

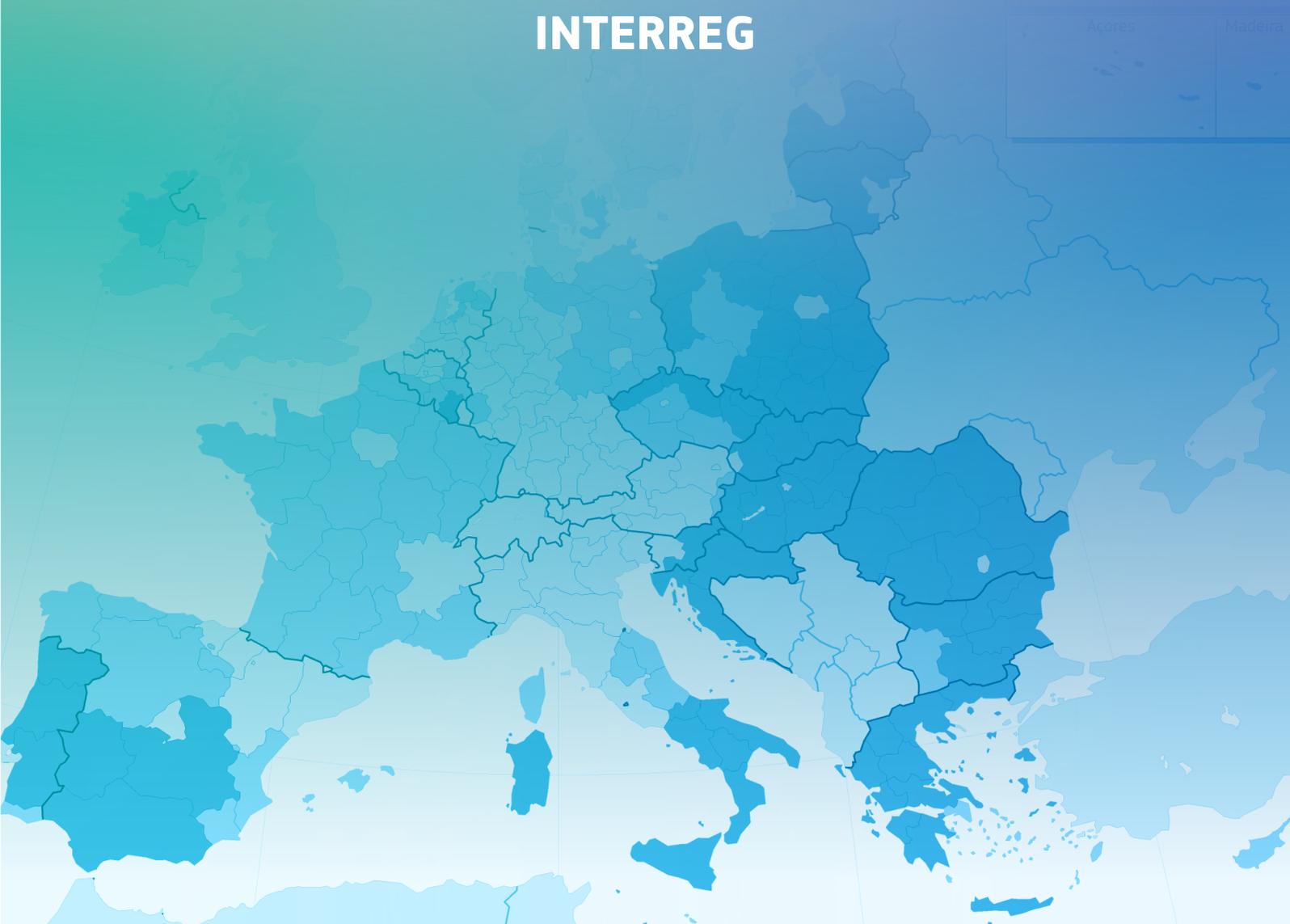
MID-TERM EVALUATION

OF THE EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT
FUND, THE COHESION FUND AND
THE JUST TRANSITION FUND



2021
2027

INTERREG



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Directorate B — Policy
Unit B.1 — Policy Development and Evaluation

Contact: Anna Wagner

E-mail: REGIO-B1-HEAD-OF-UNIT@ec.europa.eu

*European Commission
B-1049 Brussels*

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Annex 6.5
Fiche Interreg

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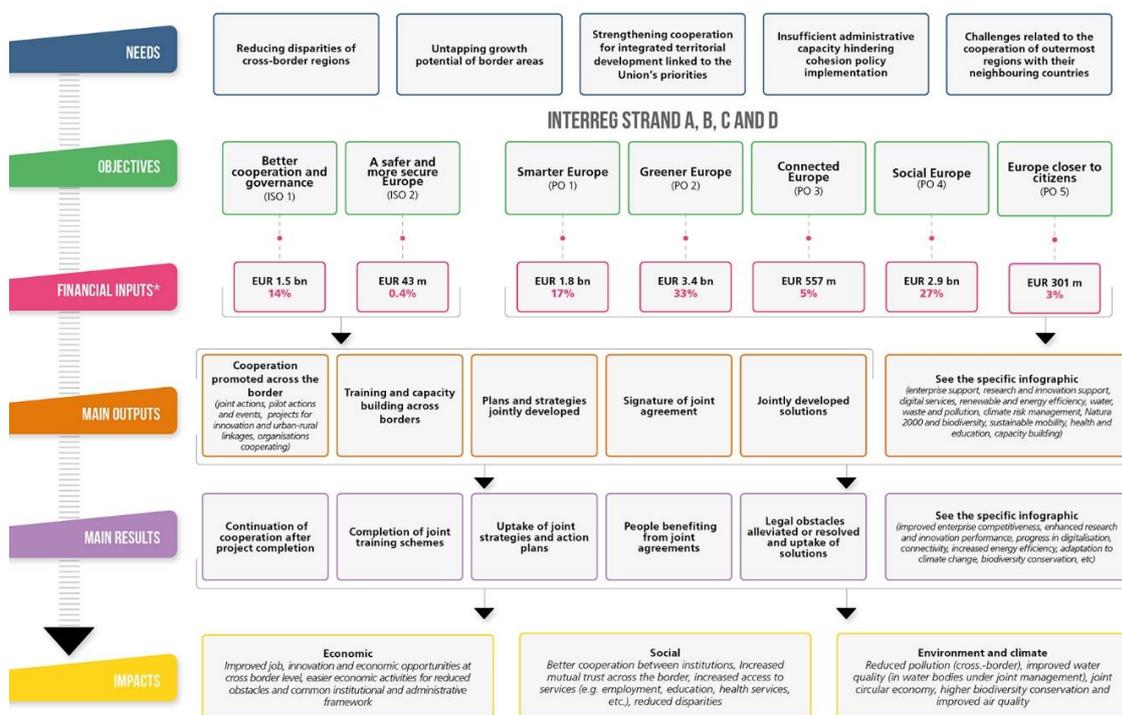
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Interreg

Article 110 EU Reg. 1060/2021 (CPR) allocates resources for two goals of EU Cohesion Policy: Jobs and Growth and European Territorial Cooperation. European Territorial Cooperation (Interreg) is organised under multiple strands: cross-border (Interreg A), trans-national (Interreg B), interregional (Interreg C) and outermost region cooperation (Interreg D). This fiche describes the intervention logic of Interreg with ERDF support and summarises evaluation findings and lessons learnt. The illustration of intervention logic covers needs, objectives, inputs, actions, outputs, results and impacts.

