



Dear Reader,

The new Interreg programming period 2021–2027 involves many innovations and challenges for transnational cooperation. The formal entry into force of the Interreg Regulation on 1 July 2021 has paved the way for the final preparation of the Interreg programmes. Programming is well underway with most of the programme areas aiming to submit their programmes to the European Commission for approval in the second half of 2021. The first calls for Interreg B project funding are expected from the fourth quarter of 2021 on.

Find out on pages 2 and 3 how exactly the geography of the six Interreg programme areas with German participation is changing. Pages 4 and 5 describe how the approach of integrated regional development will be taken up in the new programming period and which good examples of projects with spatial relevance were already implemented in the past funding period. Page 8 informs about the future financial framework for European territorial cooperation.

In addition, on pages 6 and 7, we look back to the success story of the Federal Transnational Cooperation Programme and explain what will be funded in the future.

The Interreg Team of the BBSR
Brigitte Ahlke, Nina Kuenzer, Jens Kurnol and Sina Redlich

Future programme geographies	2-3
European(!) Territorial(!)	
Cooperation(!)	4
Project examples with spatial	
relevance	5
National Funding for Interreg B	
projects: review and outlook	6-7
Future transnational cooperation:	
funding and dates	8



Subscribe to our Interreg
B-Newsletter for current information, dates, calls and events

Future programme geographies: more German regions as cooperation partners

Transnational cooperation in the existing Interreg B programme areas with German participation has proven its worth. The German Standing Conference of Ministers Responsible for Spatial Planning has therefore spoken out in favour of Germany's continued participation in the cooperation areas of the Alpine Space, the Baltic Sea Region, Central Europe, the Danube Region, the North Sea Region as well as North-West Europe and supports the proposal on the programme geographies submitted by the European Commission.

Changed geographies

This means that cooperation in these six programme areas is also to be promoted in the 2021–2027 funding period, but with partly modified geographies. The decision by the United Kingdom not to participate in future programmes following the Brexit had the biggest impact on the geography of the programme areas, especially of the North Sea Region and North-West Europe:

- While the United Kingdom and the two northernmost Norwegian regions 'Troms og Finnmark' and 'Nordland' will no longer participate in the **North Sea Region Programme**, the programme areas were enlarged in Belgium, the Netherlands and France. As a result of this, the new programme now covers the whole of Flanders and the entire territory of the Netherlands. France will participate for the first time in the programme with the regions of Hauts-de-France, Normandy and Brittany. The enlargement facilitates new opportunities for cooperation on maritime and coastal issues in areas with common challenges up to the Channel by connecting French and other North Sea regions to the Atlantic.
- The geography of the future **North-West Europe (NWE) Programme** will also be significantly different. While the UK will no longer participate, enlargements were introduced for the Netherlands and Germany: In the future, the Programme will cover all of the Netherlands, with the northern regions of Groningen, Drenthe and Friesland included for the first time. In Germany, the programme area is rounded off by the inclusion of the federal state of Bremen with the cities of Bremen and Bremerhaven as well as the predominantly rural Lower Saxony regions of Weser-Ems and Leine-Weser. They are keen to cooperate with the existing NWE regions, particularly with a view to climate change as well as innovative and intelligent economic transformation.
- In the **Central Europe cooperation** area, there is also a smaller adjustment in the German part with Lower Saxony contributing to Central Europe with the Braunschweig region. Braunschweig has a very heterogeneous territorial structure which is affected by socio-economic and environmental challenges linked to industrial transformation. With its manifold strengths in science and economy, the region of Braunschweig will be able to contribute to cohesion and regional development in Central Europe.
- According to the proposals by the European Commission, the future **Alpine Space Programme** should also include all regions of Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria in order to align the geography to that of the macro-regional strategy for the Alpine region (EUSALP). This extends the programme area by the Bavarian regions of Lower Bavaria, Upper Palatinate, Upper, Middle and Lower Franconia and, in Baden-Württemberg, the regions of Stuttgart and Karlsruhe. This alignment is meant to strengthen the coherence between strategy and programme goals and to support the path towards a carbon-neutral and climate-resilient territory while maintaining the focus of activities and interventions on the functional and geographic specificities of the Alps and peri-alpine areas.
- The geography of the **Baltic Sea Region Programme** remains largely unchanged. Only the two northernmost Norwegian regions of 'Troms og Finnmark' and 'Nordland' will no longer be included.
- The **Danube Transnational Programme** is the only one of the six transnational programmes with an unchanged geography compared to the 2014–2020 funding period.

