

Capacity-building for the Implementation of Interreg and Cohesion Policy

Study visit Report - *Hungary*

- Study Visit for National Authorities and Joint Secretariat staff – *10-14 November 2025*

05 December 2025



Contract

Capacity-building for the Implementation of Interreg and Cohesion Policy

Contract No: 2024CE160AT081

This project is implemented by a Particip-led consortium, in partnership with SZPO



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Study visit to Budapest

10-14 November 2025

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1. Summary

| Activity | Overview |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Project task | Task 3.2 – Preparation and execution of study visits |
| Aim | Providing participants with practical exposure to Interreg programme management, financial and monitoring processes. |
| Event | Overview |
| Event name | Study Visit for National Authorities and Joint Secretariat staff |
| Date of activity/duration | 10-14 November 2025 |
| Location | Budapest |
| Country | Hungary |
| Target Audience | National Authorities |

| Participants | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Guest List/Participants | Number (all in person) |
| Number of participants | 13 |
| Guest list Breakdown | Programme cycle management |
| Government officials | 13 |
| Local/regional government officials | - |
| Other (specify) | - |
| EUD/EU Staff | - |
| Female | 9 |
| Male | 4 |
| Not identified | - |

2. Implementation

2.1. Agenda

| Agenda study visit to Budapest (5 days) | |
|---|--|
| Day 1 | Content and time |
| 12:30–13:30 | SZPO HQ: Lunch and Welcome Session |
| 13:30–14:30 | Introductory seminar on the institutional governance framework for the management and Interreg programmes |
| 14:30–15:00 | Coffee Break |
| 15:00–16:30 | Role and responsibilities of a Managing Authority. Lessons of the transition from accession to full EU membership. |
| Day 2 | Content and time |
| 09:30–11:00 | SZPO HQ: Management of calls for proposals |
| 11:00–11:30 | Coffee Break |
| 11:30–12:30 | Selection, award, and contracting of project proposals, part 1. |
| 12:30–13:30 | Lunch Break |
| 13:30–14:30 | Selection, award, and contracting of project proposals, part 2. |
| 15:00–15:30 | Coffee Break |
| 15:30–16:00 | Project implementation, monitoring and reporting |
| 16:00–16:30 | Project and programme communication |
| Day 3 | Content and time |
| 09:30–10:30 | SZPO HQ: e-Cohesion, IT system setup |
| 10:30–11:00 | Coffee Break |
| 11:00–12:30 | TA management |
| 12:30–13:30 | Lunch Break |
| 13:30–15:00 | Visit to MA/NA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade) Focus: Programming phase |
| 15:00–15:30 | Coffee Break |
| 15:30–16:30 | Role of programme and national bodies, as well as the programming committees |
| 19:00–21:00 | Dinner and networking event |

| Day 4 | Content and time |
|--------------|--|
| 09:00–10:30 | Visit to Interreg Danube Region Programme MA/JS |
| 10:30–11:00 | Coffee Break |
| 11:00–12:30 | Practical experiences and feedback |
| 12:30–13:30 | Lunch Break |
| 14:00–15:30 | SZPO HQ: Peer exchange on MA/NA responsibilities and tasks, Discussion on challenges and solutions |
| 15:00–15:30 | Coffee Break |
| Day 5 | Content and time |
| 09:30–10:30 | SZPO HQ: National Development Centre representatives, MA for mainstream programmes |
| 10:30–11:00 | Coffee Break |
| 11:00–12:30 | SZPO HQ: Wrap-up, lessons learned session |
| 12:30–13:30 | Farewell Lunch |
| 14:00 onward | Return travel |

2.2. Comments on delivery of the study visit

During the five-day study visit, SZPO and external experts provided insight into their daily work using various methods, including presentations, open discussions, and group exercises.

Participants were given the opportunity to exchange experiences among themselves, fostering peer learning and strengthening cooperation between institutions. Participants were engaged throughout the event.