1. Part 1: Intervention logic

Figure 1 : Interreg Intervention logic illustration



*EU amount current prices

Source: Consortium elaboration

1.1. Needs

According to Article 176 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), ERDF addresses the main regional imbalances in the Union. Article 174 TFEU also explicitly refers to reducing disparities between levels of development in the various regions and the backwardness of least-favoured and cross-border regions. Each strand of Interreg address different common challenges ⁽¹⁾.

Cross-border cooperation (strand A) covers common challenges identified jointly in border regions and seeks to exploit the untapped growth potential in border areas. Strand A programmes support cooperation between NUTS III regions in at least two Member States lying directly on borders or adjacent to them.

⁽¹⁾ The scope of this fiche and the Mid-Term evaluation is limited to the resources employed by ERDF. Transnational Cooperation programmes benefit also from additional funding from IPA (Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance) or NDICI (Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument)

Moreover, Strand A covers cross-border programmes with neighbouring and candidate countries and combines different EU funds.

Transnational cooperation (strand B) focuses on strengthening cooperation for integrated territorial development linked to the Union's priorities. It involves partners from national to the local level in the Member States, as well as candidate countries and countries bordering the EU. Compared to cross-border cooperation, the transnational one relates to larger territories including around sea basins and those covered by macro-regional strategies.

Strand C addresses challenges related to the administrative capacity hindering cohesion policy implementations. Strand C contributes to boosting the effectiveness of cohesion policy through exchanges of experience and knowledge, innovative approaches and capacity building between regions, and cities. This is through four specific programmes: Interreg Europe, Interact, Urbact and Espon. Interreg Europe helps regional authorities to improve their regional development policies (capacity building), including Investment for Jobs and Growth programmes. The programme covers 27 EU Member States, Norway and Switzerland and was recently enlarged to five Western Balkan countries and Ukraine and Moldova. Interact, covering also the 27 Member States and Norway and Switzerland, provides support to the implementation of all other Interreg programmes and reinforces the effectiveness of cohesion policy through exchanges of experience, innovative approaches and capacity building. The Urbact IV programme supports cities implementing solutions to tackle the green, just and digital transitions in particular, through collaboration among local authorities, capacity building and expertise. The programme also covers like Interreg Europe 27 EU Member States, five Western Balkan countries and Ukraine and Moldova. ESPON carries out research and territorial analysis to advice and support policy makers at different levels of government, particularly in the field of Cohesion policy, with evidence and data. New countries (candidate countries) have also joined the programme as observers.

Strand D tackles the challenges related to the cooperation of outermost regions with their neighbouring countries. Strand D can combine ERDF and other funds and concerns four geographical areas: Amazonia, Caribbean, Middle Atlantic/Gulf of Guinea (MAC), Indian Ocean/Mozambique Channel.

Today 86 Interreg programmes are operating across EU internal and external borders. Interreg supports harmonious development at multiple territorial levels, bringing partners together across borders for health, the environment, research, tourism, education, culture and social inclusion, transport, sustainable energy and governance.

1.2. Objectives

Interreg programmes can invest in five policy objectives in Article 5 CPR: a more competitive and smarter Europe (PO1), a greener, low-carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy and resilient Europe (PO2), a more connected Europe (PO3), a more social and inclusive Europe (PO4), or a Europe closer to citizens (PO5). The Interreg regulation added two specific objectives (ISOs):

- Interreg Specific Objective (ISO) 1: A better cooperation governance.
- Interreg Specific Objective (ISO) 2: A safer and more secure Europe.

1.3. Programme inputs

1.3.1. Financial planned resources

The total Interreg financial allocation is EUR 14.079 billion for 2021-27, with EU funding of EUR 10.597 billion. This combines different funding sources from ERDF, IPA and NDICI ⁽²⁾. More than half the EU financial resources, EUR 6.3 billion, are dedicated to Interreg strand A (60%) and 22% to strand B (EUR 2.3 billion). An additional 9% (EUR 980 million) is dedicated to the Peace Plus Ireland-Northern Ireland/ United Kingdom programme. Strands C and D account for 5% and 3%, EUR 564 million and EUR 354 million respectively.

Of the total EU allocation:

- 14% or EUR 1.49 billion, is dedicated to Interreg-specific objective ISO1—Better cooperation governance;
- 0.4% or EUR 43.22 million is for Interreg-specific objective ISO2—Safer and more secure Europe;
- The remainder, around EUR 9 bn or 85.5% of the EU allocation, is planned under PO1 to PO5 objectives, analysed in the respective fiches (see other annexes of this study).

Almost half (45%) of resources under ISO 1 are allocated to ‘Institutional capacity of public authorities’ actions. The second most funded categories are ‘Other

⁽²⁾ ERDF funding for the Territorial cooperation goal through crossborder, transnational, interregional and outermost cooperation programmes in the EU27 with a budget of EUR 9 billion: the funding of cooperation under the Instrument for Pre Accession (IPA) with a budget of EUR 401 million; and, the funding of cooperation under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) with a budget of EUR 611 million.

actions to support better cooperation governance’ (almost 23%) and ‘People-to-people action for increased trust’ (16%).

1.3.2. Administrative and organisational aspects

Programme management is based on joint structures, based in one of the participating countries, responsible for the whole programme. The managing authorities use technical structures (joint secretariats) to support programme management and help the managing authority and the monitoring committee to carry out their functions.

Cross-border programmes involve regions from at least two Member States or between regions of at least one Member State and one or more neighbouring or candidate countries. Cross-border cooperation programmes cover NUTS III regions on borders, or adjacent regions.

The 2021-2027 legal framework reinforces transnational programme (Strand B) links with existing the EU strategic framework, in particular with EU macro regional strategies.