Current information on the programme areas:

Alpine Space: <https://www.alpine-space.eu>

Baltic Sea Region: <https://www.interreg-baltic.eu>

Central Europe: <https://www.interreg-central.eu>

Danube Region: www.interreg-danube.eu

North Sea Region: <https://northsearegion.eu>

North-West-Europe: <https://www.nweurope.eu>

Alpine Space



Eligible transnational cooperation areas 2021-2027
 Alpine Space

Data source: European Commission
 Geometric basis: GfK GeoMarketing, NUTS 2 regions
 Author: D. Gebhardt
 April 2021

Danube Region



Eligible transnational cooperation areas 2021-2027
 Danube Region

Data source: European Commission
 Geometric basis: GfK GeoMarketing, NUTS 2 regions
 Author: D. Gebhardt
 April 2021

Baltic Sea Region



Eligible transnational cooperation areas 2021-2027
 Baltic Sea Region

*on condition of bilateral agreements with the EU

Data source: European Commission
 Geometric basis: GfK GeoMarketing, NUTS 2 regions
 Author: D. Gebhardt
 April 2021

North-West Europe



Eligible transnational cooperation areas 2021-2027
 North-West Europe

Data source: European Commission
 Geometric basis: GfK GeoMarketing, NUTS 2 regions
 Author: D. Gebhardt
 April 2021

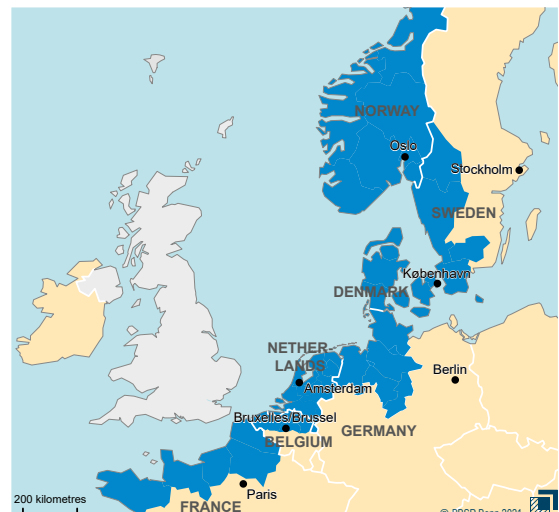
Central Europe



Eligible transnational cooperation areas 2021-2027
 Central Europe

Data source: European Commission
 Geometric basis: GfK GeoMarketing, NUTS 2 regions
 Author: D. Gebhardt
 April 2021

North Sea Region



Eligible transnational cooperation areas 2021-2027
 North Sea Region

Data source: European Commission
 Geometric basis: GfK GeoMarketing, NUTS 2 regions
 Author: D. Gebhardt
 April 2021

European(!) Territorial(!) Cooperation(!)

Every Interreg programme period has its own buzzwords. For the 2021 programme period, 'territoriality' is certainly one of them. While the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development is committed to the integrated regional development approach pursued by Interreg, the concept has recently taken a back seat to thematic approaches. Now, in the run-up to the programme period that is just beginning, territoriality has experienced an upswing from various sides.

First, the Commission introduced a new spatial policy objective (PO 5: Europe closer to citizens) in its draft regulation, which complements the thematic priorities of the past. Even if the administrative hurdles of this policy objective were too high for the transnational programme areas, the idea behind this objective, i.e. to act and cooperate on the basis of the needs of the regions, has found its way into the new Interreg programmes.

