



INTERact

Annual Implementation Report 2007



**2007 ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT
INTERACT Programme**

Programming Period 2002 – 2006

Reporting Period: 01/01/2007 – 31/12/2007

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|---|---|
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1. Introduction

This document contains the 2007 Annual Implementation Report for the INTERACT Community Initiative Programme (CIP). It covers the period 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2007. It has been drafted in accordance with art. 37 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999 of 21 June 1999 laying down general provisions on the Structural Funds, with the Methodological Working Paper No 1 of the European Commission, (Vademecum for Structural Funds Plans and programming documents) and other guidelines provided by the European Commission.¹

The total budget for the INTERACT Programme is EUR 39.54 million, EUR 28.15 million of which is ERDF (according to Commission Decision C(2004) 5802 of 28 December 2004). The programme is managed by the Austrian Federal Chancellery (*Bundeskanzleramt der Republik Österreich*) with the support of the INTERACT Secretariat. The programme is steered by a Monitoring and Steering Committee made of representatives from 27 EU Member States as well as Norway and Switzerland.

¹ Working paper No 3 "indicators for monitoring and evaluation: a methodological orientation"; Commission Staff Working Paper 3/12/2003 The Annual Implementation Report on Structural Fund Programmes.

2. General Conditions of Relevance to the Implementation of the Programme

INTERACT is an individual and institutional capacity building programme with a relatively straightforward theory of action. The programme aims to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the INTERREG Community Initiative programmes. The conduit for INTERACT impulses is ultimately individuals, who participate in INTERACT events, read publications, access databases, etc, and, through this, develop their own capacities and those of their organisations.

The working environment has therefore always been deeply linked to the political and institutional trends and changes which were often originated by the European Institutions agenda. This was also the case in 2007 throughout the final stages of the planning and development of Cohesion Policy.

In this regard 2007 has represented a stepping stone as the kick-off year for the new generation of programmes which have been prepared and approved. The 2007 – 2013 European Cohesion Policy has been finally launched and the first programmes started to be operational during the second semester of the year. In this context the INTERACT Programme adapted its structure and its service delivery methodology in view of responding to growing needs and requests.

The most relevant fact in 2007 was the adoption of the **Fourth Report on Economic and Social Cohesion** by the European Commission on 30 May 2007. The document has provided an update on the progress made towards achieving economic, social and territorial cohesion, and on the manner in which Member States' and Community's policies have contributed to it.

The Report has given a first assessment of the preparation for 2007-2013, based on the programming documents submitted to the Commission by Member States by end of April 2007. It has finally looked at the new challenges which will add up to the context for regional development in the next 20-30 years - such as demography, climate change, social exclusion or energy - and submits for a debate a series of questions on their combined impact on the policy. The long-term purpose of this report is to launch the reflection on the future of Europe's policy to promote greater economic, social and territorial cohesion and to foster regional development and competitiveness.

In this context reference is very often made to good management and excellence in the delivery of programmes. Therefore the INTERACT programme in 2007 has naturally adapted its interventions and supported INTERREG stakeholders in the first steps of the launching phase. The programme has been working in an overlapping condition with issues pertinent both to the new programming period as well as the closing and winding-up of the 2000 – 2006 programmes.

3. Progress in the Implementation of Priorities and Measures

The INTERACT Programme has been successfully delivered during 2007 by reaching a higher number of INTERREG stakeholders than previous years and becoming more and more known as the training and exchange of information tool on issues related to European Territorial Cooperation. Overall the level of communication increased with the members of the Monitoring and Steering Committee, the Points and Projects and in general with representatives of the various programmes. At each stage of the programme's development, clear and detailed information has been provided highlighting both successes and bottlenecks in view of sharing a common strategy. Overall Points and Projects delivered outputs that met the programme's targets.

In 2007 the programme continued its approach to project development and targeted more partners at regional and local level as well as developed new modules focusing on the preparation of the new generation of programmes (2007 – 2013). As a consequence of the revision of the INTERACT Programme Complement made in mid 2006 the programme benefited in 2007 from a new intervention under Priority 1 Measure 1 which supported extra activities of capitalisation of INTERREG III results. Several training events have been organised throughout Europe by the INTERACT Points and Projects. Many events have been organised in cooperation with the European Commission and some National Ministries² responsible for Regional Policy.

It is worthwhile mentioning also that in 2007 all INTERREG Programmes of the three different Strands took part in INTERACT events or used INTERACT ad hoc services and management tools. In 2007 INTERACT involved more and more professionals responsible for First and Second level Control a structured networks around these groups of professionals. These people joined the traditional INTERACT users generally operating in the Joint Technical Secretariats, the Managing Authorities and Paying Authorities as well as being representatives in Monitoring and Steering Committees.

Special emphasis was also given to services tailored for the new EU member States (Bulgaria and Romania) as well as for the ENPI component of Territorial Cooperation at the External Borders of the European Union. Some activities have also been planned in cooperation with DG Relex and DG EuropAid of the European Commission.

This chapter of the 2007 Annual implementation report introduces the progress made by Points and Projects and reports on their specific targets, gives an overview of the main events delivered, on some occasions in cooperation with National and Regional institutions. Finally it presents the INTERACT Communications Strategy as implemented by the use of tools (website, communications system, etc.) and actions (events, promotional campaigns, etc.).

For the sake of complete information for readers the following section presents the programme's Priorities and Measures per financial allocation and context of intervention.

² Public official from EC and National Ministries attended INTERACT events and pro actively contributed to discussions and delivery of information.

3.1 The INTERACT Programme Structure

The INTERACT Programme is structured into four priorities:

- **Priority 1: Management Support**
total EUR 15 139 555, ERDF EUR 13 625 599
(38% of total budget, 48% of ERDF allocation)
- **Priority 2: INTERREG Development: Local and Regional Initiatives**
total EUR 14 076 036, ERDF EUR 7 038 018
(36% of total budget, 25% of ERDF allocation)
- **Priority 3: Management of Transition and External Cooperation**
total EUR 8 257 940, ERDF EUR 7 038 018 €
(21% of total budget, 20% of ERDF allocation)
- **Priority 4: Technical Assistance**
total EUR 2 064 485, ERDF EUR 1 858 036
(5% of total budget, 7% of ERDF allocation)

The two measures in Priority 3 provide for broadly the same activities as Priorities 1 and 2 respectively, but with an ad hoc focus on the Member States that joined EU in 2004, the two new Member States (Bulgaria and Romania as from January 2007) and the external cooperation at the Eastern and Southern borders of the European Union, effectively making this dimension of the programme more visible.

Priority 1 and Priority 3 Measure 1 are focused on 'INTERREG management support' – assisting INTERREG programmes in their practical implementation and management. The services and resources under this heading are delivered by four INTERACT Points which are coordinated by the INTERACT Programme Secretariat.

Under Priority 1 Measure 1 the intervention called "Capitalisation of INTERREG III results towards the new programmes under European Territorial Cooperation (ETC)" aims at capitalising on the experience and know-how achieved in all three strands of the INTERREG III Community Initiative.

Priority 2 and Priority 3 Measure 2 complement the work of the INTERACT Points through INTERACT Projects which were selected via two calls for proposals³. INTERACT Projects were set up by groups of regions and other eligible players⁴ in view of deepening INTERACT activities also for some specific stakeholders (e.g. sparsely populated regions, maritime cooperation regions, etc...), and to provide potential benefits to a wider INTERREG audience.

³ 1st Call launched in July 2003 and 2nd Call launched in May 2004.

⁴ A wider target group could apply under these measures than under Priority 1, including national, regional and local authorities and public equivalent bodies able to take full responsibility for the administration and spending of public funds.

Table 1: Structure of the INTERACT Programme

| Priority | Mode of implementation |
|---|--|
| Priority 1: INTERREG Management Support | |
| <p>Technical support to the bodies involved in managing and implementing INTERREG programmes, including Managing and Paying Authorities.</p> <p>Measures</p> <p>P1M1 – Information and Animation.</p> <p>P1M1 – IIIC Coordination</p> <p>P1M1 – Capitalisation of INTERREG III results towards the new programmes under European Territorial Cooperation (ETC)</p> <p>P1M2 Qualification and Transfer</p> | <p>This support is being delivered through a network consisting of INTERACT Points and the INTERACT Programme Secretariat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INTERACT Point Information and Animation • INTERACT Point Tool Box • INTERACT Point Qualification and Transfer • INTERACT Point IIIC Coordination • INTERACT Point Managing Transition and External Cooperation <p>90% of co-finance is ERDF and 10% is contributed to the budget ex ante by countries participating in INTERREG.</p> |
| Priority 2: INTERREG Development – Local and Regional Initiatives | |
| <p>Support for projects proposed by local and regional bodies to tackle specific issues related to the different strands of INTERREG.</p> <p>The priority comprises one measure.</p> | <p>Funding INTERACT Projects proposed by groups of applicants.</p> <p>50% of co-finance is ERDF and 50% is contributed by the applicant.</p> |
| Priority 3 Cooperation and Management of Transition in Border Regions with Accession Countries | |
| <p>Accession countries/new Member States to adapt from current pre-accession, cross-border instruments to full INTERREG participation.</p> <p>Priority 3 has two measures cross-cutting Priorities 1 and 2, but targeting the regions bordering accession countries/new Member States.</p> <p>Measures</p> <p>P3M1 – Joint Cooperation Tools.</p> <p>P3M2 – Managing Transition and External Cooperation</p> | <p>P3M1 Joint Cooperation Tools provides scope to support an INTERACT Point focused on the management of transition for accession countries/new Member States (2004 and 2007 enlargement).</p> <p>P3M2 Managing Transition and External Cooperation provides scope to support INTERACT Projects focused on the management of transition for accession countries/new Member States. The service is delivered through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INTERACT Point Managing Transition and External Cooperation |
| Priority 4 Technical Assistance | |
| <p>Funding the activities of the Programme Secretariat in managing the programme.</p> <p>Measures</p> <p>P4M1 Technical Assistance 1 (Management, monitoring and implementation).</p> <p>P4M2 Technical Assistance 2 (Information, publicity, evaluation).</p> | <p>Used to fund the activities of the INTERACT Programme Secretariat and the Managing Authority while managing and implementing with efficiency the programme.</p> |

3.2 Overall Summary of Events in the INTERACT Programme in 2007

The INTERACT Programme aims to increase the effectiveness of INTERREG by linking the whole European INTERREG community and offering chances to exchange experiences and discussing relevant issues faced daily by programme managers. The individuals are in the end the target of INTERACT actions as they participate in INTERACT events, read publications, access databases, etc, and, through this, develop their own capacities and those of their organisations.

In 2007 INTERACT continued its action of support by opening up several opportunities throughout Europe and closely involving INTERACT users in the development of relevant resources and the organisation of cooperation activities. Programmes from the three Strands of INTERREG became closer and closer both in their own Strand as well as within other types of cooperation and areas.

The needs and the priorities have been increasingly identified together with the INTERREG programmes and so the activities have been planned. Therefore in comparison to previous years the calendar of INTERACT events and services has been drafted in conjunction with INTERACT users. In this regard the programme managers (Secretariat and Points) denoted a great flexibility and capacity of adaptation. At the same great support was provided by the Managing Authority and the Monitoring and Steering Committee.

Once again INTERACT activities contributed to improving individuals' knowledge and skills as well as to bring about organisational changes which collectively mean that INTERREG programming becomes more effective.

The tables below highlight various types of interventions (seminars, conferences, etc...) on different themes (e.g. Lead Partner principle, project and programme closure, new institutional settings under 2007 – 2013 programmes, INTERREG Project ideas generation, etc...) and list the main INTERACT events delivered by the Programme actors directly and/or in cooperation with other European and/or National institutions/organisations. The main internal management meetings are also marked. In the course of 2007 the INTERACT Points started to market their activities by using the names they are supposed to have under INTERACT 2007 – 2013. Therefore they promoted themselves as INTERACT Point and the name of the location of their premises (Valencia, Vienna, Viborg and Turku).

Table 2: INTERACT Programme events in 2007

| Date | Event | INTERACT Unit involved |
|--------------------|--|------------------------|
| 09 and 10 January | Coordinators Group Meeting, Vienna | IS + IPs + MA |
| 17 January | INTERACT Project FIMIP Transnational Seminar on Financial Management, Huelva, Spain | INTERACT Project |
| 22 and 23 January | Training Seminar: Financial Management of INTERREG programmes and projects, Brussels | INTERACT Point Viborg |
| 24 January | IPA CBC Workshops – Cross-border programmes between Member States and IPA countries, L'Aquila, Italy | INTERACT Point Vienna |
| 25 and 26 January | Training Seminar: Financial Management of INTERREG programmes and projects, Brussels | INTERACT Point Viborg |
| 02 and 03 February | IONAS Project Final Conference, Venice | INTERACT Project |

| Date | Event | INTERACT Unit involved |
|--------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| 05 February | INTERACT Programme Financial Control Group Meeting, Tenerife | FCG + MA + IS |
| 05 and 06 February | INTERACT Training for trainers | IS + MA + IPs |
| 07 and 8 February | Coordinators Group Meeting, Viborg | IS + IPs + MA |
| 13 February | IPA CBC Workshops – Cross-border programmes between Member States and IPA countries, Belgrade | INTERACT Point Vienna |
| 19 and 20 February | INTERACT Projects Lead Partner Training Seminar II, Vienna | INTERACT Programme Secretariat (IS) |
| 28 February | IPA CBC Workshops – Cross-border programmes between Member States and IPA countries, Sofia | INTERACT Point Vienna |
| 01 March | INTERACT workshop for the new European Territorial Cooperation Romania-Bulgaria Programme, Sofia | INTERACT Point Vienna |
| 05 and 06 March | Training Seminar on Territorial Cooperation Project Management, Dresden | INTERACT Point Viborg |
| 07 and 08 March | Coordinators Group Meeting, Vienna | IS + IPs + MA |
| 13 and 14 March | INTERACT Project Re-Act Seminar on water resources management and risk prevention, Como, Italy | INTERACT Project |
| 15 and 16 March | INTERREG meeting on second level control, Strasbourg | INTERACT Point Viborg |
| 16 March | INTERACT Project Ex-Int and FIMIP International Seminar on Development and Financial Management of projects in the new Objective 3, Athens | INTERACT Project |
| 29 and 30 March | INTERACT Conference - European Territorial Cooperation programmes 2007-2013: Expectations, changes and challenges, Budapest | INTERACT Programme (IS + IPs) + EC |
| 16 and 17 April | INTERACT Project ALSO Conference on the achievements of the Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategy objectives by the INTERREG Initiative, Szeged, Hungary | INTERACT Project |
| 19 and 20 April | Seminar: IVB and C Project Officers' Network Meeting, Copenhagen | INTERACT Point Viborg |
| 24 and 25 April | Workshop on Human Resources in Territorial Cooperation Programmes, Madrid | INTERACT Point Valencia |
| 02 and 04 May | Coordinators Group Meeting, Valencia | IS + IPs + MA |
| 08 and 09 May | Training Seminar on Territorial Cooperation Project Management, London | INTERACT Point Viborg |
| 10 and 11 May | Training Seminar on Financial Management of INTERREG programmes and projects, Warsaw | INTERACT Point Vienna, Turku Branch |

| Date | Event | INTERACT Unit involved |
|---------------------|--|--|
| 21 and 22 May | INTERACT Project Trans-Sea Seminar "Implementing the Strategic Environmental Assessment in interregional cooperation", Brussels | INTERACT Project |
| 24 and 25 May | Introduction to European Territorial Cooperation Seminar, Brussels | INTERACT Point Valencia |
| 31 May | Workshop on Communication Plan and tools for cross-border programmes, La Valletta, Malta | INTERACT Point Vienna |
| 05 and 06 June | MSC Meeting, Turku | IS + MA + MSC |
| 18 and 19 June | Coordinators Group Meeting, Vienna | IS + IPs + MA |
| 20 and 21 June | Introduction to European Territorial Cooperation Seminar, Lisbon | INTERACT Point Valencia |
| 21 and 22 June | Training Seminar on Territorial Cooperation Project Management, London | INTERACT Point Viborg |
| 25 and 26 June | Workshop on Human Resources in Territorial Cooperation Programmes, Milan | INTERACT Point Valencia |
| 28 and 29 June | INTERACT Project CULTPLAN International Symposium: "Planning Cultures in Europe – Exploring Cultural Differences as Resources and Restrictions for Interregional Cooperation", Hamburg | INTERACT Project |
| 02 and 03 July | Training Seminar on Territorial Cooperation Project Management, Bratislava | INTERACT Points |
| 05 and 06 July | Training Seminar on Territorial Cooperation Project Management, Ljubljana | INTERACT Points |
| 06 and 07 September | Coordinators Group Meeting, Aalborg | IS + IPs + MA |
| 18 and 19 September | ENPI CBC Programme implementation 2007-13, Brussels | INTERACT Point Vienna, Turku Branch + EC |
| 20 and 21 September | EU Interregional Cooperation Forum 2007: Celebrating INTERREG IIIC - Launching INTERREG IVC, Lisbon | INTERACT Point IIIC Coordination |
| 25 and 26 September | Introduction to European Territorial Cooperation Seminar, Brussels | INTERACT Point Valencia |
| 11 and 12 October | Training Seminar on Territorial Cooperation Project Management, Tallinn, | INTERACT Point Vienna, Turku Branch |
| 17 and 18 October | INTERACT Seminar on Strategic Project Generation, Venice | INTERACT Point Vienna |
| 17 and 18 October | Training Seminar on Financial Management of Territorial Cooperation programmes and projects, Paris | INTERACT Point Valencia |
| 18 and 19 October | MSC Meeting, Vienna | IS + MA + MSC |
| 23 and 24 October | INTERACT Seminar on Communicating in the new Territorial Cooperation programmes, | INTERACT Point Vienna |

| Date | Event | INTERACT Unit involved |
|--------------------|--|-------------------------|
| | Prague | |
| 30 and 31 October | Coordinators Group Meeting, Brussels | IS + IPs + MA |
| 12 and 13 November | Training Seminar on Financial Management of Territorial Cooperation programmes and projects, Barcelona | INTERACT Point Valencia |
| 15 and 16 November | INTERACT Seminar on Strategic Project Generation, Vienna | INTERACT Point Vienna |
| 19 and 20 November | Training Seminar on Territorial Cooperation Project Management, Valencia | INTERACT Point Valencia |
| 26 and 27 November | INTERACT Seminar on the EGTC, Vienna | INTERACT Point Vienna |
| 29 and 30 November | INTERACT Seminar on Strategic Project Generation, Luxembourg | INTERACT Point Viborg |

3.3 INTERACT Points

Priority 1 of the INTERACT Programme (INTERREG Management Support) and Priority 3 Measure 1 (Joint Cooperation Tools) provided for the establishment of a network of 'INTERACT Points' whose role is to work in coordination with the INTERACT Programme Secretariat to deliver development services to the INTERREG community throughout the whole of Europe. Their task is to generate content in terms of best INTERREG management and delivery practices and to enable this to be shared and applied by INTERREG end-users at the programme and project level.

In 2007 the INTERACT Points successfully implemented their work plans by increasingly coordinating their actions. Several activities have been in fact planned by identifying needs common to different geographical areas and to different types of cooperation as differently served by the Points. Three elements have characterized the INTERACT Points delivery structure: 1) the winding down at the end of 2006 of the INTERACT Point located in Sweden redistributed the tasks and the responsibilities for the communications policy to the INTERACT Secretariat and partially to each single INTERACT Point; 2) in anticipation of the application of the new INTERACT II model a geographical approach was followed by the Points which collaborated more closely with programmes located in specific cooperation areas; 3) the INTERACT Point Valencia widened its portfolio of activities and started offering training and information services as the other Points.

During 2007 the INTERACT Points have operated in the whole EU territory serving all INTERREG Programmes. Following the last EU enlargement ad hoc services have been provided to Romania and Bulgaria. Furthermore special attention has been paid to cooperation at the external borders and the implementation of the ENPI programmes at Eastern and Southern borders. The most successful type of activity organised and delivered were public events, such as training seminars, workshops and thematic conferences.

In general the themes addressed have largely covered typical issues related to programme management and implementation. Amongst others, programme financial management, Lead Partner principle, first and second level control, programme winding-up etc... Furthermore in 2007 new issues arose related to the new programming period and as a consequence INTERACT tailored its services to the set up of new structures, new institutional frameworks and the possible use of new legal instruments such as the EGTC.