Strand C programmes involve Member State representatives, Norway, Switzerland and candidate countries on an equal footing to promote better cooperation governance with different funding sources (ERDF, NDICI, IPA). Compared with the 2014-2020 period, Interreg D programmes can support cooperation for outermost regions with neighbouring countries and territories as well as manage both external funds and ERDF under the same set of rules.

1.3.3. Capacity building challenges and risks

The study survey also investigates programme implementation and capacity building challenges. The total is more than 100% because managing authorities could choose more than one option. The biggest challenge to programme implementation in the current programming period is setting up management for the new rules and procedures, according to 48% of the responses, 43% find delays in starting implementation challenging. This is followed by 39% of Interreg respondents that find late approval of the programme and 39% that find financial data monitoring system challenging. This is followed by project generation and calls (30%), financial management (26%) and the performance framework (26%). Least challenging appear to be reporting to the EC and coordination with intermediate bodies.

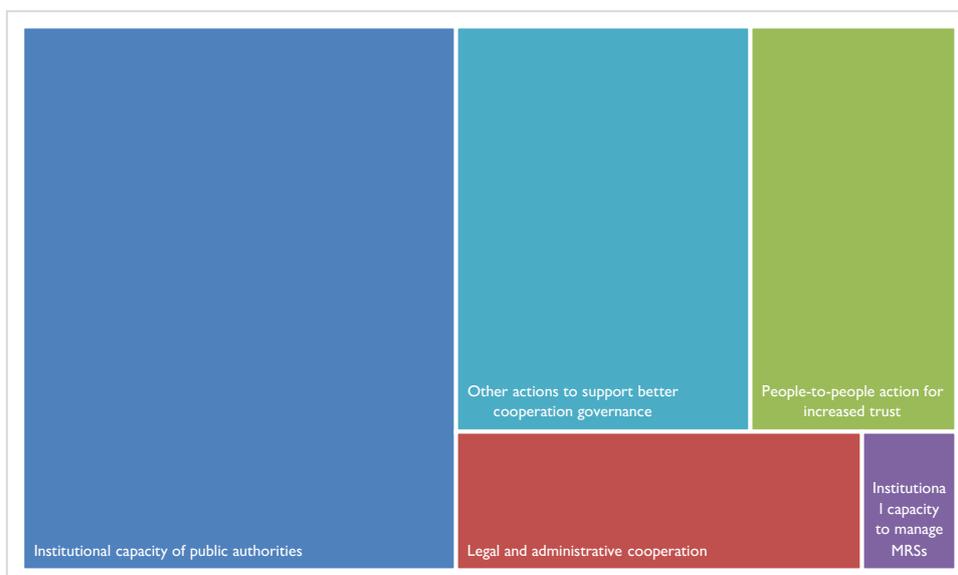
1.4. Planned activities under ISOs

Planned actions in POs 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 are similar to those detailed in each PO fiche. Therefore, these are not described here. This fiche focuses planned actions for the two ISOs.

As illustrated above, ISO 1— a better cooperation governance has the following actions: institutional capacity of public authorities; legal and administrative cooperation; people-to-people action for increased trust; institutional capacity to manage macroregional strategies; and other actions to support better cooperation governance.

- Almost half the ISO 1 resources (46%) are for investments to enhance institutional capacity in public authorities (ISO6.1), linked to all Interreg strands;
- Actions to enhance efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens, civil society actors and institutions (ISO6.2), absorbs 11% of the ISO 1 allocation;
- Actions under ISO6.3 to build mutual trust, in particular by encouraging people-to-people actions and accounts for 16% of ISO 1;
- The category ISO6.4 to enhance institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders to implement macro-regional strategies and sea- basin strategies, as well as other territorial strategies (all strands) accounts for 2.5% of the allocation;
- Category ISO6.5 to enhance sustainable democracy and support civil society actors and their role in reforming processes and democratic transitions (all strands involving third countries, partner countries or Overseas Countries and Territories). No programmes have selected this category of actions so no amount is planned;
- Other actions to support better cooperation governance (all strands) account for the remainder of the ISO1 budget, EUR 459 million (23.5%).

Figure 2: Categories of actions, ISO1 – Cooperation governance



Source: Consortium elaboration, based on February 2024 data

The second Interreg-specific objective, ISO2—Safer and more secure Europe, instead has four groups of actions:

- ISO 7.1 Border crossing management and infrastructure, EUR 13 million;
- ISO 7.2 Mobility and migration management, EUR 14 million;
- ISO 7.3 Protection and economic and social integration of third-country nationals (including refugees), EUR 2 million;
- ISO 7.4 Other actions for a safer and more secure Europe, EUR 13 million.

Each of these categories has around 30% of financial allocation for ISO2, with the exception of protection and integration of migrants (including refugees), which has around 5% of the allocation.

Figure 3: Categories of actions, ISO2 - Safer and more secure Europe



Source: Consortium elaboration, based on February 2024 data

1.5. Output

Analysis of the 2029 target values of common output indicators across actions of the two specific objectives enables mapping of the most frequent deliverables for programmes.

Interreg programmes enhance the institutional capacity of public administrations by:

- promoting participation in joint actions across borders and joint training schemes,
- involving organisational cooperation across borders, including multilevel governance of macro-regional strategies (Interreg B strand),
- developing strategies, actions and plans across borders, developing and implementing joint pilot actions.

To enhance efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens, civil society actors and institutions (strands A, C, D and, where appropriate, strand B), outputs refer to:

- solutions, in particular for legal and administrative obstacles,
- participation in joint actions across borders, strategies and jointly developed action plans,
- Joint or administrative legal agreements,

developing strategies and action plans across borders, developing and implementing joint pilot actions

Table 1 – Common output indicators, ISO 1

	ISO6.1	ISO6.2	ISO6.3	ISO6.4	ISO6.6
RCO115 Interreg: Public events across borders jointly organised (events)	8		3 171		2 068
RCO116 Interreg: Jointly developed solutions (solutions)	512	69	32	30	150
RCO117 Interreg: Solutions identified for legal/admin. Obstacles (solutions)	5	120			100
RCO118 Interreg: Organisations cooperating for MLG of MRSs (organisations)	42			126	50
RCO120 Interreg: Projects supporting urban-rural linkages (projects)					5
RCO81 Interreg: Participation in joint actions across borders (participations)	111 491	6 766	394 006	50	88 136
RCO82 Interreg: Participations in horizontal principles actions (participations)					40
RCO83 Interreg: Strategies and action plans jointly developed (strategy/action plan)	734	167	51	16	199
RCO84 Interreg: Pilot actions developed and implemented jointly (pilot action)	315	19	32	16	157
RCO85 Interreg: Participations in joint training schemes (participations)	9 017		552		492
RCO86 Interreg: Joint administrative or legal agreements signed (legal or administrative agreement)	7	11			30
RCO87 Interreg: Organisations cooperating across borders (organisations)	13 738	653	4 505	63	1 677

Source: Consortium elaboration, based on February 2024 data

Under ISO2, actions of border crossing management for a safer and more secure Europe deliver mainly participation in joint actions across borders and joint training schemes, as well as jointly developed strategies and actions. Regarding mobility and migration management, Interreg programmes participate in joint actions and joint administrative or legal agreements involving organisational cooperation across borders. For action on the protection and economic and social integration of third-country nationals, Interreg programmes support organisational cooperation across borders. For this type of action, concerning other actions for a safer and more secure Europe, the most important deliverable captured by common output indicators is joint training schemes.

