

Position of the MOT in response to the INTERACT III programming questionnaire 2014-2020

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I. Introduction

The INTERACT program has launched a stakeholder consultation via a questionnaire on the INTERACT III programming 2014-2020.

The network of Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT) wants to participate in this consultation, in particular on aspects linked with cross-border cooperation.

MOT responds to the questions addressed to EU wide networks.

Presentation of the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT - Transfrontier Operational Mission):

The Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière, created in 1997, is both an association and a French inter-ministerial structure, which has the main objective of facilitating cross-border projects. Its missions are operational assistance to leaders of cross-border projects (project development, legal structures, studies, etc.), networking, assistance in the definition of overall strategies in cross-border cooperation, and implementation of European projects. The MOT brings together within its network sub-national authorities and their groupings, associations, cross-border structures, large corporations, states, etc. involved in cross-border cooperation and situated on both sides of the border. It has about 60 members, from 11 European countries.

To date, the MOT has concentrated its work on cross-border proximity cooperation and assistance in the definition of policies regarding cross-border territories.

Website: www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu

II. The MOT contribution

II.1 What are new and existing needs and challenges for territorial cooperation in 2014-20 period?

Please consider the preamble of the ETC Regulation proposal and the new requirements for the ETC programmes. The adaptation of the content of programmes to the territorial needs, but also the setting up of the bodies responsible for audit and control, the joint secretariat, and the allocation of liabilities in case of financial corrections are examples of challenges faced by ETC. You will find below a list of challenges for the new programming period and we would like to know your opinion about the key ones. Please select a maximum of 3 answers:

- To simplify and make programme management more effective
- X To train new staff members of programme authorities
- To enhance the exchange of good management practices
- To address Territorial Cooperation thematic specificities and exchange
- To link up Territorial Cooperation with the wider funding context
- X To capitalise the results of Territorial Cooperation
- To increase the overall visibility of Territorial Cooperation achievements
- X To better coordinate national networks of Cooperation experts
- To better coordinate with EU level ETC stakeholders
- Other:

II.2 Could you please shortly explain the answers given in the previous question?

Training: There is a need not only to train staff of programme authorities, but also a need to train at the **project level**. There are many existing materials and experiences to be used (MOT-Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière, TEIN-Transfrontier Euro-Institut Network, results of the project Interform/INTERACT etc.).

Capitalisation and networking: It is necessary to consolidate the tools for programme and project **capitalisation and networking**, as well as networking between stakeholders involved in cross-border cooperation, in order to contribute to disseminating good practices and knowledge. It would be useful to develop a **new generation of the INTERACT programme** at EU level, aimed at assisting the implementation of not only **programmes** but also cooperation **projects**, facilitating the exchange of information, experiences, results and good practices.

Concerning the programmes, one should not only address management, as it was mostly the case in the current period, but also the **strategic dimension of programmes** (strategies, territorial diagnoses, development, selection, follow up and evaluation of projects). In addition INTERACT should address **projects to capitalize on thematic aspects** (particularities of the cooperation context for the priorities resulting from thematic objectives cited in regulations) **and territorial aspects** (cross-border areas of different types –urban, rural, maritime, etc.). Moreover, special topics concerning cross-border cooperation may be followed by INTERACT (EGTC, cross-border labor market and mobility etc.), the same way as INTERACT already follows several macro-regional strategies (work on content, networking of stakeholders, communication etc.).

Coordination: We understand the need for coordination not only at either the national or the European level, but there is a need for an overall multilevel governance approach, linking and coordinating all levels involved in Territorial Cooperation. This means to also involve the local and regional level as well as all stakeholders concerned (including existing networks, associations etc.). See also detail on different levels below.

Visibility: We furthermore think that a fourth cross-cutting challenge exists, which is “to increase the overall visibility of Territorial Cooperation achievements”. It is important to increase this visibility at the European level with the help of INTERACT in order to give a critical mass to the whole process. One needs to underline the broad spectrum of types of ETC achievements that surpass the local specificities of the individual programmes. Aggregation is that much important since the budgets of the programmes are far inferior than that of mainstream programmes. Increasing the visibility of Territorial Cooperation achievements and especially of its added value (going beyond the conclusions presented in the 5th Cohesion Report and the INTERREG III evaluation) participates both to justify the existence of future Territorial Cooperation programmes and to reinforce their legitimacy. By underlining the “return on investment” of the programmes, it will be easier for decisions makers at European and national level to justify future increases in the allocated budget.