One example is the 'green' priority (PO 2: A greener, low-carbon Europe), which will be promoted in all future Interreg programmes with German participation. Spatial issues that address local and regional needs are an important focus here: How can climate-neutral cities and regions be created? How can climate adaptation measures be implemented sustainably in cities and regions? What are the opportunities of the circular economy if it is based on local and regional strategies, plans and approaches? How can sustainable mobility as well as sustainable digital and physical connectivity of places be achieved everywhere?

Contact person for discussion:

Philipp Schwartz (philipp.schwartz@interact-eu.net)

A future for all places

Furthermore, the Territorial Agenda 2030 has made a significant contribution to the fact that the guiding motto of 'A future for all places' has found a place on the agenda of the Interreg programmes. The Territorial Agenda 2030 (TA 2030) adopted in December 2020 sets out common goals and guiding principles for the European spatial planning policy. It provides an action-oriented framework for promoting territorial cohesion in Europe and is an important reference document for the transnational programmes 2021–2027. But the Interreg B programmes of the soon to end 2014–2020 funding period and their projects are also already making a significant contribution to the implementation of TA 2030. The topics include 'social empowerment' in rural areas, smart digital transformation of villages, accessibility of services in regions affected by demographic change, connecting the hinterland to the trans-European transport networks or 'renewable energy regions'.

What characterises a territorial Interreg project?

Despite all the good examples, the idea behind integrated spatial planning remains complex for many and must frequently be explained. What characterises a territorial Interreg project? And how can the characteristics of territorial projects be easily operationalised so that project partners can put the concept into practice? In response to an invitation by Interact, a working group is now addressing this question. In an exchange between programme stakeholders from cross-border, transnational and Europe-wide cooperation and with the involvement of other experts, project examples are being compiled and core elements of territorial projects identified. Discussions are underway as to whether awards should be granted to territorial projects, for instance, through a 'TA label' in the keep.eu database. It is also up for debate whether the existing project selection criteria meet spatial characteristics or whether they should be supplemented or made more precise in this respect.



Project examples with spatial relevance (programming period 2014–2020)



Pilot community Eisenbach © Municipality of Eisenbach, Regionalverband Südlicher Oberrhein

SmartVillages (Alpine Space)

Rural communities in the Alpine region lack much-needed jobs, good services and a favourable climate for entrepreneurship and social innovation which are all leading to a brain drain. While digitalisation may offer a promising approach towards improving services for remote areas, it does not generate development in itself. A SmartVillages approach for mountain areas aims to unlock the potential of local actors to make their region a more attractive place to live and work. The Interreg B SmartVillages project aims at preparing towns and municipalities in rural areas of the Alpine Space to recognise the opportunities of digitalisation and to use them to their advantage. Ideas on the topic of 'digitalisation and quality of life' are being developed together with citizens.

More information:

<https://www.alpine-space.eu/projects/smartvillages/en/home>

MAMBA (Baltic Sea Region)

Demographic change, emigration and limited public finances in the rural areas of the Baltic Sea Region are increasingly threatening the accessibility of services and goods and thus also the quality of life of the people living there. The Interreg MAMBA project aims to counter this trend by coordinating existing and new mobility structures more efficiently, bringing more services to the people and more people to service providers.

More information:

https://www.interreg.de/INTERREG2014/DE/Projekte/Gute-Beispiele/MobilitaetundVerkehr/DL/DL_mamba.pdf



Solar farm in Plymouth, RegEnergy pilot project © Plymouth City Council

RegEnergy (North-West Europe)

North-West Europe is the most densely populated area in Europe. As energy still largely comes from non-renewable sources, CO2 emissions there are significantly higher compared to other regions in Europe. Urban areas are large consumers of energy, but they do not have the potential to produce the renewable energy they need and thus meet their needs independently. The surrounding areas, however, have the required natural resources, but not enough consumers or human and financial capacities. The RegEnergy project aims to break up existing structures and increase the use of renewable energy by creating urban-rural partnerships in North-West Europe.