Table 2 - Common Output Indicators (ISO 2)

	ISO7.1	ISO7.2	ISO7.3	ISO7.4
RCO81 Interreg: Participation in joint actions across borders (participations)	1 015	387		
RCO83 Interreg: Strategies and action plans jointly developed (strategy/action plan)	13			
RCO85 Interreg: Participations in joint training schemes (participations)	174			196
RCO86 Interreg: Joint administrative or legal agreements signed (legal or administrative agreement)		7		
RCO87 Interreg: Organisations cooperating across borders (organisations)	2	29	2	6

Source: Consortium elaboration, based on February 2024 data

1.6. Results

The analysis of common result indicators across the actions of the two specific objectives enables mapping of the most frequent direct intervention outcomes.

Under ISO1, the results of the actions for institutional capacity in public authorities regard joint strategies and actions taken-up and completed joint training schemes as well as durable cooperation and participation in post-project actions.

For legal and administrative cooperation actions, Interreg programme results regard people covered by joint administrative or legal agreements well as organisation, durable cooperation and participation in post-project actions.

For people-to-people action to increase trust, Interreg programme results are about implemented solutions, scale-up, joint agreements and organisational cooperation across borders continuing after the project.

For institutional capacity to manage macro-regional strategies and other actions to support cooperative governance, the most important results are continued participation in post-project actions.

These results mirror the common output indicators as they are a direct consequence of delivery.

Table 3 - Common Result Indicators, ISO 1

	2029 targets				
	ISO6.1	ISO6.2	ISO6.3	ISO6.4	ISO6.6
RCR104 Interreg: Solutions taken up or up-scaled (solutions)	111	60	7 522	21	121
RCR79 Interreg: Joint strategies and action plans taken up (joint strategy/action plan)	555	106	35	4	159
RCR81 Interreg: Completion of joint training schemes (participants)	7 535		497		430
RCR82 Interreg: Legal/admin. obstacles alleviated or resolved (legal or administrative obstacles)	4	68			40
RCR83 Interreg: Persons covered by joint agreements signed (persons)	6 585 366	6 323 333			
RCR84 Interreg: Organisations cooperating post-project (organisations)	332	368	1 846	84	513
RCR85 Interreg: Participations in actions post-project (organisations)	2 143	882	45 135		69 298

Source: Consortium elaboration, based on February 2024 data

Under ISO2, the results of cooperation governance management actions for a safer and more secure Europe regard joint strategies and actions taken-up with completed joint training schemes as well as durable cooperation and participation in post-project actions.

For mobility and migration management, Interreg programmes results regard people covered by joint administrative or legal agreements well as durable cooperation and participation in post-project actions.

For the protection and economic and social integration of third-country nationals, Interreg programme results are about organisational cooperation across borders continuing after the project.

For this type of action, which is about other actions for a safer and more secure Europe, the most important results are completed joint training schemes.

These results mirror common output indicators as they are direct consequence of delivery.

Table 4 - Common result indicators (ISO 2)

	ISO7.1	ISO7.2	ISO7.3	ISO7.4
RCR79 Interreg: Joint strategies and action plans taken up (joint strategy/action plan)	7			
RCR81 Interreg: Completion of joint training schemes (participants)	174			176
RCR83 Interreg: Persons covered by joint agreements signed (persons)		847 706		
RCR84 Interreg: Organisations cooperating post-project (organisations)	2	15	2	6
RCR85 Interreg: Participations in actions post-project (participations)	160	50		

Source: Consortium elaboration, based on February 2024 data

1.7. Impacts

Given the early implementation stage of 2021-2027 programming period funds, information gathered for this study only examines how much current implementation is on track. Financial and physical progress at this early stage does not provide enough evidence for a robust assessment of Interreg's impacts.

The planned contribution of Interreg to SDGs is considered a proxy to assess expected impacts on the wider economy and society. Only ISO1 contributes to three SDGs:

- SDG 13, Climate action, EUR 14.4 million
- SDG 11 Sustainable cities and communities, EUR 8.67 million
- SDG 9 Industry, innovation, infrastructure, EUR 8.51 million

To a lesser extent investments also contribute to: SDG1 No poverty, SDG 15 Life on land with, SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth, SDG 6, Clean water and sanitation.

While not directly tracked by the financial category, ISO2, focusing on migration and security should contribute to SDG 16, whose objective is to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

The categorisation of investments on their support for climate, environment, biodiversity and clean air enables a more nuanced understanding of expected impacts for Interreg investments. Tracking these measures reveals that ISO cooperation governance contributes to:

- Climate, for EUR 34 million,

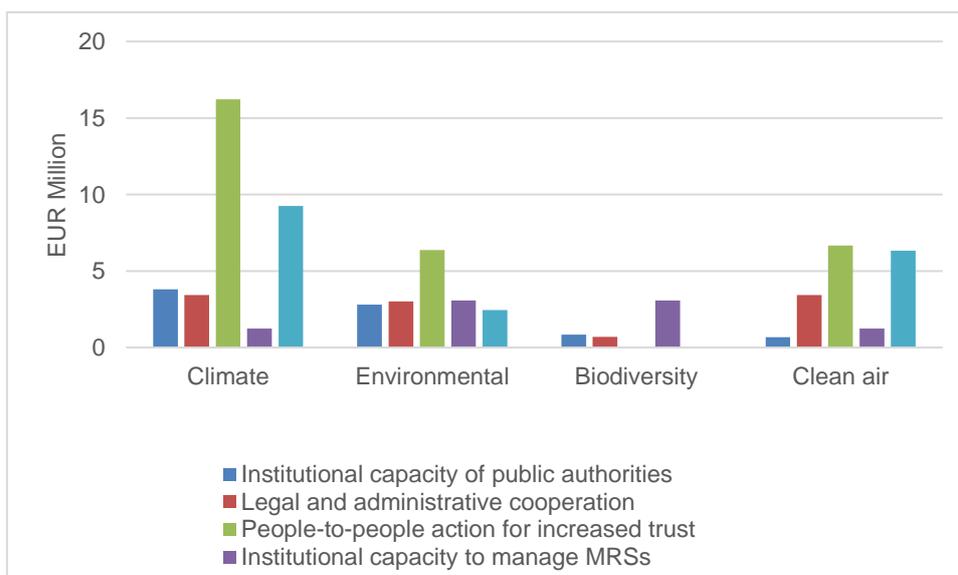
- Environmental, for EUR 18 million,
- Biodiversity, for EUR 5 million,
- Clean air, for EUR 18 million.