Overall 4234 participant days⁵ have been delivered (this is a measure of the amount of training and interaction time involved in the services provided – e.g. 40 people attend a 2-day conference, this is 80 participant days) to programme managers.

The INTERACT Points focused on the consolidation of a working community and made up networks of professionals in the field of project and financial management, communications and information, etc. Therefore larger room was devoted to typical working sessions rather than wide information activities.

In 2007 in fact only one major wide conference was organised in Budapest in March. In cooperation with the Hungarian Government and the European Commission the purpose of the conference was to inform about the state of submission and approval of the various programmes as well as sharing different views and opinions on the application of the Structural Funds Regulations. In addition it is also worthwhile mentioning the INTERREG IIIC concluding conference held in Lisbon.

The following sub-chapters give an overview per Priority and Measure of the targeted activities and the related outputs delivered at the end of the year by the INTERACT Points. It highlights relevant factors which influenced their performances and also contains a summary of the principal features of the INTERACT Points based on the Work Plan 2007. It finally gives an overview of the financial progress made.

It is finally appropriate to signal that during 2007 the INTERACT Points have been considerably involved in the process of preparation of the new INTERACT programme for the period up to 2013. The largest part of the Communications Group meetings organised has been therefore devoted to the preparation and set up of the new programme and turned to become Coordinators' Group meetings. The preparatory process was led by the Managing Authority with the support of the INTERACT Secretariat in view of the discussion and the decisions to be taken by the MSC Members⁶.

In 2007 the INTERACT Points increased their financial performance and managed to spend on average up to 89% of their budget⁷. The table below gives this information per INTERACT Point.

Table 3: INTERACT Point Aggregate Budgetary Information 2007

| | Budget available 2007 | Spent from budget 2006 | %(b) from (a) | Unspent budget from the Work Plan 2006 (c) = (a) - (b) | %(c) from (a) |
|---|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------|---|---------------|
| | (a) | (b) | | (c) | |
| Tool Box | 839.193,86 | 630.478,04 | 75% | 208.715,82 | 25% |
| IIIC Coordination | 680.704,21 | 564.825,83 | 83% | 115.878,38 | 17% |
| Qualification and Transfer | 969.852,00 | 904.929,77 | 93% | 64.922,23 | 7% |
| Managing Transition and External Cooperation 2) | 1.185.647,04 | 1.164.978,09 | 98% | 20.668,95 | 2% |
| TOTAL | 3.675.397,11 | 3.265.211,73 | 89% | 410.185,38 | 11% |

⁵ The quantification of the working days (participants days) is intended to measure the results of the INTERACT services in terms of their take up by final beneficiaries.

⁶ The data (figures and description of activities) in the following pages are taken by the 2007 Annual Reports as originally submitted by the INTERACT Points.

⁷ It was 85% in 2006.

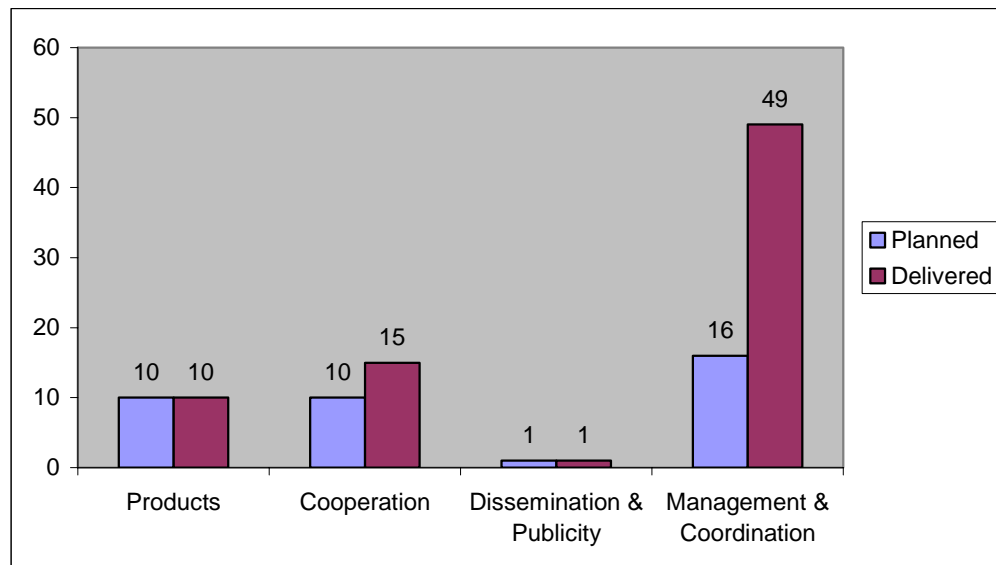
3.3.1 INTERACT Point Valencia – Outputs delivered

It has been a year of transition for the INTERACT Point based in Valencia (Spain). Particular emphasis was given to the differentiation of activities as compared to previous years and to the widening of the portfolio of services. The Point in fact started to carry-out so called “cooperation activities” as the other INTERACT Points. Public events have been organised together with the colleagues of the Secretariat and the Points to smoothly move to self organised events in the second part of the year.

Building on the experience gathered by the Programme actors in the previous years, three main categories of activities have been identified and delivered:

1. Activities handed-over by other INTERACT Points, namely promotion and communication
2. Activities organised and conducted by the Point itself, namely in the South West of Europe
3. Activities organised jointly with other INTERACT Points

The INTERACT Point reported on 2007 activities as follows with the INTERACT Point’s Annual Final Report –



MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2007

INTERACT Studies and Handbooks

- Handbook on Memoranda of Understanding
- Handbook on Cash Flow management and reimbursement of projects
- Some studies conducted and finalised in 2006 have been reprinted and further disseminated (e.g. Handbook on Programme and project closure, Study on Human Resources in INTERREG III programmes, etc...)
- Material sets developed within the programme were used by the Point in training events and partially readapted (e.g. introduction to European Territorial Cooperation).
- INTERREG WEB LIBRARY – ongoing updating of this source of information

Seminars, Workshops and Conferences

- 3 seminars on the “Introduction to the European Territorial Cooperation”

- 2 training seminars on Financial Management
- 2 training seminars on Project Management
- 2 workshops on human resources management in Territorial Cooperation programmes
- Contribution to the INTERACT wide European conference held in Budapest in March 2007

Promotion of Activities

- Leaflets on Tool Box services and material to raise the INTERACT Point visibility amongst the INTERREG community
- Paper copies of Studies posted to relevant stakeholders in the programmes

The INTERACT Point reported on 2007 outputs as follows with the INTERACT Points' Annual Final Report -

| Priority/Measure | Output planned in 2007 | Output achieved in 2007 |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| PRIORITY 1 – Measure 1 | | |
| INTERACT Point Tool Box | | |
| Products | | |
| <i>Handbooks</i> | 2 | 2 |
| <i>Material Sets</i> | 5 | 5 |
| <i>Updating of Web library</i> | 1 | 1 |
| <i>Surveys</i> | 2 | 2 |
| Cooperation | | |
| <i>Training/seminars</i> | 7 | 11 |
| <i>Workshops and Forum</i> | 3 | 3 |
| <i>Conference</i> | 0 | 1 |
| Dissemination & Publicity | | |
| <i>Marketing Tools</i> | 1 | 1 |
| Management & Coordination | | |
| <i>Feedback exercise</i> | 8 | 18 |
| <i>Strategies agreed</i> | 1 | 1 |
| <i>Meetings of other committee</i> | 4 | 4 |
| <i>Calls for Tender</i> | 3 | 26 |

The following factors influenced the INTERACT Point's performance in 2007:

- As in previous year a reduction of staff affected the overall delivery and overloaded employed staff
- The widened portfolio of services to be provided in 2007
- The Point invested time and resources in the preparation of the new INTERACT Programme 2007 - 2013

Financial Performance in 2007

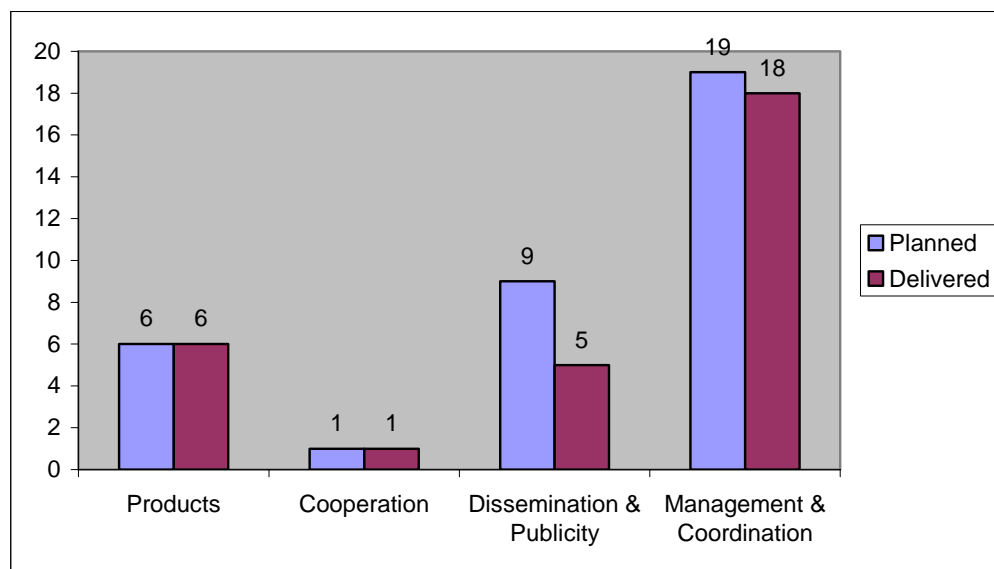
Budget available: EUR 839 193, 86
 Budget spent: EUR 630 478, 04
 Expenditure rate: 75%

3.3.2 INTERACT Point IIIC Coordination – Outputs delivered

The objective of the INTERACT Point IIIC Coordination (IIIC COORD) is to keep the implementation of the INTERREG IIIC programme consistent across the four IIIC zones – North, East, South and West. The INTERREG IIIC North Programme, located in Rostock, acts as Lead Partner of a consortium consisting of four Programmes with management bodies based in Rostock, Vienna, Valencia and Lille respectively.

This 2007 was the last year of implementation of joint activities amongst the programmes as the interregional cooperation has moved to an integrated approach and delivery under the INTERREG IV C programme.

The INTERACT Point reported on 2007 activities as follows with the INTERACT Point's Annual Final Report -



MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2007

Programme Development

- 1 all four zones MSC meeting was organised in September with more than 100 participants

Joint Programme Tools

- Update and review of the IIIC monitoring and reporting documents
- Four zones joint task force meeting on communication issues
- Development of Joint programme administration database
- Coordination of various activities related to financial control and audit, system and sample checks

Information and Communication

- Ongoing update of the joint internet portal
- 4 Newsletters published
- Publication on achievements of the INTERREG IIIC funded operations

- The Interregional Cooperation Forum, Lisbon, 20 and 21 September (900 stakeholders attended)

The INTERACT Point reported on 2007 outputs as follows with the INTERACT Points' Annual Final Report -

| Priority/Measure | Output planned in 2007 | Output achieved in 2007 |
|-----------------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| PRIORITY 1 – Measure 1 | | |
| INTERACT Point III C Coordination | | |
| Products | | |
| | <i>Studies</i> | 1 |
| | <i>Newsletters (paper and e-version)</i> | 4 |
| | <i>Material Sets</i> | 1 |
| Cooperation | | |
| | <i>Workshops and Forum</i> | 1 |
| Dissemination & Publication | | |
| | <i>Marketing Tools</i> | 3 |
| | <i>Media Contacts</i> | 5 |
| | <i>Promotional Initiatives</i> | 1 |
| Management and Coordination | | |
| | <i>Delivery strategies agreed</i> | 1 |
| | <i>Meetings of main committee</i> | 1 |
| | <i>Meetings of other committee</i> | 4 |
| | <i>Systems developed</i> | 1 |
| | <i>Required reports</i> | 3 |
| | <i>Strategies agreed</i> | 9 |

The following factors influenced the INTERACT Point's performance in 2007:

- During 2007, the cooperation between the four partners of the consortium has been smooth and efficient thus ensuring the joint implementation and fulfilment of the contractual duties towards INTERACT.
- One Communications Officer was replaced in the West zone
- Only few delays occurred during the implementing period and these affected primarily the publication of the IIC achievements
- Some time was absorbed by the on the spot check conducted by Ernst & Young in the LP North

Financial Performance

Budget available: EUR 680 704, 21
 Budget spent: EUR 564 825, 83
 Expenditure rate: 83%

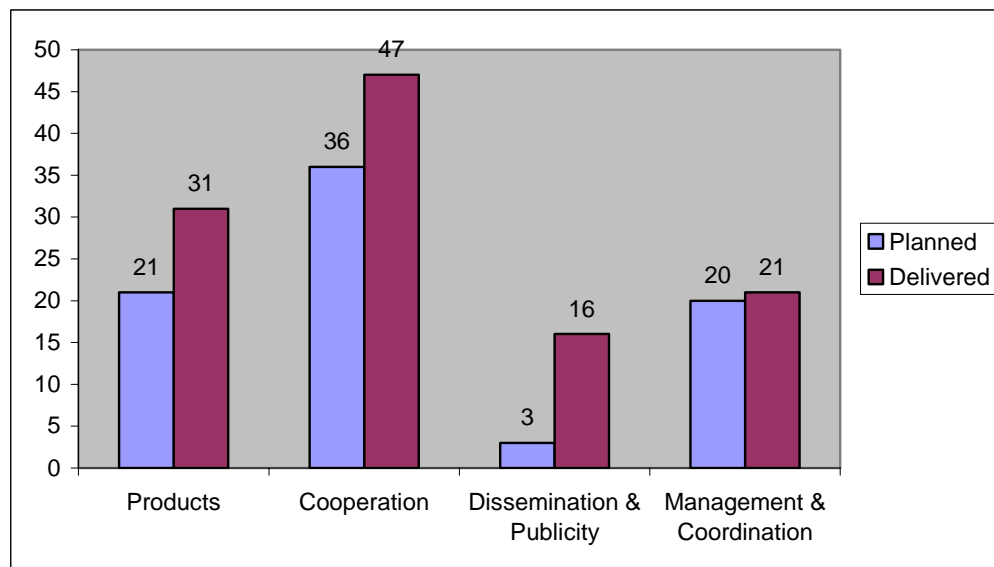
3.3.3 INTERACT Point Viborg – Outputs delivered

The INTERACT Point was particularly successful in 2007 and continued to extend its capacities and profile. It is becoming an increasingly cooperation partner for a wide range of programmes and other organisations.

During the year several events have been organised with a large number of professionals involved. The material produced was not only used on public occasions but also required afterwards by other programme managers in order to train new staff and prepare for the new programming period.

The activity of the Point is demand driven and it best serves those who are willing to make their demands known. The programmes and member States which have actively engaged have also drawn significant benefits and services.

The INTERACT Point reported on 2007 activities as follows with the INTERACT Point's Annual Final Report -



MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2007

Seminars, workshops and conferences

- 13 training seminar on Finance, Project management, Strategic project development, First Level Control)
- 10 workshops (IIIA maritime programmes, IIIB+IIIC project development, IIIB+IIIC communication, Second Level Control, IIIB+IIIC programme managers)
- 17 advisory services in the form of specific presentations, workshops, Q&A sessions etc

INTERACT Studies and Handbooks

- 2 handbooks on “programme systems and procedures” and how to run partner search and project development events”
- 1 compendium on exchange of results between first and second level control
- 1 outline paper on state aid
- 20 material sets related to delivered events

Contacts

- Maintenance and development of established networks: IIIB and IIIC finance staff; IIIB and IIIC communication staff; IIIB and IIIC project development staff and IIIA programme management
- Consolidation of a Second level controller network

Promotion of Activities

- 2 INTERACT Point newsletters
- 16 targeted event announcements (web announcement, targeted e-mails and follow-up reminders)

The INTERACT Point reported on 2007 outputs as follows with the INTERACT Points' Annual Final Report -

| Priority/Measure | Output planned in 2006 | Output achieved in 2006 |
|---|------------------------|-------------------------|
| PRIORITY 1 – Measure 2 INTERACT Point Qualification & Transfer | | |
| Products | | |
| <i>Studies</i> | 3 | 3 |
| <i>Handbooks</i> | 2 | 2 |
| <i>Surveys</i> | 1 | 6 |
| <i>Material Sets</i> | 15 | 20 |
| Cooperation | | |
| <i>Training/seminars</i> | 14 | 14 |
| <i>Workshops and Forum</i> | 9 | 10 |
| <i>Conferences</i> | 1 | 1 |
| <i>Advisory Services</i> | 7 | 17 |
| <i>Networks</i> | 5 | 5 |
| Dissemination and Publication | | |
| <i>Promotional initiatives</i> | 3 | 16 |
| Management and Coordination | | |
| <i>Delivery Strategies agreed</i> | 1 | 1 |
| <i>Meetings of other committee</i> | 13 | 15 |
| <i>Systems developed</i> | 1 | 1 |
| <i>Required reports</i> | 5 | 4 |

The INTERACT Point highlighted the following performance factors related to its activities:

- Growing sense of versatility and authority of INTERACT services and advices and a developing willingness to invite INTERACT into a range of programme development actions.
- The implementation of the activities has been fundamentally problem-free and it was often the amount rather than the nature of the work that occasionally has stretched the available resources.
- Participation has generally met or exceeded targets. Furthermore for the events it was drawn extensively on the expertise of programme staff during in preparation and delivery.
- The Point invested some time also in the preparation of the new INTERACT programme.

Financial Performance

Budget available: EUR 969 852, 00
 Budget spent: EUR 904 929, 77
 Expenditure rate: 93%

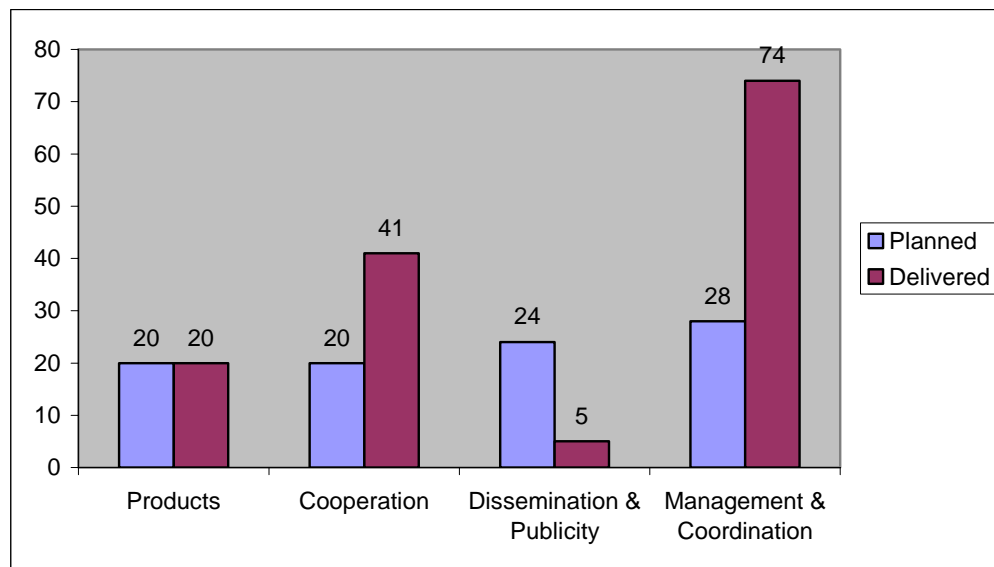
3.3.4 INTERACT Point Vienna – Outputs delivered

The INTERACT Point has a specific geographical and thematic mandate which refers particularly to management and development of INTERREG Programmes in the countries involved in the last two EU enlargements and their cooperation with the old EU 15. The Point devotes also resources towards the programmes dealing with cooperation at the EU North, East and South external borders.

In 2007 the activities have been increasingly coordinated with the other INTERACT Points and the INTERACT Programme Secretariat in view of a higher degree of integration and quality standard in all areas served.

As for the other INTERACT Points resources have also focused on the preparation of the new INTERACT II Programme. Therefore the activity line “Management and Coordination” reports considerable actions taken. This year has marked the phasing out of the legal cooperation with the INTERACT Point branch office in Turku which is expected to become an independent operational Unit under INTERACT II.

