



Federal Ministry
of Transport and
Digital Infrastructure

Impacts of Transnational Cooperation in Interreg B

Investigation of selected Interreg IVB projects for impacts achieved
and central success factors



Contents

0. Summary.....	1
1. Investigating impacts	3
1.1 Knowledge interest and objectives	4
1.2 Procedure	5
2. Identifying impacts	8
3. Understanding impacts	15
3.1 Impact dimensions.....	17
3.2 Impact categories.....	19
3.3 Project types.....	22
4. Enhancing impacts.....	26
4.1 Bases for an optimised implementation of financial support.....	28
4.2 Optimise programme implementation	29
4.3 Optimise project implementation	31
5. Further publications of this investigation	40
Appendix.....	42

0. Summary

- The objective of this investigation is to support the **development, planning and implementation** of effective and successful projects with **practice-oriented guidance** and to give advice on **the planning and implementation of the programme**. The intention is to contribute to enhancing the impact of Interreg B in the future.
- On the basis of empirical findings, a model was developed which **systematises the different impacts of Interreg funding** and illustrates their **interrelations**.
- The objective of Interreg B is “to promote cooperation [in Europe] by measures contributing to an integrated regional development in accordance with the priorities of the cohesion policy of the Union”¹. This objective comprises two dimensions: the **sectoral dimension** (support of the priorities of cohesion policy) and the **cross-sectoral dimension** (improvement of cooperation in Europe). Accordingly, Interreg B pursues two kinds of objectives:
 - The **sectoral objectives** of financial support under Interreg B are oriented towards thematic elements, e.g. the increase of research and innovation activities, the reduction of CO2 emissions or the strengthening of the competitiveness of SMEs.
 - Besides, Interreg B also pursues **cross-sectoral objectives**, i.e. intersectoral, procedural, organisational and cooperative objectives. These objectives are cross-sectoral since they equally apply to all sectoral areas and are pursued irrespective of the sectoral objectives of financial support. Examples include the introduction of new structures or the improvement of existing ones and of processes in organisations, the improvement of the capabilities of stakeholders to work on a transnational level or the enhancement of institutional capacities.
- **Six specific impacts of Interreg B** were identified:
 - Increased capacity of key stakeholders to act through increased knowledge and skills
 - Facilitation of political decision-making processes through joint action
 - More targeted communication of interests at regional, national and European level
 - More effective and efficient design of work processes
 - More frequent application of social and technological innovations
 - Improved ecological, social and economic (living) conditions
- The impacts of Interreg B funding differ from those of the regional structural funds programmes which focus more strongly on the sectoral impacts. It is important in the future to emphasise the specific impacts of Interreg B **at all programme levels**, to communicate them and to actively take them into account when planning and implementing the programmes.
- The **optimisation of the implementation of the projects** is of outstanding significance in order to further increase the impact of the programmes by adding their effects. Five **success factors** were identified which the project stakeholders have to address to achieve optimum project effects:
 - Identification: Reach agreement on common objectives and interests
 - Leadership: Ensure professional project management and strengthen team spirit
 - Balance: Establish a representative project partnership
 - Linkage: Identify synergy potentials and make use of existing structures
 - Topicality: Address urgent challenges of supranational significance
- The further **optimisation of the programme implementation** is also of great importance in order to enhance the impact of Interreg B in the future. For the bodies managing the programmes, the Member States as well as the EU Commission, specific **recommendations for action** were defined:
 - A more explicit recognition and a better consideration of the combination of cross-sectoral and sectoral impacts which is specific to Interreg B, especially on the legislative level.

¹ Cf. Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013

- Precise survey of the situation in the programme area and, on this basis, determination of the appropriate **balance of cross-sectoral and sectoral objectives** for funding.
- Development of cross-sectoral intervention logics in order to define precise objectives for funding.
- Development of result indicators which also consider the cross-sectoral impacts of funding and represent evolutions in this sector.

1. Investigating impacts



Interreg B concentrates on issues which increasingly pose great challenges to the European states. Climate change, the competition for enterprises, skilled workers and investments as well as an ageing society are key issues which equally affect and preoccupy all European states across administrative and national borders. To adequately master these challenges it is necessary to elaborate supranational approaches and to strengthen the cooperation of stakeholders from different countries.

Since the introduction of Interreg in 1990, the support of a well-balanced economic, social and territorial development in Europe has been a focal area of financial assistance within the framework of the Interreg programmes. The transnational strand, Interreg B, has developed and established itself as a specific approach of territorial cooperation since its introduction in 1997. This becomes apparent in the legal and organisational framework as well as in the implementation of the financial support in the transnational programme areas. Thus, the aim of Interreg B is “to promote cooperation [in Europe] by measures contributing to an integrated regional development in accordance with the priorities of the cohesion policy of the Union”²

For more than 20 years, Interreg B has been making a contribution towards strengthening the territorial integration of Europe. Funds are granted for the cooperation among partners in transnational cooperation areas. Participants in the projects can be representatives from public authorities, the scientific community, from SMEs as well as representatives of pressure groups, NGOs and other private organisations. The aim is to develop new strategies, services, products and concepts in order to effectively address the above-mentioned supranational challenges. The transnational character of these collaborative schemes is the prerequisite for the elaboration of effective solutions which are necessary to tackle the great common challenges and their long-term application.

1.1 KNOWLEDGE INTEREST AND OBJECTIVES

Against the background of an increased result orientation in European structural policy³ it is of great importance to the project and programme stakeholders to precisely name the specific impacts of transnational collaborative projects and illustrate them. Although the positive effects of Interreg B funding have become perceptible for some years, for example by better cooperation structures, the specific contribution of Interreg B to the economic evolution in the relevant programme region can only to a limited extent be represented by indicators.

In this study, the requirement outlined was taken up. The specific impacts achieved within the framework of Interreg B are identified and systematised on the basis of selected projects from the programming period 2007-2013. Furthermore, characteristics of successful projects are mapped out and illustrated as well as possibilities of optimising the implementation of the programme.

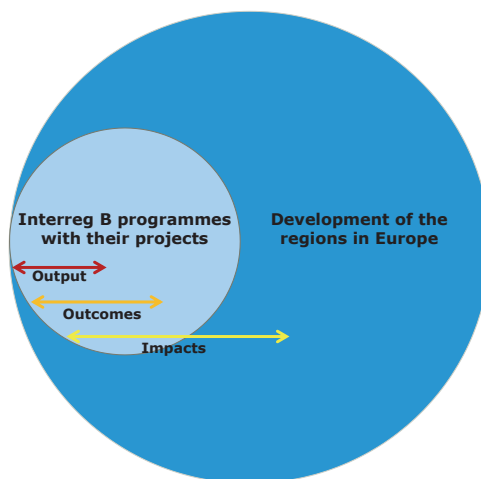
These impacts are defined as effects caused directly or indirectly by the funded intervention and reach out beyond the stakeholders directly involved in the project. They can occur already during the period of financial support or after termination of the intervention.

This investigation focusses on two levels: On the basis of the cooperation programmes which generate outputs and outcomes with their numerous projects, the contribution to the development of the regions in Europe (impacts) is investigated.

² Cf. Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013.

³ European Commission (2014): An introduction to EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020. http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/basic/basic_2014_de.pdf (retrieved on 9 August 2016)

Figure 1: Classification of the Interreg B programmes and their effects within the European context



Source: Ramboll Management Consulting

One objective of this study is, while taking three key questions into account, to support the **development, planning and implementation** of effective and successful projects with **practice-oriented guidance** and to give advice on **the planning and implementation of the programme**. The intention is to contribute to enhancing the impact of Interreg B in the future.

To achieve this objective, a **model** is developed on the basis of empirical findings which **systematises** the impacts of Interreg funding and **illustrates** the **interrelations** between the levels. The stakeholders are given specific practical guidance on how to make use of the findings from this investigation for a still more successful implementation of the projects and programmes.



The following key questions are to be answered with the outcomes of the investigation:

- Which cross-sectoral impacts can be identified on the basis of Interreg IVB projects in the five Interreg cooperation areas with German participation which exceed the direct project duration and the partners involved?

- How were these impacts generated? Which activities during the implementation of the project and conditions within the project partnership facilitated the development of cross-sectoral and long-term impacts?
- What recommendations for the programming period 2014-2020 and beyond can be derived therefrom? How can the findings be integrated into the future selection and development of projects and, thus, contribute to increasing the effectiveness of Interreg B funding?

1.2 PROCEDURE

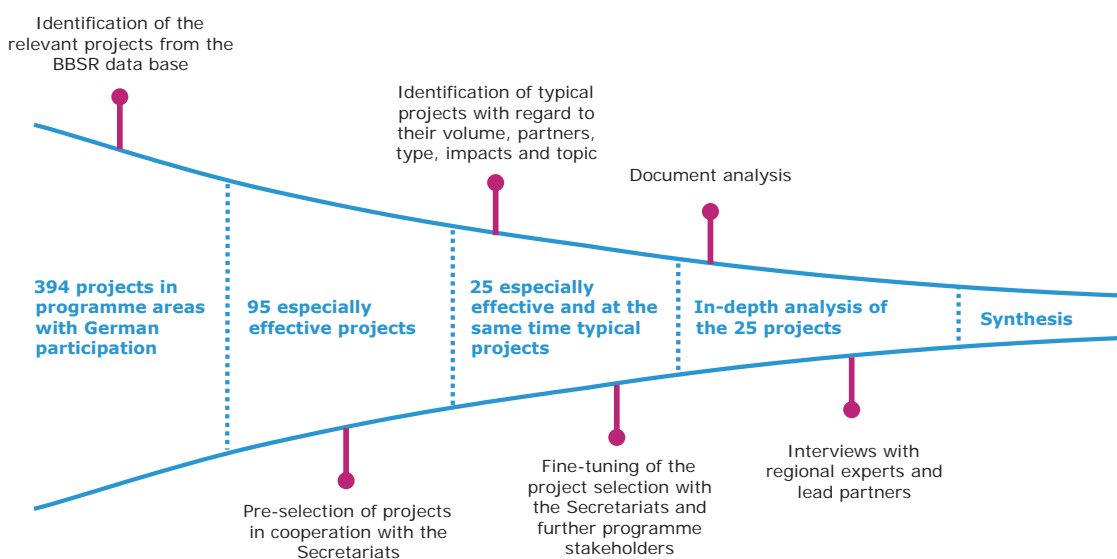
The potential impacts of the financial support were identified and subsequently systematised in the investigation.

In order to enable a great number of programme and project stakeholders to utilise the findings from the investigation, the approaches analysed should ideally be transferable. Therefore, the task was to identify projects which are equally typical and successful. Projects which were exclusively investigated were those which are especially successful since the focus was on the identification of impacts which were actually achieved as well as on the main factors for their generation. Thus, projects which were less successful according to the

bodies which are responsible for the programme were, therefore, deliberately not taken into consideration in this investigation since the findings obtained in terms of the

objective of the investigation would have been noticeably lesser.

Figure 2: Phased approach for the investigation and systematisation of the impacts



Source: Ramboll Management Consulting

In the following, the central aspects of the procedural steps taken are summarised.

1. Selection and analysis of the projects

The starting point for the identification and selection of suitable projects was an extract from the project data base of the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR)⁴ which lists all projects with German participation from the five programme areas investigated⁵. On the basis of the short descriptions of the projects and in consideration of relevant studies and analyses as well as previous experience of the team of consultants, a preliminary categorisation of potential impacts was performed.

The Joint Secretariats of the Interreg B programme areas as the responsible bodies implementing the programme selected among the projects listed those projects which are, in their opinion, especially successful and, against the background of the objective of the investigation, especially suitable.

On the basis of further publicly accessible information, typical characteristics of the 95 pre-selected projects were identified with regard to their volume, the partners involved, the type, the impacts and the topic. With the involvement of stakeholders from the programme areas, 25 projects were selected which can be designated as typical Interreg B projects in the programme areas investigated.⁶

⁴ See: <https://www.bbr-server.de/Interreg/>

⁵ During the programming period 2007-2013, there were five programme areas with German participation: Baltic and North Sea Regions, North West Europe, Central Europe, Alpine Space. The Danube Region has only been granted financial support within the context of Interreg since the programming period 2014-2020; for this reason, this region was not taken into consideration in this investigation.

⁶ See Appendix

To obtain additional information about the 25 projects, first of all a comprehensive document analysis (project reports as well as further project-related documents) was carried out.

Impact logics were outlined and findings generated on the importance and shaping of potential success factors.