Figure 4 – Contribution to SDGs, ISO1 – Cooperation governance, by type of actions



Source: Consortium elaboration, based on February 2024 data

Figure 5 – Climate, environmental, biodiversity, clean air tracking, by type of actions



Source: Consortium elaboration, based on February 2024 data

Lastly, the financial categorisation of interventions also reports how much each Interreg fund contributes to digital transformation.

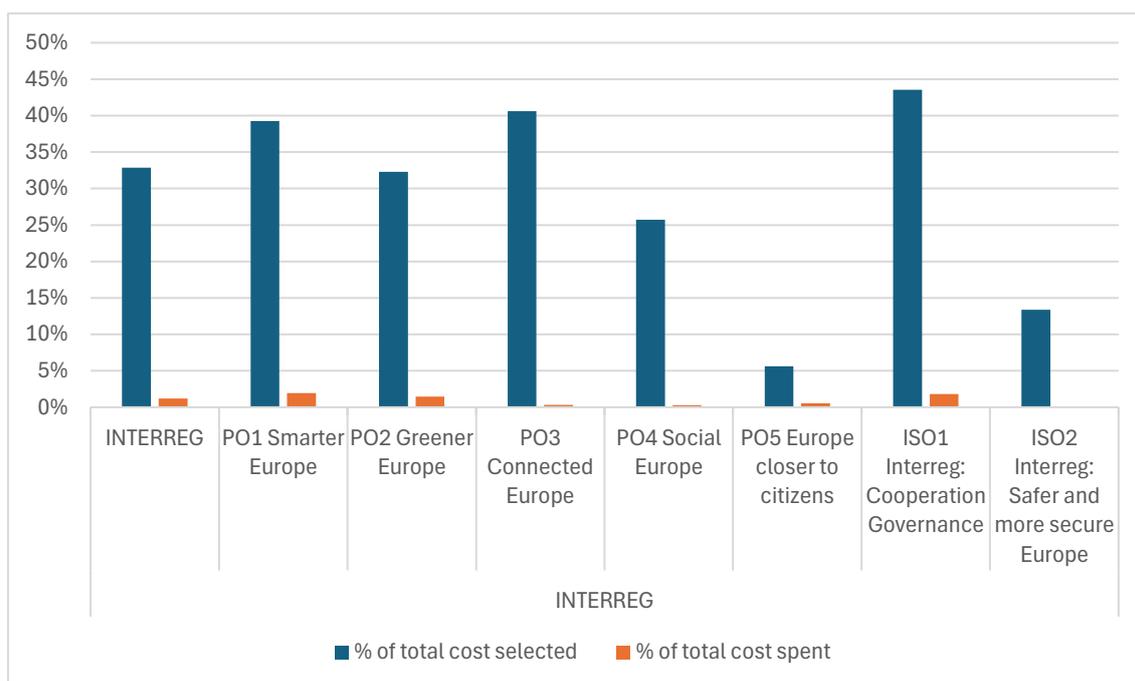
Within ISO1, actions on legal and administrative cooperation, people-to-people action for increased trust and other actions to support better cooperation governance all contribute to the digital transformation, for a total of EUR 17.7 million (around 1% of the specific objective allocation).

2. Part 2: Key evaluation findings from implementation and lessons learnt

2.1. Current implementation progress

This paragraph presents current implementation progress of Interreg programmes, including financial and physical progress. As at June 2024, Interreg decided resources were EUR 4.75 billion (EU Amount EUR 3.448 billion). The specific objectives that had the highest decided share were ISO1 and PO1, with around 40% of the total EU allocation. The share of financial resources already spent for all POs and ISOs is still low; only EUR 175.29 million (EU amount EUR 123.67 million) of Interreg resources was spent in the first half of 2024, 1% of the EU allocation.

Figure 6 – Interreg financial progress, by POs and ISOs



Source: Consortium elaboration, based on June 2024 data

The following tables illustrate the physical progress of common output indicators for PO1 to PO5, limited to Interreg fund.

Under PO1, the output indicator for the number of enterprises receiving support (RCO01) shows advances, especially decided amounts that have surpassed the 2024 milestones, alongside firms cooperating with research organisations

(RCO10). Among enterprises receiving support, the most advanced indicator concerns non-financial support (RCO04). For Interreg-specific indicators, RCO90 on projects for innovation networks across borders is the most advanced indicator, followed by the number of strategies and action plans jointly developed (RCO38) and the number of organisations cooperating across borders (RCO87). Regarding on digital services, products, and processes (RCO14), the decided amount are over the 2024 milestone but the indicator has no implemented value

Table 5 - Common output indicators PO1, Interreg fund

	Measurement unit	Target 2029	Milestone 2024	Decided (% 2024 milestone)	Implementation progress (% 2024 milestone)
RCO01 Firms: All firms	enterprises	22 720	726	810.2%	46.6%
RCO02 Firms: Grant aided	enterprises	6 535	255	228.6%	32.2%
RCO04 Firms: Advised	enterprises	17 519	470	896.4%	60.6%
RCO05 Firms: New Enterprises	enterprises	280	3	0.0%	0.0%
RCO06 RTDI: Researchers with improved infrastructure	annual FTEs	190	0	-	-
RCO07 RTDI: ROs in joint research	research institutions	706	77	415.6%	0.0%
RCO08 RTDI: Value of R+I equipment	euro	16428 721	1642 872	190.4%	5.0%
RCO10 RTDI: Firms cooperating with Ros	enterprises	1 572	103	622.3%	38.8%
RCO101 RTDI: SMEs investing in new skills	enterprises	1 467	12	6316.7%	0.0%
RCO115 Interreg: Public events across borders jointly organised	events	66	5	0.0%	0.0%
RCO116 Interreg: Jointly developed solutions	solutions	1 023	43	1493.0%	27.9%
RCO14 Digital: Public institutions supported for Digital	public institutions	954	4	875.0%	0.0%
RCO15 Firms: Capacity of incubation created	enterprises	110	0	-	-
RCO81 Interreg: Participation in joint actions across borders	participations	64 920	0	-	-
RCO83 Interreg: Strategies and action plans jointly developed	strategy/action plan	550	32	1309.4%	53.1%
RCO84 Interreg: Pilot actions developed and implemented jointly	pilot action	1 767	102	865.7%	12.7%
RCO85 Interreg: Participations in joint training schemes	participations	6 709	294	643.2%	0.0%
RCO87 Interreg: Organisations cooperating across borders	organisations	5 053	648	460.5%	38.9%
RCO90 Interreg: Projects for innovation networks across borders	projects	134	8	737.5%	275.0%

Source: Consortium elaboration, based on June 2024 data

Under PO2, indicators linked to climate, energy, circular economy, environment, water management and urban transport show no progress regarding implemented values. Conversely, Interreg-specific output indicators and common output indicators for supported enterprises, indicate progress for decided and implemented values.