The INTERACT Point reported on 2007 activities as follows with the Annual Final Report -



MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2007

Seminars, workshops and conferences

- 17 training and cooperation sessions with almost 800 participants in different locations (e.g. Belgrade, Sofia, Rome, Warsaw, Venice, Tallinn, Dresden, Bratislava, Ljubljana)
- 8 workshops with almost 100 participants in different locations (e.g. La Valletta, Helsinki, Bucharest, Vilnius, Palermo)
- 9 advisory services with 1220 participants
- Contribution to the INTERACT European wide conference in Budapest

INTERACT Studies and Handbooks

- 2 studies on “Process Monitoring of Impacts” and “the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation”

Resources

- Implementation of the e-tool 'Electronic Handbook on Eligibility
- Maintenance of the Online Expert Database
- Elaboration and distribution of material sets supporting the trainings and the public events in general
-

Promotion of Activities

- Publication and distribution of 3 INTERACT point newsletters
- Workshops on the presentation of the latest INTERACT Studies
- Participation in external seminars to promote services

The INTERACT Point reported on 2007 outputs as follows with the INTERACT Points' Annual Final Report -

| Priority/Measure | Output planned in 2006 | Output achieved in 2006 |
|---|------------------------|-------------------------|
| PRIORITY 3 – Measure 1 | | |
| INTERACT Point Managing Transition and External Cooperation | | |
| Products | | |
| <i>Studies</i> | 1 | 2 |
| <i>Web resources</i> | 2 | 2 |
| <i>Newsletters (e-version)</i> | 4 | 3 |
| <i>Material sets</i> | 13 | 13 |
| Cooperation | | |
| <i>Training/seminars</i> | 6 | 17 |
| <i>Workshops and Forum</i> | 8 | 8 |
| <i>Conferences</i> | 1 | 2 |
| <i>Advisory Services</i> | 4 | 9 |
| <i>Networks</i> | 1 | 5 |
| Dissemination and Publication | | |
| <i>Media contacts</i> | 20 | 1 |
| <i>Marketing Tools</i> | 4 | 4 |
| Management and Coordination | | |
| <i>Calls for Tender</i> | 5 | 42 |
| <i>Meetings of other committees</i> | 6 | 10 |
| <i>Feedback exercise</i> | 12 | 15 |
| <i>Required reports</i> | 4 | 4 |
| <i>Systems developed</i> | 3 | 3 |

The following factors influenced the INTERACT Point's performance in 2007:

- the INTERACT Point relied on the support of technical external experts and professionals working in INTERREG programmes
- the internal working processes have been revised and streamlined in order to guarantee higher performances and quality
- As in previous years the staff experienced some turn over

The satisfaction of the stakeholders, measured through the evaluation system and through formal and informal contacts, was very high and met the targets envisaged in the work plan 2007.

Financial performance

Budget available: EUR 1 185 647,04
Budget spent⁸): EUR 1 164 978, 09
Expenditure rate: 98%

3.3.5 Coordinators' Group Meetings in 2007

In 2007 the INTERACT Points, the INTERACT Programme Secretariat and the Managing Authority regularly met in the context of the Coordinators' group meetings. This group derives from the experience of the Communications Group which has operated regularly during the years to discuss communications related issues as well as programme management issues. However in view of the preparation of the INTERACT II Programme for the period 2007 - 2013, the Coordinators of the different offices started to meet regularly and therefore the Group became a natural forum and meeting environment.

Several meetings have been held in different locations (Viborg, Turku, Vienna, Brussels, Valencia) in order to prepare the documents to be submitted for discussion and future approval by the INTERACT Monitoring and Steering Committee.

During the second part of the year the meetings focused also on the preparation of the 2008 Annual Work Plan as it was regularly submitted for approval to the Monitoring and Steering committee in October.

3.3.6 Communications Group Meetings 2006

As described in the Programme Complement, the INTERACT Communications Group serves as a permanent internal task force and think-tank set up by the INTERACT Programme Secretariat as the vehicle for coordination. In 2007, the Communications Group changed its role from one which addressed a wider range of issues within the programme (which was dealt with by the Coordinators Group) and solely addressed Communication Issues. In 2007 the Communications Group met twice.

Both Communications Group meetings dealt with the development of the INTERACT Website and were held in Vienna. The meetings focussed on the usability of the INTERACT Website and steps to be taken for future developments for INTERACT II.

⁸ This amount includes accrued expenditures and open commitments from the budget 2006 for an amount of EUR 15 660.34. This amount will be added to the budget 2007 in order to enable the expenditure.

3.4 INTERACT Projects

This chapter reports at aggregated level on the activities conducted and the services delivered during 2007 by the INTERACT Projects' partners throughout Europe. A detailed description of the projects' main achievements in 2007 and those realised during the whole implementing period is presented in the Annex to this document.

In 2007 fourteen projects have been operating under Priority 2 (INTERREG development/ local and regional initiatives) and four projects under Priority 3 Measure 2 (INTERREG participation at the external borders) of the INTERACT Programme. Three projects operating under Priority 2 had finished in 2006 and had submitted their Final Project Reports: INTERPROCEDURE (June 2006), PACINTERREG (December 2006) and INTER-A (December 2006). Fourteen projects finished in 2007 and most of them submitted their Final Project Reports: IONAS (March 2007), Pro Monte (April 2007), COMPART (April 2007), Re-Act (May 2007), LARA INTERREG Tool Box (June 2007), Intermed (June 2007), Time 2C (June 2007), FIMIP (June 2007), Tran.S.E.A. (July 2007), ALSO (October 2007) EuroTool (November 2007), Ex-Int (December 2007), CULTPLAN (December 2007) and IQ-Train (December 2007).

This part of the Implementation Report is mostly based on the Project Final Reports submitted by the finalised projects⁹. Four projects will conclude in 2008 and have sent the Annual Final Report 2007: Border Crossing (March 2008), Frontiers (May 2008) INTERFORM (May 2008) and SPARC (June 2008). It has to be stressed that one project (INTERMED¹⁰) was underperforming and did not deliver neither the final report 2006 nor the project final report due to internal management problems of the Lead Partner.

In the table below as compared to 2006 table the planned and achieved output indicators have been revised and updated as a consequence of the approval of time extension and also allocation of extra ERDF for some Projects under Priority 2. These figures include the achieved outputs of the 16 concluded projects (excluding INTERMED that didn't submit any report and therefore no indicators are available) and the 4 still ongoing projects.

To implement and improve the operational aspects of the projects the INTERACT Programme Secretariat organized on the 19th and 20th of February 2007 in Vienna a Lead Partner Seminar, which focused on the reporting templates and procedures the INTERACT Projects had to use and follow in the final reporting phase. This presentation session proved very valuable and this has been seen in the enhanced quality of the delivered reports.

The following information presents an overall picture of projects' activities highlighting in quantitative terms the critical mass of INTERACT outputs delivered¹¹. A comparison between planned and achieved output indicators can be found in the tables below.

⁹ Not all projects managed to submit their final report within the expected contractual period.

¹⁰ The Annex to this document does not include the fact sheet of the INTERACT project INTERMED:

¹¹ For information and simplification purposes the outputs delivered have been clustered around the main headings identified by the Programme Enhanced Indicators' Framework.

Table 4: Output indicators per Priority and Measure (Projects)¹²

| Priority/Measure | Output planned for the whole implementing period | Output achieved until December 2007 | |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Priority 2 – (INTERREG development/local and regional initiatives) | | | |
| INTERACT Projects | | | |
| Resources | | | |
| | <i>Handbooks</i> | 19 | 20 |
| | <i>Material Sets</i> | 127 | 107 |
| | <i>Newsletters (paper and e_version)</i> | 24 | 25 |
| | <i>Studies</i> | 24 | 28 |
| | <i>Surveys</i> | 15 | 13 |
| | <i>Web resources</i> | 12 | 11 |
| Cooperation Activities | | | |
| | <i>Advisory services</i> | 2 | 2 |
| | <i>Conferences</i> | 24 | 25 |
| | <i>Exhibitions</i> | 20 | 28 |
| | <i>Networks</i> | 4 | 4 |
| | <i>Study visits</i> | 8 | 8 |
| | <i>Training/seminars</i> | 111 | 46 |
| | <i>Workshops and Forum</i> | 31 | 33 |
| Dissemination and Publicity | | | |
| | <i>Marketing tools</i> | 33 | 46 |
| | <i>Media contact</i> | 39 | 61 |
| | <i>Promotional initiatives</i> | 18 | 25 |
| | <i>Web sites</i> | 13 | 13 |
| Priority 3 – Measure 2 – (INTERREG participation at the external borders) | | | |
| INTERACT Projects | | | |
| Resources | | | |
| | <i>Handbooks</i> | 4 | 15 |
| | <i>Material Sets</i> | 30 | 42 |
| | <i>Newsletters (paper and e_version)</i> | 24 | 21 |
| | <i>Studies</i> | 1 | 4 |
| | <i>Surveys</i> | 13 | 16 |
| | <i>Web resources</i> | 6 | 6 |
| Cooperation Activities | | | |
| | <i>Conferences</i> | 9 | 9 |
| | <i>Exhibitions</i> | 25 | 45 |
| | <i>Networks</i> | 4 | 3 |
| | <i>Study visits</i> | 8 | 9 |
| | <i>Training/seminars</i> | 42 | 41 |
| | <i>Workshops and Forum</i> | 43 | 48 |
| Dissemination and Publicity | | | |
| | <i>Marketing tools</i> | 20 | 20 |
| | <i>Media contact</i> | 29 | 29 |
| | <i>Promotional initiatives</i> | 7 | 7 |
| | <i>Web sites</i> | 3 | 4 |

¹² As reported by the INTERACT Projects in the INTERACT Management System

Management and coordination activities were particularly relevant in the initial phase of projects implementation, considering their strategic importance in the starting of the Project Life Cycle (see INTERACT Programme Annual Implementation Report 2005). In the closure phase of the projects they are still considered of particular importance. Given that the majority of the INTERACT projects has now gained the final stage, some of the most succeeding examples of this management-related category are highlighted here below.

The project ALSO set up different project bodies: the ALSO Secretariat, the ALSO Scientific Committee and the ALSO Working Groups. The ALSO Secretariat elaborated an internal communication procedure and a financial reporting manual for the project partners. All the Working Groups worked together under the coordination of the respective strand partners to draft project ideas, using the ALSO tools (Evaluation Model, Good Practice Manual, Checklist and Software) created by the ALSO Scientific Committee, to verify at a first stage at what extent an INTERREG project contributes to the achievement of the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy. Each Working Group was charged with the responsibilities of operative, administrative and financial reporting towards the ALSO Secretariat, during the whole duration of the activities.

The Iq-Train project Steering Group created cooperative project bodies: the Iq-Train Secretariat, the Iq-Train Learning Organisation, the Network-Partners and the External Process Moderation. The Steering Group, supported by the External Process Moderation, was responsible for the steering of all activities and took decisions for the entire organization. The Iq-Train Secretariat (Landesakademie Lower Austria - LAK) acted as focal point of communication: management of the project website and publication of the results of the learning events. The Iq-Train Secretariat was also the help-desk that offered advice and support to participants and persons responsible of training sessions. The Learning Organization had the role to guide and inform external executive partners and internal participating partners.

Of particular relevance are the Contact Points established by the project LARA INTERREG Tool Box in the Czech Republic, Netherlands, Hungary and Poland with the objective to make them self-sustainable in the upcoming years. These Contact Points are hosted by the project partners and they work as front offices (one staff person) that collect the inquiries or requests and either responds immediately or furthers the demands to the project managers and experts. The main purpose of these LARA Contact Points is to spread information and contact in the target countries addressing the local and regional governments and elaborate new project ideas.

INTERACT Resources are now available to INTERREG practitioners. This particular investment of the INTERACT Projects has generated many outputs in 2005, 2006 and 2007 and has complemented outputs delivered by the INTERACT Points and the INTERACT Programme Secretariat already in 2004. It has therefore strengthened the INTERACT Programme delivery as a whole. Some relevant examples are mentioned below.

More studies (32) were realised than planned (25) representing a unique chance to confront regional and local actors with INTERREG Project implementation related issues and providing possible solutions for sound management and performance.

It is worthwhile mentioning the "Vademecum of Good practices and useful tools for the promotion of the innovation in the SMEs and the management of cooperation projects" published by the project INTER-A, which increases the efficiency and adaptability of the INTERREG programmes and future Territorial cooperation programmes to territorial needs, including the analysis of potential overlapping, inconsistencies and synergies with other SMEs support programmes.

The project INTERPROCEDURE published a final document „Key issues to Europe“, which contains solutions for improving the application and articulation of the regulations on expenditure eligibility in the framework of the INTERREG programmes.

The project FIMIP elaborated a guide in English and in Spanish referring to the best practices in Financial Management on INTERREG projects and including the recommendations that provide solutions and practical tools for solving common financial issues.

The project Time 2C produced two thematic publications on Maritime Cross-Border Cooperation “Guide of Best Practices on Maritime INTERREG Projects” and „Towards a Joint Cooperation Strategy” for creating synergies and transfer of know-how on maritime projects throughout the whole INTERREG programmes and for improving the better governance of INTERREG maritime projects. These studies were used as a Dutch input for the Green Paper on maritime policy.

Furthermore It is worthwhile mentioning the publication of the project IONAS “Towards the Environmental Management Systems in the Adriatic and Ionian area”, related to the international workshop on environmental management methods entitled “Sharing of knowledge about environmental management methods in port areas – Problems concerning dredging and waste management”, that was added as an extra activity.

The project Pro Monte created the Alpine Space Toolbox that presents ideas and recommendations to improve European Territorial Cooperation Programmes considering the specific territorial needs for the sustainable development of the Alpine areas.

The project Re-Act realised two regional information manuals with the title “INTERREG in the Emilia-Romagna Region: the implementation of the Community Initiative on trans-European cooperation in the 2000-2006 period” and “INTERREG in IIIB-IIIC in Lombardy”.

The production of material sets (149) and handbooks (35) is strictly related to training and transfer of know-how in general and in 2007 projects consolidated and improved their experience in knowledge generation. All the useful information materials delivered for discussion at conferences were consequently made available for a wider public on each project website.

The project PACINTERREG published a Handbook on Regional Structure for future stakeholders (based on the recommendations of different INTERREG JTS) to help the creation of strong and steady partnerships which are often the prerequisite basis to lead cooperation projects to a successful end.

The project ALSO set up the ALSO package "ALSO Manual for Projects Assessment: looking for guiding principles", which includes the three main ALSO products (ALSO Evaluation Model, ALSO Good Practice Manual and ALSO Checklist) for evaluating INTERREG projects results and impact and orienting the new generation of European Territorial Cooperation projects towards the objectives of the Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategy¹³.

Important to mention is the model for training seminars addressed to project managers elaborated by the Project Re-Act based on the “Regional Practitioner Guidelines for Good Project Management in the Territorial Cooperation Objectives”, a tool kit that arms future project managers with a series of useful tips and guidelines for more efficient projects¹⁴.

¹³ The ALSO Evaluation Model indicates one successful project and three pilot projects of the three INTERREG Strands (project already finished at the time of the analysis) for each Lisbon and Gothenburg objective selected.

¹⁴ This model for training seminars takes in consideration also the Re-Act Concept Paper “Recommendations drawn from an analysis of INTERREG Programmes”, which has attempted to chart a roadmap of selected ways in which the planning and management of the next round of “European Territorial Cooperation” Programmes can be improved

Even in this category the projects under Priority 3 Measure 2 produced more material sets (42) than planned (30). This is the case of the Project Iq-Train developed two tools: a 'FLC-glossary' and a 'FLC-dictionary'.

It is worthwhile to mention the English/Greek glossary on European Territorial Cooperation, realised by the project PACINTERREG, collecting the most common terminology on that topic.

For the project Tran S.E.A. the finalisation of the "SEA Guidelines" referring to the European Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, represents the most important project output. It will be available in hard copies, in CD-Rom and for download on the project website. Worthwhile was also the creation of a web-based helpdesk service, aimed to support INTERREG actors in the elaboration of qualitative good Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA). In particular the service, via email or through the project website, is available for giving a first evaluation on the SEA applications proposed by INTERREG programme and projects. This helpdesk will last also after the project conclusion, through an automatic reply service, that will be managed by the LP with internal resources and external expertise.

The newsletters (46) represent the main tool when addressing a wider and often not specialised public. Those delivered by the INTERACT Projects contribute to a great extent to the involvement of new actors in INTERREG namely at regional and local level.

The Lead Partner of the project INTERFORM disseminated bilingual (English and French) newsletters 'Lettre Espaces transfrontaliers' - 'Letter cross-border territories' that give information about the INTERACT programme and the INTERFORM project.

The project COMPART published 3 newsletters with the following topics: general issues about European Territorial Cooperation (January 2006); the reform process of EU's external aid: cross-border cooperation under ENPI and IPA, and the role of Local Authorities in the new thematic programmes (April 2006); From territorial cooperation to Euro-regions (June 2006).

The online interactive dimension of the products is represented by the Web resources (17) which are individual added-value web features made available on a website (e.g. eForum, FAQ section, searchable database of Projects, good practices or thematic experts). These products are proved to be the more accessible ones and considered of great impact from INTERACT Projects' clientele.

The database of the project PACINTERREG is based on searchable maps of INTERREG projects and it allows to research the projects by themes and by zone (thematically and territorially), comparing the divergences and convergences between programmes and projects and facilitating the generation of new partnerships. Also the goal of the database created by the project Eurotool was to facilitate the search for new project partners in all European regions for the programming period 2007-2013. The database specifies the entities-authorities responsible for the area of cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation at European, national and regional level, including non-EU Member States and external borders.

The project Tran S.E.A. created an Expertise System based on interactive FAQ, aimed to support INTERREG actors identifying best practices and benchmarking analysis, through the promotion of new approaches, experiences and know-how on the application of SEA.

INTERREG Programme and Project managers become users of the **INTERACT cooperation activities** and develop their own capacities and those of their organisations. This process is supposed to ultimately lead them to change or refine practices in order to enhance the quality of INTERREG Programmes and Projects.

The pedagogic dimension of the INTERACT Programme is typically represented by both training seminars (87) and workshops of discussion (81). Such activities have been organised in

2007 in many countries and addressed various beneficiaries coming mainly from regional and local administrations but also from the non-profit sector (NGOs, Association of entrepreneurs, Universities and research Institutes).

The project Time 2C organised 3 master classes concerning different topics: "Maritime Economy", "Maritime Transport and Infrastructure", "Coastal Development, Water management and Environment" for representatives of regional and local authorities, including a promotional campaign.

The project PACINTERREG organised the Summer University, consisting in a Master Class for "Facilitating the meetings between political decision maker", for implementing the contacts and the exchanges of information and know-how between national and local authorities.

5 transnational seminars were organised by the project Pro Monte, where different mountain issues were discussed: the territorial cooperation into the Carpathian mountains (in Slovakia); the efficiency of the Interreg programmes A and B in the Alps (in Italy); the common problems in Mediterranean mountains (in Spain); the cooperation between the mountain areas of Mediterranean islands (in Greece); the sustainable development of mountain regions (in Bulgaria).

The project LARA Tool Box held trainer courses and end-user courses addressed to the target countries. 9 trainers were trained in Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic and these trainers trained over 60 municipal officers while in the Netherlands over 30 officers were trained.

The project CULTPLAN realised 2 local workshops (in Italy and Greece) addressed to local stakeholders involved in European projects for contributing to the promotion of the cultural perspective on a local project level.

The INTERACT Projects have organised 34 international, national and regional conferences where actual themes of cooperation were discussed. These addressed, amongst others, themes like Good Governance of Programmes in cross border cooperation, generation of project ideas in maritime cooperation areas and in the mountain areas, cross strand fertilisation of management techniques, Lisbon and Gothenburg priorities as currently targeted by INTERREG Projects, etc...

All the finalized projects organized final conferences for presenting the achieved results and new project ideas to be developed in the coming Territorial Cooperation programming phase.

It is also worthwhile to mention the unplanned dissemination conference (called Project Factory) organised by the project INTER-A within the XV EBN (European Business and Innovation Centres Network) Annual Congress, during which a workshop and a stand were organised for presenting the main project results and methodologies. The Innovation Tool Database created by the project is still included on the EBN website.

The project Iq-Train organized 2 Open Space Conferences (OSC) based on the hypothesis that if the participants by themselves design the event, the issues treated will be of high importance and the results will be of higher quality. The individual needs were related to thematic topics, which have been sorted on the level of importance and impact on INTERREG programmes and projects.