The results of the document analysis were verified in telephone interviews and augmented as to their contents. For this purpose, regional experts⁷ were initially interviewed by phone. The issue at stake concerned the effects which were achieved by the projects in the programme area. In a further step, the assessments of the experts were looked at in more depth and enriched with information provided by project partners. The focus of the interviews by phone with the project partners was on the verification of the outlined impact logics as well as on the success factors for the effective implementation of the project. In addition, the impact logics were verified along the 95 pre-selected projects.

2. Synthesis and conclusions

On completion of the analysis, the information collected was evaluated on the basis of the long-term experiences of the team of consultants: Impacts were identified and systematised. Common elements as well as differences between the projects investigated were mapped out. The findings from the individual projects were classified and categorised on a general level. In an intermediate step, the findings were discussed with stakeholders from the programme areas as well as with further Interreg experts within the context of a workshop which was held in November 2016.

Subsequently, the team of consultants dealt in more detail with the possibilities of systematising the results of the investigation in a transparent way and of making them accessible to the active players. At that time, the focus was on the challenge to process the comprehensive and complex findings so as to form a logic construct which is understood by the stakeholders. Moreover, specific recommendations for action were to be defined for the stakeholders in the projects and programmes as well as for the stakeholders at European level. To ensure their applicability, the results were processed for the different groups of stakeholders in formats specific to each target group and illustrated with appropriate examples:

- The present detailed executive summary of the most important results of the investigation was prepared for the interested expert community. Moreover, an expert paper was elaborated for this target group which outlines the approaches pursued in order to illustrate the specific impacts of Interreg B.
- Good Practice Guidelines were elaborated for the stakeholders in the project which descriptively present the impacts of successful projects as well as their success factors.

⁷ The regional experts were stakeholders who are actively engaged in the programme area in the sectoral field of the relevant project and who are able, due to their far-reaching technical and regional knowledge, to realistically assess the local situation. On the whole, regional experts were interviewed for 20 of the projects investigated.

2. Identifying impacts



→ At a glance: Identifying impacts

In the course of the investigation, six specific impacts of Interreg B were identified:

- Increased capacity of key stakeholders to act through increased knowledge and skills
- Facilitation of political decision-making processes through joint action
- More targeted communication of interests at regional, national and European level
- More effective and efficient design of work processes
- More frequent application of social and technological innovations
- Improved ecological, social and economic (living) conditions

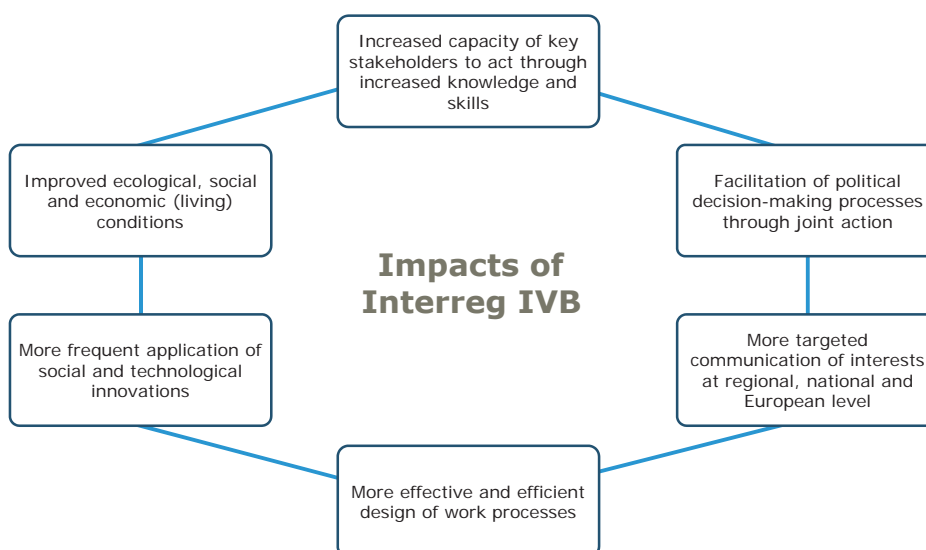
It is very difficult to illustrate the **specific contribution of Interreg B to the evolution of the relevant programme region**. This is also attributable to the fact that the impacts of financial support which are caused directly or indirectly by the funded intervention reach out even beyond the stakeholders directly involved in the project. They can occur already during the period of financial support or only after termination of the intervention.

? This chapter, therefore, gives an answer to the **first key question of the investigation**:

1. Which cross-sectoral impacts can be identified on the basis of Interreg IVB projects in the five Interreg cooperation areas with German participation which exceed the direct project duration and the partners involved?

In order to better illustrate the impacts of Interreg B in the future, the potential impacts of the financial support were investigated and systematised in a first step. For this purpose, selected **projects were investigated in more detail**. In this connection, patterns and **common elements** but also **differences** among the projects became apparent.

Figure 3: Impacts of Interreg IVB



Source: Ramboll Management Consulting.

→ Impact: Increased capacity of key stakeholders to act through increased knowledge and skills

The impact describes that stakeholders acting within the range of topics of a project are enabled to recognize new possibilities for action and make active use of them. This impact is brought about in numerous projects under investigation especially by new approaches and products, an improved information situation and an enhanced awareness.

In this way, the development and identification of new approaches, methods and technologies can extend the scopes for action of different key stakeholders in a targeted manner. But the stakeholders' capacity to act can also be enhanced by directly addressing them and raising their awareness (e.g. by consultancy services) as well as by providing specific support for the build-up of knowledge and skills (e.g. by workshops and seminars).

The target groups of this impact strongly depend on the relevant topic, which means that in particular stakeholders from politics and administration as well as from businesses are involved. Both target groups extend their specific capacities and capabilities. The application of the knowledge and the new skills acquired is a possible later step which is not covered by this impact.



Project example for the impact “Increased capacity of key stakeholders to act through increased knowledge and skills”

The SCIENCE LINK network established by leading large research facilities and higher education institutions as well as regional economic development organisations has improved the transfer of knowledge between the stakeholders from the sectors of industry and science in the Baltic Sea Region and, thus, their capacity for action. More intensive networking activities (contact points at economic development organisations), specific research partnerships and the provision of instruments have made it possible for enterprises to trigger innovations. The research institutes benefit from an enhanced visibility and importance which increases their competitiveness in the international scientific context. This impact was identified for 23 of the 25 projects which were investigated in detail.

Impact: Facilitation of political decision-making processes through joint action

Stronger joint action in political decision-making processes is initiated within the context of the Interreg IVB projects investigated, especially by creating technical and organisational bases for an intensified political cooperation as well as by measures raising the awareness regarding the added value of a more extensive transnational cooperation.

Thus, for example, new communication channels are established and strategic approaches are developed to even more effectively master the current and future challenges in the relevant programme area by setting common transnational priorities and intensifying the efforts of policymakers and public authorities. Workshops and seminars may also be organised to reduce the silo mentality among different stakeholder groups in order to form a basis for common political decisions and integrated partnerships beyond specialist areas.

In the first place, the stakeholders from politics and administration (e.g. regional planning, labour market policy, resource conservation) engaged at European and national level in these sectoral fields benefit from this impact. This joint action does not only mean the intensified cooperation of stakeholders on the vertical level (e.g. through the increased participation of national and regional stakeholders in political processes at EU level) but also on the horizontal level (e.g. by better integrating the different stakeholders operating in the national and regional framework into decision-making processes).



**Project example for the impact
“Facilitation of political decision-
making processes through joint action”**

The approaches developed for ballast water management within the framework of the BALLAST WATER OPPORTUNITY project and the accompanying public relations work have resulted in more intensive coordination efforts among the North Sea coastal states with regard to the decision-making processes within the International Maritime Organization (IMO). Thus, the results of the project were used as a basis for negotiations for the conclusion of a new convention on ballast water management which is currently in the ratification process.

This impact was identified for 7 of the 25 projects which were investigated in detail.

→ **Impact: More targeted communication of interests at regional, national and European level**

The more targeted communication of interests at national, regional and European levels reflects the increased influence on political decision-makers and, consequently, the enhanced awareness of the relevant topic among these stakeholders. In the final analysis, the relevant topic features more prominently on the political agenda of the responsible decision-makers and the new insights are taken into account in decision-making processes. The inclusion of topics in the political agenda is an important prerequisite to initiate for instance necessary changes (e.g. in legislation) or other political measures (e.g. support measures in the field of environmental protection).

The more effective communication of interests has positive effects especially for the stakeholders in the relevant sectoral fields. It is a useful tool to place their topics with the responsible decision-makers, as the case may be, to raise media attention and bring about improvements. Within the context of the Interreg IVB projects investigated, these benefits are achieved by establishing new or more effective communication channels such as transnational network fora or associations with legal status where stakeholders join forces and bundle their common interests. These common interests can in turn be presented more effectively by an appropriate public relations work (e.g. elaboration of guidelines, position papers, brochures etc.).



**Project example for the impact “More
targeted communication of interests at
regional, national and European level”**

The merger of the regional stakeholders and decision-makers in the CODE24 project and the associated pooling of interests improved the communication of interests at European level. Apart from the elaboration of the overall strategy and the related extensive public relations work, the consolidation of the partnership by the legal status EGTC was especially profitable here. The legal personality makes the concerns of the stakeholders involved more important and more visible at European level. As a matter of fact, the organisation acts as a mouthpiece for regional interests, for example in the course of the consultation procedures concerning the 2030 Federal Transport Infrastructure Plan or regarding the development of core network corridors at EU level.

This impact was identified for five of the 25 projects which were investigated in detail.

→ Impact: More effective and efficient design of work processes

The more effective and efficient structuring of work processes describes the further development of procedures and approaches in public as well as in private-sector organisations. This includes in particular that decisions are taken which are more forward-looking, existing processes and procedures are evolved and standardized and/or new methods and approaches are integrated into the work processes.

As regards the Interreg IVB projects investigated, the foundation for these improvements is the common development of new and/or the amelioration of existing processes and procedures as well as raising the awareness in this respect. This enables the stakeholders, on the one hand, to act in a more cost- and time-saving manner and, on the other, to obtain the intended result more effectively. In many cases, effectiveness means primarily ecological sustainability, i.e. the economical use of resources due to new methods and approaches or the reduction of the drain on these resources by modified work processes.

The more effective and efficient structuring of work processes will be beneficial for very different stakeholder groups. These groups may include ministries and authorities but also enterprises and scientific institutions.



Project example for the impact “More effective and efficient design of work processes”

The two software products which were developed within the framework of the MORECO project are increasingly used when taking location decisions in the Alpine Space, thus supporting a more sustainable settlement development. For example, the regional implementation of the settlement calculator was funded by the state government of Salzburg, new location criteria were incorporated into the promotion of housing development in Salzburg and the household calculator was established in housing counselling in order to contain urban sprawl and to promote environmentally friendly mobility. In numerous workshops, public decision-makers gained the necessary knowledge about the benefits and the handling of the software products and the awareness of private individuals was raised by information events.

This impact was identified for 12 of the 25 projects which were investigated in detail.

→ Impact: More frequent application of social and technological innovations

The more frequent application of social and technological innovations accounts for the increase of the innovation performance of different stakeholders within the programme areas. This impact is achieved in Interreg IVB projects in particular by an increased exchange of knowledge by stakeholders from academia and industry, the creation of outline conditions which stimulate innovation and the initiation of awareness-raising measures. For example, the provision of research instruments, more intensive networking activities or specific partnerships make relevant research findings accessible to enterprises which supports the evolution and implementation of innovations. Furthermore, the improved access to capital or suitable spaces can stimulate innovations and promote creative pilot approaches.

As compared with other impacts, the increase of the innovation performance in the programme area is strongly focused on selected stakeholder groups: Primarily, enterprises and here especially SMEs and scientific institutions developing and applying technological innovations benefit from this. But the projects investigated also include stakeholders who initiated social innovations in terms of new and problem-solving approaches to cope with societal challenges.



Project example for the impact “More frequent application of social and technological innovations”

Within the framework of the PROINCOR project it was possible to increase the innovation performance of the participating SMEs by providing advisory activity which triggered off changes in the enterprises. In this way, a total of 80 technological product and process development projects were stimulated and 30 million euros of financial support were acquired. In most cases, the funds were used to improve existing products or to develop new ones.

The successful implementation of these numerous technological innovations also had spillover effects on further SMEs in the region: The interest in research and development projects (and consequently the number of applications) increased noticeably in the region.

This impact was identified for 7 of the 25 projects which were investigated in detail.

→ **Impact: Improved ecological, social and economic (living) conditions**

This impact describes all positive changes in a region which noticeably improve the living conditions and the scope for action of different regional stakeholders. It is especially the (further) development of planning processes and management structures as well as specific pilot projects which bring about these improvements. And they can affect various spheres of life: Some improvements concern the economic and structural conditions in the region, others the social and environmental outline conditions.

