CLIMATE-FRIENDLY AND RESOURCE-EFFICIENT TRANSPORT

Funding opportunities through Interreg B programmes

The European Union’s Interreg B programmes promote cooperation in transnational cooperation areas. Various German federal states and regions are involved in a total of six Interreg B programmes (Alpine Space, Danube Region, Central Europe, North Sea Region, North-West Europe and Baltic Sea Region). The cooperation programmes focus on themes such as innovation, reducing CO₂ emissions, the environment, transport, climate change and governance. They also promote innovative ideas for reducing CO₂ emissions and improving energy efficiency with regard to transport. Another focus is on transport links and accessibility. Potential project partners include municipalities and other public bodies (e.g. public utilities, responsible authorities/organisations) as well as stakeholders from the fields of business, science and civil society.

In the 2014–2020 funding period, a total of around 1.4 billion euros will be made available from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to projects in the six cooperation areas. Although Interreg projects have less funding at their disposal than other EU funding programmes, they are capable of stimulating innovations and promoting creative pilot approaches. Projects also bring together the strategic and the local implementation level and thereby promote common transnational awareness.

Projects need to include partners from at least three countries (generally from at least two EU Member States). Much bigger consortia are common, though, as, depending on the project topic and problem definition, it often makes sense to involve partners from several countries in a transnational project. The total costs of a typical Interreg project, which usually runs for three years, varies between 1 and 5 million euros. Depending on the programme area, between 15 and 50 per cent of expenditure must be co-financed by the project partners.

In the previous Interreg funding period (2007–2013), transnational projects came up with interesting solutions with regard to the theme of transport, including how to make regional railway services more attractive and using impetus generated in trans-European transport networks for regional development.

The O-Bus in Salzburg: Making urban and regional transport more energy and resource efficient.
Sustainable urban and regional transport – a European theme

Sustainable urban and regional transport – a European theme\(^1\). It outlines a vision of eco-friendly urban and regional transport, whereby cities in particular, with their high traffic volumes are regarded as a promising area in which mobility can in future be made both more energy- and resource-efficient and more eco- and climate-friendly. Concrete goals for urban transport include halving and doing without vehicles which run on conventional fuels by 2030 and 2050 respectively.

Commissioning authorities and the operators of public transport – local and regional railways, underground railways, trams and buses – across Europe are faced with similar tasks. These include financing, creating attractive offers in intermodal competition, dealing with the opportunities and risks resulting from rapid developments with regard to information and communication technologies (ICTs) and handling the specific challenges arising when putting in place cross-border offers and cooperations. Other topics, which may potentially be open to transnational cooperation, include new car- and bicycle-sharing models, multimodality and intermodality, specifically information provision and turning stations into mobility hubs. A number of projects in the previous funding period developed ways of tackling these issues and themes and implemented pilot applications.

Attractive regional transport offers – experience gained in the INTER-Regio-Rail project

In the Removing Barriers to Regional Rail Transport (INTER-Regio-Rail) project nine partners from Germany, Italy, Poland and the Czech Republic cooperated with the aim of improving regional passenger rail transport in Central Europe. The studies and pilot projects show, by way of example, how regional passenger rail transport can attract new users in the long-term through better organisation, a better infrastructure and tailor-made offers. A mobility service for the elderly was developed in Stuttgart, for example. One focal topic were cross-border regional passenger rail transport services in Germany and Poland, which fall significantly behind national service levels both in terms of quality and quantity, although cross-border integration both with regard to commuter and leisure transport is increasing. Basic studies were conducted and these helped project partners to implement first approaches to improving available offers.

→ For more information go to www.interregiorail.eu

So you’re not left out in the rain at the station – AlpInfoNet delivers door-to-door information

Currently less than ten per cent of tourists use public transport to travel to the Alpine region. The transition from cars to more eco-friendly means of transport is impeded by, among other things, the lack of cross-border information. An attractive door-to-door information system is not only important so that tourists can get to their destination and back home again, they also need to be mobile while they are holidaying in a region. Thirteen partners from the five Alpine countries – Germany, Austria, France, Italy and Slovenia – cooperated in the Sustainable Mobility Information Network for the Alpine Space (AlpInfoNet) project. Its objective was to provide travellers with comprehensive and tailor-made information – across regional and national borders – about both eco-friendly and barrier-free mobility offers and local tourist attractions. Existing internet-based transport and tourism information systems were linked up. The tools developed in the project included an “arrivals widget” which allows mobility information to be integrated into existing websites.

→ For more information go to www.alpinfonet.eu

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European cooperation creates added value!

