

Capacity-building for the Implementation of Interreg and Cohesion Policy

Study visit Report - *Austria*

Information/communication Study Visit for Joint Secretariats, branch offices and national
contact/info points, Austria, 17-21 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 Austria (Vienna, Graz)

17-21 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 communication and capitalisation of results
Event	Overview
Event name	Study Visit for Joint Secretariats, branch offices and national contact/info points
Date of activity/duration	17-21 November 2025
Location	Budapest
Country	Hungary
Target Audience	National Authorities

Participants	
Guest List/Participants	Number (all in person)
Number of participants	15
Guest list Breakdown	Information/communication
Government officials	4
Local/regional government officials	2
Other (JS, Info Point)	9
EUD/EU Staff	-
Female	10
Male	5

2. Implementation

2.1. Agenda

Agenda study visit to Budapest (5 days)	
Day 1	Content and time
12:30–13:30	Central Europe JS premises: Welcome Session& Lunch
13:30–14:30	Introductory seminar - hosted by Interact Vienna Office on development and implementation of a communication& capitalisation strategy
14:30–15:00	Coffee Break
15:00–16:00	SK-AT JS example on the development of a communication and capitalisation strategy
Day 2	Content and time
09:30–10:30	Central Europe JS premises: Communication as an integral part of programme management: The Interreg CE approach - from communications strategy to annual work plans that are integral parts of annual programme work plans. Insights from CE NCP Austria.
10:30–11:00	Coffee Break
11:00–12:30	Capitalisation at all stages of the programme life cycle in Interreg CE - How do we approach capitalisation?
12:30–13:30	Lunch Break
13:30–15:00	Roundtable: Programme awareness-raising and communication strategies. How to attract newcomers to Interreg projects? How to attract newcomers through more than outreach? How to disseminate the results out of the Interreg community?
15:00–15:30	Coffee Break
15:30–16:00	Wrap up & travel to Graz
Day 3	Content and time
09:30-10:30	Short introduction, Styrian regional development and EU-Instruments managed by Department for Regional Development
10:30–11:00	Regional coordination body and national authority AT- Role and tasks of dep.17 as NA and RC, procedures, documents etc. special regard to BWG

11:00–11:30	Coffee Break
11:30–12:00	Regional coordination body HU- Role and tasks of RC, procedures, documents etc. special regard to RC-Network
12:00–12:30	Publicity work in the phase of programme preparation. Workshops, Interviews...
12:30–13:30	Lunch Break
13:30–14:00	Publicity work and capitalisation in the phase of programme preparation - Targeted workshops, support in project preparation – role of RC-network, home pages, programme presentations, EC-days, SPF, meta projects
14:00–14:30	Project presentation 1
14:30–15:00	Coffee Break
15:00–15:30	Project presentation 2
15:30–16:00	Project presentation 3
16:00–17:30	Guided tour in Graz
Day 4	Content and time
10:30–12:00	Visiting guest: Ministry of Cohesion and Regional Development of Slovenia - MA operating three CBC Programmes Consultation techniques, Project monitoring, including site visits.
12:00–13:00	Lunch Break
13:00–14:30	Organisation of awareness-raising and capacity building events, From consultation to assessment
14:30–15:00	Coffee Break
15:00–15:30	Wrap-up
Day 5	Content and time
09:30–10:30	Lessons learned session
10:30–12:00	Travel to Vienna
13:00 onward	Return travel

2.2. Comments on delivery of the study visit

During the five-day study visit, experts from Austria and Slovenia based Programmes provided insight into their daily work using various methods, including presentations, open discussions, round table discussions.

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?	12	3				4,8
Was the training material clear and adequate?	12	3				4,8
Was the level of information given for each topic sufficient?	13	2				4,9
Was the distribution of presentations and group work appropriate?	14	1				4,9
Was the time dedicated to each topic adequate?	11	4				4,7
Were the trainers well prepared?	14	1				4,9
Was the overall organisation adequate?	14	1				4,9

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)
Development of a communication strategy	11	4				4,7
Development of a capitalisation strategy	9	6				4,6
Comm&Cap as integral part of programme management	10	5				4,7
Interreg communication strategies	12	3				4,8
Partnership approach in publicity and capitalisation	12	3				4,8
Consultation techniques, project monitoring & site visits	9	6				4,6
Organisation of awareness-raising/capacity building events	11	4				4,7
Development of a communication strategy	11	4				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 involvement of several Programme's representatives, contributed positively to their learning experience.

Although participants were generally satisfied with the study visit, they also shared constructive suggestions for further improvement. Some would have welcomed providing the training materials in advance to allow participants to optimise learning outcomes. 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"> • The most valuable elements were the practical insights shared by the Interreg Central Europe and the detailed presentations on communication and capitalisation and communication into programme management • The most valuable aspects of the study visit were the practical insights, shared by programme authorities • I liked the fact that the training targeted different aspects and stages of the project cycle. Networking as well • Styrian on regional development and EU instruments managed by department for regional development • Presentation by the Slovenian Ministry of Cohesion and Regional Development. Presentation by the Styrian regional development department • The study was well organised and provided valuable and practical examples • We had the opportunity to see the differences with the different programme implementation and methodologies, their aspects and solutions within these programmes • The greatest value for me was sharing the experience from other Interreg programmes • It was very useful to see a real experience in project realisation. Also the communication issues were very interesting performed by speakers • Sharing experience of project implementation within the Interreg programme with Austria. Communication tools and activities as for the branch office of Interreg NEXT ROUA programme

Question	Comments
What could be potentially improved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maybe providing the training materials in advance to allow participants to optimise learning outcomes • The visit was very well organised, only adding more time for returning in the future • Providing materials in advance would allow participants to prepare targeted questions and maximise the benefit • More space for interactive exchanges. The agenda was very rich • For a one-week training, it is good to have maybe more site visits or something that can make the participants interact more • I think we needed more examples and concrete project cases • All theoretical aspects of the training could be supported by more examples or concrete cases • Extend the duration • As always, it is about further simplification • Everything was well prepared; I don't have additional proposals for improvement • Stationary provision. Media support • More practical knowledge as for accurate institution. For example what should activities should do the branch offices

Question	Comments
<p>On which other issues would you like to receive more information in the future?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced guidance on communication planning within Interreg NEXT. Case studies and successful capitalisation actions and effective partnership. Communication models in similar EU programmes • I would particularly like to receive more information on the transition of a candidate country towards EU accession and access to funds based on practical experience of other countries • More detailed guidance on digital communication tools and analytics of programme visibility. Practical examples of capitalisation at project level • I would appreciate additional sessions on practical communication tools for small teams • Partnership agreements. Cohesion funds/policy in general • Different programmes consulting • From project calls to application and application assessment • More information about best practices and successful projects • I would like to get more information about micro-projects, capitalisation and monitoring • In the future, according to my position, I would like to receive information about financial issues • Project realisation, monitoring & evaluation • Every other information will be useful as it is very interesting.

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. During the study tour the organiser mobilised 7 different Interreg Programmes and 14 colleagues throughout the week to ensure that the event was delivered at the highest possible standard. It is also worth noting that the commitment and motivation of the participants played an important role in the success of the study visit.