Thus, all stakeholders in the relevant region are potential beneficiaries of these changes: In contrast to the previous impacts which were in the majority of cases more aimed at specific target groups, this impact is more all-embracing since the changes are, as a rule, perceptible across all target groups.

The direct character of this impact must be especially emphasized: The changes in the region can be directly attributed to the Interreg B projects or were initiated by the activities of the project partnership. For example, social and cultural attractions which are newly created by Interreg B projects can promote the social regional development, whereas new data and management approaches can, in other cases, noticeably improve the ecosystem in the region.



**Project example for the impact
“Improved ecological, social and
economic (living) conditions”**

The SECOND CHANCE project has contributed to revitalizing neighbourhoods in cities, enhancing their attractiveness and improving the quality of life for the inhabitants.

In the course of the project, innovative approaches for the preservation of old industrial facilities were developed, marketing strategies were elaborated and cultural centres were set up. These activities have directly influenced the establishment of new enterprises in the neighbourhood and the influx of numerous further investments. As a consequence, the living conditions of the inhabitants have considerably improved in economic as well as in social respects.

This impact was identified for 7 of the 25 projects which were investigated in detail.

In the Appendix, the project examples outlined are described in more detail and in consideration of their further impacts.

3. Understanding impacts



→ **At a glance: Understanding impacts**

Two impact dimensions of Interreg B were identified:

- Cross-sectoral impacts, for example new or improved structures and processes in organisations, additional capacities of stakeholders to work transnationally or enhanced institutional capacities.
- Sectoral impacts, for example, increase of the R&D intensity or reduction of CO2 emissions.

The specific impacts of Interreg were systematised in **three impact categories**:

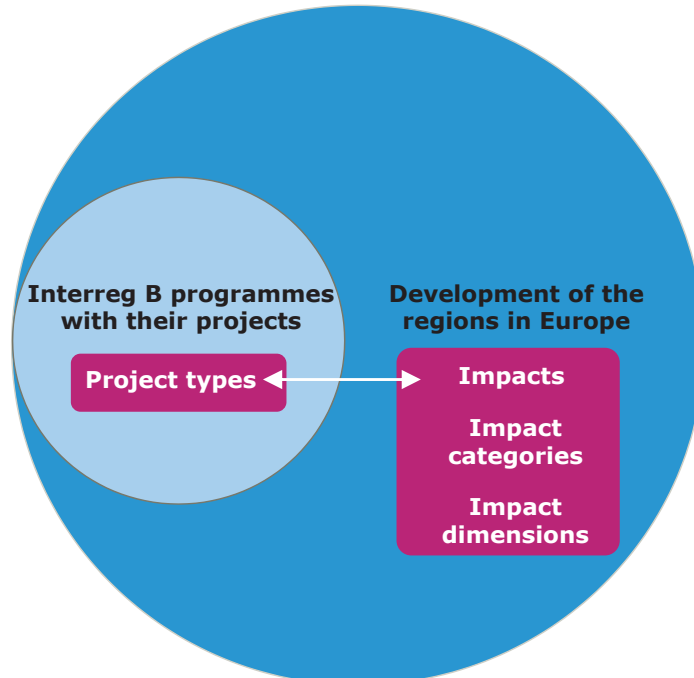
- Empowerment of key stakeholders
- Activation of decision-makers
- Application of knowledge and skills

The findings concerning the three impact categories were applied to the projects investigated. This resulted in the creation of **four project types**:

- Project type 1: Empowerment and activation
- Project type 2: Empowerment and application
- Project type 3: Empowerment, activation and application
- Project type 4: Activation

The system used for the illustration of the impacts in Interreg B is, therefore, as follows:

Figure 4: System developed for the specific impacts of Interreg B



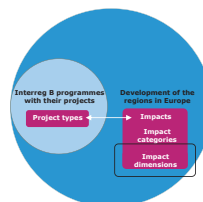
Source: Ramboll Management Consulting.

In the course of the in-depth analysis of the six specific impacts of Interreg B identified, it became apparent that in some cases they build on or complement each another. In order to illustrate this insight the impacts were systematised in two steps. This boosts the understanding for the generation of the impacts which results in an increased applicability of the findings by the stakeholders in the programme areas.

? This chapter presents further insights to answer the **first key question of the study**:

1. Which cross-sectoral impacts can be identified on the basis of Interreg IVB projects in the five Interreg cooperation areas with German participation which exceed the direct project duration and the partners involved?

3.1 IMPACT DIMENSIONS

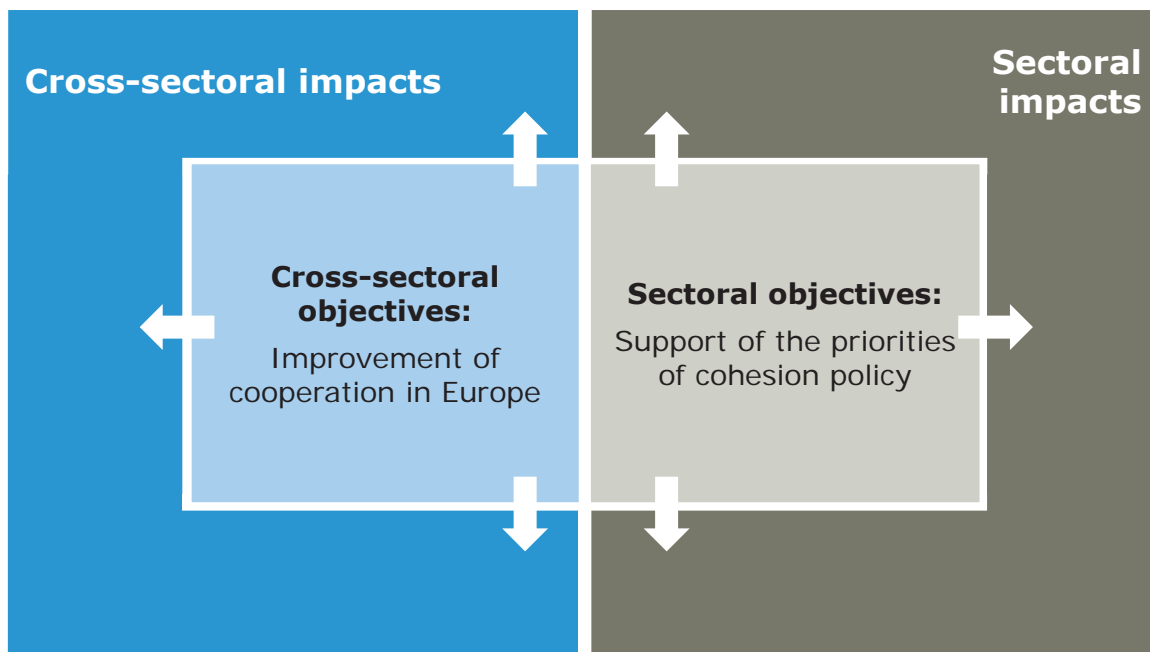


In a first step, the impacts on the overall level were systematised in **two impact dimensions**: This means a classification of the basically **possible dimensions of impacts** in transnational cooperation to which Interreg B can make a contribution.

The specific objective of Interreg B, “to promote cooperation [in Europe] by measures contributing to an integrated regional development in accordance with the priorities of the cohesion policy of the Union”⁸ is two-dimensional: The **cross-sectoral** dimension (improvement of cooperation in Europe) and the **sectoral** dimension (support of the priorities of cohesion policy).

⁸ Cf. Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013.

Figure 5: Two dimensions of Interreg financial support



Source: Ramboll Management Consulting

The specific objective of Interreg B and its two dimensions is to obtain two types of impacts:

→ Sectoral impact dimension

The **sectoral objectives** of financial support under Interreg B are oriented towards thematic elements, e.g. the increase of research and innovation activities, the reduction of CO₂ emissions or the strengthening of the competitiveness of SMEs.

The targeted **sectoral effects** can be directly derived from the structure of a cooperation programme: From the priority axes via the investment priorities right through to the specific objectives, there are clear sectoral targets which are to be achieved by the financial support. It is, in principle, possible to capture the sectoral impacts on the basis of statistical data.

→ Cross-sectoral impact dimension

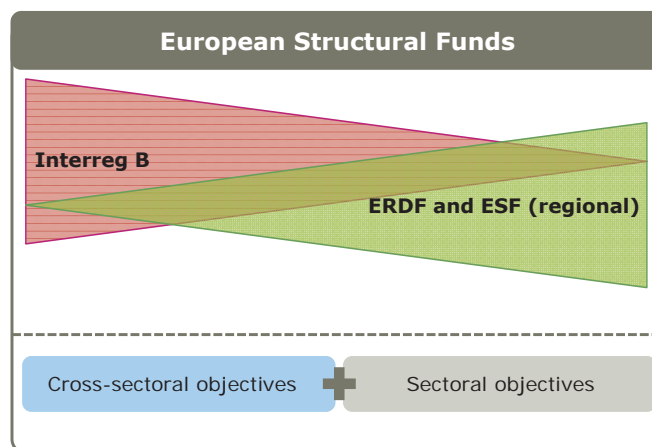
The **cross-sectoral objectives** of Interreg B are intersectoral, procedural, organisational and cooperative objectives. These objectives are cross-sectoral since they are equally pursued in all sectoral areas of the financial

support. Examples include the introduction of new structures or the improvement of existing ones and of processes in organisations, the improvement of the capabilities of stakeholders to work on a transnational level or the enhancement of institutional capacities.

The **cross-sectoral impacts** are the central added value of Interreg B. Unlike the regional structural funds programmes (e.g. ERDF and ESF as regards the “Investment in growth and employment” objective) which are more focussed on the sectoral impacts and which are endowed with considerably higher financial means, this second impact dimension in Interreg B is of special significance. The reason for this is that cooperation among the stakeholders is specifically in the centre of attention in Interreg B.

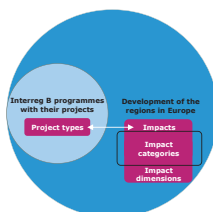
One of the central **characteristics of Interreg B** as compared with regional structural funds programmes, is the weighting applied to the cross-sectoral and sectoral objectives: While the **cross-sectoral objectives are of specific importance** in Interreg B, it is evident that the regional structural funds programmes are more focussed on the sectoral objectives.

Figure 6: Comparison of the specific importance of sectoral and cross-sectoral objectives in the implementation of regional structural funds programmes and of Interreg B (simplified representation)



Source: Ramboll Management Consulting

3.2 IMPACT CATEGORIES



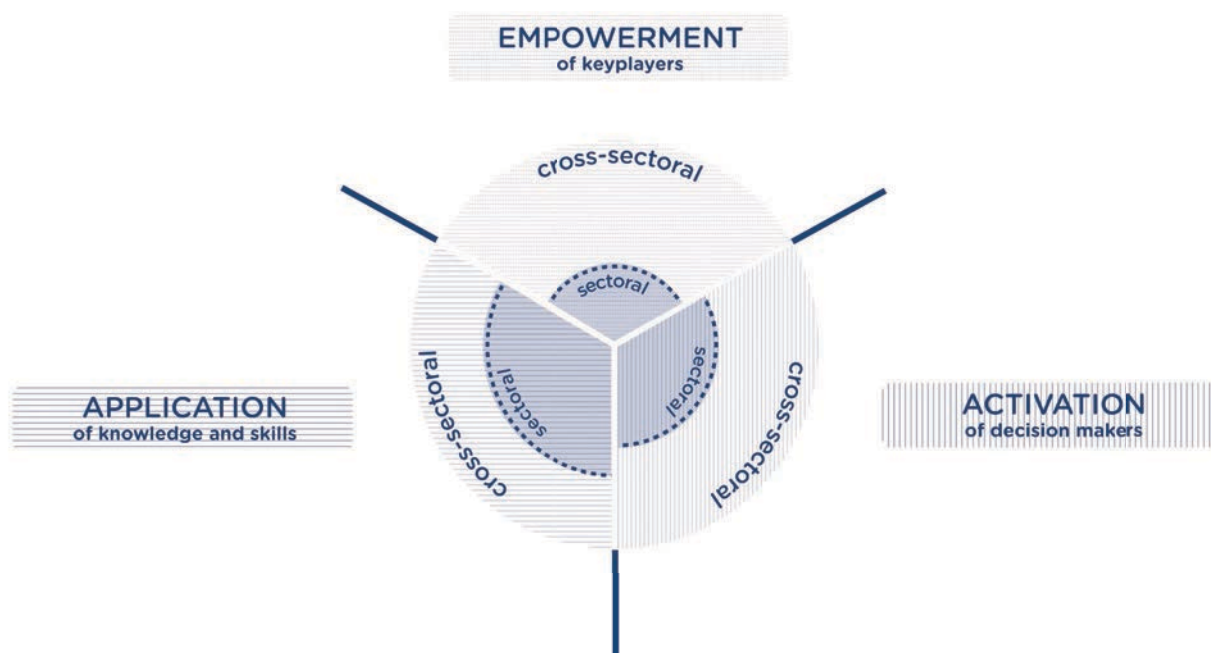
In a second step, the impacts were classified into **three impact categories**. The impact categories reflect the development stages which are necessary to establish sustainably successful and effective collaborative schemes in **the relevant regions**.