One of the project partners of CULTPLAN organized an international symposium including international experts dealing with planning culture and reflecting previous project achievements on that topic. Objectives are to deepen the understanding of theoretical basics, exchange experience and knowledge with international experts, networking with European partners and to communicate project results.

The project Euro Tool organised a final forum for connecting people coming from all over Europe interested in European Territorial Cooperation programmes, responding to the main project goal that is to facilitate the search for partners in other European regions, particularly those that are geographically remote.

To increase the professionalism of the organisations and individuals involved in cross-border cooperation the project INTERFORM organised methodological seminars about the coordination of public policies in cross-border areas and 3 Cross-Border Discussions were realised under the title "Culture and citizenship in cross-border cooperation".

The INTERACT Projects contributed to disseminate INTERREG and INTERACT results by participating in exhibitions (73). These are intended as events organised (e.g. fairs, conferences, directoria) mainly by Programme management authorities where an INTERACT Project stand was set up or a presentation given. The INTERACT projects participated to more promotional activities than foreseen.

The LP of the project EX-INT realised 5 study tours round in Europe (Berlin, Chmenitz, Marseille, Cyprus, Prague) for the dissemination activities and know how exchanges for future cooperation. These tours were preceded by a benchmarking report in order to schedule and organise the destinations.

Alongside the training course the project LARA Toolbox made available an advisory service to assist local authorities in preparing project applications for the new programming period. Between the different training courses experts visit the participants and work with them on the development of project proposal.

The INTERACT Programme relies very much on the generation of information on INTERREG and the dissemination of results achieved in the different Strands of cooperation. This is why **Dissemination and Communication** activities play a crucial role also at INTERACT Project level where Leaders and Project Partners have allocated relevant resources. These activities were particularly important and considerably improved in 2007 because the Projects, already in their mature phase, contributed to promote the INTERACT brand at regional and local level raising awareness and expectations.

By December 2007 20 INTERACT Projects launched their Web sites. Many projects constantly developed their web pages, adding interactive sections. They represent useful platforms where project outputs can be published and are free available, becoming more and more significant sources of information about INTERREG Programmes in different Members States. They host and promote material in 12 different languages and serve clients in their own native and most of the times working languages.

The ALSO website for example has been enriched with new areas like ALSO Library (containing the most important documents on Lisbon Agendas) ALSO people (a blog discussing the main topics of Lisbon issues).

The Media contacts (90) include all efforts made to gain media coverage for an initiative. These efforts have generated articles in newspapers and specialized technical reviews, radio and TV interviews, dissemination of press releases, etc.

During 2007 the promotion of INTERACT passed also through the launch of 32 promotional campaigns and the preparation of 66 sets of marketing tools which are an investment in a visual identity, or marketing materials such as posters, brochures, flyers, panels, etc...

It is worthwhile mentioning the common transnational TV spot produced by PACINTERREG for enhancing the cooperation in the Mediterranean area.

The project ALSO realised the ALSO Photo competition, the ALSO Photo exhibition and Photo Exhibition Catalogue, that represent a reportage on the project activities.

The above listed examples intend to give an overview of INTERACT projects type of activities and are not meant to be exhaustive. However they signal overall a satisfactory performance when cross checking activity reports with financial reports. The project in fact passed from a annual level of financial absorption of 55% (2005) and 65 % (2006) to an average of 85% in 2007 and significantly contributed to the N+2 positive result of the Programme.

3.5 The INTERACT Communications Strategy

The INTERACT Communications Strategy focuses on internal and external components:

- Internal: to facilitate effective management-related communication between the structures which together manage and steer the programme (the Secretariat, MA and MSC) and the structures which ultimately deliver development services to final beneficiaries (the Secretariat and the INTERACT Points).
- External: to reach the wider INTERREG community – the end users of the programme’s services, a group encompassing both INTERREG programme managers and project participants.

3.5.1 INTERACT Website

Regarding the INTERACT Website, milestones in 2007 included:

- Update of the INTERACT Programme sections, including changes to the team pages and updates to the INTERACT Point and Project pages.
- Update of the FAQ Section “About this site”
- Launch of the Programme Closure section in INTERREG Information.
- Updates to the “Clickable Maps” of each INTERREG programme
- Update of the “2007-2013” section, including a new section “additional information” containing documentation from the Budapest Conference.
- Question & Answer session with DG Regional Policy on the INTERACT Forum
- Launch of the INTERACT E-tool on eligibility (cooperation between INTERACT Point Managing Transition (Turku partner) and INTERACT Programme Secretariat)

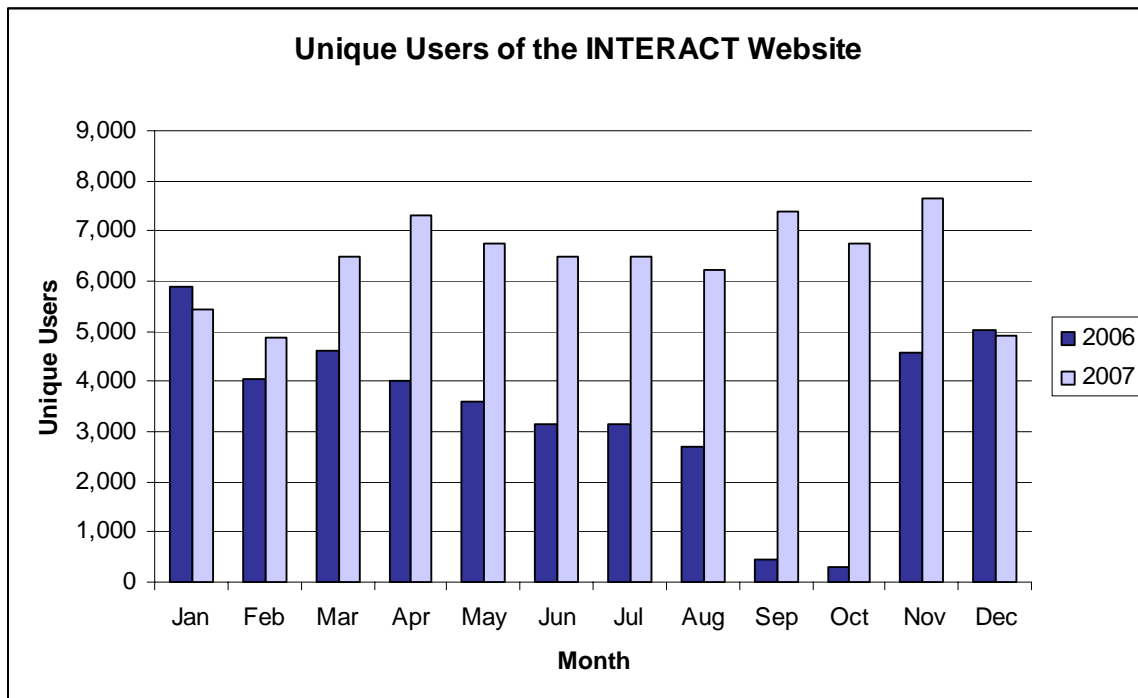
3.5.2 Web Statistics

A brief summary of a detailed analysis of the INTERACT Website statistics gives the following results:

57 901 **unique visitors** came to the site in 2007, as determined by typical behaviour of browsers with a non-rotating IP address and including a projection of the true number of visitors with rotating IP addresses. This is compared to 32 289 **in 2006**. A typical visitor examined 10.89 distinct files before leaving the site. A typical visit lasted for 6.07 minutes. Visitors came from 220,671 **distinct internet addresses**. The web server delivered 9,625 unique documents one or more times each as compared to 4 663 in 2006. The INTERACT Website is now linked to by one or more pages found on 3,889 distinct websites.

The following graph shows the number of unique visitors¹⁵ in 2007 compared to 2006

Figure 1: INTERACT Website – Unique Visitors in 2007



3.5.3 Livelink to Confluence

Livelink is a permission-based intranet for different actors ranging from the INTERACT Monitoring and Steering Committee to external experts.

Confluence has replaced LiveLink in December 2008. This new wiki tool will function as the artery of the day-to-day internal flow of information within INTERACT. With the ability to share, discuss and collaborate online it is more user friendly and allows for greater customisation.

¹⁵ A "visit" consists of one or more accesses made by the same visitor, with no more than a certain time interval between accesses. A "unique visitor" is a single, distinct person, visiting the site one or more times.

Confluence also has meant significant budgetary savings for the INTERACT Programme (450 000 .EUR over the course of the next 7 years). A shared calendar is stored in the system as a coordination tool.

All documentation from INTERACT I stored on Livelink has been sorted, archived and moved to Confluence, where applicable. The INTERACT Programme Secretariat uses Confluence in its daily work to share documents with the Managing Authority, the INTERACT Points, INTERACT Projects and as well as the Monitoring and Steering Committee.

3.6 Publicity

The presence of INTERACT in online and paper publications has been satisfying throughout 2007. A selection of documented press-clippings:

- The December 2007 issue of Panorama Magazine included an article on INTERACT.
- Wikipedia now has an entry for INTERACT and European Territorial Cooperation.
- INFOREGIO Site included several news on INTERACT in 2006 in the section “INTERREG III: what’s new” (such as the publication of the “Ask the Experts: Q&A session with the European Commission on the INTERACT Forum”)

3.6.1 Contact database, Event Registration Tool and Expert Database

The INTERACT Contact Database (IP Information and Animation until September 2006 and then INTERACT Programme Secretariat) and the Expert Database (IP Managing Transition) are searchable databases with contact information on those involved in European regional cooperation.

Thanks to the integration of an online Event Registration Tool by the INTERACT Programme Secretariat the number of data subjects increased immediately to approx 7 000 (from 3 500 in 2006).

The Contact database and Event Registration Tool were both refined in 2007 and are now used by each INTERACT Point and the INTERACT Secretariat for all events.

3.6.2 Disseminators

The INTERACT Programme Secretariat also has a list of disseminators which are contacted to disseminate the INTERACT Programme Secretariat or Programme's activities when needed. The database consists of approx. 50 information disseminators such as Welcomeurope, Infobase Europe and EU Praxis as well as networks and associations such as Association of European Border Regions, Innovating Regions in Europe and European Spatial Planning Research and Information Database. These contacts are not included in the contact database and are used for dissemination of press releases only.

4. Programme financial implementation

This chapter gives an overview of the financial aspects of the INTERACT Programme. Information is provided about allocations and commitments as decided by the INTERACT MSC, payments made by the INTERACT Paying Authority and payments received from the European Commission.

Section 4.1 provides an overview of the programme's financial allocations and commitments as well as the progress made at Priority and Measure level.

Section 4.2 gives a detailed overview of all claims of the Paying Authority and Payments made by the EC since the beginning of the Programme until the end of 2007. Section 4.3 gives an overview of the eligible expenditure certified and reimbursed by the Paying Authority in 2007 per Priority and Measure as well as the level of cumulative expenditure since the beginning of the programme implementation.

Finally section 4.4 gives information about the N+2 situation at the end of 2007 and the positive performance of the INTERACT Programme with regards to the risk of decommitment.

4.1 Financial progress

Table 5 shows the programme financial allocations (per Priority and Measure) as applied in 2007 following the revision approved by the INTERACT MSC in November 2006 and formally accepted by the EC in February 2007.

Table 5: Financial allocation according to the revised INTERACT Programme complement

| Source | Total Costs | Public Expenditure | | | Private | Priority share of total | Priority share of ERDF |
|---|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| | | Total Eligible Expenditure | ERDF | National | | | |
| Priority 1: INTERREG Management Support | 15 139 555 | 15 139 555 | 13 625 599 | 1 513 956 | 0 | 38.29% | 48.40% |
| <i>Priority 1 Measure 1 - Information and Animation</i> | 11 370 468 | 11 370 468 | 10 233 421 | 1 137 047 | 0 | 28.76% | 36.35% |
| <i>Priority 1 Measure 2 - Qualification and Transfer</i> | 3 769 087 | 3 769 087 | 3 392 178 | 376 909 | 0 | 9.53% | 12.05% |
| Priority 2: INTERREG Development | 14 076 036 | 14 076 036 | 7 038 018 | 7 038 018 | 0 | 35.60% | 25.00% |
| Priority 3: Managing Transition and External Cooperation | 8 257 940 | 8 257 940 | 5 630 413 | 2 627 527 | 0 | 20.89% | 20.00% |
| <i>Priority 3 Measure 3.1 - Joint Cooperation Tools</i> | 3 753 610 | 3 753 610 | 3 378 248 | 375 362 | 0 | 9.49% | 12.00% |
| <i>Priority 3 Measure 3.2 - Development of INTERREG Participation</i> | 4 504 330 | 4 504 330 | 2 252 165 | 2 252 165 | 0 | 11.39% | 8.00% |
| Priority 4: Technical Assistance | 2 064 485 | 2 064 485 | 1 858 036 | 206 449 | 0 | 5.22% | 6.60% |
| <i>Priority 4 Measure 1 - Technical Assistance 1</i> | 1 352 024 | 1 352 024 | 1 216 820 | 135 204 | 0 | 3.42% | 4.32% |
| <i>Priority 4 Measure 2 - Technical Assistance 2</i> | 712 461 | 712 461 | 641 216 | 71 245 | 0 | 1.80% | 2.28% |
| TOTAL INTERACT | 39 538 016 | 39 538 016 | 28 152 066 | 11 385 950 | 0 | 100.00% | 100.00% |

A shift of an amount of EUR 117 500 total costs (EUR 105 750 ERDF) from Priority 1 Measure 2 to Priority 1 measure 1 was agreed with MSC10-decision 1 on 9 November 2006 (confirmed by the EC on 05.02.2007)

The total allocations and related ERDF shares are also shown in table 6 (columns B and C). This information is completed by the indication of the funds committed with MSC decisions (columns D and E) and ultimately paid out by the Paying Authority by the end of 2007 (columns G and H) as well as the relationships between these items in percentages.

Most of the allocated funds of the Programme are committed. Columns D and E (commitments) show, for INTERACT Programme Secretariat and TA as well as the INTERACT Points and Projects the use of the amounts until end 2007. A higher level of commitment of funds was reached by the programme on the occasion of the INTERACT MSC meeting held in Vienna in March 2008.

Table 6: INTERACT Programme – funds allocated, committed and paid by 31 December 2007

| Situation as of 31 December 2007 | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Priority/Measure | Total Funds allocated | ERDF allocated | Funds committed | ERDF committed | % committed of allocated funds | Total Funds paid out | ERDF paid | % total paid of allocated Funds | % total paid of committed Funds |
| A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J |
| Measure 1.1 | 11.370.468 | 10.233.421 | 10.898.458 | 9.808.612 | 96% | 8.836.685 | 7.953.017 | 78% | 81% |
| Measure 1.2 | 3.769.087 | 3.392.178 | 3.270.121 | 2.943.109 | 87% | 2.978.475 | 2.680.628 | 79% | 91% |
| Total Priority 1 | 15.139.555 | 13.625.599 | 14.168.578 | 12.751.720 | 94% | 11.815.160 | 10.633.644 | 78% | 83% |
| Total Priority 2 | 14.076.036 | 7.038.018 | 13.844.314 | 6.901.707 | 98% | 6.753.497 | 3.376.749 | 48% | 49% |
| Measure 3.1 | 3.753.610 | 3.378.248 | 3.753.610 | 3.378.248 | 100% | 3.491.323 | 3.142.191 | 93% | 93% |
| Measure 3.2 | 4.504.330 | 2.252.165 | 3.959.164 | 1.979.021 | 88% | 1.371.165 | 685.583 | 30% | 35% |
| Total Priority 3 | 8.257.940 | 5.630.413 | 7.712.775 | 5.357.270 | 93% | 4.862.488 | 3.827.773 | 59% | 63% |
| Measure 4.1 | 1.352.024 | 1.216.820 | 1.337.457 | 1.203.711 | 99% | 1.022.017 | 919.815 | 76% | 76% |
| Measure 4.2 | 712.461 | 641.216 | 691.599 | 622.439 | 97% | 496.616 | 446.954 | 70% | 72% |
| Total Priority 4 | 2.064.485 | 1.858.036 | 2.029.055 | 1.826.150 | 98% | 1.518.633 | 1.366.770 | 74% | 75% |
| TOTAL PROGRAMME | 39.538.016 | 28.152.066 | 37.754.721 | 26.836.847 | 95% | 24.949.778 | 19.204.935 | 63% | 66% |

The commitments approved by the INTERACT MSC during the years (column D of the table above) are presented in the following table with the details of the spending bodies as funded by each Priority and Measure.

Table 7: Commitments at Priority and Measure Level

| Commitments | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | Total |
|----------------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Priority 1 | 403 137 | 1 955 793 | 3 676 247 | 3 980 832 | 4 094 292 | 58 275 | 14 168 578 |
| Measure 1.1 | 403 137 | 1 700 242 | 2 671 215 | 2 941 147 | 3 124 440 | 58 275 | 10 898 458 |
| IP IA | 38 848 | 450 501 | 478 040 | 581 452 | 0 | 0 | 1 548 841 |
| IP TB | 41 615 | 291 575 | 644 512 | 715 630 | 775 106 | 0 | 2 468 438 |
| IP IIIC COORD | 0 | 367 455 | 785 155 | 802 008 | 645 000 | 0 | 2 599 619 |
| IP MT | | | | | 519 515 | 0 | 519 515 |
| INTERACT Secretariat | 322 674 | 590 710 | 763 508 | 842 057 | 1 184 819 | 58 275 | 3 762 043 |
| Measure 1.2 | 0 | 255 551 | 1 005 032 | 1 039 686 | 969 852 | 0 | 3 270 121 |
| IP QT | 0 | 255 551 | 1 005 032 | 1 039 686 | 969 852 | 0 | 3 270 121 |
| Priority 2 | 6 665 | 554 409 | 4 517 991 | 6 167 492 | 2 468 596 | 129 160 | 13 844 314 |
| Priority 3 | 35 794 | 921 965 | 2 156 880 | 2 622 673 | 1 855 434 | 120 030 | 7 712 775 |
| Measure 3.1 | 24 994 | 713 372 | 1 227 715 | 1 111 626 | 665 620 | 10 285 | 3 753 610 |
| IP MT | 24 994 | 689 100 | 1 169 708 | 1 096 199 | 650 193 | 0 | 3 630 193 |
| INTERACT Secretariat | 0 | 24 272 | 58 007 | 15 427 | 15 427 | 10 285 | 123 418 |
| Measure 3.2 | 10 800 | 208 592 | 929 165 | 1 511 046 | 1 189 815 | 109 745 | 3 959 164 |
| Priority 4 | 214 099 | 483 619 | 416 197 | 425 171 | 321 265 | 168 704 | 2 029 055 |
| Measure 4.1 | 154 967 | 281 028 | 250 000 | 310 319 | 202 439 | 138 704 | 1 337 457 |
| Measure 4.2 | 59 132 | 202 591 | 166 197 | 114 853 | 118 826 | 30 000 | 691 599 |
| Total | 659 695 | 3 915 785 | 10 767 315 | 13 196 169 | 8 739 587 | 476 169 | 37 754 721 |

4.2 Payments Received

The table underneath shows all financial flows between the Commission and the Paying Authority in relation to the INTERACT Programme, approved 16 December 2002, Commission Reference CCI 2002 RG 16 0 PC 002.

Because of the higher expenditures per year more claims were sent to the EC. The average amount of a claim rose and stabilised at about 1.5 MEURO with a significant positive exception of the last claim submitted in December 2007.

