

European Regional Development Fund
(2007 - 2013)



INTERREG IVC

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ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

2007



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1 Identification and executive summary

OPERATIONAL PRO-GRAMME	Objective concerned	Territorial cooperation
	Eligible area concerned	Whole EU plus Norway and Switzerland
	Programming period	2007-2013
	Programme number (CCI No)	CCI 20007 CB 163 PO 046
	Programme title	INTERREG IVC
ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT	Reporting year	2007
	Date of approval of the annual report by the monitoring committee	28 June 2008

On 11 September 2007 the INTERREG IVC operational programme was approved. It was the first programme of the new European Territorial Cooperation objective of the programming period 2007 – 2013 which was officially accepted by the European Commission. The 11 September 2007 marked also the successful end of a programming process that began in April 2006 with the first meeting of the Programming Committee in Vienna. Under the Chairs of Austria, Finland, Germany and Portugal and with the active support of the Managing Authorities and the JTS of the four INTERREG IIIC programmes, the EU Member States, Norway and Switzerland agreed on a new set-up of the interregional cooperation programme.

In focusing the thematic scope and also centralising the management, the INTERREG IVC programme drew conclusions of the experience of the predecessor programme, INTERREG IIIC. With the set-up of the four Information Points, three of which are located in and hosted by the INTERREG IIIC Managing Authorities, the Member States ensured that the valuable know-how of the staff and the proximity to the applicants and the stakeholders are not lost.

During the first three months of the implementation, the programme focused on the information to potential applicants about the programme. The first call of proposals was opened on 21 September 2007 with a deadline on 15 January 2008. Several hundred persons participated in consultations to discuss with the JTS and the IPs their proposals. The interest in the programme, which was beyond any expectations, is proof of the importance of interregional cooperation for the successful development of the European Regions.

2 Overview of the implementation of the Operational Programme

2.1 Achievement and analysis of the progress

2.1.1 Information on the physical progress of the Operational Programme:

Based on the indicator system approved by the Member States of the INTERREG IVC Programme and outlined in section 4.5 of the Operational Programme (OP), the table below shows the achievements in the relevant sections in the year 2007. The baseline value for all indicators is zero.

Table 1: Selected indicators on the physical progress of the OP

Indicator		2007	Total	
2.1 Support project generation and provide advice to project applicants	Output: No. of "Individual Consultations" (IC) with applicants	Achievement	248	248
		Target		900
	Output: No. of participants in "Individual Consultations" (IC)	Achievement	620	620
		Target		1,800
	Result: No. of applications submitted	Achievement	0	0
		Target		800
2.5 Organise meetings and events for applicants, partners, auditors, experts, Member States and other bodies to inform them about the programme, to discuss specific aspects of its implementation, disseminate and capitalise on operations' results	Output: No. of brochures (no. of issues created, not no. of copies printed or disseminated)	Achievement	0	0
		Target		4
	Output: No. of newsletters (no. of issues created, not no. of copies printed or disseminated)	Achievement	0	0
		Target		34
	Output: No. of events organised	Achievement	7	7
		Target		80
	Output: No. of other events participated in (with presentations/stands etc. about the programme activities)	Achievement	14	14
		Target		50
	Output: Estimated no. of participants in events participated in	Achievement	1705	1705
		Target		5,000
	Result: No. of press releases on programme activities disseminated	Achievement	2	2
		Target		20
	Result: No. of copies of newsletters disseminated	Achievement	0	0
		Target		10,000
	Result:	Achievement	0	0

Indicator			2007	Total
	No. of copies of brochures disseminated	Target		10,000
	Result:	Achievement	9	9
	No. of articles/appearances published in the press and in other media	Target		20
		Result:	Achievement	1395
	Estimated no. of participants in events organised	Target		5,500
		Result:	Achievement	37,284
	Average no. of visits per month on the programme website	Target		10,000
		Result:	Achievement	
2.6 Ensure the reporting to the Member States and the European Commission.	Output: No of Monitoring Committee meetings	Achievement	1	1
		Target		15
	Result: Average no. of visits per month on the programme intranet site	Achievement	40	40
		Target		50

2.1.2 Financial information (in EUR)

Table 2: Financial information on the priority axes by source of funding

	Expenditure paid out the beneficiaries included in payment claims sent to the managing authority	Corresponding public contribution	For information		Private expenditure (1)	Expenditure paid by the body responsible for making payments to the beneficiaries	Total payments received from the Commission
			Norwegian contribution	Swiss contribution			
<i>Priority 1:</i> Innovation and the Knowledge Economy ERDF, Public Funding	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,534,539.38
<i>Priority 2:</i> Environment and Risk Prevention ERDF, Public Funding	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,506,309.74
<i>Priority 3</i> Technical Assistance ERDF, Public Funding	392,518.38	115,491.14	5,031.95	2,515.98	0.00	158,055.00	385,586.12
Grand total:	392,518.38	115,491.14	5,031.95	2,515.98	0.00	158,055.00	6,426,435.24
Total in transitional regions in the grand total	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total in non-transitional regions in the grand total	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
ESF type expenditure in the grand total where the operational programme is co-financed by ERDF (2)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
(1) Only applicable for operational programmes expressed in total cost (2) This field shall be completed where the operational programme is co-financed by the ERDF or the ESF where use is made of the option under Article 34(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006							