In the course of the investigation, the relations between some of the six specific impacts of Interreg B were identified: The in-depth analysis of these relations clearly showed that the impacts can be attributed to three different **impact categories**:

- Empowerment of key stakeholders,
- Activation of decision-makers and
- Application of knowledge and skills.

The impacts achieved in each category are either cross-sectoral or sectoral. The difference between the three categories is the **weighting between the two impact dimensions**.

Figure 7: Categorisation of the six specific impacts of Interreg B into three impact categories: Empowerment, activation and application



Source: Ramboll Management Consulting.

The three impact categories presented which summarise the impacts of the Interreg IVB projects investigated **interact and in some cases build on each other**. Depending on the objective, the initial situation and the outline conditions, Interreg B projects can address these impact categories to varying degrees.

Impact category: Empowerment of key stakeholders

→ **Impact: Increased capacity of key stakeholders to act through increased knowledge and skills**

The impact category “empowerment (of key stakeholders)” describes the impacts of transnational cooperation which enable the stakeholders to exploit **new opportunities for action**. **Key stakeholders** are in this context stakeholders who play a significant and active part in the relevant sectoral field in technical, political and regional terms. The **degree of empowerment** of these stakeholders is, thus, an important indicator for the success and effectiveness of the project. To obtain the intended empowerment, stakeholders can follow different paths, ranging from the development or evolution of **knowledge, skills, methods** and products to **awareness-raising** concerning such developments. This impact category is, therefore, identical with the impact assigned to it.

The impact category of empowerment is, moreover, to be considered as the **preliminary stage** for the impact categories “activation” and “application” described in the following: First of all, key stakeholders must be enabled to recognize new opportunities for action. In a second step, they can become active, making use of the possibilities available and taking appropriate measures. This outlined **causal link of the three impact categories** explains the enormous importance of an “increased capacity to act for key stakeholders through increased knowledge and skills”: The **“empowerment of key stakeholders” is necessary** to subsequently obtain stimulating (e.g. stronger joint political action) and application-oriented effects (e.g. higher investments).



Taking the identified impacts as a basis, the projects investigated were assigned to the impact categories.

It becomes evident, that the three impact categories occur in the projects with varying frequency. In almost all projects (23 projects) an “empowerment of key stakeholders” was detected.

Impact category: Activation of decision-makers

- **Impact: More targeted communication of interests at regional, national and European level**
- **Impact: Facilitation of political decision-making processes through joint action**

The impact category “activation of decision-makers” is mainly a political dimension: In this context, decision-makers are political **stakeholders in relevant key positions** who, due to their area of responsibility and their political influence, are crucial when it comes to creating the necessary political **outline conditions for the subsequent implementation** of targeted measures. Relevant outline conditions are for example new topic-related **decision-making processes** or an increased **coordination** and consultation. According to the regional context and the sectoral field addressed, the decision-makers described can be identical with the key stakeholders who are empowered (see impact category “empowerment of key stakeholders”).

The “activation of decision-makers” will be of special importance if current challenges require a **common position across national borders** and if solutions have to be elaborated and decisions taken. Experience has shown that this issue is of particular significance in connection with **new topics** in the course of **newly established collaborative schemes** as well as in **less homogeneous areas** facing major and sudden challenges which have to be mastered.

In the majority of cases, the objective of the projects is to activate (mostly high-level) political stakeholders, but with different intentions. The result of the “more targeted communication of interests at national, regional and European level” is that the relevant project topic features more prominently on the political agenda of the decision-

makers concerned and that decision-making processes are influenced accordingly. By contrast, the “facilitation of political decision-making processes through joint action” leads to the extension or deepening of the specific cooperation of political stakeholders in each sectoral field.



The “activation of decision-makers” is of importance in about half of the Interreg B projects investigated. The question of whether the impact category is served depends, among other things, on the novelty of the topic, the priorities set with regard to programme steering and the level of maturity of the collaborative schemes.

For some of the Interreg IVB projects investigated, the necessary political outline conditions (e.g. economic development policy, infrastructure) were either already existing or only of secondary importance to the relevant sectoral field and the achievement of the intended objective. Accordingly, the impact category “activation” was not served.

Impact category: Application of knowledge and skills

- Impact: Improved ecological, social and economic (living) conditions
- Impact: More frequent application of social and technological innovations
- Impact: More effective and efficient design of work processes

Finally, the third impact category “application of knowledge and skills” is of a more **technical and/or operational nature**: It describes the **realisation of measures** by key stakeholders and/or target groups and, for this reason, builds on the two other impact categories. More knowledge and skills and, if appropriate, the successful activation of decision-makers enable the implementation of specific measures and the **use of new possibilities for action**.

The stakeholders implementing the measures can considerably differ, depending on the relevant regional context and sectoral field. This also becomes apparent when analysing the impacts assigned to this category: For example, political stakeholders can strengthen the ecological environment by adopting and implementing new legal regulations and standards (“improved ecological, social and economic (living) conditions”), economic stakeholders can initiate and implement innovations (“more frequent application of social and technological innovations”) and administrative stakeholders can make work processes more effective by applying new approaches (“more effective and efficient design of work processes”).



In 19 of the projects investigated, the “application of knowledge and skills” was identified. It has to be noted that this impact category always occurred together with at least one impact from the category “empowerment” or “activation”. This underlines the special significance of the impacts in Interreg B which are of a highly cross-sectoral nature.

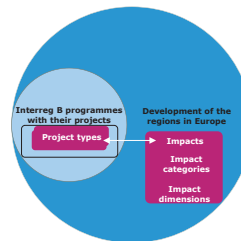


It must be emphasized that an Interreg B project does not need to serve each of the three impact categories outlined in order to be considered as successful or particularly effective. Rather, the impact categories which a project passes through in the course of financial support depend on the individual **initial situation**, the **stakeholders** as well as further outline conditions of the project. While some of the Interreg B projects investigated start with the “empowerment” of key stakeholders, other projects can already build on existing knowledge and skills and, therefore, focus on “activation” or “application” in the course of financial support. The question of which one and how many of the three impact categories are served within the context of a project does not provide direct insight into the success of the individual project. It is rather the case that conclusions can be drawn on the initial situation of a project.

To summarise, it can be noted that the **combination of cross-sectoral and sectoral impacts** is necessary to achieve the specific objective of Interreg B, i.e. financial support in accordance with the ETC Regulation. In transnational collaborative schemes it is, first of all, very important that a common knowledge base is created, which means that all relevant stakeholders are qualified. This step focusses strongly on **intersectoral, procedural and cooperative impacts**. Since Interreg B programmes regularly address new challenges, empowerment is an important and legitimate objective, even in cooperation areas which have been existing for many years. The same applies, in principle, to the impact category “activation” which is also predominantly characterised by cross-sectoral issues.

The most important added value is the **pooling of interests** and the **establishment of transnational partnerships**. It will only be possible to proceed to “application” if at least the empowerment and possibly also the activation have been successful. For the **application** of knowledge and skills, the sectoral impact dimension plays a stronger role. Knowledge and skills are, as a rule, used in a **specific sectoral context** in order to bring about **direct sectoral impacts** (e.g. increase of the innovative capacity or reduction of CO2 emissions).

3.3 PROJECT TYPES

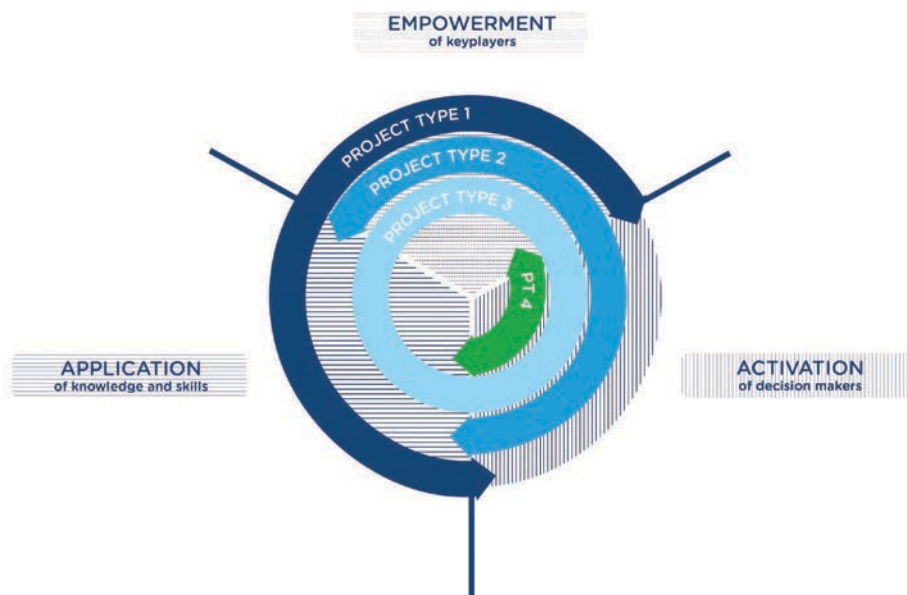


Following the classification of the impacts into two impact dimensions and three impact categories, the **projects investigated were once again analysed** and the findings of the previous steps were verified.

As already described, all 25 Interreg IVB projects investigated achieve more than one impact. In most cases, two impacts were achieved, for some projects even three. Building on that, an approach was developed which classifies the projects analysed into different project types. **Four different project types** were identified.

The classification into project types was made on the basis of the three impact categories. The following figure shows the relations between project types and impact categories. The sections of each circle which are not highlighted in colour illustrate those impact categories which were passed through already in the run-up to the funding by Interreg B or which will be served following the Interreg B funding.

Figure 7: Four project types and the impact categories addressed



Source: Ramboll Management Consulting

Project type 1

→ Impact categories: Empowerment + application



Projects of type 1 support the build-up of knowledge and skills by key stakeholders (“empowerment”), who implement concrete activities and measures on this basis and/or exploit new possibilities for action which have been identified (“application”).

This means that projects of type 1 support stakeholders in their efforts to build up knowledge and skills and immediately make use of these capabilities to realise innovations or optimise work processes (in the majority of the cases investigated). In this respect, too, the projects investigated show a direct causal relationship between the empowerment impact in a first step and the application impact in a second one.

The activation of political decision-makers is not required for this project type since the necessary outline conditions for the implementation on the political level are already existing here or are not essential for the successful application. The only missing factors are the skills and/or the knowledge to cope with the pressing social or economic challenges or to implement long-cherished projects. The Interreg IVB projects of this type create the basis for knowledge and skills which is necessary for the realisation of this measure.



In one project of type 1, for example, new networks and contact points for stakeholders from academia and industry were created. This contributed to improving the transfer of knowledge (“empowerment”), to establish research alliances and initiate innovations (“application”).

In the framework of another project of type 1, SMEs were given advice on their innovation potential and specific recommendations were defined (“empowerment”). As a consequence, innovations were stimulated and realised (“application”).

Most of the 25 projects investigated in this framework can be assigned to project type 1: A total of 14 projects are classified as type 1.

Further information about the projects SCIENCE LINK and PROINCOR is contained in the Appendix.



For the projects of type 2 there is, thus, a causal link between the impacts “increased capacity of key stakeholders to act through increased knowledge and skills” and “facilitation of political decision-making processes through joint action”. In one project of type 2, for example, the development of software products was initiated which provide a better basis for the relevant stakeholders to take joint cross-border decisions on settlement issues (“empowerment”). The common software products make it possible to easily feed information into the system. They provide useful data for the stakeholders in political decision-making processes (“activation”).

Five of the projects investigated were classified as project type 2.

Further information about the project MORECO is contained in the Appendix.

Project type 2

→ Impact categories: Empowerment + activation



Project type 2 describes those projects the impacts of which empower key stakeholders and also activate decision-makers. In most cases, new knowledge is generated and new management approaches are developed within the context of these projects

(“empowerment”) which form the basis for a stronger cooperation of political decision-makers in order to address current and future challenges in a targeted manner (“activation”).

