

INTERREG EUROPE SUMMARY

8 January 2014

What's the issue?

The European Union works to reduce disparities in the levels of development, growth and quality of life in European regions through its [Cohesion policy](#). It promotes actions to make the European territory more innovative, more sustainable, and more inclusive. This is the EU policy agenda called [EU2020 strategy](#).

While the large majority of the funds designated to reduce these disparities are managed nationally, the EU and member states believe that regional development can be improved through cooperation across borders.

The INTERREG EUROPE programme, financed by the [European Regional Development Fund \(ERDF\)](#), is designed to support policy learning among public authorities **to improve the performance of policies and programmes for regional development**. It allows public authorities across Europe to exchange practices and ideas on the way public policies work thus finding solutions to improve their strategies for their own citizens.

How will it work?

The INTERREG EUROPE programme has a budget of €359 million ERDF for the 2014-2020 period.

INTERREG EUROPE will work on the following four topics, all related to regional development:

1. Research, technological development and innovation
2. Competitiveness of SMEs
3. Low carbon economy
4. Environment and resource efficiency

INTERREG EUROPE will finance two actions:

- a) Cooperation projects: partnerships of public organisations coming from different countries in Europe work together for 3 to 5 years to exchange their experiences on a particular policy issue. Each region involved in the cooperation project will produce an Action Plan. This specifies what will be done in the region to ensure that the lessons learnt from the cooperation are put into action. Projects are also asked to monitor what happens to the Action Plan, to see how well the cooperation has worked.

Calls for project proposals will be launched throughout the programming period.

- b) Policy Learning Platforms: a space for continuous learning where any organisation dealing with regional development policies in Europe can find solutions to improve the way they manage and implement their public policies in the four topics above.

Who can access funding?

Organisations based in the 28 EU member states, Norway or Switzerland are eligible for INTERREG EUROPE funding if they are:

- National, regional or local public authorities
- Other institutions governed by public law (e.g. universities, regional development agencies, business support actors, etc.). Each country defines which institutions are eligible according to national regulations.

Who will benefit, in the end?

Staff and organisations involved in policy-making and implementing policy in the four topics listed above, throughout all EU regions, Norway and Switzerland can directly benefit from this programme. As a result of this, the citizens and groups impacted by those policies will benefit from improved governance or implementation.

What exactly will change?

Individual staff members and organisations will be better equipped to propose new policies or implement improved techniques.

Institutions on regional, national and EU-level will be more effective in implementing regional policies and programmes.

How is this different from what existed before?

This type of cooperation has existed for around 20 years. However, new features have been introduced to make sure that the use of EU funds is more effective:

1. Selection of more focused topics: the more focused the topics, the more chances there are to have effective results
2. Mid to long-term monitoring: EU cooperation projects have been criticised in the past over the difficulty of capturing projects' results (on policy change) after the funding of the activities has ended. Now, regional partners will be asked to spend some time monitoring the impacts of the projects on their territories. This "monitoring phase" is essential for participating regions to demonstrate the value of the cooperation and to make sure that the results of cooperation (and of the investment of EU money) are captured more systematically.
3. Policy Learning Platforms: while many European networks exist on countless topics of regional development, none has the main aim of supporting local and regional governments to be more effective when planning and implementing policies for the benefit of citizens. Policy Learning Platforms seek to redress this: it is a tool to allow a faster and better share of knowledge to help governments do their job better.
4. Greater emphasis on improving policies and programmes that are part of the European Union's Cohesion policy.