

*Insight Brussels is an information service exclusively tailored for Eurosité members. Insight Brussels reports on developments in Brussels regarding the Bird and Habitat Directives, the Common Agricultural Policy and other relevant policies; it also reports on funding opportunities and key events. Insight Brussels also acts as a platform for Eurosité members to share their views and agree on collective action. Insight Brussels is a product of the European Facilitation Service.*

## EU Funding: Interreg IVc - Inter-regional Cooperation

European Territorial Cooperation is one of the objectives of the European Fund for Regional Development (ERDF). The ERDF is one of the financial instruments of the EU's Cohesion Policy and can be used by site managers to finance their projects. European Territorial Cooperation, also called Interreg, is divided in three strands of cooperation:

- Interreg IVa: cross-border cooperation;
- Interreg IVb: transnational cooperation;
- Interreg IVc: inter-regional cooperation.

This factsheet will focus on Interreg IVc: inter-regional cooperation. More information on the other cooperation strands can be found on the Eurosité website: [www.eurosite.org](http://www.eurosite.org).

Interreg IVc has one Operational Programme (OP)<sup>1</sup>. This OP is lead by a Secretariat and it covers all of the EU territory. All Member States can participate in Interreg IVc. A total budget of 445 million<sup>2</sup> euro is available for the programme period 2007-2013.

### Objective/ Priorities

The overall objective of the programme is "to improve the effectiveness of regional development policies in the areas of innovation, the knowledge economy, the environment and risk prevention as well as to contribute to the economic modernisation and increased competitiveness of Europe"<sup>3</sup>. The programme sees the exchange, sharing and transfer of experience, knowledge and good practice as the means to achieve this objective<sup>5</sup>.

The IVc programme is organised around two thematic priorities, which are related to the Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategies<sup>4, 6</sup>:

Priority 1: Innovation and the knowledge economy, focusing on: i) innovation, research and technological development, ii) entrepreneurship and SME's, iii) the information society, iv) employment, human capital and education.

Priority 2: Environment and risk prevention, focusing on: i) natural and technological risks (including climate change), ii) water management, iii) waste management, iv) biodiversity and preservation of natural heritage (including air quality), v) energy and sustainable transport, vi) cultural heritage and landscape.

An integrating (cross-cutting) approach is encouraged and projects demonstrating this will receive priority in the selection process.

### Operational Programme

The Interreg IVC programme is described in detail in the OP document and the programme manual. Several topics are highlighted below:

- **Activities:** Activities that can be undertaken under IVC to achieve the programme objectives and with a focus on knowledge exchange are:
  - study visits,
  - joint training sessions and exercises,
  - staff exchange,
  - studies and reports,
  - data analysis,
  - comparative case studies,
  - meetings and events (interregional workshops, seminars, conferences, etc.),
  - information and publicity actions (press release, brochures, leaflets and newsletters, website, radio and TV broadcasts, etc.),
  - development of common conceptual and methodological frameworks, elaboration and pilot experimentation of new instruments and approaches, development of operational action plans<sup>4</sup>.
  
- **Budget:** The programme budget (445 million) euro is divided over the different priorities: 55% for priority 1 and 39% for priority 2<sup>3</sup>. The Programme co-finances 75% or 85% of the project costs, depending on the GDP per head of the participating Member State.  
 It is not possible to receive advance payments, meaning that partners have to pre-finance project activities. The IVC payment grant is based on six-month progress reports.
  
- **Partnership:** Projects have to involve partners from at least three countries, from which at least two partners must be from EU Members states. Under the IVC programme all Member States all eligible. Partners outside the EU territory are welcomed, but cannot be co-financed from the IVC programme. They have to participate at their own cost. Exceptions are made for (potential) candidate countries for EU membership. Norway and Switzerland can participate under special circumstances. Eligible partners under IVC are public authorities and bodies whose expenditure is considered as public expenditure<sup>4,6</sup>.  
 Applications from national, regional or local authorities, or partnerships having at least a solid and relevant participation of regional and local authorities and policy and decision makers in them, will be considered with priority in the selection process<sup>4</sup>. In order to maximise the impact of this programme on regional and local policies across the EU, applicants are strongly encouraged to include the relevant and competent public authorities in their operations.
  
- **Eligibility:** In order to be eligible to ERDF funding under Interreg IVC, beneficiaries have to be public authorities or bodies whose expenditure is considered as public expenditure. This applies especially to bodies governed by public law.

A body governed by public law means any body:

- a) established for the specific purpose of meeting needs in the general interest, not having an industrial or commercial character;
- b) having legal personality; and
- c) either:
  - financed, for the most part, by the State, regional or local authorities, or other bodies governed by public law;
  - or subject to management supervision by those bodies;
  - or having an administrative, managerial or supervisory board, more than half of whose members are appointed by the State, regional or local authorities, or by other bodies governed by public law.