Table 8: Reimbursements by the European Commission

| Claim and payment application title | Amount claim EUR | Claim updated | Pament received EUR |
|--|---------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| 7 % Advance Payment | | 13 March 2003 | 1.055.600,00 |
| 7 % Advance Payment | | 28 October 2003 | 694.400,00 |
| Certification of expenditure and application for payment 04/2004 | 313.724,87 | 18 June 2004 | 313.583,27 |
| Certification of expenditure and application for payment 10/2004 | 352.292,73 | 29 November 2004 | 351.989,22 |
| Certification of expenditure and application for payment 01/2005 | 983.107,28 | 09 March 2005 | 982.520,11 |
| Certification of expenditure and application for payment 05/2005 | 1.087.902,90 | 23 June 2005 | 1.086.881,34 |
| Certification of expenditure and application for payment 09/2005 | 1.261.717,79 | 21 October 2005 | 1.260.348,54 |
| Certification of expenditure and application for payment 12/2005 | 1.112.670,25 | 13 January 2006 | 1.112.670,01 |
| Certification of expenditure and application for payment 01/2006 | 1.061.994,61 | 20 February 2006 | 1.061.994,20 |
| Certification of expenditure and application for payment 05/2006 | 1.312.725,26 | 15 June 2006 | 1.312.724,83 |
| Certification of expenditure and application for payment 07/2006 | 1.418.016,69 | 01 September 2006 | 1.418.016,11 |
| Certification of expenditure and application for payment 10/2006 | 1.533.257,17 | 08 November 2006 | 1.533.256,56 |
| Certification of expenditure and application for payment 12/2006 | 1.430.538,32 | 06 February 2007 | 1.430.537,52 |
| Certification of expenditure and application for payment 04/2007 | 1.429.618,76 | 29 May 2007 | 1.429.617,94 |
| Certification of expenditure and application for payment 07/2007 | 1.450.299,99 | 16 August 2007 | 1.450.299,14 |
| Certification of expenditure and application for payment 09/2007 | 1.474.730,11 | 30 October 2007 | 1.474.729,15 |
| Certification of expenditure and application for payment 12/2007 | 2.979.899,98 | 29 January 2008 | 2.979.899,77 |
| | | | 20.949.067,71 |

4.3 Payments Processed per Priority and Measure

The level of payment claims has substantially increased in 2007. The claims are processed by the INTERACT Programme Secretariat and forwarded to the Managing Authority and Paying Authority for further evaluation. The processing of reports and payment claims from INTERACT Points and Projects is undertaken by the INTERACT Programme Secretariat, which checks the relevant information and suggests actions to be taken by the Managing Authority and the Paying Authority. The Managing Authority also handles the payment claims from the legal employer and service provider for the INTERACT Programme Secretariat (ÖIR the Austrian Institute for Regional Studies and Spatial Planning), following a procedure in which indicated cost items are subject to approval in advance.

The tables in the following two pages show the amounts actually paid out by the paying Authority per Priority and Measure in 2007 and the total cumulative since the beginning of the programme implementation.

At the beginning of the year the Annual Report 2006 and payment claims of the INTERACT Points and Projects were processed. At the end of the year, the Mid Term Reports 2007 of the INTERACT Points were processed and most Points and Projects also claimed ERDF with Additional Payment Requests. For monitoring and processing purposes, the INTERACT Programme Secretariat relied on management system which was developed in 2006.

Table 9: Payments per Priority and Measure in 2007

| Column | 1 | 2 | 3=2/1 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|--|-------------------|--|--------------------|-------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Priorities /Measures | Total allocations | Total Eligible Actually Paid and Certified Expenditure | % of Eligible Cost | Other | Field of Intervention | Field of Intervention (in %) |
| Priority 1: INTERREG Management Support | 15.139.555 | 4.339.202 | 28,66 | | | |
| Measure 1.1: Information and Animation | 11.370.468 | 3.231.290 | 28,42 | | 411 | 45,31 |
| | | | | | 412 | 0,00 |
| | | | | | 413 | 11,75 |
| | | | | | 414 | 85,03 |
| | | | | | 415 | 0,00 |
| Measure 1.2: Qualification and Transfer | 3.769.087 | 1.107.912 | 29,39 | | 411 | 0,00 |
| | | | | | 412 | 0,00 |
| | | | | | 413 | 0,00 |
| | | | | | 414 | 146,97 |
| | | | | | 415 | 0,00 |
| SP 2: INTERREG Development | 14.076.036 | 4.193.067 | 29,79 | | | |
| Measure 2.1: INTERREG Development | 14.076.036 | 4.193.067 | 29,79 | | 411 | 0,00 |
| | | | | | 412 | 0,00 |
| | | | | | 413 | 122,57 |
| | | | | | 414 | 26,38 |
| | | | | | 415 | 0,00 |
| SP 3: Border Regions | 8 257 940 | 1.522.367 | 18,44 | | | |
| Measure 3.1: Joint Co-operation Tools | 3.753.610 | 827.056 | 22,03 | | 411 | 4,25 |
| | | | | | 412 | 0,00 |
| | | | | | 413 | 0,00 |
| | | | | | 414 | 105,92 |
| | | | | | 415 | 0,00 |
| Measure 3.2: Development of INTERREG | 4.504.330 | 695.310 | 15,44 | | 411 | 0,00 |
| | | | | | 412 | 0,00 |
| | | | | | 413 | 37,03 |
| | | | | | 414 | 40,15 |
| | | | | | 415 | 0,00 |
| Priority 4: Technical Assistance | 2.064.485 | 272.347 | 13,19 | | | |
| Measure 4.1: Technical Assistance 1 | 1.352.024 | 223.135 | 16,5 | | 411 | 85,52 |
| | | | | | 412 | 0,00 |
| | | | | | 413 | 0,00 |
| | | | | | 414 | 0,00 |
| | | | | | 415 | 0,00 |
| Measure 4.2: Technical Assistance 2 | 712.461 | 49.212 | 6,91 | | 411 | 34,54 |
| | | | | | 412 | 0,00 |
| | | | | | 413 | 0,00 |
| | | | | | 414 | 0,00 |
| | | | | | 415 | 0,00 |
| Total INTERACT | 39.538.016 | 10.326.983 | 26,12 | | | |

Table 10: Cumulative Payments since beginning of Programme implementation

| Column | 1 | 2 | 3=2/1 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|--|-------------------|--|--------------------|-------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Priorities /Measures | Total allocations | Total Eligible Actually Paid and Certified Expenditure | % of Eligible Cost | Other | Field of Intervention | Field of Intervention (in %) |
| Priority 1: INTERREG Management Support | 15.139.555 | 11.815.160 | 78,04 | | | |
| Measure 1.1: Information and Animation | 11.370.468 | 8.836.685 | 77,72 | | | |
| | | | | | 411 | 133,98 |
| | | | | | 412 | 0,00 |
| | | | | | 413 | 11,75 |
| | | | | | 414 | 242,84 |
| 415 | 0,00 | | | | | |
| Measure 1.2: Qualification and Transfer | 3.769.087 | 2.978.475 | 79,02 | | | |
| | | | | | 411 | 0,00 |
| | | | | | 412 | 0,00 |
| | | | | | 413 | 0,00 |
| | | | | | 414 | 395,12 |
| 415 | 0,00 | | | | | |
| SP 2: INTERREG Development | 14.076.036 | 6.753.497 | 47,98 | | | |
| Measure 2.1: INTERREG Development | 14.076.036 | 6.753.497 | 47,98 | | | |
| | | | | | 411 | 0,00 |
| | | | | | 412 | 0,00 |
| | | | | | 413 | 195,06 |
| | | | | | 414 | 44,83 |
| 415 | 0,00 | | | | | |
| SP 3: Border Regions | 8 257 940 | 4.862.488 | 58,88 | | | |
| Measure 3.1: Joint Co-operation Tools | 3.753.610 | 3.491.323 | 93,01 | | | |
| | | | | | 411 | 16,44 |
| | | | | | 412 | 0,00 |
| | | | | | 413 | 0,00 |
| | | | | | 414 | 448,62 |
| 415 | 0,00 | | | | | |
| Measure 3.2: Development of INTERREG | 4.504.330 | 1.371.165 | 30,44 | | | |
| | | | | | 411 | 0,00 |
| | | | | | 412 | 0,00 |
| | | | | | 413 | 45,66 |
| | | | | | 414 | 106,55 |
| 415 | 0,00 | | | | | |
| Priority 4: Technical Assistance | 2.064.485 | 1.518.633 | 73,56 | | | |
| Measure 4.1: Technical Assistance 1 | 1.352.024 | 1.022.017 | 75,59 | | | |
| | | | | | 411 | 377,96 |
| | | | | | 412 | 0,00 |
| | | | | | 413 | 0,00 |
| | | | | | 414 | 0,00 |
| 415 | 0,00 | | | | | |
| Measure 4.2: Technical Assistance 2 | 712.461 | 496.616 | 69,7 | | | |
| | | | | | 411 | 328,45 |
| | | | | | 412 | 20,07 |
| | | | | | 413 | 0,00 |
| | | | | | 414 | 0,00 |
| 415 | 0,00 | | | | | |
| Total INTERACT | 39.538.016 | 24.949.778 | 63,1 | | | |

4.4 Automatic Decommitment (N+2 Rule)

The ERDF allocation (commitment) to the INTERACT Programme for 2005, which has set the N+2 target for expenditure during 2007 (=N+2) was MEUR 7.429. The N+2 target is cumulative as it also includes the ERDF allocations to 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005. The cumulative ERDF allocation which had to be spent before the end of 2007 to avoid a decommitment was EUR 20 666 804. This target has been reached and the surplus of EUR 282 263 contributed to reach the 2007 target. This success was also due to an appropriate system of reports and claim processing set up by the Managing Authority and the Paying Authority in strict coordination with the INTERACT Secretariat.

Table 11: Progress of ERDF expenditure against the N+2 target

| Year | ERDF co-financing rate | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | Total |
|--|------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-------------------|------------|------------|
| ERDF allocation | mixed | 1.055.600 | 4.141.600 | 8.040.158 | 7.429.446 | 7.485.262 | | | 28.152.066 |
| ERDF accumulated -> N+2 target | | | | 1.055.600 | 5.197.200 | 13.237.358 | 20.666.804 | 28.152.066 | |
| Total ERDF committed | mixed | | 586.739 | 3.219.006 | 7.511.721 | 8.805.137 | 6.402.264 | 311.980 | 26.836.847 |
| ERDF paid from the PA for: | mixed | | 144.246 | 1.165.049 | 4.848.489 | 5.746.312 | 4.315.068 | | 16.219.164 |
| ERDF claimed by INTERACT PA to EC | Claimed by PA | | | | | | | | |
| | Paid by EC | | | | | | | | |
| Advance Payment (7%) | | | | | | | | | 1.750.000 |
| Interim Payments on Claims | | 19.202.497 | | | | | | | 18.916.804 |
| | | | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | | |
| a. Claims ERDF Paying Authority per year | | | | 666.018 | 4.445.398 | 6.756.532 | | | |
| b. Advance Payment EC | | | 1.750.000 | | | | | | |
| c. Total paid ERDF (accumulated, including b.) | | | 1.750.000 | 2.415.527 | 6.857.992 | 13.614.522 | | | 20.949.067 |
| d. ERDF accumulated -> N+2 target | | | n.r. | 1.055.600 | 5.197.200 | 13.237.358 | 20.666.804 | | |
| e = c - d Surplus or gap in N+2 target | | | n.r. | 1.359.927 | 1.660.792 | 337.164 | 282.263 | | |

4.5 Interest Revenues

So far accumulated interests on the trust account will be used by the Managing Authority/Paying Authority for the implementation of the Intervention in accordance to Art. 32 of Reg. (EU) No. 1260/99 if so required.

5. Steps Taken to Ensure Quality and Effectiveness of the Programme

2007 was a full year of implementation and delivery during which no major problems have been faced by the programme structures. Both the relations with the clientele (INTERREG programmes and to a limited extent projects) and the programme stakeholders (MSC, MA and EC) were constructive.

The programme performed very well both in financial and activity terms as reported in other chapters of this document. The biggest challenge was the smooth adaptation to a new service delivery model which is going to be fully applied under INTERACT as from 2008. The model envisages a higher focus on specific geographical areas per each of the INTERACT Points. This approach would enable a closer knowledge of the stakeholders' needs and tailor ad hoc services.

During the second semester of the year the INTERACT Points started to apply more and more this approach and coordinated with the INTERACT Secretariat in order to avoid overlapping activities and serve closely INTERREG actors throughout Europe.

In general as in previous years one element which affected programme management and delivery was the turn over of the staff in the Secretariat and in the Points. To this regards INTERACT shares an unfortunate situation similar to other INTERREG programmes in the three Strands. Here below some details as incurred in the different offices and structures.

No formal evaluation of the programme has been conducted in 2007 by the Managing Authority. However the programme progress was constantly monitored and reported to INTERACT MSC Members on the occasion of the meetings. This was done in view of the transition to the new programme and the consequent adaptation to the European Territorial Cooperation objective scenario and the community of stakeholders to relate to.

INTERACT Programme Secretariat

In 2007 on average the Secretariat was understaffed according to the FTE planned and approved by the INTERACT MSC. This was due to the change of the Head of the Secretariat who joined the team in March and the non substitution of the Communications Manager whose role was taken over only last quarter of the year.

Nevertheless the Secretariat managed to respond to the highest level of demands coming from the INTERACT projects which were finalising their activities and therefore preparing the Final Activity and Financial Reports. Time and resources have been also absorbed by the support to the INTERACT managing Authority for the preparation of INTERACT 2007 – 2013.

INTERACT Point Tool Box (Valencia)

Since Mid May 2007 the Coordinator of the INTERACT Point was on sick leave thus the coordination of the activities was partially taken over by an official of the hosting institution (Region of Valencia). The staff were challenged by new tasks depending on the widening of the portfolio of activities assigned to the Point. The delivery of public events in fact accompanied the conception of products and tools.

INTERACT Point IIIC Coordination

No major problems have been encountered during the reporting period. The Communications Officer located in the IIIC West Secretariat was replaced as from July onwards. The IIIC North Secretariat and the Managing Authority have been subject of the "on the spot check" control conducted by a consulting firm ad hoc contracted for the purpose of the second level control.

As a consequence this activity absorbed some working time of the staff in order to prepare the appropriate documentation for revision and control.

INTERACT Point Qualification and Transfer (Viborg)

No major problems have been encountered during the reporting period. The Office administrator was on maternity leave and was substituted.

INTERACT Point Managing Transition and External Cooperation (Vienna/Turku)

The INTERACT Point was affected by a turnover in staff as two members left during the first semester of the year. No major problems otherwise have been faced. Some extra work has been devoted to the implementation of the internal administrative and financial procedures as recommended by the outcomes of the “on the spot check conducted in late 2006.

5.1 Financial Control

At the third meeting of the INTERACT Financial Control Group (FCG) held on 19 June 2006 in Brussels the audit methodology (including checklists, audit protocols and other working papertemplates) as well as the sample and the time plan for the INTERACT Programme Audit have been approved according to chapters IV and V of Commission Regulation 438/2001. On this basis the on-the-spot checks for INTERACT Project ALSO and INTEARCT Point IIIC Coordination were convened by the contracted auditor Ernst & Young Germany during 2007.

As regards the results of these checks the external auditor concluded the following: Of the total declared expenses audited – which in total amounts to EUR 654.017,43 - EUR 7.478,6 can be deemed ineligible. For both projects the final financial effect could not be established. While for INTERACT Project ALSO only the amount of EUR 2.251,52 has been put into question, the preliminary financial effect for INTERACT Point IIIC amounts - due to the fact that the audited body did not allocate its overhead and staff costs on the basis of traceable and equitable methods – to EUR 174.532,95. The final financial effect needs to be established in the Follow-up process.

As regards the Follow-up process for all checks convened in 2006 all open findings could be solved during 2007. The final financial effect has become in total EUR 22.084,31 (EUR 227,64 for the Technical Assistance and EUR 21.856,67 for INTERACT Point Managing Transition and External Cooperation). This amount has been deducted from payment claims submitted by the Host Organisation of the Technical Secretariat respectively by the Host of IP MTEC , City of Vienna . The Financial Control Group has been informed about the findings detected in 2006 as well as on the Follow-up measures implemented by the Managing Authority at their meeting on 5 February 2007.

5.2 Programme Management and Steering

The management and steering of the INTERACT Programme is the shared responsibility of:

- the Managing Authority (MA) and Paying Authority (PA),
- the Monitoring and Steering Committee (MSC) and
- the INTERACT Programme Secretariat (IS)

These three structures have worked together to steer and manage the INTERACT Programme.

5.2.1 The Managing and Paying Authorities

The Managing Authority (MA) and the Paying Authority for the INTERACT Programme is the Austrian Federal Chancellery (Bundeskanzleramt der Republik Österreich). There are in total five staff members involved in the programme (2.6 FTE).

The location of the Managing Authority in Austria has proved to be particularly efficient as the whole programme benefited of the experience and skills developed in the Austrian public administration sector. Overall emerged a tendency to operate according to a non-hierarchical approach (State Government and Regions) which fitted appropriately with the INTERACT management structure.

As a consequence the daily management of the programme was outsourced to a dedicated Programme Secretariat and the service delivery shared across a network of INTERACT Points representing the priorities of the wider INTERREG Community Initiative.

In 2007 regular meetings were normally held every two weeks between Managing Authority and INTERACT Programme Secretariat to discuss ongoing issues and prepare formal (MSC) and informal events (e.g. trainings).

At operational level the Paying Authority of INTERACT is supported by the ERP-Fund (state aid institution in Austria on federal level with legal personality status under public law) responsible for the execution of payments to the programme beneficiaries and the provision of administrative support, in particular in relation to the monitoring for the purpose of gathering data pursuant to Art.34(1) of Regulation (EC) No1260/1999.

For all the ERDF funded programmes in Austria, the ERP Fund has established a uniform ERDF Central Monitoring System. This system allows monitoring data to be collected and processed on the level of individual projects/operations. For this purpose a data catalogue based on Annex 4 of Council Regulation (EC) 438/2001 is used, which has been, as far as necessary, adapted to the INTERACT programme.

The Paying Authority has also worked in strict coordination with the INTERACT Programme Secretariat. Shared procedures have been consolidated and contributed to reach and overcome the 2007 n+2 target as well as assured appropriate information flow to the body responsible for the Second Level Control and the on the spot checks of Point and Projects.

5.2.2 The Programme Secretariat

The INTERACT Programme Secretariat is contracted and supervised by the Managing Authority. The function of the Secretariat is acting as facilitator, organiser, and information node for the whole programme. As a consequence its tasks go beyond the functions of classical technical secretariats as operating in INTERREG programmes. This is due to the specific nature of INTERACT and the explorative and innovative character of the operations.

In addition to 'Technical Management Functions' in fact, the Secretariat also acts as an implementing body and performs 'Operational Functions' under Priority 1 and Priority 3, Measure 1 of the programme. The latter functions either have a horizontal character or serve the purpose of further development of INTERACT Tasks.

The responsibility of the day-to-day management of the programme stays in the Secretariat, which has been outsourced by the MA to the Austrian Institute for Regional Studies and Spatial Planning and will be operating until June 2008.

In 2007 the staff of the Secretariat partially changed. In particular, the coordination role which was assured ad interim by the Project Manager acting as Coordinator since June 2006 was

finally taken over by a new Head as from April 2007. A new position of Deputy Head was also created in order to ensure continuity as well as improved management and control.

Following the leave of the Communications Manager in April 2007 the Communications officer was finally promoted in the role.

Main Activities in 2007

Even in 2007 a large part of the resources were devoted to the support of the finalisation of the INTERACT projects. Several project steering committee meetings have been attended by the staff of the Secretariat and an ongoing technical support and advice was provided with regards to the use of the INTERACT reporting system and the documentation required.

As in previous year the work with the Points was coordinated via regular meetings and IT communication channels as well as by attending events organised throughout Europe. The pick of the collaboration amongst the different Units was the European wide INTERACT Conference organised in Budapest in collaboration with the Hungarian authorities.

Finally the Secretariat supported regularly the Managing Authority in the process of preparation of the 2007 – 2013 INTERACT Programme by organising laboratory groups, ad hoc meeting of the INTERACT MSC as well as coordinating some external consultants contracted ad hoc.

Here below a brief summary on the activities is presented even if direct involvement must be considered while reading other Chapter of the current document.

Main relations with the INTERACT MSC Members and other National Authorities

- MSC meeting 11, Turku, June 2007
- MSC meeting 12, Vienna, October 2007
- FCG meeting, Tenerife, February 2007

External Events

- European wide INTERACT Conference, Budapest, March 2007

INTERACT Projects

- Bilateral meetings between Projects and INTERACT Programme Secretariat
- Attendance of Projects' steering committee meetings
- Attendance of Projects' final events
- Ongoing advice and technical support to INTERACT Projects on procedural requirements (auditing, reporting, etc...)
- Lead Partner Seminar for INTERACT Projects, Vienna; February 2007

Support to the INTERACT Managing Authority in the preparation of the new INTERACT Programme

- Organisation of drafting group meetings
- Coordination of external experts' support
- Liaison with MS and EC Representatives

Coordination of INTERACT Points

- 4 Coordinators' Group meetings – coordination of IPs' activities and work plans delivery
- Bilateral meetings between Points and INTERACT Programme Secretariat
- Ongoing assessment of outputs delivered and consequent discussion on modifications
- INTERACT Team Training, February, Denmark

Coordination of the INTERACT Points

In 2007 the coordination between the INTERACT Points and the Secretariat improved and started to move towards a new integrated model as possibly envisaged under INTERACT II. Products and services have been conceived and realised in stricter cooperation than previous years and feedback exercises following events have confirmed an overall improvement in quality and a higher level of satisfaction amongst the INTERACT users.