Sustainable goods transport – the European perspective
The key objectives set out in the EU’s above-mentioned White Paper on transport policy are that, by 2050, greenhouse gas emissions in the European transport sector are to be reduced by at least 60 per cent compared to 1990 levels and that long-distance road freight transport is to be transferred to eco-friendly means of transport. The key precondition is that trans-European transport networks first need to be expanded: The core network, the first building block, is to be fully operational by 2030 and will then be taken forward to 2050. This overall network will cover the entire EU and guarantee accessibility to all regions. Both levels cover all means of transport: road, rail, air, inland waterways and sea transport as well as intermodal platforms. Intermodal logistics strategies not only play an important role across long distances when it comes to improving energy efficiency and reducing the impacts on humans and the environment, they can also play their part in urban and regional areas. As set out in the EU’s White Book, by 2030 largely carbon-free urban logistics are to be in place in larger urban centres.

Using the Rotterdam–Genoa corridor for regional development – making use of ideas generated by CODE24 in the region
The Rotterdam to Genoa north–south transversal was initially operated as the “Corridor 24”, but is now known as the “Rhine–Alpine Corridor”. It is one of Europe’s most important transportation routes. Every year 700 million tonnes of goods are transported by rail along this axis, that equals 50 per cent of the total European north–south goods transports by rail. The opening of the Gotthard Base Tunnel is expected to lead to a further growth spurt. There are bottlenecks, though, which make it more difficult to absorb any further increase in traffic volume. Fifteen partners from the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland and Italy cooperated to optimise the “Corridor 24” and to combine economic, transport, environmental and spatial development along this trans-European transport axis to create a global strategy. Sub-projects are addressing the provision of information for efficient planning purposes, implementation of noise protection, logistics strategies, communication and networking, for example.

Funding priorities in current cooperation programmes
Interreg is geared to achieving the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy, the EU’s ten-year growth strategy. In the 2014–2020 funding period, all transnational programmes are required to become more thematically focused and to select a limited number of themes from among their priorities. The theme of “transport” is represented to various degrees and with various emphases in the six Interreg V B programme areas (Alpine Space, Danube Region, Central Europe, North Sea Region, North-West Europe and Baltic Sea Region): in Central Europe, the North Sea Region and the Baltic Sea Region “transport” is a separate priority axis; in the Alpine Space, Danube Region and North-West Europe “transport” is referred to as a strategic objective under the priority axes “reducing CO₂ emissions” (Alpine Space, North-West Europe) and “networking and energy efficiency” (Danube Region). Those programme areas, which have “transport” as a separate priority axis, focus on aspects such as eco-friendliness, accessibility, and multimodality, intermodality and interoperability. More specifically:

For more information go to www.code-24.eu

The Rhine–Alpine Corridor is one of Europe’s most important transport axes. The CODE24 project came up with new ideas for developing the port of Mannheim.
Central Europe: Better accessibility of local and regional transport as well as multimodal and eco-friendly goods transport are mentioned in relation to the priority axis “transport”. Low-carbon transport is subsumed as a priority under “reducing CO₂ emissions”. Projects are, for instance, to look at strategies for better integrating different means of transport and develop pilot projects.


Baltic Sea Region: The priority “transport” is highly diversified in the Baltic Sea Region. Priority themes are interoperability in goods and passenger transport, accessibility of peripheral regions and regions affected by demographic change, maritime safety, eco-friendly shipping and eco-friendly urban transport.

Alpine Space: The priority “low-carbon Alpine Space” includes the objective “increase options for low-carbon mobility and transport”. Projects are, for instance, to develop integrated policy strategies in this regard.

Danube Region: Eco-friendly, safe transport and balanced accessibility to urban and rural regions is one theme in the priority “networked and energy-efficient Danube Region”. Transnational projects are, for instance, to look at impulses generated in the Rhine–Danube Corridor which could be used for regional development.

North-West Europe: The priority “reducing CO₂ emissions” lists low-carbon solutions in transport systems as a theme of cooperation. Given that transport is the largest energy consumer in North-West Europe, funding is available to projects which aim to reduce carbon emissions, for example using new technologies.

The advantages of transnational cooperation

Here are just a few good reasons for getting involved in transnational projects:

- As a project partner you will receive a not insignificant amount of funding from the EU, and pooling capacities in a project can lead to further cost savings.

- Transnational cooperation means you can benefit from the know-how and expertise of other project partners and get a different perspective on your own challenges. Projects open up the opportunity of simply giving innovative ideas a go.

- Taking part in an EU project focuses greater attention on your project topic and your institution at regional, national and European level – both in the media and in the eyes of political decision-makers. This can help speed up developments and, in the best case, give your image a boost.

- The added social value should not be underestimated either: Taking part in a project shows that you are “living Europe”. You will gain an insight – and thus also an understanding – of other countries, structures and procedures. Networks established with colleagues, institutions and businesses often endure long after the project ends and can lead to better work results even beyond the project term.

Further information

A wide range of information is available on the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development’s Interreg webpage. Besides general information about the Interreg programmes, it provides good examples, a project database, publications and tips on implementation, and lists contacts in your Interreg cooperation area: www.interreg.de