More information:

<https://www.interreg.de/INTERREG2014/DE/Projekte/Gute-Beispiele/EnergieundKlimawandel/DL/dl-regenergy.pdf>

SubNodes (Central Europe)

With the expansion of the trans-European transport networks, important nodes are being created in rail transport. However, local transport connections from the surrounding areas to these main hubs (nodes) are often lacking. Many regions can only benefit from high-speed networks to a limited extent. SubNodes has developed new strategies to expand local public transport in small towns around the main nodes and develop them into medium-sized centres of transport infrastructure (sub-nodes).

More information:

https://www.interreg.de/INTERREG2014/DE/Projekte/Gute-Beispiele/MobilitaetundVerkehr/DL/DL_subnodes.pdf

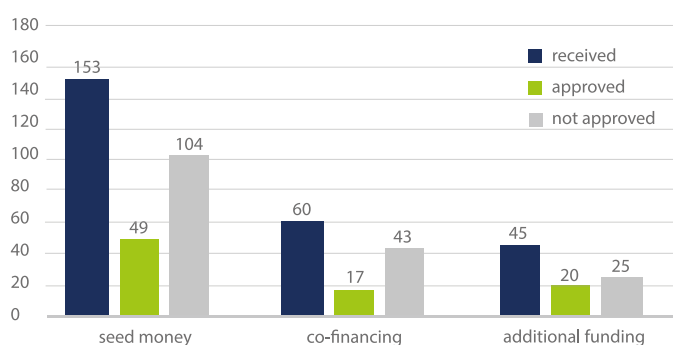
Federal Transnational Cooperation Programme: review and outlook

Every year, the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community (BMI) provides 500,000 euros of funding through the Federal Transnational Cooperation Programme. The programme supports German project partners and applicants who wish to play a leading role in transnational cooperation projects in one of the six Interreg B programmes with German involvement. The funded projects must deal with issues that are of special interest to the German Federal Government. A further prerequisite is that the projects work with integrated approaches in spatial planning. Funding is available in three categories: “seed money”, “co-financing” and “additional funding”. The 2014–2020 programming period is currently coming to an end, so that the time is ripe for insights into the funding provided by the Federal Programme in 2014–2020 and for outlooks to 2021–2027.

Statistical evaluation of the programming period 2014–2020

In the period 2014–2020¹, the Federal Ministry of the Interior has funded 86 different Interreg B projects with a budget of approximately 3.4 million euros. German project partners submitted 258 applications in 16 programme calls for the three different types of funding. The 86 approved projects are divided into 49 seed money, 17 co-financing and 20 additional funding projects.

Applications for the 2014-2020 programming period by project type



Source: Own calculation and presentation, BBSR 2021

Applications for the three funding types were received from all six Interreg B programme areas with German participation. The highest number of applications were submitted for the Central Europe cooperation programme (i.e. around 33%) which also is the largest cooperation area in Germany. 27% of the projects approved were submitted for the Baltic Sea Region,

the remaining 40% for North-West Europe (about 14%), the Alpine Space and the Danube Region (about 9% each) and the North Sea Region (about 8%) programme areas. The chances of approval were similar in all Interreg B programme areas.



Seed money projects

Most applications were submitted in the 2014–2020 period as seed money projects. Of the 153 projects received, German partners were supported in 49 seed money projects with funding amounting to about 1.12 million euros in total. This meant that leading German partners already received financial support during the project development phase enabling them to prepare and submit a qualified Interreg B application including a viable transnational partnership. For Interreg newcomers, this offers a particularly attractive incentive. Of the total 49 seed money projects funded, 27 were approved in the transnational committees. This corresponds to an approval rate of about 55% in the context of the Federal Programme.



Co-financing projects

Of the 60 co-financing projects submitted, 25 projects received a letter of intent for support from the Federal Transnational Cooperation Programme of which 17 were approved by the transnational committees. 68% of the projects that were deemed eligible for funding under the Federal Programme also received Interreg funding. The Federal Programme provided national co-financing for the 17 approved Interreg B projects in total amounting to approximately 1.29 million euros, helping the German project partners to contribute their own share (average project co-financing of approximately 76,000 euros). The approved funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for these projects amounts to approximately 42.7 million euros. In terms of content, the 17 projects can be assigned to the five thematic areas of economy-work-life (3), energy and climate change (3), environment and natural resources (1), mobility and transport (8), as well as spatial planning and governance (2).