2.1.3 Information about the breakdown of use of the Funds

Table 3: Information about the breakdown of the use of Funds

Code (*) Dimension 1 Priority theme	Code (*) Dimension 2 Form of finance	Code (*) Dimension 3 Territory	Code (*) Dimension 4 Economic activity	Code (*) Dimension 5 Lo- cation	Amount (**)
09 Priority 1: <i>Innovation and the Knowledge Economy</i>	01	10	00	inter- regional	0.00
54 Priority 2 <i>Environment and Risk Prevention</i>	01	10	00	inter- regional	0.00
85 Priority 3 <i>Technical Assistance</i>	01	10	00	inter- regional	220,360.59
86 Priority 3 <i>Technical Assistance</i>	01	10	00	inter- regional	172,157.79
Total:					392,518.38
(*) The categories should be coded for each dimension using the standard classification.					
(**) Allocated amount of the Community contribution for each combination of categories.					

2.1.4 Assistance by target groups

Under the implementation of the programme in 2007, no specially targeted groups and sectors could be identified, since the only expenditure occurred was under Technical Assistance.

2.1.5 Assistance repaid or re-used

No assistance repaid or re-used during the implementation of the programme in 2007.

2.1.6 Qualitative analysis

Shortly after the programme was approved on 11 September 2007, the first call was officially launched at the EU Interregional Cooperation Forum on 21 September 2007. The activities in the remaining months of the year focused on the promotion of the programme and the consultations with potential applicants. Events were organised all over Europe and consultations were offered by the Information Points in Katowice, Lille, Rostock and Valencia and carried out with the support of the JTS in Lille.

The demand for consultations was much higher than anticipated. The JTS would identify the following main reasons:

- The success of the INTERREG IIIC programmes and the various dissemination events organised by the programmes and the projects drew huge attention to the possibilities of the interregional cooperation.
- The successful information activities of the European Commission for the Regions for Economic Change (RFEC) gave a clear reference to the URBACT II and the INTERREG IVC programme.
- The last open call for proposals for interregional cooperation closed in October and November 2004. Many regions have been waiting since then to get the opportunity to apply for interregional projects.
- Also many of the more than 260 running operations in INTERREG IIIC capitalised on their experience. There was a lot of enthusiasm within and beyond their existing partnership to apply for new projects in the INTERREG IVC programme.

About 1,400 persons participated in the various events organised by the JTS and the four Information Points. The website as main information tool had, with about 37,000 visits per month, a much greater impact than initially expected. Further information is provided in Chapter 5.

In about 250 consultations given more than 600 persons took the chance to present and discuss their ideas. The JTS underlined in these consultations, as well as in the information events, that a clear focus is given to the aims of the Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas. Advice was also given on how to improve proposals and if necessary it was made clear if a proposal would not fit into the programme.

Concerning the promotion of equal opportunities for men and women and the protection of the environment the applicants are requested in several fields of the application form to indicate the effects of the project on equal opportunities and environmental sustainability and general but also how the day-to-day implementation affects these horizontal policies. The evaluation of these responses will be taken into account when approving projects. The Monitoring Committee as decision body of the programme is obliged in accordance to chapter 8.3 of the programme to ensure that the requirements of equal opportunities for men and women and the protection of the environment are fulfilled.

Chapter 6.4 of the Operational Programme (OP) underlines the need for the Member States to organise where appropriate and in accordance with current national rules and practices a partnership with the respective authorities on regional, local and urban level, with economic and social partners and other appropriate bodies.

2.2 Information about compliance with Community law

No problems relating to the compliance with Community law have been encountered in the implementation of the operational programme and the measures taken to deal with them.

2.3 Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them

No significant problems were encountered in implementing the operational programme.

2.4 Complementarity with other instruments

During various information events and the consultations with potential partners, the programme always underlined the specific criteria of the INTERREG IVC programme. It was made clear that INTERREG IVC can not be a substitute programme for proposals to be co-financed by ESF or other programmes.