Documents and information have been shared via the INTERACT management system which contributed to provide ongoing updated material to all INTERACT managers. A shared calendar of event has also been developed which served to plan events in various locations throughout Europe and avoid duplication of efforts. These events have been planned very often in cooperation with the INTERACT MSC Members concerned.

5.2.3 Technical Assistance (TA) and level of expenditures in 2007

The INTERACT Programme Secretariat activities are financed out of the Technical Assistance budget and Priority 1 as well as Priority 3 Measure 1 of the INTERACT Programme. The TA is respectively made of TA1 which finances the Secretariat staff and overhead costs and TA2 intended for the typical Technical Assistance functions.

In 2007 as a general remark the Secretariat did not spend the whole budget planned. The total difference between planned and actual costs for 2007 amounts to a surplus of EUR 268 470. In general the level of expenditure was lower than expected with regards to the implementation of activities. The main reasons are the following:

- Staff costs were EUR 63 000 lower than planned. Because of turnover of staff the INTERACT Secretariat did not work the whole year at full capacity (see above in 5.4.2);
- Material costs were considerably lower than planned (135 000) because some commitments from 2006 were also used in 2007; budgets for graphic design, translation, printing and training were less used and on some occasions economy of scale was made;
- The use of external experts was EUR 39 000 less than planned since IT experts were contracted for a lower amount and some activities were conducted by the staff of the Secretariat;
- Finally some funds originally allocated in Priority 4.2 (Technical Assistance) for studies (EUR 16 000) and computer systems (EUR 13 000) were not used.

The unspent amount has been carried forward to the year 2008 in order to finance the activities of the first semester. The following table shows the Secretariat financial progress in 2007. It has two distinct parts: 1) the costs section per budget line and 2) the sources of funding coming from TA1 and 2, Priority 1 and Priority 1 and Measure 3.1.

Table 12: Planned and actual costs incurred during 2007

| TABLE 1 - INTERACT Secretariat Budget and Budget Outcome 2007 | | | | |
|--|---|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Line | Function and Allocation/Year | 2007 | | |
| | | Planned (1) | Actual (2) | Difference |
| | | (a) | (b) | c = a-b |
| COSTS | | | | |
| 1 (incl. 9) | Total | 1 521 511 | 1 253 041 | 268 470 |
| 2 (=3+7+8+8b) | Secretariat/Experts/Control | 1 402 685 | 1 163 371 | 239 314 |
| 3 (=4+5+6) | 1.1. INTERACT Secretariat | 1 078 620 | 880 932 | 197 688 |
| 4 | Staff costs total | 620 000 | 557 265 | 62 735 |
| 5 | Office OIR (overhead costs) | 206 620 | 206 620 | 0 |
| 6 | Other Overhead/Material | 252 000 | 117 047 | 134 953 |
| 7 | 1.2. External expert pool | 255 000 | 215 775 | 39 225 |
| 8 | 1.3. Audit/control | 69 065 | 69 065 | 0 |
| 8b | programming | 0 | -2 401 | 2 401 |
| 9 (=10+11+12) | Technical Assistance 2 | 118 826 | 89 670 | 29 156 |
| 10 | 2.1. Studies, Seminars, Conferences | 43 826 | 27 377 | 16 449 |
| 11 | 2.2. Mid Term and Ongoing Evaluations | 0 | -18 | 18 |
| 12 | 2.3. Computer systems/Techn.Equipment | 75 000 | 62 310 | 12 690 |
| SOURCE OF FUNDING | | | | |
| 13 | TA 1 (Technical Management Function) | 202 439 | 202 439 | 0 |
| 14 | TA 2 | 118 826 | 89 670 | 29 156 |
| 15 | TA Total | 321 265 | 292 109 | 29 156 |
| 16 | Priority 1 (Programme Implementation Function) | 1 184 819 | 945 505 | 239 314 |
| 16a | Priority 3.1 Managing Transition Resources | 15 427 | 15 427 | 0 |
| 17 | INTERACT Total | 1 521 511 | 1 253 041 | 268 470 |

The Monitoring and Steering Committee (MSC)

The Monitoring and Steering Committee (MSC) strategically manages the programme and takes ultimate decisions on all issues affecting programme implementation. It undertakes tasks of the Monitoring Committee and the Steering Committee mentioned in Article 35 of Council Regulation (EC) no 1260/1999 and in points 28 and 29 of the INTERREG Guidelines. Its overall task is to supervise the quality and effectiveness of implementation and accountability of the programme operations. It is responsible for overall strategic management, monitoring of the INTERACT Programme and the allocation of funds.

The MSC consists of one to two (exceptionally three) representatives from each Member State. These are often the National INTERREG co-ordinators. With the enlargement of the European Union on 1 January 2007 the former observers from accession states became full members of the MSC which thus increased to 27 members. Norway and Switzerland continued to participate and contribute to the programme as associated states.

In 2007 the Monitoring and Steering Committee met twice. The co-chairs during 2007, along with the Managing Authority of the INTERACT Programme, were Finland and Germany. In 2007 the MSC meetings took place back to back with the Drafting Group meetings which focused on the preparation of INTERACT 2007 – 2013. In general meetings have been highly attended though in Turku the quorum for taking formal decisions was missed for one participant (in INTERACT the quorum is particularly challenging given the 27 +2 Member States involved).

5.3 Further Steps Taken to Ensure Quality and Effectiveness of the Programme

Quality has been at the centre of the programme delivery in 2007. As explained in previous chapters quality was assured by the coordination of the services as delivered by the INTERACT Points in different areas of Europe. The degree of coordination of the different feedback collected increased and outcomes were used in order to improve the quality of the services.

The activities have been monitored and assessed also on the basis of the data reported in the INTERACT management system by the INTERACT Points and Secretariat and the relevant documentation stored in live link (the document management system). The system was further developed by integrating different database (e.g. experts, participants to events). The Secretariat and the Managing Authority have extensively used the system to process payment requests and monitor the financial and physical progress of INTERACT Projects and Points.

Project report templates allow in fact INTERACT Points and Projects to feed the system from remote with data concerning financial and physical progress. It also allows the Secretariat to keep track of indicators as described in the INTERACT Programme enhanced indicators framework and clustered at programme level in the Operational Programme Document.

6. Compatibility with Community Policies and Overall Coordination

The Managing Authority has taken, where applicable and within the scope of the Membership Agreement, appropriate measures within the framework of the assistance to ensure conformity with Community policies (e.g. subsidy contract provisions, eligibility criteria for project applications, rules of procedures for MSC), including the rules on competition, state aid rules, policy on the award of public contracts. Furthermore in INTERACT the following two items are particularly considered with regards to compliance to Community Policies and rules:

■ Information and Communication Technologies and the Information Society

INTERACT uses a web-based interactive communications system and is a pioneer in the use of information technology for the coordination of a European-wide Programme.

■ Equal Opportunities for Men and Women

In order to be eligible for funding, projects under this Programme must take into account equal opportunities for men and women. The INTERACT Points and the INTERACT Programme Secretariat have a balanced representation of men and women.

7. Annex - Overview of INTERACT Projects' progress in 2007

INTERACT Project PACINTERREG (1C-01)

FINALISED project

Duration: April 2004 – December 2006

Year of contracting: 2005

Priority: 2

Name of the Lead Partner (organization): Region of Provence Alpes Cote d'Azur (France)

Number of other partners (incl. LP): 5

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- Transfer of know-how and of "best practices" between the INTERREG III strands
- Learning to know administrative, legal and financial systems of neighbour countries
- Training and exchanges between political decision makers
- Innovative communication actions to bring the EU Activities

MAIN EXPECTED OUTPUTS:

- Strengthening the first goals of the INTERREG programmes (local development and strengthening of governance) because the diverse forms of administrative and political organisations still present an obstacle to cooperation.
- Focusing on the Mediterranean via a four-step programme: transfer of know-how, knowing each other, training and exchanges of political decision makers and communication means.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

Resources:

- Creation of the projects database, generating maps of the most important partnerships by thematic classifications (NUTS 3 & NUTS 2 zone; crossborder, transnational or interregional cooperation).
- Elaboration of a Communication Protocol available on CD copies and on the project website

- Dissemination of a questionnaire to identify the main themes in order to develop the handbook of structural differences.
- Diffusion of a questionnaire to analyse the relevance of the production of the good practice handbook.
- Realization of a handbook on structural differences between public administrations
- Realisation of a English/Greek glossary collecting the most common terminology on territorial cooperation

Cooperation:

- Development of a network of elected people in the Mediterranean area
- Organisation of 2 thematic working groups: one to organize the Summer University Action and the other to exchange and build the Communication strategy.
- Organization of the Summer University – Master Class for “Facilitating the meetings between political decision maker”

Dissemination & Publicity:

- Production of the TV spot for enhancing the cooperation in the Mediterranean area (French, Italian, Greek, Spanish and English versions)

Financial Performances

Budget planned until December 2006: EUR 600 700

Budget spent until December 2006: EUR 573 638.80 (95%)

INTERACT Project PRO MONTE (1C-03)

FINALISED project

Duration: June 2004-April 2007

Priority: 2

Year of contracting: 2004

Name of the Lead Partner (organization): AEM – Association Européenne des Elus de Montagne (France)

Number of other partners (incl. LP): 13

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- Strengthening of EU, National and Regional policies concerning sustainable development of mountainous areas
- Analysis of the cooperation projects currently being undertaken in mountain areas
- Diffusion of best practice procedures to those INTERREG actors involved in mountain regions

MAIN EXPECTED OUTPUTS:

INTERACT PRO MONTE has two principal phases within which it will work:

- A thorough evaluation of best practice procedure regarding cooperation in mountain sustainable development. This knowledge will be adapted to meet the needs of the mountain local authorities and development actors.
- The transfer and diffusion of this best practice procedure to INTERREG actors.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

Resources:

- Publication of the „Some best practices of INTERREG projects in Mountain regions”
- Realisation of the Alpine Space Toolbox that presents ideas and recommendations to improve ETC Programmes considering the specific territorial needs for the sustainable development of the Alpine areas
- Exchange between President Barroso and AEM about the idea of a green paper on the future of European policies toward mountain ranges.
- Production of material sets for the seminars
- Creation of an handbook 'Projectuality of mountain municipalities'
- Elaboration of 2 surveys: "Questionnaire for the evaluation of the Community Initiative Programmes-INTERREG III, Objectives 1,2,3 and LEADER + programmes"

and "Questionnaire for the evaluation of the best practices of cooperation in the mountain areas in Europe".

- Adoption of the 'APPEL DE BELLUNO' at the end of Belluno Alpine seminar and of a motion called 'Territorial cooperation in mountain ranges' approved in Chambéry.

Cooperation:

- Organization of 5 transnational seminars in Vysoké Tatry – Slovakia (October 2005) on the territorial cooperation into the Carpathian mountains; in Belluno – Italy (February 2006) to discuss the efficiency of the Interreg programmes A and B in the Alps; in Granada – Spain (March 2006) on the common problems in Mediterranean mountains; in Lasithi - Greece (May 2006) for promoting cooperation between the mountain areas of Mediterranean islands; in Pamporovo - Bulgaria organised (October 2006) referring to the sustainable development of mountain regions.
- Realization of the final conference in Chambéry – Savoie (June 2006) on the massif dimension of the European territorial cooperation

Dissemination & Publicity:

- Realisation of a project website which includes the most relevant deliverables and features.
- Realisation of promotional materials: gadgets, posters and leaflets.
- Participation at different dissemination events: Alpine space peak event in Stresa, 5th Mountain convention in Chaves
- Organisation of different press conferences: one after every seminar and one after the final project conference.

Financial Performances

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Budget planned until April 2007: | EUR 1 075 890.40 |
| Budget spent until April 2007: | EUR 848 706.70 (79%) |

INTERACT Project IONAS (1C-04)

Ionian and Adriatic cities and ports joint cooperation

FINALISED project

Duration: May 2004-March 2007

Year of contracting: 2004

Priority: 3.2

Name of the Lead Partner (organization): City of Venice (Italy)

Number of other partners (incl. LP): 26

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- The INTERACT Project IONAS aims at creating a long lasting partnership between European ports and cities and ports and cities from the neighbouring countries in the Adriatic and Ionian area, in order to identify and face together the problems that emerge when cooperating with external borders within the INTERREG programme framework. This is to be achieved via the creation of a network which, through promotion and exchange of best practice ideas, will tackle four principal issues:
- Better transport and logistics services in ports Networking among Adriatic and Ionian ports for better transport and logistic services serving the Euro-Mediterranean maritime area.
- Environment impact of ports activities and sustainable development Networking among Adriatic and Ionian ports in order to monitor environment impact of ports activities and to guarantee sustainable development.
- Joint cooperation between ports and cities Networking among Adriatic and Ionian cities and ports in order to develop a better dialogue between these institutions.
- Raising knowledge on the New Structural Funds and developing of skills for project management
Networking among Adriatic and Ionian Cities and Ports for the development of new project ideas, according to the opportunities given by the New Objective 3 – European Territorial Cooperation

MAIN EXPECTED OUTPUTS:

- Better information, communication and cooperation between ports and cities
- Definition of common challenges on transport, logistics and environment protection
- New recommendations for the future INTERREG programme addressed to the MA
- Definition of project ideas to be submitted within INTERREG programme

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS**Resources:**

- Creation of the online IONAS Port Database on existing infrastructures and logistics in Adriatic and Ionian port areas.
- Collection of Eco-maps for environmental monitoring in city-port areas
- Realisation of the handbook "Towards the Environmental Management Systems in the Adriatic and Ionian area".
- Publication of the IONAS newsletter
- Implementation of an interactive online database on new INTERREG project ideas in the Adriatic and Ionian area.
- Development of a chart of new project ideas of future call for proposals in the New Programming Phase 2007-2013.
- Elaboration of new recommendations for the future INTERREG phase 2007-2013 addressed to the INTERREG actors
- Publication of the proceedings of the International Conference on "European Territorial Cooperation 2007-2013 new scenarios and opportunities"
-

Cooperation:

- Organisation of 4 technical workshops on environmental management methods for raising awareness on EMS and EMAS.
- Development of a permanent City-Port network to guarantee dialogue and cooperation.
- Realization of an online training course on New Programming phase 2007-2013 and on structural funds project management.
- Participation to thematic conferences and/or exhibitions at national and international level for the project promotion.
- Organization of an International Conference on European Territorial Cooperation 2007-2013: new scenarios and opportunities.

Dissemination & Publicity:

- Realisation of a project website which includes the most relevant deliverables and features; further development and constant update of the webpage.
- Realisation of promotional materials: gadgets, posters and leaflets.
- Publication of articles and news concerning the project

- Organisation of different press conferences.
- Development of media contacts for TV and radio interviews.

Financial Performances

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Budget planned until March 2007: | EUR 1 245 000.00 |
| Budget spent until March 2007: | EUR 1 153 340.51 (93%) |

INTERACT Project Iq-TRAIN (1C-05)

INTERREG-Quality-Training

FINALISED project

Duration: January 2004 – December 2007

Year of contracting: 2004

Priority: 3.2

Name of the Lead Partner (organization): Office of the Government of Lower Austria (Austria)

Number of other partners (incl. LP): 9

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- Support INTERREG actors at all levels in their professional tasks and career by setting up and operating a user friendly know-how-transfer-system
- Improving skills and attitudes of INTERREG actors in the context of programmes, projects and interregional and intercultural joint development
- Strengthening the capabilities and competencies to meet the challenges of EU enlargement

MAIN EXPECTED OUTPUTS:

- Setting up a transnational learning network organisation based on the knowledge and experience of INTERREG actors.
- Development of a transnational learning network for INTERREG-Programme-actors (strand A, B and C) from “old” and “new” EU Member States.
- Matching training-demands with existing INTERREG-knowledge among the target group – mainly the staff of regional Intermediate Bodies, Regional Managements/Development Agencies, and members of the INTERREG Monitoring/Steering Committees and Managing Authorities.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

Management & Coordination:

- Setting up of the Iq-Train Secretariat and of the Iq-Train Learning Organisation
- Development of 2 Iq-Train-ings-programmes to support the programming and the implementation phases
- Creation of a help-desk, managed by the Iq-Train Secretariat, that offers

aid and support for any kinds of questions,

- Discussion of INTERACT documents in the Iq-Train net

Resources:

- Publication on the project website of all the Iq-Train events and workshops documentations.
- Creation of 6 topics/modules
- Development of the 2 tools: a 'FLC-glossary' and a 'FLC-dictionary'
- Setting up of a 'Handbook for project-holders'

Cooperation:

- Organisation of a regional Iq-Train impulse event to give to all regional INTERREG actors an equal chance to participate actively in the Iq-Train network
- Creation of two Open Space Conferences (OSC) including INTERREG actors
- Organization of 'Programming Reflection Groups', both on bilateral (Bilateral Programming Reflection Groups (BiPReGs)) and on joint level (Common Programming Reflection Groups (CoPReGs))
- Implementation of 24 workshops

Dissemination & Publicity:

- Realisation of a project website which includes the most relevant deliverables and features; further development and constant update of the webpage.
- Provision of the Iq-Train homepage functions as the main information platform of the project: workshop-results, tools and documents as well as a collection of INTERREG-relevant internet-links
- Introduction of a password-protected members-area for valorising the Iq-Train homepage. This allows limited publication and exchange of draft-documents and internal materials
- Setting up of the Iq-Train Network
- Organisation of 2 Iq-Train conferences
- Regular submission of INTERACT-materials to its workshop-participants
- Regularly sending of additionally target-group oriented information to user-groups and network-members

Financial Performances

Budget planned until December 2007: EUR 540 000.00
Budget spent until December 2007: EUR 486 881.16 (90%)

INTERACT Project INTERFORM (2C-03)**European network for training and research into cross-border practices****Duration: October 2004 – March 2008****Year of contracting: 2005****Priority: 2****Name of the Lead Partner (organization): Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (France)****Number of other partners (incl. LP): 8****PROJECT OBJECTIVES:**

- To increase the professionalism of the organisations and individuals involved in cross-border cooperation via the development of initial or ongoing training initiatives.
- To enable cross-border professionals to carry out exchanges regarding their practices by means of the transmission and appropriation of best practice and expertise as well as linking up researchers and organisations active in the territories.
- To collectively and progressively develop a shared culture for transfer to the new EU Member States.

MAIN EXPECTED OUTPUTS:

- The creation of a cross-border reference network.
- The creation of experimental modules transferable to other borders.
- The generation of theoretical concepts regarding cross-border professions and improvements in the quality of organisations.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2007**Management & Coordination:**

- Creation of an intranet website available only for the PPs, that contains administrative and financial documents (financial reports, sum-up of the steering committees) as well as some specific documents on training and research on cross-border practices, which the partners do not wish to share with the public.
- Launching of a call for contributions for each cross-border forums to find specialists of the topic chosen: 24 communications (texts) were received and 18 were selected for the speeches, plus 2 on poster format.
- Change of the Legal Representative of the Euro Institut Kehand
- Change of Auditors of: University of Pau and Adour Region (two times), University of Nice Sophia Antipolis, University of Genova and University of Deusto

Resources:

- After the training seminars, development by the PPs of training tools to promote cross-border cooperation.

Cooperation:

- Organisation of the last methodological seminar about the Coordination of public policies in cross-border areas.
- Organisation the third Cross-border Discussions under the title “Culture and citizenship in cross-border cooperation”.

Dissemination & Publicity:

- Enrichment of the project website by documents, news and contributions coming from the Interform events.
- Diffusion of the tool called 'Lettre Espaces transfrontaliers' ('Letter cross-border territories') used to disseminate information on the INTERACT programme and the INTERFORM project .
- Dissemination of the communication tools including the bilingual leaflet about the web site, the special Lead Partner Newsletter “Espaces transfrontaliers” and the leaflet about the Discussions.
- Participation at different dissemination events.