Project type 3

→ Impact categories: Empowerment + activation + application



The projects assigned to type 3 show complex impacts in all three impact categories. Unlike the projects of type 1 and type 2, the impacts in the impact categories, however, do not necessarily occur in the causal sequence mentioned

above (empowerment - activation - application). And there is not always a causal link between them. Thus, projects of this type create for example new knowledge bases (“empowerment”), which permit key stakeholders (e.g. SMEs, stakeholders from the scientific sector, social enterprises) to trigger off innovations (“application”). At the same time, the extended knowledge base can also open up new scopes for action for political decision-makers which

result in a stronger international cooperation (“activation”). In this respect, “activation” is, however, largely independent of “application”.

Other projects can, on the basis of new states of knowledge (“empowerment”) and by using new communication channels, accordingly influence political decision-making processes at regional and European level. Equally, the knowledge can be directly used by other stakeholders, for example in order to make work processes more effective (“application”).



In one project of type 3, for example, new technologies for the treatment of ballast water as well as new strategies for tests were developed (“empowerment”). The new possibilities led to more intensified consultations among the states bordering the North Sea and finally resulted in negotiations on a new convention for ballast water management (“activation”). Moreover, the establishment of a knowledge transfer centre and of a new test facility contributed to the development of new technologies by the enterprises (“application”).

Four of the 25 projects investigated were assigned to this project type.

Further information about the project BALLAST WATER OPPORTUNITY is contained in the Appendix.

Project type 4:

→ Impact categories: Activation



Project type 4 describes projects the impacts of which exclusively activate decision-makers. In this context, both or only one of the two impacts which are assigned to “activation” can be achieved.⁹



In one project of type 4, both impacts assigned to “activation” have been served: The merger of different stakeholders in the programme region did not only lead to the definition of an overall strategy for the transnational transport corridor and the institutionalisation of cooperation on the basis of the legal status EGTC, but it was also possible to improve the communication of interests among the individual stakeholders at transnational level.

One of the 25 projects investigated was assigned to type 4.

Further information about the project CODE24 is contained in the Appendix.

⁹ A more precise description of this project type can be derived from the description of the impact category “activation of decision-makers”.

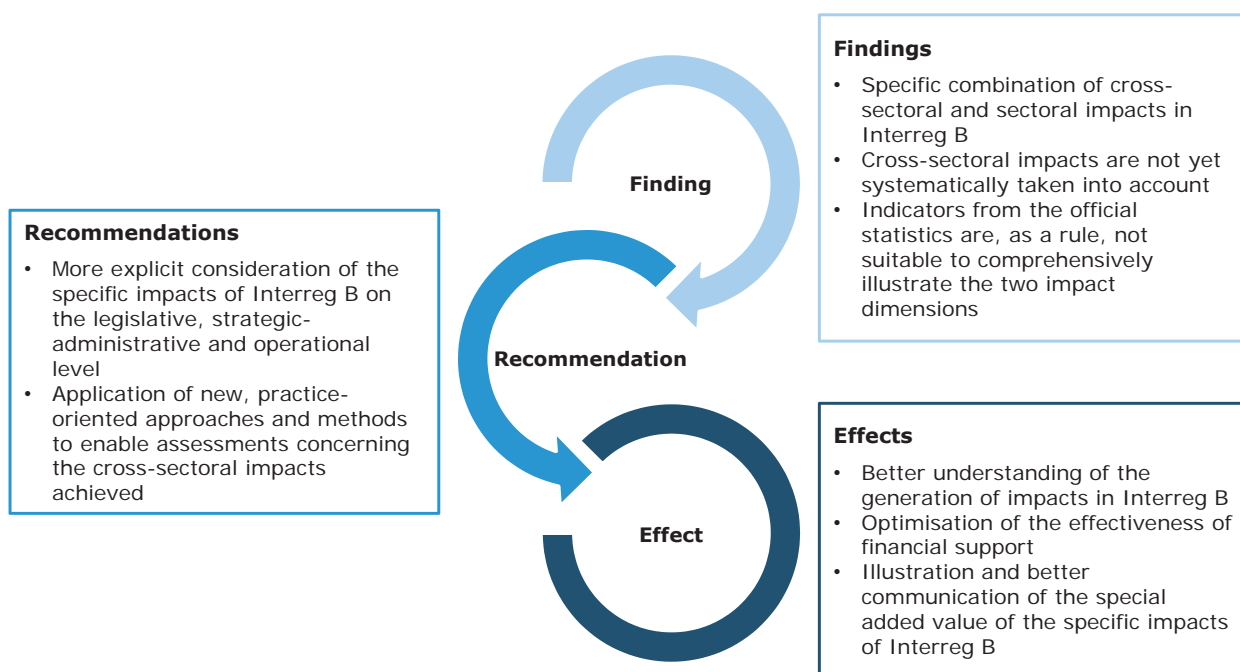
4. Enhancing impacts



Specific recommendations can be derived from the investigation for the programming period 2014-2020 and beyond. The recommendations are aimed at the stakeholders on the following three levels:

- Legislative level: European Commission, European Parliament, Member States
- Bodies responsible for the programme: i.e. managing authorities and Joint Secretariats in the cooperation programmes as well as the representatives of the Member States in the monitoring committees
- Operational level: (Potential) project stakeholders and bodies supporting the project, e.g. contact points and Joint Secretariats

Figure 8: Central, cross-sectoral findings of the investigation, recommendations derived therefrom and effects of their implementation



Source: Ramboll Management Consulting.

The added value of the funding under Interreg B will in the future become even more relevant and, that is why, it is of major importance for the **stakeholders on all levels**, i. e. the project, programme and legislative levels, to actively take the described specific impacts of the financial support into account in the years to come. As regards the preparation and implementation of the projects and programmes as well as on the general level there are specific approaches on how to follow this path.

Initially, recommendations are presented which are addressed to the bodies responsible for the programme as well as to the stakeholders at legislative level. Subsequently, the most important success factors for the implementation of effective projects are outlined and their implementation explained.



Thus, in the following chapters the **two key questions of the investigation** mentioned below are answered:

- What recommendations for the programming period 2014-2020 and beyond can be derived? How can the findings be integrated into the future selection and development of projects and, thus, contribute to increasing the effectiveness of Interreg B funding?
- How were the identified impacts (cf. Chapter 2) brought about? Which activities during the implementation of the project and conditions within the project partnership facilitated the development of cross-sectoral and long-term impacts?

4.1 BASES FOR AN OPTIMISED IMPLEMENTATION OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Apart from the successful implementation of the projects it is of great importance to adequately represent the specific objectives and impacts of Interreg B and to emphasize the special value of this kind of support. That means that, apart from the sectoral impacts, **cross-sectoral impacts are also increasingly taken into consideration** and illustrated.

The following requirement is addressed to the stakeholders on all levels: the legislative stakeholders, the bodies responsible for the programme but also the operational stakeholders.

The basic requirement is:

[Raising the awareness of and improving the appreciation for the specific impacts of Interreg B](#)

- Target group: Legislative stakeholders, the bodies responsible for the programme and operational stakeholders
- Timeframe: Programming period 2014-2020 and financial support after 2020

A **greater awareness and a better appreciation of the specific impacts of Interreg B** on the legislative level, among the bodies responsible for the programme and on the operational level is urgently necessary to further increase the effectiveness of funding. Especially the understanding of the interaction of cross-sectoral and sectoral impacts and their weighting in Interreg B is of great importance to fulfil the requirements of funding support and to promote its implementation. For this purpose, the following two approaches should be pursued:



Firstly, the adaptation of the legal bases is necessary so that the acknowledgement of the two impact dimensions of Interreg B on the legislative level is more firmly enshrined and is, consequently, improved. The current rules and regulations provide for a strong sectoral orientation of financial support. The distinctive features of Interreg B on the whole and the special characteristics of the individual

programme areas are only insufficiently taken into consideration. To implement the necessary changes, the focus during this funding period must, in the first place, be on the stronger acceptance of and appreciation for the cross-sectoral impacts achieved in Interreg B. With a view to making preparations for funding after 2020, **the cross-sectoral impact dimension should also be taken more explicitly into account in the legal guidelines.** These guidelines must ensure that Interreg B is again stronger aimed at an integrated territorial project implementation within the meaning of the Territorial Agenda 2020.

Secondly, an “**impact catalogue**” in the form of Good Practice Guidelines should be elaborated. This catalogue could illustrate the cross-sectoral as well as the sectoral impacts of the financial support and transparently explain the interrelations of the impacts. This document would contribute to further raising the awareness of the specific features of Interreg B and could be drawn up still during the current programming period. The stakeholders on the operational level could directly make use of this catalogue to appropriately assess the initial situation in the course of a project development and to define realistic objectives on this basis.



Recommendation: More explicit appreciation and stronger consideration of the combination of cross-sectoral and sectoral impacts specific to Interreg B by the elaboration of the relevant legal bases and the drawing up of an impact catalogue.


4.2 OPTIMISE PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

In connection with a better acknowledgement of the specific impacts of Interreg B, changes should be initiated when **preparing and implementing the future financial support** in order to further optimise the funding support and to communicate the added value thus obtained in a more targeted manner. The following three recommendations are addressed in particular to the **bodies responsible for the programme** in the programme areas and are of special significance for the preparation of funding after 2020.

The recommendations made to optimise the implementation of the programme are:

Clarification of the regional situation

- Target group: Bodies responsible for the programme
- Timeframe: Financial support after 2020

The selective **evolution of the procedures for programme planning and implementation** is a further aspect for the optimisation of funding and the increase of effectiveness. The identified impacts and impact categories can be used by the bodies responsible for the programme to make an in-depth **analysis of the current situation in the programme area** as preparation of a new programming period (What do the stakeholders in the programme area need to effectively cooperate with each other?). It can be analysed to what extent the key stakeholders are already empowered, whether the activation of political decision-makers is necessary and has possibly already been initiated and whether the application of knowledge and skills can take place in the transnational context. 

On the basis of the analysis, the appropriate **balance of cross-sectoral and sectoral objectives** for funding can be determined, enshrined in the strategic orientation and implementation of the programme (e.g. strategic objectives, sectoral priorities, monitoring and indicator systems) as well as taken into consideration for the implementation of the financial support (e.g. classification of the projects into the three impact categories in the course of the selection of projects which makes it possible to control the shares of cross-sectoral and sectoral objectives).



Recommendation: Precise survey of the situation in the programme area and, on this basis, determination of the appropriate **balance of cross-sectoral and sectoral objectives** for funding.

Specification of the objectives

- Target group: Bodies responsible for the programme
- Timeframe: Financial support after 2020

The objectives of the cooperation programmes should also reflect the two impact dimensions of Interreg B. The identified impacts and impact categories can support the bodies responsible for the implementation of the programme in the definition of **realistic and precise objectives** for the financial support in their programme area. The careful analysis of the situation in the programme area is a suitable starting point for this purpose (see recommendation above).



In order to lay down appropriate and specific objectives of Interreg B and to operationalise them it is also necessary, apart from the development of sectoral intervention logics (output - result - impact), to also elaborate intervention logics which explicitly reflect cross-sectoral impacts. These logics provide the basis for the stakeholders to **outline approaches to achieve the specific impacts of Interreg B** and to be able to **define objectives**.



Recommendation: Development of intervention logics for cross-sectoral outputs, results and impacts to define precise objectives for funding.

Increase the informative value of indicators

- Target group: Bodies responsible for the programme
- Timeframe: Financial support after 2020

In order to measure the **achievement of cross-sectoral objectives** it is necessary to develop suitable indicators to capture the **specific impacts of Interreg B**. This is a further important aspect for the bodies responsible for the programme during the preparation and planning of a new cooperation programme.



When defining suitable indicators it has to be taken into account that the specific impacts of Interreg B are often **of a qualitative nature**. Statistical data are, as a rule, not suitable to represent these developments. The specific objectives of Interreg B and the developed **intervention logics for the cross-sectoral dimension** can be used as a starting point for the elaboration of suitable result indicators (see recommendation above). Besides the intervention logics, the precise analysis of the situation in the programme area can be very useful. The focus of the funding support should become clearly visible already from the intervention logics, thus ensuring the short and concise definition of a result indicator.



Recommendation: Development of result indicators which also consider the cross-sectoral impacts of funding and represent evolutions in this sector.

4.3 OPTIMISE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

In the course of the investigation, **five success factors** were elaborated which are decisive for the successful implementation of projects and the achievement of the identified specific impacts of Interreg B.