2.5 Monitoring arrangements

The Monitoring Committee (MC) held its first meeting on 11 September 2007. The items discussed concerned the following points:

- Approval of the Rules of Procedure for the Monitoring Committee (see Annex 1, attachment 02)
- Approval of the Agreement between EU Member States, Norway and Switzerland, the Managing Authority and the Certifying Authority on the implementation of the INTERREG IVC Programme (see Annex 1, attachment 04)
- Information on the set up the Joint Technical Secretariat
- Approval of the Technical Assistance Budget 2007 and the related contribution of national funds from the Member States
- Presentation of the draft Communication Strategy
- Decision on the time schedule for the first call for proposals and the involvement of external experts in the assessment of applications
- Principal agreement on the application pack for the first call for proposals.

The decision notes of the first MC meeting are attached as Annex 1.

During the meeting of the MC several changes in the Programme Manual were agreed. However before finally approving the documents, the Member States asked to have a look at the final version. Therefore, it was agreed to carry out a very short written procedure which was initiated on 14 September 2007 with a deadline of 17 September 2007. As no comments were received the Programme Manual and with that the application pack was finally approved. A copy of the application pack is attached in Annex 2.

Since the beginning of the programming of INTERREG IVC the Managing Authorities of all INTERREG IIIC programmes allocated working time of members of staff of the INTERREG IIIC JTS to support the Member States in drafting the relevant documents.

After the principle declaration of admissibility on 2 May 2007 the Managing Authority of the INTERREG IIIC West programme, as selected Managing Authority for the new INTERREG IVC programme, prepared the set-up of the JTS and the Information Points.

The Member States agreed that all the INTERREG IVC JTS will have 18 positions partly filled by current staff working in the INTERREG IIIC West JTS and partly filled by new recruits. By end of 2007 recruitments for all open positions were carried out. With the exception of two financial officers the INTERREG IVC JTS was fully staffed.

With the Managing Authorities of the INTERREG IIIC North and South programmes and with the Polish Ministry of Regional Development as hosting bodies of the selected Information Points (IPs), agreements on the operation of an INTERREG IVC Information Point were prepared and signed. The position of IP West is integrated within the JTS in Lille. The IPs were operational as of 1 November 2007 and for the start members of staff of the respective INTERREG IIIC North and South JTS were partly contracted. For the IP East which was set-up in Katowice, the INTERREG IIIC East JTS designated one member of staff to ensure the transfer of know-how from INTERREG IIIC to the IP East. The person of the INTERREG IIIC JTS East was contracted part time by the IP East to assist members of staff of the Ministry that had already some experience from INTERREG III programmes. The person working for the IP West was newly employed but trained by the experienced members of staff of the INTERREG IVC JTS. All IPs contributed already significantly to the information and consultation activities of the programme during 2007.

Furthermore, most Member States set up national contact points to help to promote the programme and to assist the MA, the JTS and the IPs in organising events and consultations.

3 Implementation by priority

As the first call for proposals only closed at the beginning of 2008, limited information on the implementation of the priority axes 1 (Innovation and the Knowledge Economy) and 2 (Environment and Risk Prevention) can be given for the time being.

As already mentioned in section 2.1.6, the activities of the JTS focused on the promotion of the programme and on consultations with potential lead applicants concerning upcoming projects. The application pack was approved on 17 September 2007 in written procedure and published on our webpage on 21 September 2007. A copy of the application pack is available in Annex 2.

Information on the implementation of priority axes 3 (Technical Assistance) is given in the section 4 below.

4 Technical Assistance

The total amount spent on Technical Assistance in 2007 amounts to EUR 392,518.38, which corresponds to the expenditure in relation with the overall management and implementation of the INTERREG IVC programme from September (approval of the programme) to December 2007.

In 2007, the available technical assistance funds allowed to finance nine staff members, for positions in the field of communication, projects, finance and management. The costs related to these positions were reported on a full-time basis except for the programme director and programme deputy director, who were also partly financed from the INTERREG IIIC West programme according to their division of tasks.

Besides the staff costs mentioned above, the JTS also assisted the programme in carrying out the following activities financed from the technical assistance budget:

- Providing assistance to project applicants (advice given by e-mail, phone and through Lead Applicant seminars, by individual consultations)
- Organisation and implementation of programme meetings – one Monitoring Committee meeting
- Coordination and implementation of accounting, paying and certifying procedures with the legal employer of the Secretariat (GEIE GECOTTI), and also with the Certifying Authority.
- Costs related to communication and dissemination in relation with the INTERREG IVC programme such as organising one INTERREG IVC Partner Search Forum, setting up the website, development of a corporate design (e.g.: programme logo)
- Office related expenditure for office material such as office equipment, stationary, maintenance and utilities.
- IT related expenditures

In 2007, a total amount of EUR 392,518.38 was spent on Technical Assistance, which corresponds to EUR 269,479.31 spent from ERDF funds. That is 0,084% of the total ERDF budget of the total programming period of EUR 321,321,762.

5 Information and publicity

The communication element has become more focused under INTERREG IVC, and forms a very important part of the programme.

