

Capacity-building for the Implementation of Interreg and Cohesion Policy

Study Visit Report – Brussels and Lille

- Linking policies, indicators, monitoring and evaluation, 12-16 January 2026

January 2026

Contract

Capacity-building for the Implementation of Interreg and Cohesion Policy

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



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Linking policies, indicators, monitoring and evaluation

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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 monitoring and evaluation practices of Interreg programmes
Event	Overview
Event name	Study trip “Linking policies, indicators, monitoring and evaluation”
Date of activity/duration	12-16 January 2026
Location	Brussels and Lille
Country	Belgium and France
Target Audience	Staff from the national authorities, Interreg IPA and other territorial cooperation programmes (contact points, experts, controllers, MC members), representatives of the regional councils.

Participants		
Guest List/Participants	Number (all in person)	
Number of participants	15	
Guest list Breakdown	Programme cycle management	%
Government officials	9	60%
Local/regional government officials	1	7%
Other (JS, Info Point)	5	33%
EUD/EU Staff	-	-
Project experts	-	-
Female	11	73%
Male	4	27%
Not identified	-	-

2. Implementation

2.1. Agenda

Agenda programme cycle management (1,5 days)	
Day 1	Content
Welcome briefing @ Particip premises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Getting to know each other ▪ Overview of the study visit ▪ Introduction to the topic
Committee of the Regions	Getting to know the Committee of the Regions
Committee of the Regions	Policy objectives of Interreg programmes – the territorial dimension: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The perspective of the Committee of the Regions on Interreg's contribution to EU policy objectives, territorial cohesion, multi-level governance and regional participation ▪ The contributions of the Committee of the Regions to involving local and regional authorities in the enlargement process
Committee of the Regions	Questions and answers
Day 2	Content
European Commission DG REGIO	Programme monitoring – the EU perspective: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitoring for programme implementation and reporting ▪ Use of monitoring data at the EC
European Commission DG REGIO	Monitoring tools and systems at EU level (DG REGIO): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ IT systems (SFC, Cohesion Open Data Platform), data quality and harmonisation ▪ The evaluation dimension
Day 3	Content
Interreg Europe	Interreg Europe in a nutshell
Interreg Europe	Implementing, monitoring and evaluating Interreg Europe: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Programme performance framework: Rationale behind, how it was built, definition of indicators, calculation of target values ▪ Project selection ▪ Monitoring project outputs and results: Guidance to project partners, how information is gathered

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Programme evaluation
Interreg Europe	<p>Programme governance: work of the Monitoring Committee (C4C):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Role in programme implementation ▪ Rules of procedures ▪ Organisation of the work
Interreg Europe	<p>Capitalisation at programme level: presentation of the Policy Learning Platform</p>
Day 4	Content
Interreg North-West Europe	<p>Monitoring in NWE – The strategic dimension:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NWE in a nutshell ▪ Pathway from EU and national priorities to a NWE programme area strategy: (1) main steps from “territorial analysis” to “selection of priorities” to “intervention logic” to “type of indicator system” 2) lessons learned/comparison with previous indicator systems ▪ Impact of choices on strategic areas of programming: 1) Monitoring Committee governance 2) Project selection
Interreg North-West Europe	<p>Monitoring in NWE – The practical dimension:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project monitoring arrangements: what elements are reported upon, what tools and processes in place to capture project data/results ▪ Programme Monitoring System (PMS): general set-up of the PMS, possibilities and limitations offered by the PMS, lessons learned/comparison with previous or other PMS ▪ Programme evaluation: internal capacity and arrangements dedicated to evaluation, types of evaluations done (mandatory by Regulation vs Programme specific ones)
C4C project and Interreg Europe	<p>Performance-based approach 2028-2034:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key features ▪ Practical implications
C4C project	Evaluation of the study visit and wrap up
Day 5	Content
	<p>No sessions - return flights for all participants, in accordance with schedule</p>

2.2. Comments on training delivery

The study visit on “Linking policies, indicators, monitoring and evaluation” incorporated visits to four organisations providing their perspectives on the implementation of Interreg programmes: the **Committee of the Regions** provided the global picture of the institutions involved into the fund management and the decision-making process; the **European Commission** (DG REGIO) explained their perspective on the programme monitoring and the tools used for this purpose; while the **Interreg Europe** and **Interreg North-West Europe** programmes gave an insight into development of their programme strategies, as well as monitoring, evaluation and capitalisation activities. At the end of the study trip, the C4C project - together with Interreg Europe - provided a glimpse into one of the post-27 novelties, the performance based approach to programme implementation.

The combination of these views created a dynamic and engaging learning environment, helping to sustain attention and interest throughout the sessions. Participants raised and discussed several substantive questions, including support to the applicants in preparation of quality evaluations, use of IT systems for the programme and project monitoring, tools used by Interreg programmes for early detection of problems in projects.