They play a fundamental role for the successful **project implementation** but also for the **project preparation** and should be adequately taken into consideration by the stakeholders at an early stage already. It has to be noted that the five success factors apply, in principle, to almost any type of project. But in the transnational context, special requirements have to be observed for their consideration.

Therefore, the recommendation made to optimise project implementation:

Explicitly take account of the success factors

- Target group: Bodies responsible for the programme and operational stakeholders
- Timeframe: Programming period 2014-2020 and financial support after 2020

The identified five **success factors** should be used to increasingly focus, during the **preparation and implementation of the project**, on such aspects which are of special importance to the successful and effective implementation of the programme. This recommendation is, on the one hand, addressed to the operational stakeholders, i.e. the project stakeholders and the bodies monitoring the programme (e.g. National Contact Points). On the other hand, the bodies responsible for the programme may also use the success factors to evolve the implementation of the funding support in their programme area.



For further information about the success factors, the operational stakeholders can particularly rely on the Good Practice Guidelines which were also published within the context of this investigation.¹⁰ There, the significance of these factors for a successful project implementation is

¹⁰ Good Practice Guidelines for an Effective Implementation of Interreg B Projects. Available at: <http://www.bbsr.bund.de/BBSR/DE/FP/ReFo/Raumordnung/2015/transnationale-zusammenarbeit/01-start.html?nn=1380582>

presented and explained on the basis of project examples. The Good Practice Guidelines are addressed to (potential) project stakeholders as well as to bodies monitoring the programme. The document provides guidance for them on how to even more systematically support (potential) applicants during the **preparation of the project** and in the course of the **filing of the application**.

For the bodies responsible for the programme, the success factors can in turn be a reference point for the review and, if necessary, the **evolution of their criteria for project selection**. The success factors can also be integrated into instructions, guidelines etc. which are made available to the project stakeholders and the bodies monitoring the programme.

Recommendation: Deliberate use of the findings about the especially important success factors in order to further increase the positive effects of Interreg B and to achieve long-term impacts.

Figure 9: Overview of the success factors



Source: Ramboll Management Consulting.

The five success factors mentioned are to be understood as an **integral element of an overall system**: Ideally, the project stakeholders should take all success factors set forth into consideration to be able to achieve the highest possible effectiveness for their project. The overall system will become more fragile with more and more elements missing and the high effectiveness of the individual project less probable.

Success factor:
IDENTIFICATION - Agree on common objectives and interests

What does IDENTIFICATION mean?

A high motivation and the willingness of the project partners to become actively involved requires a clear common vision with which the project partners concerned can identify. Moreover, clearly communicated objectives are required which are beneficial for all participants in the project and are actively supported by them.

Why is IDENTIFICATION important?

Common objectives: A common understanding of the objectives of the project and the related tasks is indispensable for an effective and efficient cooperation in a transnational cooperation project. All parties involved should be able to identify themselves with the objectives agreed upon and have a common understanding of the goals to be achieved in order to committedly and successfully participate in the pursuit of these objectives. Especially in connection with transnational projects, such as those in Interreg B, misunderstandings due to language barriers, cultural disparities and different working methods may occur which can be reduced or completely avoided by clearly communicated objectives. This also means that responsibilities and expectations are clearly and early communicated and agreed. This is all the more important the higher the number of project partners is.

High level of commitment: A common understanding of and an individual interest in the objectives of the project is a decisive factor for the motivation of the project partners. The success of a project depends in turn largely on the commitment of the stakeholders involved and/or their

willingness to assume an active role in its implementation. For this reason, a common interest is an important prerequisite for the binding, active and committed support of the objectives of the project by the project partners. The principle here is: The more the parties involved are convinced of the benefits of the project for them the higher their willingness to assume responsibility for its implementation.

Intensive exchange of ideas and experience: A strong common interest has visible positive effects on the frequency and intensity of the exchange of ideas and experience among the project partners. The more the parties involved are interested in the project and its outcomes the more intensive the technical discussions within the project team are. This dedicated exchange of ideas and experience makes it possible to discuss the different technical and regional perspectives and take them into account in order to optimally exploit the enormous potential inherent in a transnational partnership.

How can IDENTIFICATION be achieved?

Even before the start of the project it is important to describe the vision as well as the objectives of the project as comprehensively as possible: Only thus will they become tangible for potential project partners and serve as a motivation to actively participate in the project. What is more, the early substantiation of the intended objectives is useful to specifically identify the best suitable stakeholders when setting up the project partnership and to win their support for the common project.

At the launch of the project, the project partners must explicitly agree on the objectives and on the in-depth planning of the forthcoming tasks to create a common basis for the implementation of the project. During this stage, all stakeholders should be given ample opportunity for participation and co-determination so as to enable partners to actively contribute to shaping this important identification process. Furthermore, already here the awareness of the special challenges of transnational partnerships should be raised, both with regard to the different regional circumstances and different work cultures and language barriers. A strong emphasis should, therefore, be placed on the clear communication of the

strategy, the objectives as well as the responsibilities within the partnership. In this connection, different language competences of the project partners should possibly also be taken into account. Ideally, it would be advisable to use clear language.

During the implementation of the project, it is important to constantly and clearly communicate the jointly developed vision within the project partnership and to compare possibly emerging (partial) objectives with this vision and, if necessary, adapt them. For some of the projects investigated, working groups were set up with the aim of ensuring the orientation of all activities towards the overarching vision. In addition, they had to inform all project partners regularly about the progress achieved.



Project example for the success factor IDENTIFICATION

An important prerequisite for the proactive and committed cooperation of the stakeholders from the scientific community and from industry in the SCIENCE LINK project was the clearly and frequently communicated vision of the project which was also actively supported by the project partners, not least due to their individual interest in the issue. Within the context of the project, the partners have, therefore, tackled a common challenge and developed solutions. All activities were subordinated to this vision and were intended to realise it.

The systematic orientation of the project towards the common vision and the interests of the project partners were the decisive factors for the active and committed pursuit of the project objectives by the extremely complex partnership (41 stakeholders). Especially the strong awareness of the specific possibilities of benefitting from the results achieved, either in the short run (improved cooperation structures) or in the long run (enhanced innovation capacity and competitiveness) had a positive effect. All partners had a strong common as well as an individual interest in the successful implementation of the project.

Success factor:

LEADERSHIP - Ensure professional project management and strengthen team spirit

What does LEADERSHIP mean?

In order to intensify the cooperation of the project partners and to make it effective and efficient, the professional management of the lead partner is necessary which ensures the active integration of all project partners, thus successfully coordinating and guiding them. In view of the transnational complex partnerships of Interreg B projects, an effective project management is of special importance.

Why is LEADERSHIP important?

Project management: Interreg B projects require a professional administrative, financial and personnel management by the lead partner. In administrative and financial terms, the specific and in some cases extensive European requirements for Interreg B funding must be taken into consideration. Long-term experience with project management, especially with regard to EU-funded projects, is very useful here and leads to noticeable efficiency gains for their implementation.

As regards personnel, the lead partner must set up a functioning project partnership and provide the relevant guidance. This includes, on the one hand, the targeted selection of motivated, representative and technically capable stakeholders. On the other hand, the usually great number of project partners - the projects investigated included on the average 14 partners - has to be guided and coordinated professionally. Responsibilities and tasks must be clearly assigned and work packages must be organised accordingly. These aspects are of great significance for the successful implementation of projects which are very ambitious from the administrative, financial and personnel point of view.

Team spirit: A further important factor for successful cooperation which can decisively be influenced by the lead partner is a trustful relationship among the project partners. Considering the technically complex projects in Interreg B which include a diversity of personnel, a strong team spirit is required: This team spirit supports

the intensive and informal communication among the partners and contributes to reducing mistrust, silo mentality and other obstacles to communication. Thus, full use can be made of the potential inherent in Interreg B projects. The lead partner can decisively and positively influence this process by bringing the stakeholders together and creating group dynamics.

How can LEADERSHIP be achieved?

The commitment of the lead partner is crucial for a professional project management and a strong team spirit. Especially during the initial phase of the project, the lead partner can positively influence group dynamics and develop team spirit among the stakeholders who have different technical backgrounds and nationalities and/or actively promote this spirit by suitable activities. To this end, in some of the projects investigated, the lead partners have, for example, organised informal meetings and joint activities such as excursions. Within the framework of other projects, study tours and/or exchanges among the project partners were made possible in order to intensify the personal contact among the stakeholders.

For project management in terms of personnel, intercultural communication and organisation skills as well as commitment, perseverance and the ability to motivate are required: For example regular mandatory meetings and exchanges of experience as well as frequent individual discussions and feedback sessions may be used to clarify specific problems and misunderstandings with individual project partners at an early stage already and to review the progress made with the implementation of the project.

The lead partner should constantly motivate the other project partners (as mentioned under IDENTIFICATION) to work towards the common objective and regularly explain the added value of this commitment. In this respect, it is, among other things, useful to give project partners reasonable opportunity to openly address specific problems and challenges and to actively participate in their solution. The imposition of obligations and discipline is another important aspect which the lead partner can actively influence by the early setting of deadlines and the clear agreement on responsibilities. At the same time, it is, in view of the different work cultures within the transnational partnership also necessary to respond flexibly to the diverse working methods and work cultures and, as far as this is possible, respect them.

A useful tool for the personnel project management can also be the cooperation of stakeholders who already know each other from other projects: Thus, they can build on common experiences and an existing basis of trust and also rely on knowledge concerning the implementation of complex, transnational projects.

As regards the administrative and financial project management, in the case of some projects where the lead partner did not yet have the relevant EU-specific competences at the start of the project, external experts, financial advisers or consultants were involved who assumed the respective subtasks of project management. Actually, the time required for these tasks within the partnership can, thus, be considerably reduced and the personnel and subject-specific management tasks can be tackled more intensively.



Project example for the success factor LEADERSHIP

The successful development of new approaches as well as their importance on the international political level in the BALLAST WATER OPPORTUNITY project was largely due to the committed and professional management of the lead partner. In order to strengthen the cooperation of the numerous stakeholders - a total of 16 project partners and 29 sub-partners from the private and public sectors were included - and to optimally exploit their potential (especially with regard to the networking with political decision-makers) a constant and intensive exchange was organised.

A useful factor in this connection was, on the one hand, the high degree of accessibility of the lead partner and, on the other, - apart from regular meetings, conferences and the high degree of accessibility - also the creation of platforms ensuring the opportunities for the exchange of ideas and experience. Thus, internal workshops, regular meetings and conferences were organised where the project partners were motivated to discuss current challenges in implementing the project and to present possible solutions. In addition, it was, thus, made possible for them to get actively involved in the strategic level of project implementation.

Success factor:

BALANCE - Establish a representative project partnership

What does BALANCE mean?

A partnership which is representative of the subject dealt with and which integrates different stakeholders and perspectives is helpful for the success of a transnational cooperation project: Key stakeholders who are significant for the project topic in technical, political and/or regional terms should be represented in the project partnership in order to organise the implementation of the project as effectively as possible.

Why is BALANCE important?

Quality: A well-balanced project partnership makes it possible to include different perspectives in the project implementation. As regards contents, multidisciplinary can be useful to complement knowledge and skills. The cooperation of stakeholders from different technical fields opens up new ways of thinking and combines ideas and trains of thought concerning individual problems on a more holistic conceptual level. This multi-stakeholder approach is, moreover, helpful to enhance the suitability of the project outcomes for use in practical applications. Horizontal (administration, industry, interest groups etc.) and vertical (representatives at regional, national and EU levels) representation in the partnership enables the adaptation of the results to the prevailing regional conditions as well as to coordinate them with the requirements of the different stakeholders. This facilitates the development of effective and practice-oriented approaches. Furthermore, the transnational perspective is necessary since an ever-increasing share of the current challenges cannot be mastered regionally or nationally. A systematic transnational orientation of the project partnership is needed to analyse transnational challenges such as climate change and its consequences and to define suitable approaches.

Legitimation: A multifaceted partnership has positive effects on the legitimation and the significance of the evidence and findings from the project. Here, the special value of a transnational partnership becomes particularly evident: Experiences, outcomes and progress made in different regional contexts are compiled, thus providing local or less connected stakeholders with new ideas and successful practices. What is more, a project partnership which combines different interest groups and stakeholders strengthens the negotiating position of the participants: The greater the number of stakeholders participating in the definition of statements on and recommendations for the project and supporting them, the higher their significance and the stronger the influence of the project partners on the political level.

Reaching target groups: The project partners act as important multipliers introducing the project into their respective region and sectoral field. A multidisciplinary, transnational and multilevel partnership is, therefore, essential for effective networking. It is helpful to address and reach target groups at different levels and to disseminate project outcomes and/or information (e.g. position papers and recommendations) as widely as possible.