Additional funding projects

Furthermore, additional funding enabled German project partners to implement additional project activities of special federal interest which were impossible to be sufficiently implemented in the context of an Interreg B project. The chances of approval were particularly good here with 20 of the 45 applications submitted approved and a total of about 982,200 euros granted for these additional German activities.

¹ BBSR's own surveys and calculations, as of September 2021

Direction of federal funding for German project stakeholders in the funding period 2021–2027




In the future, the Federal Transnational Cooperation Programme will continue to fund Interreg B projects with German participation, by which a topic of particular federal interest is implemented and make a clear contribution to sustainable spatial planning.

What will be funded?

The thematic areas of the transnational Interreg programmes in the new funding period are to be addressed through integrated and spatially effective approaches. With their project ideas, the German applicants thus move at the interface between the future themes of the Interreg B programmes 2021+ and the requirements for an inclusive and sustainable, spatial and regional development. It is particularly important to focus on the sustainable development of regions, to implement projects on the ground and to look at issues not only from a sectoral perspective. The focus is therefore on an interdisciplinary approach to a topic that links economic, ecological, social and territorial aspects. In this way, a contribution can be made towards the European goal of ‘cohesion’ and Germany’s comparable goal of ‘equal living conditions’. The programme also aims to:

- strengthen the European competence of local and regional stakeholders,
- involve new, especially local stakeholders in transnational cooperation,
- stabilise and develop long-term cooperative relationships and structures,
- prepare and plan investments and to
- strengthen the resilience of cities and regions.

The Federal Programme also provides for **three categories of funding** in the new funding period 2021–2027:

-  support for preparation of applications (‘seed money’)
-  proportionate support of the co-financing of EU funds (‘co-financing project’)
-  financing of an additional project component (‘additional funding project’)

What’s new?

The **Territorial Agenda 2030** (TA2030) offers a new strategic orientation for sustainable spatial development in Germany and Europe. In order to support the implementation of the European Territorial Reference Framework, the Federal Programme will fund projects that are oriented towards the goals

and priorities of this Agenda. The corresponding goals of a ‘Just Europe’ and a ‘Green Europe’ comprise six priorities, focusing on reducing regional disparities and creating sustainable future prospects for all regions in Germany and Europe. The concepts for spatial development in Germany are reflected in the priorities of TA2030. This creates a variety of topics that will also be addressed in the future Interreg B programmes with German participation through the political objectives of the ERDF Regulation 2021–2027.

Goals and priorities of the Territorial Agenda 2030



Six priorities of the Territorial Agenda 2030 © BBSR

One of the aims of the ‘**Just Europe**’ objective is to achieve a balanced spatial development, especially in structurally weak and rural regions. These include, for example, issues related to services of general interest, the promotion of resilient regional economic structures and spaces, sustainable urban-rural relations or the promotion of agile governance structures at local to macro-regional level. At the same time, the goal of a ‘**Green Europe**’ promotes exemplary themes that support climate-neutral cities and regions as well as local and regional measures for climate adaptation and climate change mitigation. Furthermore, this goal focuses on the promotion of a circular economy in urban and especially rural areas (building on local and regional strategies) and on the creation of new digital mobility services and multimodal transport.

Who can apply for funding?

Local and regional organisations but also foundations, research institutions and companies are addressed. Applications by local and regional actors are particularly welcomed, as European goals and guiding principles can thus be anchored locally.