II.3 How could the visibility of the results of cooperation be increased? Who are key decisionmakers, whose attention should be drawn to the ETC? How can results be shared with these?

Visibility of the results: Capitalization efforts should include existing results produced by all stakeholders involved in Cooperation (at different levels), for example resources, productions, methodological tools, best practices, experiences etc. INTERACT may **identify** those results and participate in **linking** them (e.g. by integrating them into existing tools like the KEEP database etc.). The linking of results produced by ESPON is a very good example for doing so. INTERACT may also use other stakeholders/networks as relay (idea of national contact points as they exist for ESPON, see below). In this context, existing documentation centers specialized in Territorial Cooperation may and should be linked. Visibility about the results may finally be raised via capitalization events (addressing both the programme and project level), via common exchange platforms and tools which give access to existing results etc.

Key decision-makers: It is important to raise awareness for ETC to decision-makers at all levels: local, regional, national and European level. Moreover, ETC is cross-cutting and needs to be addressed within the different policy fields. This means e.g. at European level that **Territorial Cooperation has to be linked with other EU policies** (but this is also valid for the national level). As example, ETC brings interrelation between the Single Market (free movement of people, goods, capital and services) and the Strategy Europe 2020 (smart growth, sustainable growth and inclusive growth). To raise awareness for ETC means also to ensure that **all policies** are part of a

logic of territorial cohesion and take into account the territorial aspects, and in particular cross-border aspects. In this context, territorial and cross-border **impacts** of policies should systematically be checked in advance of decisions to be taken and this by all decision-makers.

Financing: One important question concerns the financing of network activities. INTERACT should support the networking of stakeholders, either as it was done in the past via a financing of **networking projects**, or via facilitating the exchange of experts etc., involved in Territorial Cooperation (via **conferences**, an **multilevel exchange platform** etc.). Networking should also especially be facilitated between European stakeholders and networks, like Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT), Conference of European Cross-border and Interregional City Networks (CECICN) etc.

II.4 How can EU-wide networks better coordinate their support to cooperation? How can thematic links be built and facilitated, by a programme like INTERACT?

All different levels, local, regional, national and European, should be linked in a multilevel governance approach. INTERACT may be a general facilitator for an efficient exchange between these levels and all stakeholders concerned:

Local and regional level: The **networking of cross-border territories** committed in sharing knowledge should be more explicitly fundable by the future networking programmes (**funding of networking and capitalization projects via INTERACT as within the programming period 2000-2007**).

National level: There should be national **contact points in each Member State** in order to be more in tune with public partner authorities involved in cooperation and not only with management authorities, joint technical secretariats etc. Moreover, these national contact points should operate as a network, as is the case for national contact points in the ESPON network, and be coordinated with MOT-type of national structures, or those involved in the Budapest Platform (network of national support structures for cross-border cooperation ; www.budapestplatform.eu).

European level (institutional): Capitalisation and coordination should be undertaken at European level, with a strong role played by the European Commission (DG REGIO), Eurostat (Urban Audit) and the ESPON programme. DG REGIO, in its role as pilot of the cohesion policy, should emphasize that knowledge sharing is at the heart of cooperation. As joint producer of European regional knowledge (Urban Audits, works led with Eurostat and the OECD, reference framework for sustainable cities, etc.), this should integrate the issue of cross-border regions, where applicable, in partnership with national statistical institutes. **INTERACT may support an interservice group on Territorial Cooperation within the European Commission.**

European level (networks etc.): European wide networks as CECICN, Conference of European Cross-border and Interregional City Networks, might be regularly invited to participate, e.g. within an **"advisory platform"**, to meetings of INTERACT (Monitoring Committee etc.).

Cross-cutting: The future INTERACT programme should develop these new orientations, in synergy with the other **network-programmes**: INTERREG C (which should approach the territorial dimension of the cohesion policy and not only the thematic dimension), ESPON and URBACT.

To sum up, INTERACT could coordinate the different stakeholders, e.g. a multilevel exchange platform, as well as the results of Cooperation (see point about capitalization).