Financial Performances

Budget planned until December 2007: EUR 937 500

Budget spent until December 2007: EUR 620 197.98 (68%)

INTERACT Project EUROTOOL (2C-06)

A tool for promoting cooperation among EU regions

FINALISED project

Duration: May 2005 – November 2007

Year of contracting: 2005

Priority: 2

Name of the Lead Partner (organization): Regional Ministry of Economy and Labour, Junta de Castilla y León (Spain)

Number of other partners (incl. LP): 11

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Euro Tool's main goal is to facilitate the search for partners in other European regions, particularly those that are geographically remote. EuroTool aims to favour the application of all the INTERREG programmes and others of an interregional nature, especially in terms of the:
- Creation and diffusion of a tool (database) designed to facilitate cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation and partnerships. The complete database should contain basic information for over 350 files regarding national authorities, regions and euroregions all over Europe, including non-EU Member States and external borders.
- Promotion of specific cooperation relations between European regions, including those belonging to the new EU Member States, neighbouring states and non EU countries.
- Knowledge of experiences and good practices acquired through the development of projects financed by the three INTERREG III strands.

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- *Operational outputs:* EuroTool database; and EuroTool final forum for multilateral meetings.
- *Dissemination outputs:* database and general information available on the project website; and other EuroTool materials (leaflets, posters, CD).

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

Management & Coordination:

- All the PPs introduced in their websites a link to the project website and database.

Resources:

- Creation of a database (hosted by the project website) for people and institutions interested in creating networks, searching for partners, and working together in territorial cooperation

Cooperation:

- Organisation of Eurotool Final Forum for connecting people interested in territorial cooperation coming from all over Europe.
- Realization of 3 international conferences and one bilateral meeting

Dissemination & Publicity:

- Realisation of a project website which includes the most relevant deliverables and features; further development and constant update of the webpage.
- Constant update of the database
- Realisation of promotional materials: gadgets, posters and leaflets.

Financial Performances

Budget planned until November 2007: EUR 464 469.54

Budget spent until November 2007: EUR 351 648.78 (76%)

INTERACT Project CULTPLAN (2C-08)

Planning as culture in Europe. Learning from differences in planning related to the cultural context

FINALISED project

Duration: January 2005 – December 2007

Year of contracting: 2005

Priority: 2

Name of the Lead Partner (organization): Alterra BV. Green World Research

Number of other partners (incl. LP): 5

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- To articulate and exchange best practices of how differences in planning culture in INTERREG III programme and projects are managed.
- To formulate conclusions and recommendations for managing cultural differences in INTERREG initiatives and international planning processes (to bridge differences in planning cultures) to contribute to the success of the INTERREG III programme and projects.
- To disseminate in different ways (report, website, etc.) information on managing cultural differences in INTERREG initiatives to INTERREG III project managers and promoters, coordination officers (INTERREG secretariats and INTERACT Points and Secretariat) and policy makers (EU, national and regional) to contribute to realising true cross-border (strand A), transnational (strand B) and interregional (strand C) cooperation in the international initiatives such as INTERREG projects and will enhance future involvement of players who wish to involve themselves in cooperation.

EXPECTED OUTPUTS:

The main results of the project are best practices, conclusions and recommendations (methods, starting points, tools, etc.) on how to manage cultural differences in international planning processes. These results will be disseminated in various ways and with different kinds of media (e.g. website, flyers, newsletters, reports and brochures). The impact of the dissemination of the obtained knowledge and insights is better cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation between international partners and will make it easier for (future) players to get involved in INTERREG initiatives.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS**Resources:**

- Creation and diffusion of a European wide questionnaire for selecting case studies

- Elaboration of a summary of 20 case studies referring to the inventory concerning the cultural diversity in project management and planning in different parts of Europe (available on the project website and in hard copies).
- Application of the research methodology and the analytical framework (including literature study, project evaluations and case study material)
- Realisation of specific studies on differences of the strands, on the concept of good and bad practices, and reform trends of INTERREG programmes.
- Creation of a toolkit "Tool: culture in cooperation" (available on the project website) that facilitates courses and workshops in the field of European cultural and planning variety.
- Organisation of a symposium "Planning Cultures in Europe - Exploring Cultural Differences as Resources and Restrictions for Interregional Cooperation" including international experts dealing with planning culture.
- Elaboration of a final report "Cultural Differences in European Cooperation", presenting the final results of project.

Cooperation:

- Realisation of 2 local workshops (in Italy and Greece) addressed to local stakeholders, which are involved in European projects, for the dissemination of the project results to contribute to the promotion of the cultural perspective on a local project level.
- Organisation of visits to INTERREG projects during the meetings of the steering group
- Organization of the final conference in Amsterdam, including INTERREG officers & practitioners, actors in the field of spatial and cultural policy, scientists and students.

Dissemination & Publicity:

- Realisation of a project website which includes the most relevant deliverables and features; further development and constant update of the webpage.
- Realisation of promotional materials: gadgets, posters, brochures and leaflets.

Financial Performances

Budget planned until December 2007: EUR 923 500.00

Budget spent until December 2007: EUR 920 887.84 (100%)

INTERACT Project Tran.S.E.A. (2C-09)**Strategic Environmental Assessment application at transnational level to the INTERREG Programmes and Projects**

FINALISED project closed by the Managing Authority

Duration: May 2005 – July 2007

Year of contracting: 2005

Priority: 2

Name of the Lead Partner (organization): AICCRE – Italian Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (Italy)

Number of other partners (incl. LP): 5

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- To increase the quality of INTERREG Programmes and projects, and to expand and support the activities undertaken by the INTERACT Points (Tool Box and Qualification and Transfer) and the INTERACT Secretariat.
- To ensure that environmental consequences of INTERREG Programmes and projects are properly identified and assessed.
- To promote a more transparent planning of policies, plans and Programmes and sustainable development through the application of SEA.

EXPECTED OUTPUTS:

- Useful baseline information on in-force environmental legislation, best practices of SEA application to PPP and on INTERREG projects with important environmental impact.
- A tool box for the application of SEA to INTERREG programmes and projects.
- A set of training and dissemination initiatives.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS**Resources:**

- Realisation of 2 studies: one focused on the analysis of the EU and national legislation on SEA and the other based on the analysis of successful case studies of SEA application for the elaboration of a set of best practices.
- Publication of the “Guidelines for Strategic Environmental Assessment” which consists in a useful tool for the application of the SEA to projects, plans and programmes, with a specific focus on the INTERREG Programmes

- Creation of a newsletter every three months for the entire duration of the project, in order to inform on the progress of project activities and to promote the analysis of some issues relevant for the project.
- Realisation of an expertise system based on interactive FAQ, for giving a first environmental assessment of the projects
- Creation of an online helpdesk service, aimed to support Interreg actors to provide good SEA.

Cooperation:

- Organisation of an awareness seminar for Interreg Programmes developers aiming to increase awareness of Interreg and INTERACT actors in the field of sustainable development and environment and on the importance of an early assessment of environmental effects of Interreg Programmes and projects.
- Realisation of a theoretical and practical training in order to train future Interreg applicants in the application of SEA to Interreg projects.
- Organisation of the final project conference for disseminating the experiences and the opportunities of good environmental management of Interreg Programmes and projects.

Dissemination & Publicity:

- Realisation of promotional materials: gadgets, posters and leaflets.
- Publication of articles and news concerning the project on specialized magazines
- Organisation of a press conference with national and international mass media on the occasion of the final project conference (April 2007)

Financial Performances

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| Budget planned until July 2007: | EUR 672 980.00 |
| Budget spent until July 2007: | EUR 630 970.27 (94%) |

INTERACT Project BORDER CROSSING (2C-11)

Directing Local Initiatives in DE – PL – CZ Border Region towards

Duration: June 2005 – March 2008

Year of contracting: 2005

Priority: 3.2

Name of the Lead Partner (organization): Barnim-Oderbruch Municipality (Germany)

Number of other partners (incl. LP): 5

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- Establishing a close communications network between the local and regional decision makers from economics, politics, tourism, training, culture, sport, youth, etc.
- Forming a local initiative of 20 German and Polish municipalities in the border region of Eurodistrict "Mittlere Oder", evaluate the results and if they are borne out, transfer this methodology to German-Czech border regions and possibly to others.
- Setting up a German-Polish service agency for the new Eurodistrict "Mittlere Oder" with focus on the stimulation of territorial cooperation.

MAIN EXPECTED OUTPUTS:

- Creation of a close trans-border network of local stakeholders
- Development of proven new structures and tools on the Polish and Czech side
- Internet based trans-border multilingual communication and information system

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2007

Management and Coordination:

- Development of 17 regional agencies.

Resources:

- Realisation of 3 newsletters in 3 languages (German, English and Polish)
- Production of "knowledge boxes" as content for the training seminars.
- Creation of an online forum to discuss about the next programme period 2007-13
- Setting-up of the regional support structure (with service centre as stage director) for analysing the 'European Information in the Region' (examination of the existing state and the previous core aspects of the

content, the previous financing, possible individual future scenarios, the required incorporation in a joint network, existing needs).

Cooperation:

- Organisation of an information campaign 'Future EUREGION 2007 Development of suitable strategies, handouts and tools of an information campaign for the three Euregions 'Pro Viadrina', 'Pommerania' and 'Spree-Neisse-Bober'.
- Organisation of 4 workshops on Border Regions' in English, German and Polish
- Organisation of 9 administration conferences in German, Polish, English for bringing together the regionally active administrative experts with the aim of greater sensitising for a cross-border cooperation, mutual acquaintances and the probing of opportunities as well as the legal foundations. T
- Organization of a cross border Campaign for Qualification and Sustainable Development through different events-activities: 3 regional conferences, 8 meetings of the Eurodistrict's Oderland-Nadodrze board and 11 meetings of the working groups.

Dissemination and Publicity:

- Participation at different dissemination events.

Financial Performances

Budget planned until December 2007: EUR 658 159. 03

Budget spent until December 2007: EUR 450 372. 05 (68%)

INTERACT Project COMPART (2C-12)**Coordinating and Programming Cross-border and Transnational Partnerships in Mediterranean and South-East Europe Areas through Stakeholder and Benchmarking Analysis**

FINALISED project closed by the Managing Authority

Duration: June 2004 – April 2007

Year of contracting: 2005

Priority: 2

Name of the Lead Partner (organization): Regional Government of Tuscany (Italy)

Number of other partners (incl. LP): 10

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- Identification of procedures to enhance the Regions' role in the INTERREG strategic programming (that is, participation in the elaboration of INTERREG complements)
- Identification of coordination measures within INTERREG and with MEDA and CARDS programmes as well as with the incoming Neighbourhood Programme
- Development of the partnership concept, taking into account the diverse vertical and horizontal subsidiary structures in South Mediterranean and South-East European Countries

MAIN EXPECTED OUTPUTS:

- 3 Expert Meetings
- 3 Steering Committees
- COMPART Internet Web
- Benchmarking instrument on partnership
- Concept Paper on partnership

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS**Resources:**

- Publication of 3 newsletters: general issues about European Territorial Cooperation (January 2006); the reform process of EU's external aid: cross-border cooperation under ENPI and IPA, and the role of Local Authorities in the new thematic programmes (April 2006); From territorial cooperation to Euro-regions (June 2006)
- Creation of the COMPART Concept Paper on the partnership concept based on a policy analysis of relevant documentation referring to

INTERREG ,MEDA ,CARS and Neighbouring Programmes

- Elaboration of 2 questionnaires: one for qualitative interviews addressed to relevant stakeholders in each EU partners region and country and the other for qualitative interviews addressed to relevant stakeholders in each non EU partners region and country.
- Realisation of 2 surveys: one referring to opportunities and constraint to enhance EU regions' role in strategic programming and coordination measures for the new programming period and the other concerning opportunities and constraint to enhance non EU regions' role in strategic programming and coordination measures for the new programming period.
- Production of the final paper on benchmarking analysis proposing procedures and mechanisms to improve the quality of partnership in programming and coordinating INTERREG programmes with national policies
- Realization of a document of recommendations to be addressed to the European Commission in the framework of the consultation process about the rules of implementing ENPI/IPA/CBC
- Elaboration of a Final Policy Paper "Building partnership in ENPI and IPA cross-border cooperation"
- Realisation of the publication "Toward a new partnership on Cross-border Cooperation for the Mediterranean Development"

Cooperation:

- Organisation of the 2 Experts Workshop for verifying the stakeholder's analysis results and for working out the methodology of benchmarking analysis and the necessary tools.
- Realization of the 3 dialogue workshops focused on IPA and ENPI: the first in Verteneglio (Italy), the second in Kozani (Greece) and the third in Florence (Italy).
- Participation to 5 events at national and international level for the project promotion: an international conference on ENPI, an international conference on IPA, PACINTERREG project Steering Committee and Final Conference, CRPM intermediterranean commission.

Dissemination & Publicity:

- Realisation of a project website which includes the most relevant deliverables and features; further development and constant update of the webpage.
- Distribution of a CDrom containing all the significant documents and results produced by the project

Financial Performances

Budget planned until April 2007: EUR 616 794
Budget spent until April 2007: EUR 566 313.20 (92%)

INTERACT Project Time 2C (2C-14)

Time 2C is growing to a governmental, political and institutional structure which improves the interregional, transnational and cross-border cooperation specifically between regions separated by seas

FINALISED project

Duration: January 2005 – June 2007

Year of contracting: 2005

Priority: 2

Name of the Lead Partner (organization): Province of Zeeland (The Netherlands)

Number of other partners (incl. LP): 9

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- Define the extent to which the results concerning maritime issues fed from INTERREG IIC into INTERREG III, how they contributed to the community initiative itself and how they could contribute to an INTERREG IV community initiative in terms of project types.
- Determine how the three strands (A, B & C) of INTERREG III are interacting and/or overlapping in geographical areas whilst focusing on the southern North Sea as an example.
- Create synergies and a maximum transfer of best practices and know-how on maritime projects throughout the whole INTERREG III programme and to improve the implementation of approved INTERREG maritime projects through better governance.

MAIN EXPECTED OUTPUTS:

- A small-scale Maritime Cross-Border Cooperation eCentre of Expertise to assist awareness raising activities and the formulation of future projects.
- A multilingual (English, French and Dutch) web-site on Maritime Cross-Border Cooperation including a Maritime Cross-Border Cooperation Guide of Practice for use in all European regions. Newsletters, leaflets, brochures and press articles.
- A European Maritime Cross-Border Cooperation seminar and high level master classes for representatives of the Executive Body of the regional authorities, including a full publicity campaign.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

Management & Coordination:

- Creation of a communication workgroup

Resources:

- Publication “Guide of Best Practices on Maritime INTERREG Projects”
- Final Report „Towards a Joint Cooperation Strategy” used as a Dutch input for the Green Paper on maritime policy, which includes the results of the master classes
- Project Compendium with a list of future project proposals
- Publication of 3 newsletters
- Realisation of 9 interviews during the Baltic Sea Conference with projects that took part to the event, using the same questionnaire used to analyse 17 Interreg projects in the Southern North Sea area.
- During the a final conference a joint statement was subscribed by all participants to underline the will to work together in the future

Cooperation:

- Organisation of 3 master classes concerning different topics: “Maritime Economy”, “Maritime Transport and Infrastructure”, “Coastal Development, Water management and Environment”
- Setting up of a maritime cross border co-operation eCentre of Expertise within the partnership
- Participation to thematic conferences and/or exhibitions at national and international level for the project promotion.

Dissemination & Publicity:

- Realisation of a project website which includes the most relevant deliverables and features; further development and constant update of the webpage.
- Presentation of all documents during a final conference in Middelburg (in November 2006). Speakers were members of the Task Force on Maritime Policy, the Interreg North Sea Secretariat and the Maritime Safety Umbrella Operation.

Financial Performances

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| Budget planned until June 2007: | EUR 754 000.00 |
| Budget spent until June 2007: | EUR 583 324.34 (77%) |

INTERACT Project FIMIP (2C-15)**Financial Management of INTERREG projects****FINALISED project****Duration: January 2005 – June 2007****Year of contracting: 2005****Priority: 2****Name of the Lead Partner (organization): County Council of Huelva****Number of other partners (incl. LP): 4****PROJECT OBJECTIVES:**

- Improve the (financial) management of current and future INTERREG projects, with a combined focus on current projects and a more strategic focus on future projects and programmes for the coming Structural Funds period;
- Conduct problem survey and problem analysis (elaborating on the projects mentioned above);
- Providing solutions, best practices and practical tools; make these available to the widest possible audience.

MAIN EXPECTED OUTPUTS:

- Production and design of a questionnaire that will be sent to the leader partners of INTERREG III B and C Projects.
- Compilation of contacts of INTERREG III B and C Leader Partners.
- Dissemination activities: design of leaflet, poster and website. Publication of an article in INTERACT News and press conference in Greece.
- Three meetings between partners for coordination of the project.
- Preparation of six workshops in six languages and four countries.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS**Resources:**

- Elaboration of 4 studies using the questionnaire containing the main recommendations for solving the problems that were found during the transnational workshops
- Realization of the guide in English and in Spanish referring to the best practices in Financial Management on INTERREG projects and including the recommendations

- Elaboration of two training handbooks as material to be used in the training sessions and as information material available on the project website
- Creation of an e-toolkit: a CD that contains all the relevant FIMIP products: leaflet with the recommendations, the guide and the two training handbooks

Cooperation:

- Organization of 4 transnational workshops in Huelva, Potsdam, Catania and Brussels. There was a high participation of stakeholders of the INTERREG Community
- Realisation of 2 Final Conferences for getting a wider coverage: the first in Huelva (January 2007), the second in Athens (March 2007)

Dissemination & Publicity:

- Realisation of a project website in English and Spanish, which includes the most relevant deliverables and features; further development and constant update of the webpage.
- Creation of the leaflets addressed to the INTERREG stakeholders in English, Spanish, Greek, German and Italian, containing the main recommendations for the new programming period 2007-2013
- Participation to numerous dissemination initiatives related to other projects and initiatives organised by the project partners
- Publication of different articles in Spanish and Greek on local and European newspapers
- Realisation of promotional materials: gadgets, posters and brochure.

Financial Performances

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| Budget planned until June 2007: | EUR 701 000 |
| Budget spent until June 2007: | EUR 619 499.14 (88%) |

INTERACT Project INTERPROCEDURE (2C-16)

Cooperating for a better management of the eligibility criteria in INTERREG Programmes

FINALISED project closed by the Managing Authority

Duration: January 2005 – June 2006

Year of contracting:

Priority: 2

Name of the Lead Partner (organization): Navarre Regional Government (Spain)

Number of other partners (incl. LP): 3

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- Identify the problems which project managers and beneficiaries from programmes in different INTERREG strands have to deal with currently.
- Analyse the problems by contrasting them both at the level of the programmes in the project partnership and at transnational level. In this way, it will be possible to distinguish between those cases which require regional handling and those which should be approached from a European perspective.
- Find and disseminate solutions to the problems perceived, combining the identification of best practice and the detection of new ideas, which can contribute to the project's general objective.

MAIN EXPECTED OUTPUTS:

- Participation of at least 30 key disseminators to carry out the diagnosis and solution identification processes.
- Publication of a final document which will include the conclusions and recommendations achieved by the project.
- Organisation of four seminars which will be the main vehicle for disseminating the results achieved. At these seminars, the document on the conclusions of the project
- will be presented as a tool to facilitate effective impacts through the Member States.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

Resources:

- Realisation of 2 surveys for identifying the problems and the solutions faced in the INTERREG Programmes in relation to financing expenses.
- Publication of a final document „Key issues to Europe“ that contains

solutions for improving the application and articulation of the regulations on expenditure eligibility in the framework of the INTERREG III programmes.

Cooperation:

- Organization of 3 Workshops with the participation of auditors from the public and the private sectors
- Organisation of the final conference in Pamplona where the joint document was elaborated

Dissemination & Publicity:

- Participation to numerous dissemination initiatives
- Publication of different articles on local and regional newspapers
- Realisation of promotional materials: gadgets, posters and leaflets.

Financial Performances

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| Budget planned until June 2006: | EUR 282 507.50 |
| Budget spent until June 2006: | EUR 232 434.12 (82%) |

INTERACT Project INTER-A (2C-17)

INTERREG Best Practices Analysis in terms of Managing Tools for Cooperation Programmes and Support Tools for SMEs in Innovation & Internationalisation Process

FINALISED project closed by the Managing Authority

Duration: November 2004 – December 2006

Year of contracting: 2005

Priority: 2

Name of the Lead Partner (organization): Instituto Tecnológico de Canarias, S.A. (Spain)

Number of other partners (incl. LP): 15

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- Facilitate the exchange and access to diverse tools and methods implemented by partner organisations by other initiatives' promoters and by INTERREG authorities on the two main priority axes (i.e. management of INTERREG programmes and innovation with SMEs).
- Build an efficient tool allowing the extension of cooperation towards other territories (possibility of "replicability" of the tools and methods).
- Increase the efficiency and adaptability of the INTERREG programme and future cooperation programmes to territorial needs, including the analysis of potential overlapping, inconsistencies and synergies with other SMEs support programmes.