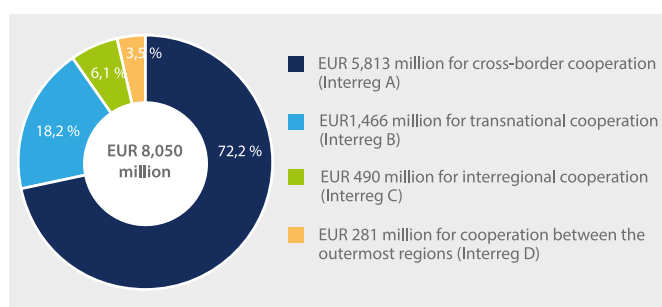
More informationen:

www.interreg.de > National funding

Future funds for European territorial cooperation (Interreg B)

After the EU institutions agreed upon the EU budget for the period 2021–2027 in December 2020 and also reached agreement on the new Interreg Regulation, the future financial framework for European territorial cooperation has now been fixed. Based on this, around 8.05 billion euros of funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) will be available for Interreg over the next seven years. This marks a significant decrease in funding when compared to the funding period 2014–2020 during which 8.9 billion euros of funds were available. Germany will receive a total of around 1.02 billion euros of funding for Interreg.

ERDF funding for the European Territorial Cooperation objective (Interreg)



Source: Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 © BBSR

Germany ensures continuity in transnational cooperation

Transnational cooperation, which has also included the outermost regions until 2020, will receive 1.75 billion euros (which is less than the previous 2.1 billion euros). However, the share of Interreg as a whole increases from 20.4 to 21.7%. Of the total funds allocated to Germany for Interreg, around 318 million

euros will be contributed to the six transnational programmes with German participation – an order of magnitude comparable to the funding period 2014–2020 which allows for continuity in transnational cooperation. For Germany, the only way to ensure this was to make use of the flexibility option in the transfer of funds and by transferring funds, earmarked for cross-border cooperation (Interreg A), to transnational cooperation (Interreg B).

Final figures still pending

The amount of ERDF funding allocated to the individual transnational cooperation areas has not yet been determined for all areas. However, it is becoming apparent that, compared to the previous funding period, a significant decrease in ERDF funding can be expected, especially in the North-West Europe programme and in the Danube Region. The final funding figures will be determined when the programmes are officially submitted to the European Commission for approval. The Central Europe Programme has already been submitted, and most of the programmes are to be submitted in the course of 2021.

First project calls planned for autumn 2021

The first project calls for Interreg funding are expected from the fourth quarter of 2021. Preparations for this are in full swing. The framework conditions for the project calls are currently being discussed in the programming committees, the application documents are being prepared and the electronic management systems are also being set up.

Current dates and deadlines for tenders:

www.interreg.de > Aktuelles



**Bundesinstitut
für Bau-, Stadt- und
Raumforschung**

im Bundesamt für Bauwesen
und Raumordnung



In the context of the European structural policy objective „European territorial cooperation“ - familiarly known as Interreg B - the European Union supports transnational cooperation in cross-national cooperation areas in order to realise an integrated spatial development.

The Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR) informs the public and supports the transfer of results, it organises exchange across Germany, represents the Federal Government in programming or steering committees and supports projects of special interest to the Federal Government in the context of the Federal Transnational Cooperation Programme on behalf of the German Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community.

IMPRINT

Published by: Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR) within the Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning (BBR) | Deichmanns Aue 31–37 | 53179 Bonn

Contact: BBSR | Division I 3 “European Spatial and Urban Development” | Brigitte Ahlke | interreg@bbr.bund.de | www.bbsr.bund.de | www.interreg.de

Edited and layout by: CONVIS Consult & Marketing GmbH | Auerbachstraße 10 | 14193 Berlin

Printed by: Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning, Bonn

Orders from: beatrix.thul@bbr.bund.de | reference: Interreg Journal EN 2021

Picture credits: p. 1: Mathias Weil - stock.adobe.com, p. 3: BBSR, p. 4: BBSR, p. 5: Municipality of Eisenach, Plymouth City Council, p. 6: BBSR, p. 7: BBSR, p. 8: BBSR

Reprint and copying: All rights reserved. Reprint is permitted only if detailed reference to the original source is provided. Please send us two sample copies. The contents of this report reflect the views of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the publisher.