How can BALANCE be achieved?

The crucial factor for a partnership which creates added value is the process for the selection of the project partners before the start of the project. The first step should be to specifically identify the stakeholders who are relevant for the implementation of the project. Relevance refers, on the one hand, to the sectoral orientation: The intention should be to focus on stakeholders, i.e. participants, who are themselves interested in the outcomes of the project and who can, from a sectoral perspective, also essentially contribute to the success of the project. But relevance refers, on the other hand, also to the status and/or position of the stakeholders. Potential project partners should be well connected both sectorally and regionally to make it easier to reach the target groups and to be able, if necessary, to integrate relevant stakeholders outside the project partnership into the implementation of the project.

In addition, potential project partners should be addressed as early as possible. Thus, the lead partner will have sufficient time to attract suitable stakeholders for the project and to address alternative stakeholders in the case of rejections. And the early planning enables the project partners to make provisions for sufficient personnel and financial capacities and to adequately plan ahead. A suitable option to integrate stakeholders who, for temporal and/or financial reasons, cannot become a project partner is the “associated partnership”: In this case, stakeholders assume an advisory function and/or participate only to a limited degree in the project implementation by providing resources (networking, transfer of knowledge etc.). This possibility is once again taken up in connection with the success factor LINKAGE.

In order to guarantee an effective and efficient cooperation among the many and varied stakeholders from different regions and technical fields, a committed personnel management by the lead partner - as described under LEADERSHIP - is necessary.

It must be emphasized that it is not the number of project partners which is crucial to the success of the project. Under certain conditions, a great number of partners can even hamper the efficient implementation of the project. A well-balanced composition of the project partners as to their technical, regional and political expertise and significance is, however, an important factor for the successful and effective project implementation.



Project example for the success factor BALANCE

The complex, diversified and, thus, highly representative partnership of the Code24 project was a decisive factor for the achievement of the project goal, i.e. to develop a common overall strategy for the corridor. A total of 17 project partners from five countries were involved and represented the entire corridor from Rotterdam to Genoa.

When establishing the partnership, special importance was attached to the coverage of the relevant sectoral fields. Thus, with the participation of representatives from public authorities, stakeholders from the private sector, from scientific institutions, regional planners and seaport authorities, multifaceted and also relevant perspectives were merged and combined to an inclusive representative overall strategy. The high representativeness enhanced the legitimation and significance of the overall strategy as well as that of the partnership itself. This facilitated the access to the decision-making processes at EU level.

The identification and inclusion of suitable project partners required extensive preparation. More than a year before the filing of the application, potentially appropriate stakeholders were addressed and enlisted for cooperation.

Success factor:**LINKAGE - Identify and make use of synergy potentials****What does LINKAGE mean?**

In order to optimally profit from existing structures, the collaborative schemes already in place must be actively used. These schemes may relate to political, business and scientific associations and networks as well as to projects in other programme areas which are funded under Interreg.

Why is LINKAGE important?

Synergy: Cooperation with existing collaborative schemes is of great relevance especially for the content-related structuring of the project: Owing to their structure, associations, networks and fora (merger of numerous stakeholders with different experiences) provide important bases for the exchange of experiences and knowledge with an added value. They pool different knowledge, various experiences and perspectives and offer great synergy potentials for Interreg B projects on account of their similar orientation extending across regions and stakeholders. In a first step, they enable a better holistic understanding of the challenges and in a second one, the development of suitable and practice-oriented approaches.

Visibility: Cooperation with existing structures enhances the visibility of the Interreg B projects, either through agreed collaborative schemes, presentations at conferences or through participation in seminars and workshops. These approaches make it possible for the project partners to directly access stakeholders beyond the project partnership. Initially, this makes it obviously easier to address stakeholders and to possibly integrate them later on. This visibility can, in addition, be enhanced by the active promotion and assistance for example provided by associations: They are important multipliers for Interreg B projects since they can effectively disseminate information in connection with the project concerned in their network and, thus, noticeably increase the level of awareness of this project.

Influence: Cooperation with other similar collaborative projects, primarily Interreg projects, is also beneficial since it may thus be possible to achieve a greater external effect. For example, in the case of one project investigated, a common concluding conference with a sectorally similar Interreg project was organised which not only increased the number of participants but also contributed to better reaching target groups. The technical and practical exchange of ideas and experience as well as mutual assistance, especially when addressing and reaching the target groups during the implementation of the project, can be very helpful.

How can LINKAGE be achieved?

The early awareness-raising of the project partners to actively address and integrate external associations, networks and fora is useful for an effective linkage. All project partners should be encouraged to draw attention to the project in their respective sphere of influence (e.g. by at least one event in every country involved) and to identify starting points for cooperation with other collaborative schemes. Collaborative schemes of especially high relevance (in technical terms and/or with regard to the target groups) should be specifically addressed and integrated on the sectoral level, for example via associated partnerships or selected projects.

Moreover, a professional and comprehensive communications strategy is useful to address relevant associations, networks and fora and enlist them for cooperation in implementing the project and, as multipliers, provide them with attractive information material. For this purpose, sufficient personnel resources with technical expertise should be allowed for in order to develop adequate high-profile products and carry out activities. Such adequate products include publications, press releases and information material. When presenting the outcomes to the public, an attractive layout and design should be chosen and/or an internal Corporate Identity should be used to enhance the recognition factor. Other creative formats (e.g. comics, short films, postcard campaigns, summer school for students) can be helpful to present the objectives and outcomes of the project as tangibly as possible.



Project example for the success factor LINKAGE

Between 2010 and 2013, the PROINCOR project supported about 400 enterprises in the programme area. The project partners used a jointly developed system for an innovation audit. The experiences made by innovation centres, universities and research institutes as well as by Chambers of Industry and Commerce were integrated into the methodology. In order to reach target groups, the project partners used their regional network relationships, e.g. with the European Enterprise Network, with business associations and innovation consultants. On the one hand, this made it possible for the SMEs to become acquainted with the range of services offered by PROINCOR. On the other hand, these relations were used to implement the recommendations made in connection with the innovation audits which had been carried out.

In addition, PROINCOR was monitored by an internationally staffed Advisory Board. Together with the high-level board members, policy recommendations for the improvement of the regional innovation systems were drawn up. These recommendations referred to the marginal conditions of the regional innovation systems, e.g. the funding instruments available for an enhanced innovation.

Success factor:

TOPICALITY - Address urgent challenges of supraregional significance

What does TOPICALITY mean?

In order to attract and ensure the attention of key stakeholders, the project should address existing challenges and the urgent requirement for action and present suitable approaches.

Why is TOPICALITY important?

Interest: The success of the project and its sustainability largely depend on the support of high-level key

stakeholders - especially political decision-makers - outside the project partnership. They cannot only provide valuable technical and practical assistance during the implementation of the project but also use and/or disseminate and evolve the outcomes after the termination of the project. The topic dealt with should be of adequate significance and interest to the stakeholders outside the project partnership in order to gain their support. In this respect, topicality is a crucial factor: The more the project addresses existing challenges and the urgent requirement for action and presents approaches, the greater the likelihood of active support and attention by political decision-makers and other key stakeholders. In some cases, this also concerns topics which have in the meantime disappeared from the policy agenda despite an urgent requirement for action and which again become topical issues due to the efforts undertaken by the project partners.

How can TOPICALITY be achieved?

A key prerequisite for the TOPICALITY of the project is the early adaptation of the project objectives to the existing challenges and/or urgent requirement for action, e.g. by taking up current political action plans and recently adopted agendas. This should already be ensured during the drawing-board stage before the launch of the project by its initiators. Furthermore, when the project starts, an intensive dialogue between the project partners on the situation in the individual regions is helpful. Project partners should be able to clearly understand and assess the political, social and/or economic context of the programme area concerned and its special characteristics in order to identify the existing challenges in a targeted manner and to develop suitable approaches.

The proactive addressing of key stakeholders, especially high-level political stakeholders which is also mentioned under LINKAGE, is beneficial here. The attention of the political stakeholders should be drawn to the added value which the relevant project offers with regard to the addressing of urgent challenges. For this purpose, it is on the one hand useful to be present at and actively participate in political decision-making processes such as consultation procedures. Short meetings with and presentations before high-level policymakers where the potential of the project outcomes for the existing challenges is transparently

explained are also advantageous. On the other hand, key stakeholders can also be actively involved in the implementation of the project, either by invitations to internal round tables and seminars organised by them or by their inclusion in accompanying project committees which issue recommendations.



Project example for the success factor TOPICALITY

During the last few years, the Alpine Space has been confronted with an increasing urban sprawl due to the economic and demographic development: While the population in rural areas is constantly decreasing, local authorities in the conurbations have to cope with high urban pressure which entails negative consequences such as ever-increasing commuter flows or high infrastructure costs. Therefore, the requirement for action to be taken by the local authorities with regard to a coordinated and early planning has enormously risen. The MORECO project is targeted exactly at this situation. The software products household and settlement calculators which were developed within the framework of the project, provided the necessary instruments to better address the growing problem of urban sprawl.

The interest of the local authorities, municipalities and regional administrations in and their response to the developed instruments (household and settlement calculators) is, therefore, very high. Thus, for instance, more than 2,500 public stakeholders and private individuals attended the numerous events and activities in the Alpine Space; several newspaper articles and a television report dealt with the project while the project management is continuously being invited to (international) presentations.

In the course of this investigation, two further publications were issued.

Good Practice Guidelines for an Effective Implementation of Interreg B Projects

The Good Practice Guidelines are primarily addressed to (potential) project stakeholders but also to project advisors. This document gives a practice-oriented explanation of the findings from the investigation relating to the effective preparation and implementation of Interreg B projects and provides specific examples.

The Good Practice Guidelines were published in German and English and can be retrieved from the following web address:

<http://www.bbsr.bund.de/BBSR/EN/Publications/BMVI/2017/impacts-interreg-b.html?nn=796908>

Expert paper: Measuring Interreg B Specific Impacts

The expert paper is primarily intended for the stakeholders who are responsible for the programme. It provides an impetus for impact analyses in Interreg B which do not only attach great importance to the sectoral but also to the cross-sectoral impacts. For this purpose, suggestions for the evolution of result indicators are formulated and proposals for practicable methodological procedures are made.

The Good Practice Guidelines were published in German and English and can be retrieved from the following web address:

<http://www.bbsr.bund.de/BBSR/EN/Publications/BMVI/2017/impacts-interreg-b.html?nn=796908>

Appendix

In-depth investigation of Interreg IVB projects

Programme area	Project	Brief description
Baltic Sea	AQUABEST	Development of a common strategy for sustainable aquaculture in the Baltic Sea region.
	BaltSeaPlan	Development of integrated national maritime strategies and implementation of an integrated maritime spatial planning in the Baltic Sea region.
	BSLN	Management and harmonisation of common challenges facing the labour market in the Baltic Sea region on the basis of common transnational strategies.
	COHIBA	Sources, cycles and management of hazardous substances, their monitoring and management as well as best practice solutions for the handling of selected hazardous material to implement the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP).
	SCIENCE LINK	Creation of a network of contact and consultation points to provide information about the possibilities of major research infrastructures for SMEs; consultation and support when looking for funding instruments and services.
	SCANDRIA	Promotion of transport infrastructure, innovative transport logistics as well as sustainable regional development in the corridor between Scandinavia and the Adriatic Sea.
Central Europe	CEC5	Increasing energy efficiency in public buildings and increasing the demand for “zero-energy buildings”.
	HABIT-CHANGE	Protection and strengthening of the biological diversity of species and of all habitats.
	INTER-Regio-Rail	Development of a better and more innovative offer in regional bus transport as well as of an alternative offer to road transport for inhabitants and visitors of the regions.
	PROINCOR	Improvement of the innovation performance of SMEs in the most important production and industrial performance areas within the Baltic Sea-Adriatic Sea corridor.
	SECOND CHANCE	Development and presentation of new and innovative re-integration options by the transformation of industrial waste land into cultivated areas.
Alps	NEWFOR	Improved access to the forest with regard to an economical harvest and transport of timber; sustainable forestry industry and timber industry in view of climate change.
	ViSiBLE	Promotion of a standardised integrated perspective on zero-energy buildings.
	MORECO	Clarification of the relationship between mobility and housing costs for private households and public stakeholders, in order to take influence on location decisions made by citizens, the construction industry, authorities and enterprises with a view to sustainable mobility and the strengthening of the infrastructure towards supply centres and public transport arteries.
	SHARE	Development, testing and promotion of a decision support system to use waterpower which merges requirements to be met by river ecosystems and waterpower on a neutral basis.
North West Europe	Zecos	Development of a multi-stage certificate system for zero CO2 emissions to standardise and officially recognize European Zero CO2 (greenhouse gas) Emissions Communities.
	ECO-LASERFACT	Facilitation of the transfer of know-how concerning improved environmentally friendly and low-cost laser-based processes by leading research institutes to SMEs as well as the merger of research institutes participating in the manufacture of micro laser systems.
	Grow2Build	Promotion of biological building materials from hemp and flax as well as the strengthening of transnational production chains for hemp and flax materials, improvement in the quality of the raw materials, promotion of product innovations and activities to increase demand.
	I-stay@home	Reduction of negative impacts of demographic change and support of the expectations of the citizens for a long and independent life even in old age or with a handicap.
	Code24	Elaboration of integrated development strategies for the European transport corridor 24 (Rotterdam-Genoa link), taking economic, spatial, ecological and traffic aspects into account.
North Sea	ACCSEAS	Development and introduction of electronic navigation (e-navigation) in the North Sea.
	Ballast Water Opportunity	Improvement of the ecological quality of the North Sea by promoting the ratification of the Ballast Water Management Convention (MWMC) which will, inter alia, also create a new market for innovative products.
	BwC	Mainstreaming of energy-efficient building through the complete production chain; awareness-raising of the advantages and the significant potential for energy saving and the reduction of CO2 emissions as well as establishment of the passive house standard.
	GreCor	Promoting the setting up of a co-modal transport corridor in the North Sea region in special consideration of secondary networks, nodes as well as of the regional hinterland around the “green transport corridor” Oslo - Randstad from the co-modal perspective.
	NSSP	Setting up and interlinking of innovation capacities of undertakings and service providers in the field of film and television industry and interactive media with the aim of creating new jobs.

