated policy authority'**



Main features:

- Officially included in the application form
- No budget - travel & accommodation costs covered by relevant project partner
- Declaration provided at the application stage
- Involvement regularly monitored during project implementation

Discovery partner

Rationale: facilitate participation from the 7 new countries

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Ukraine

Main characteristics:

- Lighter form of involvement: no need to address a policy instrument
- Aim: to discover interregional cooperation and learn from others
- Recommendation: max 2 per project



Geographical coverage

- **Broad** coverage required
- **Mix** between more and less advanced regions
- **Five areas**



Geographical areas	Countries covered
North	Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden
East	Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia
South	Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain
West	Belgium, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Switzerland
EU candidates	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Ukraine

3. Project finances

Co-financing rates

Co-financing rates	According to legal status or location
80% Interreg funding	Public or public equivalent from the EU
70% Interreg funding	Private non-profit from the EU
50% Norwegian funding	Public, public equivalent and private non-profit from Norway (NO)
Swiss funding	Public, public equivalent and private non-profit from Switzerland (CH)

Simplified financial rules

Cost categories	Simplification
Preparation costs	Lump sum €17,500
Staff	Fixed % of the real gross employment cost
Office & administration	Flat rate of 15% of staff costs
Travel & accommodation	Flat rate of 15% of staff costs (real cost reporting only in specific justified cases)
External Expertise and Services	
Equipment	
Infrastructure and Works	For pilots only

Plus:

- Simplified reporting, faster payments to projects
- Less control (sampling, risk-based verifications)

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