MAIN EXPECTED OUTPUTS:

- Reports on the results of the programmes and projects analysis work
- A toolkit addressed to INTERREG actors for successful project management
- Recommendations to EU managing bodies aimed to improve INTERREG procedures
- Staff exchanges and training seminars

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

Management & Coordination:

- Organization of 2 thematic committees on "Management of cooperation projects" and "Support to innovation within SMEs"

Resources:

- Publication of the Vademecum of "Good practices and useful tools for the

promotion of the innovation in the SMEs and the management of cooperation projects”

- Publication of a Recommendation Paper to improve cooperation practices in INTERREG projects
- Creation of an Innovation tool database included on the European Business and Innovation Centres Network (EBN) website
- Development of a questionnaire to analyze cooperation tools, practices and process made available to INTERREG project developers.

Cooperation:

- Realization of 3 teleconferences between the leaders of the thematic groups, the EBN and the coordinator to assure the optimal results of the project
- Organisation of a dissemination event on the outcome of the first study.
- Organisation of a dissemination conference (called Project Factory) within the XV EBN annual congress. The main project results and methodologies used were described. The target group was composed by other BICs and PLs.
- Realisation of 7 Regional dissemination events on the project's final results.
- Realisation of a unplanned dissemination event on the final outcomes of the project in the EBN XV annual Congress. A workshop and a stand were organised.

Dissemination & Publicity:

- Realisation of a project website which includes the most relevant deliverables and features; further development and constant update of the webpage.
- Dissemination of the project results through 2 European networks: EBN and IRC.
- Publication of different articles on specialised technical publications and newsletters in countries within the partnership
- Realisation of promotional materials: gadgets, posters and leaflets.

Financial Performances

Budget planned until December 2006: EUR 560 000

Budget spent until December 2006: EUR 507 487.04 (91%)

INTERACT Project FRONTIERS (2C-18)

Successful INTERREG Project Planning and Implementation – The Case of Remote Areas

Duration: June 2005 – May 2008

Year of contracting: 2005

Priority: 2

Name of the Lead Partner (organization): Rodopi Development S.A. (Greece)

Number of other partners (incl. LP): 10

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- Improving the access of European remote areas to sound and appropriate information in order to support their familiarisation with the Community Initiative INTERREG and improve their co-operation with other areas in terms of common planning and joint implementation of successful projects within all strands of the Community Initiative INTERREG.
- Increasing the capacities of certain groups of final beneficiaries in European remote areas in terms of accessing ERDF funds, developing innovative approaches and managing interregional, transnational and cross-border development projects of the Community Initiative INTERREG.
- Increasing the effectiveness of regional development projects in European remote areas where a clearly identified potential exists, in order to promote the balanced development and cohesion of the European space, focusing also on the countries of the New Neighbourhood.

MAIN EXPECTED OUTPUTS:

- Information seminars, workshops, awareness raising and dissemination activities for local actors and beneficiaries of the participating countries
- Common typology of problems and good practices, which are accordingly reducing or increasing the effectiveness of INTERREG projects and structural interventions in remote areas of the EU as well as training seminars on "INTERREG Projects' Planning" and "INTERREG Projects' Implementation" for groups of final beneficiaries from the pilot areas
- Analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the pilot areas as well as the design and realisation of a methodology on efficient planning and implementation of INTERREG projects in remote European areas.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2007

Resources:

- Editing of the study on common problems and extraction of good practice of

the recorded INTERREG projects

- Presentation of the structure of the database. Feeding the data base will be done in 2008
- Realisation of a specifications report on conducting a situation analysis per participating area

Cooperation:

- Organisation of 7 information seminars to inform local publics
- Organisation of an international conference in Trapani in September 2007
- Organisation of 4 seminars in Estonia with specific content related to INTERREG Iva and a seminar was held in Trapani
- Organisation of 2 international workshops in Greece and Estonia

Financial Performances

Budget planned until December 2007: EUR 1 282 329. 70

Budget spent until December 2007: EUR 444 288. 39 (35%)

INTERACT Project SPARC (2C-19)**Spatial Planning and Regional Competitiveness****Duration: January 2005 – July 2008****Year of contracting: 2005****Priority: 2****Name of the Lead Partner (organization): Heriot-Watt University (UK)****Number of other partners (incl. LP): 6****PROJECT OBJECTIVES:**

- To develop knowledge and skills related to integrated spatial development and planning through training that is targeted at those taking part (or wanting to take part) in INTERREG programmes or transnational cooperation under the new Structural Funds after 2007. These include project promoters, programme secretariats, contact points, representatives on monitoring and steering committees, persons and institutions. Those in local and regional authorities involved in INTERREG programme development and implementation are a special target group. We aim to promote enhanced understanding of links between sectoral policies/activities at the EU, Member State and subregional levels and their impact in terms of spatial development, thereby contributing to the horizontal and vertical integration of policies and activities.
- To challenge traditional administrative cultures and practices. We will demonstrate that spatial planning and integrated development is a strategic and visionary activity that operates at and across European, transnational and regional scales. It is integrative. It aims for competitiveness and territorial cohesion and sustainable spatial development.
- To develop a transnational, polycentric network of institutions that can develop and deliver training in spatial development and planning through connecting experience and findings from the European Spatial Planning Observation Network (ESPON) and INTERREG to practical decision-making in different regions.

MAIN EXPECTED OUTPUTS:

- A distance learning pack in English on Spatial Planning and Regional Competitiveness. This will have eight units that cover general principles and more, plus additional units in the form of regional case studies and transnational exercises.
- Production and delivery of a module on Spatial Planning and Regional Competitiveness by a network of universities and professional bodies across Europe. Delivery includes tuition, assessment and accreditation by partners.
- Assessment and accreditation by the partners of successful completion of the learning package means that there would be a common platform and set of benchmark standards. This will add value to the preparatory work and cooperation on spatial planning aspects for INTERREG IIIA and IIIB and IIIC applicants and the new Structural Funds after 2007.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2007

Management & Coordination:

- Setting up of a database to record module awards
- Updating of core units based on outcome of internal feedback exercises
- Updating of Case Studies based on outcome of internal feedback exercises

Cooperation:

- Organisation of a student workshop in connection with completion of case study assignment in Edinburgh (Heriot-Watt University) in November 2007.

Dissemination & Publicity:

- Realisation of the email marketing of the 2nd and the 3rd SPARC teaching phases

Financial Performances

Budget planned until December 2007: EUR 386 882

Budget spent until December 2007: EUR 362 781. 50 (94%)

INTERACT Project EX-INT (2C-20)

From external to internal: managing the transformation of borders and preparing for the New Neighborhood

FINALISED project

Duration: May 2005 – December 2007

Year of contracting: 2005

Priority: 3.2

Name of the Lead Partner (organization): Greek Ministry of Macedonia and Thrace (Greece)

Number of other partners (incl. LP): 8

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- Dissemination of know-how from EU internal and/or former external border cooperation (all three INTERREG strands).
- Smooth and effective inclusion of new Member States and accession countries in the INTERREG programme.
- Utilisation of the local know-how and mobilisation of local stakeholders.

MAIN EXPECTED OUTPUTS:

- Handbooks and guides for the administrative structure reflection in the region.
- Best practices and reference guides for the transfusion of successful approaches from other regions.
- Common communication structures and tools (e.g. yellow pages, benchmarking procedures etc.) for common formulation of programmes and projects.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

Management & Coordination:

- Definition of a clear and coherent communication strategy for all stakeholders involved
- Realisation of promotional materials: gadgets, posters and leaflets.

Resources:

- Realisation of 2 handbooks: "Yellow Pages catalogue" and "Best Practices guide".
- Realisation of a guide for joint project development.

- Publication of 7 guides for the best practises, 7 Yellow Pages guides, one for every project partner except the Lead Partner that published an introduction guide accompanying the previous guides and a folder in order to include the guides.
- Development of a database available on the website including all the information of Yellow pages Guide.
- Publication of 4 guides for the preparation of common projects (one for each European financial tool EGTC, ERDF, IPA, ENPI and for each Greek partner)
- Realisation of a study on Cross Border Cooperation Initiative that focused on EGTC.
- Realisation of 4 Country reports (Albania, Bulgaria, Fyrom, Romania) in 2 languages.
- Realisation of a study "Expertise-overview of the INTERREG III activities-results, strategy"
- Publication of a study on European Project management
- Realisation by the LP of a benchmarking report in order to schedule and organise the study tours
- Realisation of a final CD containing the all the guides of the project and all training material used in the seminars and workshops.
- Realisation of 4 surveys in every Greek Region and 4 surveys in the neighbouring countries (Albania, FYROM, Bulgaria, Turkey). The registration of organizations and projects in Cyprus and the Czech Republic has been also completed

Cooperation:

- Organisation and implementation of 5 study tours by the LP (Berlin, Chemnitz, Marseille, Cyprus, Prague) for the project dissemination, know how exchange, preparation for future cooperation, promotion of EGTC
- 13 seminars were organised for the training of the final beneficiaries and the local authorities' officials.
- Realisation by the LP of an event for the promotion of cross border cooperation between local stakeholders.
- Organisation by the LP of a focused event concerning the EGTC promotion, addressed to local authorities, universities and chambers.
- Realisation of a promotional event by a Greek PP in Athens for the promotion of its activities in the project.
- Organisation of a closing event for the project results dissemination in Thessaloniki

Dissemination & Publicity:

- Realisation of a project website in Greek and English, which includes the most relevant deliverables and features; further development and constant update of the webpage.
- Realisation of promotional materials: gadgets, posters and leaflets

Financial Performances

Budget planned until December 2007: EUR 1 547 000.00

Budget spent until December 2007: EUR 1 180 375.15 (76%)

INTERACT Project RE-ACT (2C-21)

Regional Actors in INTERREG Cooperation

FINALISED project closed by the Managing Authority

Duration: January 2005 – May 2007

Year of contracting: 2005

Priority: 2

Name of the Lead Partner (organization): Emilia Romagna Region (Italy)

Number of other partners (incl. LP): 8

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- To contribute to the improvement of the management procedures in the various INTERREG programmes.
- To improve the management capability of NUTS II administrations of INTERREG programmes, strands A, B, C.
- To improve the quality of projects developed on INTERREG III programmes (design, implementation, participation).

MAIN EXPECTED OUTPUTS:

- RE-ACT project database
- Manual on INTERREG project management; recommendations for an homogenisation of INTERREG programmes management procedures
- Staff exchanges (four executives) and training seminars (3x12 hours)

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS:

Resources:

- Realization of the final report "Analysis on Interreg projects management" that provides information on the 2000-2006 programming period, by identifying best practices and critical points in the management of INTERREG programmes
- Publication of the final report Analysis on Interreg projects management. The report provides a useful overview of the general issues faced in project management and it is based on a detailed analysis on 73 Interreg projects in the A, B and C strands.
- Publication of the information manual with the title "INTERREG in the Emilia-Romagna Region: the implementation of the Community Initiative on trans-European cooperation in the 2000-2006 period"

- Publication of the information manual with the title “INTERREG in IIIB-IIIC in Lombardy”
- Elaboration of the Concept Paper “Recommendations drawn from an analysis of INTERREG Programmes”, which has attempted to chart a roadmap of selected ways in which the planning and management of the next round of “European Territorial Cooperation” Programmes can be improved
- Creation of a “Regional Practitioner Guidelines for Good Project Management in the Territorial Cooperation Objectives”. This tool kit arms future project managers with a series of useful tips and guidelines for more efficient projects
- Publication of newsletters

Cooperation:

- Organization of 7 training seminars (4 more than planned) in Italy, Ireland, Greece and Spain about crucial topics related to the INTERREG Initiative
- Realisation of workshops by the project partners concerning relevant topics about INTERREG programmes and other ERDF-supported programmes.
- In the frame of the additional activities of the project, the Lombardia Region and IREALP organised a seminar in Milan (April 2007) to present the activities and the results of two INTERACT projects: React and Promonte
- Realisation of two Staff Exchanges: Champagne Ardenne – Emilia-Romagna in May 2006 and Lombardia – Centre Balears Europa in July 2006

Dissemination & Publicity:

- Realisation of email campaign
- Info-pack (in paper and electronic formats) containing all the relevant information material produced within the project
- Creation of an intranet, that is accessible via the webpage
- Realisation of promotional materials: gadgets, posters and leaflets

Financial Performances

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Budget planned until May 2007: | EUR 1 121 500 |
| Budget spent until May 2007: | EUR 964 656.98 (86%) |

INTERACT Project ALSO (2C-22)**Achievement of the Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategy Objectives****by INTERREG****FINALISED project****Duration: June 2005 – October 2007****Year of contracting: 2005****Priority: 2****Name of the Lead Partner (organization): Marche Region (Italy)****Number of other partners (incl. LP): 15****PROJECT OBJECTIVES:**

- General Objectives: To facilitate exchange of know-how between regional development planners, INTERREG programme managers and INTERREG project developers; To foster INTERREG project development and to facilitate a wider and more qualified participation in the future European Territorial Cooperation Objective; To make the findings available for the European.
- Commission, the INTERACT Secretariat, the INTERACT Points and the INTERREG community with the aim of improving the effectiveness of INTERREG III and contributing to the new programming of the European Territorial Cooperation Objective.
- Specific Objectives: ALSO aims to examine and evaluate a defined number of INTERREG projects and test them on an Evaluation Model in order to produce a Good Practices Manual and a Checklist supplying the key indication for evaluating INTERREG projects results and impact, training regional planners and operators/project managers and orienting the new generation of INTERREG projects (European Territorial Cooperation) towards the objectives of the Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategy.

MAIN EXPECTED OUTPUTS:

- Scientific outputs: ALSO Evaluation Model, ALSO Report Analysis.
- Operational outputs: ALSO Good Practice Manual, ALSO Checklist, two ALSO workshops to raise awareness and train regional actors about the role played by ALSO.
- Dissemination outputs: Ongoing publication of all information regarding ALSO project on the project website; continuous web-marketing activities; publication of two high level articles in the EIPASCOPE magazine; production and dissemination of ALSO materials (leaflets, posters, gadgets); participation at special events and organisation of three STRAND Working Conferences and a Final Conference.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS:**Management and Coordination:**

- Creation of the Financial Reporting Manual for the PPs by the ALSO Secretariat on the bases of the INTERACT Financial reporting guidelines provided by the INTERACT Managing Authority.
- Setting up of an internal communication procedure by the ALSO Secretariat.
- Setting up of the ALSO project bodies. ALSO Secretariat, ALSO Scientific Committee and ALSO Working Groups
- Organisation of a conference on “European Territorial Cooperation: INTERact for re-launching the Lisbon and Gothenburg Agenda”
- Development of the ALSO software based and customized on the ALSO Evaluation Model

Resources:

- Production of the ALSO Report Analysis that is part of the ALSO Manual for Project Assessment: 3 “good practices” have been selected, one per strand (A, B and C). In addition, 3 “good practices”, one per dimension (criteria) plus the overall winner have been selected and validated by the ALSO SC.
- Setting up of the ALSO package "ALSO Manual for Projects Assessment: looking for guiding principles", which includes the three main ALSO products: ALSO Evaluation Model, ALSO Good Practice Manual and ALSO Checklist

Cooperation:

- Organisation of 2 ALSO Workshops where some PPs presented the achieved results to all the ALSO working groups in view of the ALSO Good Practices Manual and the ALSO Checklist elaboration
- Organisation of 3 Strand Working Conferences during which the ALSO Evaluation Model and the ALSO Evaluation Model Software were presented to the INTERREG Community
- Participation to thematic conferences and/or exhibitions at national and international level for the project promotion: Regions Open Days in Brussels October 2006, Valencia Meeting (June 2006), Forum PA in Rome (May 2006 and 2007), Liubiana Meeting (December 2006), STIMENT Final Conference (May 2006), CEI meeting for Interregional and Cross Border Cooperation (January 2006), European Territorial Cooperation 2007-2013 in Bologna (November 2006), Tools and opportunities of the new European community planning in Rimini in October 2006, Introduction to European Territorial Cooperation in Lisbon (June 2007), Interact event in Turku (June 2007), Interact meeting in Vienna (March 2007), Interact Meeting in Budapest (March 2007), Dissemination meetings in Brussels at the EU Commission.

Dissemination & Publicity:

- Creation of the ALSO Database and selected of the first 24 projects using

the ALSO evaluation model

- Creation of the ALSO Package titled “ALSO Manual for project assessment - Looking for guiding principles” (March 2007).
- Elaboration and Delivery of the ALSO Evaluation Model Software
- Realisation of promotional materials: gadgets, posters and leaflets.
- Production of 3 newsletters
- Publication of articles and news concerning the project at local and international level: INTERACT newsletters, INTERACT project COMPART newsletter, Marche Region and Italian press release, CEI newsletter article, Lisbon Platform website.
- Realization of the ALSO Photo competition, the ALSO Photo exhibition, and Photo Exhibition Catalogue

Financial Performances

Budget planned until October 2007: EUR 1 376 047.79
Budget spent until October 2007: EUR 1 313 412.09 (95%)

INTERACT Project LARA-INTERREG TOOL BOX (2C-23)**Toolbox for local and regional authorities working with INTERREG projects****FINALISED project****Duration: June 2004 – June 2007****Year of contracting: 2005****Priority: 2****Name of the Lead Partner (organization): VNG International (The Netherlands)****Number of other partners (incl. LP): 7****PROJECT OBJECTIVES:**

- Increased participation from local and regional authorities in (projects within) the INTERREG programme.
- Improving the quality of (municipal and regional) INTERREG projects.
- Developing a strategy to involve town partnerships in the INTERREG programme, initially from within the partner countries.

MAIN EXPECTED OUTPUTS:

- Practical toolbox for local and regional authorities on (developing) INTERREG projects.
- Strategy on involving town partnerships (and regional authorities) in the INTERREG programme.
- Sustainable pipeline of INTERREG projects with participation of town partnerships.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS**Management & Coordination:**

- Establishment of LARA contact points in the target countries. These have been successfully accomplished in CZ, HU and the NL and to a lesser extent in Poland.
- At the end of each end-user training course an extensive evaluation was held by means of a questionnaire and a class room discussion with the participants.

Resources:

- Completion of the collection of cases: nearly 200 practical cases and projects on local and regional governments involved in the implementation of EU Structural Funds and INTERREG projects were collected

- Finalisation of six pilot projects on ESF and ERDF project generation that were conducted between Dutch and Polish/Czech partners until the end of 2005.
- Generation of over 65 project proposals ready to be transferred in actual ESF/Interreg IV applications by the involved municipalities
- Offering of partner search tool for INTERREG projects through the LARA website
- Creation of the LARA INTERREG Toolbox containing the programme management tools, the practical cases, more elaborate project descriptions developed under the pilot projects programme and the practical course materials
- Realisation of a manual which guides local authorities step by step to process of writing an application for EU funds (INTERREG and other Structural Funds). The manual will be distributed as support material on the regional seminars and on the end-user training courses.

Cooperation:

- Distribution of the LARA INTERREG Toolbox through local and regional seminars and workshops
- Conduction of trainer courses and end-user courses addressed to the target countries. 9 trainers were trained in Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic and these trainers trained over 60 municipal officers while in the Netherlands over 30 officers were trained
- Alongside the end-user course, availability of an external expert with practical experience with INTERREG and Structural Funds to assist municipalities and/or provinces with preparing project applications for INTERREG or Structural Funds (new programming period).
- Organisation of a final seminar for assisting selected municipalities that took part at the end-user trainings.

Dissemination & Publicity:

- Dissemination of a project brochure in the project partner's languages
- Updating and translation of the core content of the website into English, Czech, Dutch, Hungarian, Polish and Spanish
- Commitment of the LP VNG to prolong LARA activities by financing the Service Bureau Europe for the upcoming years. The services offered through the bureau derive directly from the LARA contact point activities.

Financial Performances

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|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Budget planned until June 2007: | EUR 1 299 773.00 |
| Budget spent until June 2007: | EUR 994 315.68 (76%) |