As the programme was launched on 21 September 2007, the communication measures described below cover the period September - December 2007. Throughout the whole year, the INTERREG IVC programme was consistently presented alongside INTERREG IIIC West results where the JTS participated in IIIC events. Details of these events can be found in the INTERREG IIIC West Annual Report 2007.

It is perhaps useful to explain the organisation under INTERREG IVC in terms of communication. The programme is managed by one Joint Technical Secretariat (as opposed to four under INTERREG IIIC). One Communication Officer therefore is responsible for the strategy and implementation of the Communication Plan. Four Information Points assist the Secretariat in information and dissemination measures. They are based in Rostock, Katowice, Valencia and Lille and are the first point of contact for potential project partners.

5.1 *Graphic identity*

The launch of INTERREG IVC necessitated a new graphic identity for the programme, building upon the recognition of INTERREG IIIC yet showing the vital differences. A new logo was developed based on the key values of INTERREG IVC – dissemination and sharing. The entire corporate image was derived from this – letter paper, business cards, compliments slips, folders – alongside templates for PowerPoint presentations, word documents etc.

5.2 *Printed material*

An upright banner and exhibition stand were produced to use during events. 500 INTERREG IVC calendars and greetings cards were sent to selected contacts across Europe, and were received positively. 500 INTERREG IVC factsheets were produced and distributed during appropriate events.

5.3 Events

5.3.1 Launch Event

INTERREG IVC was launched on 21 September 2007 at the EU Interregional Cooperation Forum in Lisbon (PT). Over 800 people assisted the two day conference (the first day being dedicated to closing INTERREG IIIC and financed through the INTERACT budget). One hundred exhibitors were present to exhibit project ideas and search for partners. Over 1,150 project ideas were collected during the workshops and on the online project idea database.

5.3.2 Lead applicant seminars

In the period between the programme launch and the end of 2007, six Lead applicant seminars were held across the four Information Point areas, reaching in total 595 participants. Each seminar was followed by individual consultations with project promoters who received feedback on a pre-filled project idea form (see below for details on all individual consultations).

5.3.3 Participation in events

Despite the increased workload of the INTERREG IVC JTS, who were consecutively closing the INTERREG IIIC West programme, and given the fact that it took several months to reach the full capacity of the Information Points, staff continued to participate in externally-organised events. Not all invitations could be accepted, and the high number of solicitations is in itself an indication of the awareness of the programme. Priority was given to Member State-organised events, with five National Information Days attended in Ireland, Estonia, Greece, North of England, and France. A total of 680 participants took part in these events. The Managing Authority of the programme organised an information session for the staff of the Nord-Pas de Calais Regional Council, attended by 90 people. On the same day, a workshop was dedicated to INTERREG IVC during the Open Days event in Brussels, organised by the Committee of the Regions. While 100 participants took part in the workshop itself, over 5000 people attended the event in total. Programme material was available for participants to collect.

The IP East attended several events, such as

- Innovation Week in Wielkopolska region, 13 November 2007 with about 200 participants;
- Regional Seminar, Marshall Office of the Silesia Region, 29 November 2007, about 100 participants;
- 20 December 2007, Krakow, Regional Informational Seminar, no of participants: about 150
- 10 December 2007, Katowice, LAS, no of participants: 125
- September 2007, Olsztyn, NEEBOR Network meeting, no of participants: about 100

Other events attended by the JTS include a meeting of Polish, German and French mayors in Warsaw, and a meeting in Paris of 120 regional actors.

National contact points in several Member States also organised national information events to promote the first call for proposals.

5.4 Media

Initial contact with the media was positive at the launch event. A press conference held with Danuta Hübner, Commissioner for Regional Policy, Rui Baleiras, the Portuguese Secretary of State for Regional Development and Francisco Nunes Correira, Portuguese Minister for Environment, Spatial Planning and Regional Development attracted over 10 journalists.

Two press releases have been sent to journalists in this period. A total of nine references to the programme have been collected from articles.

5.5 Project Consultations

Between the launch of the programme and the end of 2007, around 250 individual project consultations were organised, to give specific feedback to Lead Partners on their project idea. 58 of these consultations were held in Lille, and open to Lead Partners from all over Europe, awaiting the set-up of the Information Points. The remaining consultations were organised in each IP area, with the Lead partner from that area. These consultations were in addition to the feedback provided by email, using the Project Idea Form.

5.6 Website

The INTERREG IVC website was put in place in time for the launch event in September 2007. From September to December it registered an average of 37,284 unique visitors per month, which can be interpreted as a very positive sign. Users could download the programme documents, the Application Pack and find out what assistance was available to them. The link to the website was also published on some national contact points websites. The website will be fully developed with further functions in 2008.

5.7 Newsletter

The INTERREG IVC newsletter will be operational in 2008, with the completion of the website. It will be sent in electronic version only.