Table 6 - Common output indicators PO2, Interreg fund

	Measurement unit	Target 2029	Milestone 2024	Decided	Implemented
RCO01 Firms: All firms	enterprises	2 606	153	439.9%	112.4%
RCO02 Firms: Grant aided	enterprises	1 478	116	134.5%	56.0%
RCO04 Firms: Advised	enterprises	1 344	37	1316.2%	27.0%
RCO107 Circular: Investments in separate waste collection	euro	2 500 000	500 000	0.0%	0.0%
RCO115 Interreg: Public events across borders jointly organised	events	773	45	395.6%	0.0%
RCO116 Interreg: Jointly developed solutions	solutions	2 349	94	1519.1%	17.0%
RCO120 Interreg: Projects supporting urban-rural linkages	projects	13	9	66.7%	0.0%
RCO121 Climate: Area covered by protection measures (other)	enterprises	68 727	10 247	0.0%	0.0%
RCO24 Climate: Investments in disaster management	euro	122 249 058	560 000	3687.0%	0.0%
RCO26 Climate: Green infrastructure adapted to climate change	hectares	2 899	79	119.0%	0.0%
RCO28 Climate: Area covered by protection against wildfires	hectares	35 539	5 170	0.0%	0.0%
RCO34 Circular: Additional capacity for waste recycling	tonnes/year	800	200	0.0%	0.0%
RCO36 Env: Green infrastructure (not related to climate change)	hectares	5 730	1	5714.3%	0.0%
RCO39 Env: Area covered by systems for monitoring air pollution	air quality zones	2	1	0.0%	0.0%
RCO58 Urban Trans: Dedicated cycling infrastructure supported	km	15	1	0.0%	0.0%

	Measurement unit	Target 2029	Milestone 2024	Decided	Implemented
RCO81 Interreg: Participation in joint actions across borders	participations	281 875	2 251	1003.1%	56.7%
RCO83 Interreg: Strategies and action plans jointly developed	strategy/action plan	2 250	123	778.9%	23.6%
RCO84 Interreg: Pilot actions developed and implemented jointly	pilot action	3 623	117	1389.7%	50.7%
RCO85 Interreg: Participations in joint training schemes	participations	17 485	1 034	554.4%	1.1%
RCO87 Interreg: Organisations cooperating across borders	organisations	8 994	1 067	490.3%	17.4%

Source: Consortium elaboration, based on June 2024 data

Except for the RCO87 indicator on organisations cooperating across borders, none of the common output indicators under PO3 show any implementation progress. Nonetheless, most of these indicators have high decided values.

Table 7 - Common output indicators PO3, Interreg

	Measurement unit	Target 2029	Milestone 2024	Decided	Implemented
RCO115 Interreg: Public events across borders jointly organised	events	6	2	0.0%	0.0%
RCO116 Interreg: Jointly developed solutions	solutions	128	7	500.0%	0.0%
RCO120 Interreg: Projects supporting urban-rural linkages	projects	12	8	75.0%	0.0%
RCO46 Road: Length of roads- non-TEN-T	km	155	3	964.8%	0.0%
RCO48 Rail: Length of new or upgraded rail - non-TEN-T	km	41	7	0.0%	0.0%
RCO50 Rail: Length of rail - non-TEN-T	km	139	5	395.0%	0.0%
RCO81 Interreg: Participation in joint actions across borders	participations	168	50	0.0%	0.0%
RCO83 Interreg: Strategies and action plans jointly developed	strategy/action plan	152	7	1042.9%	0.0%

	Measurement unit	Target 2029	Milestone 2024	Decided	Implemented
RCO84 Interreg: Pilot actions developed and implemented jointly	pilot action	124	5	720.0%	0.0%
RCO87 Interreg: Organisations cooperating across borders	organisations	450	147	141.5%	40.1%

Source: Consortium elaboration, based on June 2024 data

In general, common output indicators under PO4 reflect significant progress in decided amounts but various levels of implemented operations. For instance, RCO01 on the number of enterprises supported surpasses the 2024 milestone for decided and implemented amounts. This can only be attributed to enterprises receiving non-financial support (RCO04), while indicator RCO02 'Firms: Grant aided', has significantly lower values for decided and implemented actions, with no implemented amounts. Similarly, indicators on healthcare (RCO69) show much progress for decided actions, but no implementation progress.

Table 8 - Common output indicators PO4, Interreg

	Measurement unit	Target 2029	Milestone 2024	Decided	Implemented
RCO01 Firms: All firms	enterprises	690	65	1056.9%	172.3%
RCO02 Firms: Grant aided	enterprises	406	41	2.4%	0.0%
RCO04 Firms: Advised	enterprises	285	22	3118.2%	509.1%
RCO113 Integrated actions for inclusion of marginalised pop.	persons	400	100	0.0%	0.0%
RCO115 Interreg: Public events across borders jointly organised	events	1 825	40	2880.0%	352.5%
RCO116 Interreg: Jointly developed solutions	solutions	1 504	48	822.9%	56.3%
RCO117 Interreg: Solutions identified for legal/admin. obstacles	solutions	25	1	600.0%	300.0%
RCO69 Health: Capacity of health care facilities	persons/year	855 404	5 000	10138.2%	0.0%
RCO77 Number of cultural and tourism sites supported	cultural and tourism sites	1 458	72	1108.3%	4.2%
RCO81 Interreg: Participation in joint actions across borders	participations	1385 793	3 274	4702.1%	390.0%

	Measurement unit	Target 2029	Milestone 2024	Decided	Implemented
RCO82 Interreg: Participations in horizontal principles actions	participations	10 475	50	940.00%	0.00%
RCO83 Interreg: Strategies and action plans jointly developed	strategy/action plan	931	35	962.9%	88.6%
RCO84 Interreg: Pilot actions developed and implemented jointly	pilot action	1 184	68	747.1%	39.7%
RCO85 Interreg: Participations in joint training schemes	participations	199 614	28 266	326.3%	3.1%
RCO87 Interreg: Organisations cooperating across borders	organisations	6 204	422	1841.5%	225.6%

Source: Consortium elaboration, based on June 2024 data

As with PO3 common indicators, PO5 common indicators for Interreg show progress for decided amounts but almost no implementation. Exceptions are RCO75 and RCO76, on the number of strategies for integrated territorial development and integrated projects for territorial development where both show implementation progress.