Source: Internal Presentation Ramboll Management Consulting, brief description on the basis of the BBSR project data base.

Project examples to illustrate impacts and success factors

Project: SCIENCE LINK

Programme area

Baltic Sea Region

Thematic field

Research and innovation

Objective

Improvement of the transfer of knowledge between industry and academia

Impacts

→ **Increased capacity of key stakeholders to act through increased knowledge and skills**

The SCIENCE LINK network established by leading large research facilities and higher education institutions as well as regional economic development organisations has improved the transfer of knowledge between the stakeholders from the sectors of industry and science in the Baltic Sea Region and, thus, enhanced their ability to act. More intensive networking activities (contact points at economic development organisations), specific research partnerships and the provision of instruments have made it possible for enterprises to trigger innovations. The research institutions benefit from an enhanced visibility and importance which increases their competitiveness in the international scientific context.

→ **More frequent application of social and technological innovations**

The initiated research alliances have triggered innovations. In particular, the use of research instruments and measuring devices supported the enterprises involved in developing or optimising products. The networks which have been created and are constantly used enable the effective application of physical basic research in the Baltic Sea region for innovation projects of the business world.

Success factor

→ **Identification**

An important prerequisite for the proactive and committed cooperation of the stakeholders from academia and industry was the vision of the project which was clearly and frequently communicated and actively supported by the project partners because it also served their own interest: The transfer of knowledge between industry and academia was to be improved, thus enhancing the competitiveness and the innovative capacity of these stakeholders in the region. Within the context of the project, the partners have, therefore, tackled a common challenge and developed solutions. All activities were subordinated to this vision and were intended to realise it. The declared objective was to exploit the opportunities large-scale research infrastructures offer for basic research in physics so that they can also be used by research-intensive enterprises from the region.

The systematic orientation of the project towards the outlined vision and the interests of the project partners was the decisive factor for the active and committed pursuit of the project objectives by the partnership the composition of which was extremely complex (41 stakeholders). Especially the strong awareness of the specific possibilities of benefitting from the results achieved, either in the short run (improved cooperation structures) or in the long run (enhanced innovation capacity and competitiveness), had a positive effect. All partners had a strong common as well as an individual interest in the successful implementation of the project.

Project: BALLAST WATER OPPORTUNITY

Programme area

North Sea Region

Thematic field

Environment and natural resources

Objective

Development of technological solutions and administrative standards for ballast water management in the North Sea region

Impacts→ **More frequent application of social and technological innovations**

Bringing together stakeholders from academia, industry and administration and the creation of a new knowledge transfer centre and a new test facility led to the development of new and innovative products. This made it possible for some enterprises to develop new technologies for ballast water management and have them approved.

→ **Increased capacity of key stakeholders to act through increased knowledge and skills**

The project consortium consisting of representatives from the scientific community, industry and public authorities developed - apart from new management technologies - new methods and strategies to improve the testing of ballast water from sea-going vessels, thus preventing the introduction of alien organisms into domestic ecosystems. Newly developed test methods enable the authorities to carry out more effective checks. As a consequence, political decision-makers at international level are, on the basis of the test results, able to lay down new international ballast water standards.

→ **Facilitation of political decision-making processes through joint action**

The approaches developed for ballast water management and the accompanying public relations work have resulted in better coordination efforts among the riparian states of the North Sea with regard to the decision-making processes within the International Maritime Organization (IMO). Thus, the findings of the project were used as a basis for negotiations for the conclusion of a new convention on ballast water management which is currently in the ratification process.

Success factor→ **Leadership**

The successful development of new approaches as well as their importance on the international political level was largely due to the committed and professional management of the lead partner. In order to strengthen the cooperation of the numerous stakeholders - a total of 16 project partners and 29 sub-partners from the private and public sectors were included - and to optimally exploit their potential (especially with regard to the networking with political decision-makers), a constant and intensive dialogue was organised. A useful factor in this connection was, on the one hand, the high degree of accessibility of the lead partner and, on the other, - apart from regular meetings, conferences and the high degree of accessibility - also the creation of platforms ensuring the opportunities for the exchange of ideas and experience. Thus, internal workshops, regular meetings and conferences were organised where the project partners were motivated to discuss current challenges in implementing the project and to present possible solutions. In addition, it was, thus, made possible for them to get actively involved in the strategic level of project implementation.

Project: CODE 24

Programme area

North West Europe

Thematic field

Traffic and transport

Objective

Further development of the Rhine-Alpine corridor between Rotterdam and Genoa by way of a coordinated overall strategy

Impacts

→ Facilitation of political decision-making processes through joint action

17 regional decision-makers and stakeholders from the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland and Italy formed the transnational project consortium of Code24 to elaborate a common and integrative overall strategy for the transnational transport corridor between Rotterdam and Genoa. In the final analysis, the regional stakeholders agreed in the future to more intensively coordinate their activities in the field of transport but also with regard to economic, environmental and spatial development. In order to continue the coordination of the respective regional activities for the development of the corridor even after the termination of the project and, thus, to strengthen the joint action of regional stakeholders in the long run, the partnership was continued on an ongoing basis following the project and is now acting as the “European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation” (EGTC) in accordance with European law.

→ More targeted communication of interests at regional, national and European level

The merger of the regional stakeholders and decision-makers and the associated pooling of interests improved the communication of interests at European level.

Apart from the elaboration of the overall strategy and the related extensive public relations work, the consolidation of the partnership by the legal status EGTC was especially profitable here. The legal personality makes the concerns of the stakeholders involved more important and more visible at European level. As a matter of fact, the organisation acts as a mouthpiece for regional interests, for example in the course of the consultation procedures concerning the 2030 Federal Transport Infrastructure Plan or regarding the development of core network corridors at EU level.

Success factor

→ Balance

The complex, diversified and, thus, highly representative partnership of Code24 was a decisive aspect for the achievement of the project goal, i.e. to develop a common overall strategy for the corridor. A total of 17 project partners from five countries were involved and represented the entire corridor from Rotterdam to Genoa.

When establishing the partnership, special importance was attached to the coverage of the relevant thematic fields. Thus, with the participation of representatives from public authorities, stakeholders from the private sector, from scientific institutions, regional planners and seaport authorities, multifaceted and also relevant perspectives were merged and combined to an inclusive representative overall strategy. The high level of representativeness enhanced the legitimation and significance of the overall strategy as well as that of the partnership itself. This facilitated the access to the decision-making processes at EU level.

The identification and inclusion of suitable project partners required extensive preparation. More than a year before the filing of the application, potentially appropriate stakeholders were addressed and enlisted for cooperation.

Project: PROINCOR

Programme area

Central Europe

Thematic field

Industry and innovation

Objective

Improvement of the innovative capacity and activity as well as the competitiveness of SMEs in Central Europe

Impacts

→ **Increased capacity of key stakeholders to act through increased knowledge and skills**

The PROINCOR project has increased the innovative capacity of numerous SMEs in Central Europe. As part of the project, specifically trained innovation consultants carried out more than 400 innovation audits which gave the SMEs a clear idea of the status of their innovation procedures and processes and, together with them, developed measures to improve the innovative capacity. For instance, clear recommendations for the management were defined, the possibilities of the innovation funding scheme were discussed and cooperation structures for the transfer of research and knowledge were improved.

→ **More frequent application of social and technological innovations**

In fact, the PROINCOR project made it possible to increase the innovation performance of the participating SMEs by providing advisory activity which triggered off changes in the enterprises. In this way, a total of 80 technological product and process development projects were stimulated and 30 million euros of financial support were acquired. In most cases, the funds were used to improve existing products or develop new ones. The successful implementation of these numerous technological innovations also had spillover effects on further SMEs in the region:

The interest in research and development projects (and consequently the number of applications) increased noticeably in the region.

Success factor

→ **Linkage**

Between 2010 and 2013, the PROINCOR project supported about 400 enterprises in the programme area. The project partners used a jointly developed system for an innovation audit. The experiences made by innovation centres, universities and research institutes as well as by Chambers of Industry and Commerce were integrated into the methodology.

In order to reach the target groups, the project partners used their regional network relationships, e.g. to the European Enterprise Network, with business associations and innovation consultants. On the one hand, this made it possible for the SMEs to become acquainted with the range of services offered by PROINCOR. On the other, these relations were used to implement the recommendations made in connection with the innovation audits which had been carried out.

In addition, PROINCOR was monitored by an internationally staffed Advisory Board. Together with the high-level board members, policy recommendations for the improvement of the regional innovation systems were drawn up. These recommendations referred to the marginal conditions of the regional innovation systems, e.g. the funding instruments available for an enhanced innovation.

Project: MORECO

Programme area

Alpine Space

Thematic field

Urban and spatial development

Objective

Elaboration of strategies and tools for an improved spatial and mobility development

Impacts

→ Increased capacity of key stakeholders to act through increased knowledge and skills

Within the context of the interdisciplinary transnational project consortium of MORECO, two new software products were developed which increased the capacity to act, especially of stakeholders from the public sector with regard to mobility and spatial development in the Alpine Space: Using the settlement calculator, local authorities and federal state governments can quite easily compare and assess locations regarding certain mobility parameters. The household calculator is helpful for private individuals to obtain more information about the individual housing and mobility costs at different locations which can influence their choice of residence. What is more, mobility tests and simulations in pilot regions were carried out to enhance the knowledge of local authorities in the Alpine Space as regards the interrelations between mobility and settlement activities.

→ More effective and efficient design of work processes

These two software products are increasingly used when taking location decisions in the Alpine Space which enables a more sustainable settlement development. For example, the state-wide implementation of the settlement calculator was funded by the state government of Salzburg, new

location criteria were incorporated into the promotion of housing in Salzburg and the household calculator was established in housing counselling in order to contain urban sprawl and to promote environmentally friendly mobility. In numerous workshops, public decision-makers gained the necessary knowledge about the benefits and the handling of the software products and the awareness of private individuals was raised by information events.

Success factor

→ Topicality

During the last few years, the Alpine Space has been confronted with an increasing urban sprawl due to the economic and demographic development: While the population in rural areas is constantly decreasing, local authorities in the conurbations have to cope with high urban pressure which entails negative consequences such as ever-increasing commuter flows or high infrastructure costs. Therefore, the requirement for action to be taken by the local authorities with regard to a coordinated and early planning has enormously risen. The MORECO project is targeted exactly at this situation. With the aforementioned newly developed software products, household and settlement calculators, the project provided the necessary instruments to better address the growing problem of urban sprawl.

The interest of the local authorities, municipalities and state administrations in the developed products (household and settlement calculators) and their response to them is, therefore, very high. Thus, for instance, more than 2,500 public stakeholders and private individuals attended the numerous project events and activities in the Alpine Space; several newspaper articles and a television report dealt with the project while the project management is continuously invited to (international) presentations.

Notes

Notes

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