Out of 15 participants of this training, the evaluation forms were filled by 15 (100%), and they showed a high level of satisfaction with the training and its correspondence to the needs of participants. **13 participants stated that the study visits were “Very useful”, while 2 acknowledged them as “Useful”.**

The detailed scoring 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?	10	5	-	-	-	4,7
Was the training material clear and adequate?	8	6	1	-	-	4,5
Was the level of information given for each topic sufficient?	8	5	-	-	-	4,6
Was the distribution of presentations and group work appropriate?	11	3	1	-	-	4,7
Was the time dedicated to each topic adequate?	12	3	-	-	-	4,8
Were the trainers well prepared?	15	-	-	-	-	5,0
Was the overall organisation adequate?	12	3	-	-	-	4,8

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

Organisations visited	5	4	3	2	1	Average (on 5)
Committee of the Regions	13	2	-	-	-	4,9
European Commission	14	1	-	-	-	4,9
Interreg Europe	14	1	-	-	-	4,9
Interreg North-West Europe	11	2	2	-	-	4,6

2.3. Challenges

Participants expressed strong appreciation for the breadth and relevance of the topics covered during the training, stating that it will be useful in their daily work. While the training was broadly well-received, participants also provided constructive suggestions for improvement:

- **Need for more practical tools and examples:** Participants expressed their desire for slower pace of the training and incorporation of practical tools such as brainstorming sessions and workshops that could foster greater application of knowledge in real-life scenarios.
- **Complex logistics:** As the study visit was taking place in different institutions/locations and involved travel, some participants found it exhaustive.
- **More time for exchanges among the participants:** Participants expressed a need for deeper facilitated discussion among themselves in order to ensure learning from the peers.

Question	Comments
<p>What aspects of the study visit did you find to be of the greatest value?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Possibility to meet directly colleagues from DG REGIO and Interreg Europe and discuss actual issues of cooperation 2. Interreg Europe is a programme available in my region and all the knowledge that I have received can be shared with local stakeholders 3. The practical exchange of experience on programme monitoring-evaluation-performance, as well as the direct discussion with the EU institutions and the programmes 4. Understanding the process on a big scale, big picture. The whole ideology behind indicators and lessons learned on how to do better monitoring 5. The greatest value of the study visit was the insight into how Interreg Europe ensures coherence between policy objectives, indicators and monitoring of performance, which is highly relevant for national coordination of external assistance 6. The practical examples from Interreg Europe and Interreg NWE were valuable, helping us to better understand how performance framework and indicators are applied in practice 7. To me personally the study visit was really interesting because it gave me information about the implementation of Interreg programmes, which makes it useful on my daily job routine 8. Everything was good and useful for me, and the study visit fully met my expectations 9. Cohesion Policy training 10. Project monitoring and programme monitoring system 11. Experience exchange between the participants 12. The experience shared by Interreg Europe and Interreg NWE + Visiting the DG REGIO offices and the CoR 13. Visits to all organisations; comprehensive and practical overview and implementation of monitoring 14. A lot of the topics, but monitoring tools and systems was so useful, as well as monitoring project outputs and results. Performance-based approach was very useful 15. Getting to know more about the Interreg programmes and the challenges that they have had during time. This study visit boosted my knowledge and understanding of the role of the national authority

Question	Comments
What could be potentially improved?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitation of meetings with colleagues from the EC on pressing issues of bilateral cooperation 2. It could be improved by adding more practical exercises, either in group work or individual tasks 3. More time for interactive discussions 4. Transportation made us exhausted. An arranged in advance transportation would be highly appreciated, like a bus between cities (from hotel to hotel) 5. The study visit was very well organised and I am grateful for the opportunity to participate. All was relevant and useful for my work 6. Overall, the sessions were highly relevant, informative and well delivered. Providing key materials and presentations in advance would help participants to be more involved and engaged 7. I am pleased overall, but tackling the Interreg programmes in my region would have been also useful 8. Everything was well organised and met the objectives 9. More interaction 10. More examples during the sessions 11. (Not answered) 12. I was satisfied from the study visit, even if it was in two cities and a little bit exhausting. I am glad that we visited all the organisations in both cities 13. More experience exchange with participants from EU Member States; one more day for team building events and networking to create/keep networking of contacts 14. Everything was ok 15. I found the operational, logistical and managerial logistics to be good overall. I would have appreciated to have a few more examples of best practices from the single projects of Interreg

Question	Comments
On which other issues would you like to receive more information in the future?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More information on structural funds of the EU for non-Member States/candidate countries 2. Interreg Europe:detailed cases/More info on structural funds 3. Performance-based approaches, use of indicators and good practices in monitoring and evaluation 4. More comparison between different aspects (EU vs EaP or Balkans, countries, regions, etc). Also, where are we in the big picture: why is it important for us and how we can use this 5. For me - as new in the Department - the information was enough, but the trainers were open to help us in the future :) 6. I would like to receive more information in the future about new MFF, in special about performance-based approaches, to better understand how this will work 7. New programmes that may be launched after the IPA period 8. Practical examples and experiences from the projects taht could be applied 9. e-mail or online sessions, additional study visits 10. Final version of programming 2028-2034 11. Quality assessment of the projects, new performance-based approach, capitalisation 12. More practical experiences from otehr programmes 13. Procurement, project implementation, mainstream programmes 14. All topics were good, so all information was welcome 15. The PBA, the new Monitoring Regulation

3. Lessons learned/ Recommendations

Based on both the trainers' observations and participants' feedback, the study visit on "Linking policies, indicators, monitoring and evaluation" successfully achieved its initial goals. It provided a valuable information on the programme and project monitoring, indicators and data, as well as their role in the programme design and implementation.

To ensure continued relevance and effectiveness, future capacity building events should even more focus on learning from practitioners, helping participants translate theoretical knowledge into operational capacity that can be immediately applied. There was also a clear interest in more group work, brainstorming activities, and the use of concrete tools and real-life examples, particularly from EU Member States, to better understand how such systems operate in practice.

4. Annexes

Powerpoint presentations, exercises and other materials, list of participants and pictures.