The detailed scoring for the delivery is as follows:

| On the sessions | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor | Very poor | Average (on 5) |
|---|-----------|------|------|------|-----------|----------------|
| Were the scope and the coverage of the training responsive to your needs? | 9 | 2 | | | | 4,8 |
| Was the training material clear and adequate? | 10 | 1 | | | | 4,9 |
| Was the level of information given for each topic sufficient? | 10 | 1 | | | | 4,9 |
| Was the distribution of presentations and group work appropriate? | 10 | 1 | | | | 4,9 |

| On the sessions | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor | Very poor | Average (on 5) |
|--|-----------|------|------|------|-----------|----------------|
| Was the time dedicated to each topic adequate? | 9 | 2 | | | | 4,8 |
| Were the trainers well prepared? | 11 | | | | | 5,0 |
| Was the overall organisation adequate? | 9 | 2 | | | | 4,8 |

The detailed scoring for on acquired knowledge and skills (5 being the highest mark) is as follows:

| Acquired knowledge & skills | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Average (on 5) |
|---|----|---|---|---|---|----------------|
| Introduction to institutional framework | 10 | | 1 | | | 4,8 |
| Design and management of calls | 10 | 1 | | | | 4,9 |
| Project monitoring and reporting | 9 | 1 | 1 | | | 4,7 |
| Project and programme communication | 10 | | 1 | | | 4,8 |
| e-Cohesion, IT | 9 | 1 | 1 | | | 4,7 |
| Technical assistance | 9 | 2 | | | | 4,8 |
| Visit to MFA | 11 | | | | | 5,0 |
| Visit to Danube Region | 10 | | 1 | | | 4,8 |
| Visit to National Development Center | 8 | 3 | | | | 4,7 |

2.3. Challenges

Participants expressed strong appreciation for both the depth and the relevance of the topics explored during the study visit. They highlighted that the overall structure, together with the use of varied and interactive techniques, contributed positively to their learning experience. It should also be acknowledged that, due to the higher hierarchical positions of some participants, not everyone was able to engage fully in all exercises and programme activities.

Although participants were generally satisfied with the study visit, they also shared several constructive suggestions for further improvement. Some noted that the agenda could have been slightly more flexible, for example by combining certain sessions to allow more time for discussion or reflection. The practical components of the programme were particularly well received, and several participants indicated that they would have appreciated an even greater emphasis on hands-on, practice-oriented elements.

| Question | Comments |
|--|--|
| <p>What aspects of the event did you find to be of the greatest value?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibility to meet colleagues - practitioners - in person and build contacts • Very detailed information • The mechanism for national co-financing and pre-financing; the programming phase, as well as exchanging on how authorities prepare for the upcoming financial exercise; the setup and functioning of the IT system; the institutional set up of management of the funds • Practical experience • The openness, preparedness and readiness to answer all the questions • Work group exercise, openness and hospitality. Differences presented between CBC, transnational and mainstream programmes. Also joint dinner :) • Sharing the practical experience and perspective; lessons learnt; building the network of professionals • TA management and management of calls for proposals • All trainings were very well placed and integrated, so in this sense can help to create a general context of the programme management • All topics were useful. If I have to choose the most useful one, it would be the presentation on the next programming period. |

| Question | Comments |
|---|--|
| What could be potentially improved? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To combine some of the sessions as to allow for a more flexible agenda, but also to undertake a needs/interest assessment exercise before the actual study visit • Everything was very good. Thank you! • As a suggestion, lessons should not be scheduled on the day of departure, as it becomes very complicated to manage • More flexible agenda, some city tour visit and transport arrangements when we are a group from different countries • Thank you! It is a very valuable study visit. Hopefully there will be the opportunity to continue this kind of study visits • Successful stories and videos • I think it would be better if presentations would have been supported with specific examples, specially problematic examples, in order to improve a more practical relationship between theory and practice • I don't have any remarks regarding the organization of the capacity building. It was well-designed to meet the needs of all four country representatives, which is not an easy balance to achieve. Great job! |
| On which other issues would you like to receive more information in the future? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design of programmes • More in-depth of programme preparation but also irregularity management and recovery process • The information related to the use of EU funds will be highly appreciated • It would be good to include project visits in the future • Structural funds, project site visits and pre-accession funds • TA management and post-27 Interreg • Project and programme communication • On the roles and functions of national authorities in detail, specially on legal basis, attached with practical examples • More information for managing with Technical assistance and rules for VAT (Value added tax). • Key Points for Managing TA (Eligibility of costs, Audit, absorption of TA funds). • VAT (Value added tax) eligabel/not eligible. |

3. Lessons learned/ Recommendations

Based on both the trainers' observations and participants' feedback, the study visit can be regarded as highly successful. The overall level of satisfaction was clearly evident and frequently expressed by participants, both in terms of the professional content and the organisation of the programme. The host organisation, SZPO, mobilised 12 internal and 10 external colleagues from 5 Interreg programmes (HU-SK, HU-SRB, HU-HR, HU-SK-RO-UA NEXT, Interreg Danube Region Programme) throughout the week to ensure that the event was delivered at the highest possible standard.