The private sector (i.e. profit-making organisations or NGOs which do not fulfil the requirements mentioned above) can participate in operations at their own cost.

**Project type**

Two types of projects are supported in the Interreg IVc programme, Regional Initiative and Capitalisation projects.

**Type 1: Regional Initiative Projects.** The type 1 projects allow partners to work together on a shared regional policy issue within the two thematic priorities. These projects should contribute the programme’s objective and should have a particular focus on the exchange of experience and on the identification, analysis and dissemination of good practices. Different levels of intensity of cooperation are possible under type 1, see table below for details.

	BASIC LEVEL	MEDIUM LEVEL	HIGH LEVEL
Intensity of cooperation	Exchange and dissemination of experience.	Exchange and dissemination of experience + transfer of practices / development of new approaches	Exchange and dissemination of experience + joint development of new approaches (mini programme)
Example of activities	Thematic seminars, study visits, exchanges of staff, conferences, web sites, newsletters, brochures, production of good practice guides.	In addition to ‘basic’ activities: - Pilot experimentations (for instance in the context of a transfer of practice) - Development of regional policy tools (methodologies, software)	In addition to ‘basic’ and ‘medium’ activities: - Development of sub-projects
Partnership	8-20 partners	10-15 partners	Max. 8 partners (preferably only public & regional authorities)
Duration	approx. 36 months	approx. 36 months	approx. 36 months
Budget	500.000 – 5 million euro	500.000 – 5 million euro	500.000 – 5 million euro

**Type 2: Capitalisation projects.** Type 2 are inter-regional cooperation projects which focus specifically on the transfer of regional development good practices into mainstream EU Structural Funds programmes (i.e. Convergence, Regional Competitiveness and Employment, and other European Territorial Cooperation programmes) of the regions participating in the project or represented in the partnership. As such, projects submitted should already be well aware of existing good practices in their field of cooperation. Potential partnerships should demonstrate that they have good results and transferable tools and approaches, as well as good management skills and knowledge of the theme in question. For type 2 six to ten countries are recommended for cooperation, with a duration of approximately 24 months and a budget of 300.000 – 3 million euro.

**Funding possibilities for site managers**

Below several funding possibilities for site managers are given. Please note that a more thorough overview can be found in the OP document.

- Exchange of experiences and knowledge, transfer and further development of policies dedicated to supporting integrated, sustainable and participatory approaches to management of inland and marine waters, including waterway infrastructure;
- Exchange of experiences and knowledge, transfer and further development of policies dedicated to developing of ecosystems based approach to the sustainable management of the seas, the management of coastal zones and the reaping of the benefits of the sea";
- Exchange of experiences and knowledge, transfer and further development of policies dedicated to ensuring the overall ecological coherence and robustness of the actions (especially within the Natura 2000 network);
- Exchange of experiences and knowledge, transfer and further development of policies dedicated to developing management mechanisms (including management plans where necessary) related to sites designated as special areas of conservation;
- Exchange of experiences and knowledge, transfer and further development of policies dedicated to promoting species or habitat action plans that set management priorities for Natura 2000 species across their entire natural range in the EU;
- Exchange of experiences and knowledge, transfer and further development of policies dedicated to ensuring the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 network;
- Exchange of experiences and knowledge, transfer and further development of policies dedicated to protecting and enhancing of cultural heritage and landscape;
- Exchange of experiences and knowledge, transfer and further development of policies dedicated to supporting tourism development with a particular focus on integrating sustainability aspects.

Also, the Eurosité website contains an overview of several projects done by Eurosité members during the previous programme period (Interreg IIIc). For more project ideas, please visit the Interreg programme websites, as they offer a project database.

- Interreg IIIc: [http://www.interreg3c.net/web/home\\_en](http://www.interreg3c.net/web/home_en) (August 27, '08)
- Interreg IVc: <http://www.interreg4c.eu/> (August 27, '08)

### Practical tips for project application

If you are interested in applying, please consider the following:

- Interreg IVc focuses on partnerships with a solid representation of national, regional and local authorities. The following mix is recommended:  
authorities / bodies governed by public law --- 70% / 30%;
- Member States are responsible for confirming the legal status of partners located in their territory. If one is unclear about their status and eligibility, the Member State representative should be contacted. Contact details are available at the programme website;
- Go to the programme website and read the Operational Programme and the latest Programme Manual. These documents contain the information about programme priorities, application guidelines, eligibility criteria etc.
- If you have questions about the programme and application, do not hesitate to contact the national or programme contact points. Contact details of these points are available at the programme website: [www.interreg4c.eu](http://www.interreg4c.eu) ;
- It is only possible to submit a project application during a call for proposal. Therefore it is important to find out when the next call will be opened. At each call updated information on the programme is given. Information and assistance on project developed are offered at any time;
- Staff costs are considered as a cash contribution, and are fully co-financed by the programme. It is thus possible to use (the payment) of staff time as a partners financial contribution to the project.

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