Table 9 - Common output indicators PO5, Interreg

	Measurement unit	Target 2029	Milestone 2024	Decided	Implemented
RCO116 Interreg: Jointly developed solutions	solutions	94	13	46.2%	0.0%
RCO74 Population covered in integrated territorial development	persons	4 304 678	650 000	0.0%	0.0%
RCO75 Strategies for integrated territorial development	contributions to strategies	14	10	50.0%	20.0%
RCO76 Integrated projects for territorial development	projects	303	36	263.9%	136.1%
RCO80 Community-led local development strategies supported	contributions to strategies	4	4	100.0%	0.0%
RCO83 Interreg: Strategies and action plans jointly developed	strategy/action plan	16	1	200.0%	0.0%
RCO84 Interreg: Pilot actions developed and implemented jointly	strategy/action plan	73	6	66.7%	0.0%

	Measurement unit	Target 2029	Milestone 2024	Decided	Implemented
RCO86 Interreg: Joint administrative or legal agreements signed	legal or administrative agreement	10	2	0.0%	0.0%
RCO87 Interreg: Organisations cooperating across borders	organisations	449	75	6.7%	0.0%

Source: Consortium elaboration, based on June 2024 data

ISO 1 common output indicators show varying levels of implementation. Some have none, while others, such as RCO87 Interreg: Organisations cooperating across borders and RCO81 Interreg: Participation in joint actions across borders, have reached more than 200% of the 2024 milestone. The amount decided has progressed for all indicators.

Table 10 - Physical progress, output indicators ISO1

	Measurement unit	Implemented value	Decided value	Milestone 2024	Implemented (% of the milestone by 2024)	Decided share (%of the milestone by 2024)
RCO115 Interreg: Public events across borders jointly organised	events	41	2 301	82	2806.1%	50.0%
RCO116 Interreg: Jointly developed solutions	solutions	10	223	105	212.4%	9.5%
RCO117 Interreg: Solutions identified for legal/admin. obstacles	solutions	-	132	19	694.7%	0.0%
RCO118 Interreg: Organisations cooperating for MLG of MRSs	organisations	-	115	17	676.47%	0.0%

No REGIO/2023/OP/0045 – Study to support the mid-term evaluation of cohesion policy programmes 2021-2027 financed by the ERDF, Cohesion Fund and JTF (2023CE16BAT088)

	Measurement unit	Implemented value	Decided value	Milestone 2024	Implemented (% of the milestone by 2024)	Decided share (%of the milestone by 2024)
RCO81 Interreg: Participation in joint actions across borders	participations	29 484	280 204	8 258	3393.1%	357.0%
RCO83 Interreg: Strategies and action plans jointly developed	strategy/action plan	54	385	52	740.4%	103.8%
RCO84 Interreg: Pilot actions developed and implemented jointly	pilot action	-	156	17	917.6%	0.0%
RCO85 Interreg: Participations in joint training schemes	participations	537	3 044	1 299	234.3%	41.3%
RCO86 Interreg: Joint administrative or legal agreements signed	legal or administrative agreement	-	9	12	75.0%	0.0%
RCO87 Interreg: Organisations cooperating across borders	organisations	1 694	21 436	653	3282.7%	259.4%

Source: Consortium elaboration, based on June 2024 data

based on June 2024 data

For ISO2 output indicators, only one – RCO81 Interreg: Participation in joint actions across borders – has a 2024 milestone, but no implementation progress is registered. Nonetheless, the decided amount is higher than the 2024 milestone.

Table 11 - Physical progress, output indicators, ISO 2

	Measurement unit	Implemented value	Decided value	Milestone 2024	Implemented (% of the milestone by 2024)	Decided share (% of the milestone by 2024)
RCO81 Interreg: Participation in joint actions across borders	participations	-	372	221	0%	168.3%

Source: Consortium elaboration, based on June 2024 data

The following tables present the physical progress of Interreg common result indicators under PO1 to PO5 and Interreg-specific objectives.

Common results indicators show varying progress in decided values, with Interreg-specific indicators and indicators linked to enterprise support showing the most progress.

Table 12 - Common result indicators for PO1 to PO5, Interreg fund

	Measurement unit	Target value 2029.	Decided	Decided progress
RCR01 Jobs created in supported entities	annual FTEs	439	0	0.0%
RCR02 Firms: Private investments	annual FTEs	46 332 314	70 416 314	161.1%
RCR03 RTDI: SMEs introducing product or process innovation	enterprises	6 236	2 444	39.3%
RCR04 RTDI: SMEs introducing marketing/organisation innovation	enterprises	2 354	1 522	64.7%
RCR05 RTDI: SMEs innovating in-house	enterprises	249	22	13.8%
RCR06 RTDI: Patent applications submitted	patent applications	40	41	102.5%
RCR08 RTDI: Publications from supported projects	publications	8 907	492	5.5%
RCR104 Interreg: Solutions taken up or up-scaled	solutions	5 011	3 775	77.6%
RCR11 Digital: Users of new and upgraded public digital services	annual users	2 163 180	96 850	4.5%
RCR12 Digital: Users of digital services by enterprises	annual users	2 500	250	10.0%
RCR17 Firms: New enterprises surviving in the market	enterprises	84	0	0.0%
RCR25 Firms: SMEs with higher value added per employee	enterprises	28	0	0.0%
RCR26 Energy: Annual primary energy consumption	MWh/year	8 694 045	680 650	-39.1%
RCR35 Climate: Population benefiting from flood protection	persons	4 208 380	196 659	4.7%
RCR36 Climate: Pop. benefiting from wildfire protection	persons	14 441 613	265 621	1.8%

	Measurement unit	Target value 2029.	Decided	Decided progress
RCR37 Climate: Pop protected from natural disaster (climate)	persons	10 987 127	0	0.0%
RCR41 Water: Population with improved water supply	persons	80 000	40 400	50.5%
RCR42 Water: Pop. connected to secondary waste water treatment	persons	23 000	11 268	49.0%
RCR47 Circular: Waste recycled	tonnes/year	5	0	0.0%
RCR50 Env: Population benefiting from measures for air quality	persons	430 000	0	0.0%
RCR52 Env: Rehabilitated land	hectares	12	0	0.0%
RCR55 Road: Annual users of roads	passenger-km/ year	222 264 725	35 146 764	228.4%
RCR56 Road: Time savings due to improved road infrastructures	man-days/year	22 720	0	0.0%
RCR58 Rail Annual users railways	passenger-km/ year	3 003 250	0	0.0%
RCR64 Urban Trans: Annual users of cycling infrastructure	users	8 000	0	0.0%
RCR67 Social Infra: Annual users of social housing	users/year	200	0	0.0%
RCR71 Education: Annual users of education facilities	users/year	36 496	0	0.0%
RCR72 Health: Annual users of e-health care services	users/year	44 154	80	0.2%
RCR73 Health: Annual users of health care facilities	users/year	595 566	103 660	17.4%
RCR77 Visitors of cultural and tourism sites	users/year	10 567 498	3823 468	65.6%
RCR79 Interreg: Joint strategies and action plans taken up	joint strategy/action plan	2 950	3 095	106.8%
RCR81 Interreg: Completion of joint training schemes	participants	180 863	82 880	45.8%
RCR82 Interreg: Legal/admin. obstacles alleviated or resolved	legal or administrative obstacles	25	12	48.0%
RCR83 Interreg: Persons covered by joint agreements signed	persons	7 179 842	0	0.0%
RCR84 Interreg: Organisations cooperating post-project	organisations	6 711	4 166	62.1%
RCR85 Interreg: Participations in actions post-project	participations	52 445	7 753	14.8%
RCR95 Env: Pop. with access to green infrastructure	persons	2 039 265	899 328	44.1%
RCR96 Env: Pop protected against natural risks (non climate)	persons	2 368 844	0	0.0%
RCR97 Apprenticeships supported in SMEs	persons	40	78	195.0%
RCR98 RTDI: SMEs staff completing training	participants	4 041	2 164	53.55%

Source: Consortium elaboration, based on June 2024 data

Interreg programmes in ISO1 show progress in decided values for result indicators, with the exception of RCR83 Interreg: Persons covered by joint agreements signed.

The only result indicator with any progress for ISO2 is RCR85 Interreg: Participation in post-project actions, whose decided value as at 2024 is 50 (24% of the 2029 target). No implemented amount is registered for the result indicators of this specific objective

Table 13 - Physical progress, result indicators, ISO 1

	Measurement unit	Target 2029	Decided value	Decided progress
RCR104 Interreg: Solutions taken up or up-scaled	solutions	7 835	184	2.3%
RCR79 Interreg: Joint strategies and action plans taken up	joint strategy/action plan	864	438	51.0%
RCR81 Interreg: Completion of joint training schemes	participants	8 462	2 351	27.8%
RCR82 Interreg: Legal/admin. obstacles alleviated or resolved	legal or administrative obstacles	112	143	127.7%
RCR83 Interreg: Persons covered by joint agreements signed	persons	12 908 699	0	0.0%
RCR84 Interreg: Organisations cooperating post-project	organisations	3 179	2 055	64.9%
RCR85 Interreg: Participations in actions post-project	participations	117 668	47 979	40.8%

Source: Consortium elaboration, based on June 2024 data .

2.2. Emerging challenges and EU citizen needs

The study team has examined a sample of Interreg programmes to provide anecdotal examples on how they refer to territorial needs and disparities and approach them.

The Interreg VI-B – Danube programme indicates a rural-urban divide in economic development, especially growing gaps between urban regions as engines of growth and rural regions as peripheries. Interreg VI-B - Baltic Sea region also focuses on creating green multimodal transport systems in cities, towns and their hinterland and connecting them across borders. The Interreg VI-A - Spain-Portugal (POCTEP) programme highlights the need to improve training of a significant part of the population in the cross-border area to increase access to quality employment. The Interreg VI-A - Poland--Ukraine programme indicates that the percentage of people using sewage systems in rural areas is still very low and that in some regions, the efficiency of wastewater treatment plants is declining.

The EU Regional Social Progress Index classifies EU citizen needs into basic needs, wellbeing and opportunity. The programme sample indicates that the more relevant specific objectives to addressing EU citizens needs are RSO 4.5 (access to healthcare) and RSO 2.7 (nature protection and biodiversity).

Eight of the 12 Interreg programmes analysed took account of demographic challenges, either in general or under POs 1,2,4, ISO 1 or ISO2. Interreg VI-A - Romania-Moldova presents demographic change the most, making specific reference to ageing and depopulation caused by outmigration. Only one programme (Interreg VI-B – Danube) refers to demographic aspects at the specific objective level and with the actions dedicated to 'support better cooperation governance'. Some Interreg programmes address demographic challenges through RSO4.1 Labour market infrastructure, RSO4.5 Access to healthcare, RSO4.6 Culture and sustainable tourism and RSO5.2 Integrated development in rural and coastal areas. The survey conducted for the study with managing authorities and monitoring committee members confirms the relevance of Interreg for addressing territorial needs. The survey shows that Interreg programmes are somewhat to extremely relevant for addressing territorial needs of the programme territory, of which 53% find it extremely relevant.

2.3. Coherence with other funds

Very few Interreg programmes and ISOs cite other EU funding instruments in their description of actions within section 2 of the documents. For ISOs, only one

of programme cites specific synergy, in the form of demarcation with ESF+ and the European Asylum and Migration Fund (AMIF) in ISO 7.2 – Mobility and migration management. The Interreg programme Madeira-Azores-Canary Islands (MAC) describes challenges posed by migration and the possibility of joint actions among regions and countries in this field, as the Canary Islands is a primary region of arrival. Actions under this specific objective will complement those developed under other EU funding instruments, in particular AMIF and ESF+, to avoid overlapping measures.

The study survey shows that, according to Interreg responses, energy and climate policy interventions are very likely to fully complement national ones, followed by biodiversity, research innovation, and education and training actions.

The survey also covers synergies (at intervention / operation / project level) and coordination at strategic level with EU funds for Interreg programmes. Synergies at intervention / operation / project level usually refer to:

- Cohesion Policy Funds,
- Horizon Europe,
- Common Agricultural Policy and the Just Transition Fund.

Coordination at strategic level is mainly with other Cohesion Funds, followed by other EU Funds (Life+, Erasmus+), and Horizon Europe.

An interesting example of coordination is between Interreg programmes in the MED area. The aim is to strengthen synergies between the Mediterranean programmes to develop improved Interreg policy recommendations and joint monitoring and evaluation actions based on tested/transferred good practices and innovative solutions in the Mediterranean area.

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