

The Future of European Cooperation in Spatial Development

Work package 3: Recommendations regarding the future of Interreg B
Report 3.3: Identification of the unique selling point (USP) of Interreg B
compared to other EU-assisted programmes

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Abstract

Within the context of the MORO project on the 'Future of European cooperation on spatial development', this report aims at the identification of the unique selling point (USP) of Interreg B compared to other EU-assisted programmes.

In the 2007-2013 funding period transnational cooperation projects realised within Interreg B addressed the thematic fields of innovation, environment and management of natural resources, accessibility and transport and attractiveness and competitiveness of cities and regions. With this regard, the cross-sectoral and long-term effects and impacts of projects realised within Interreg B can be described as follows:

- In all thematic fields the Interreg B projects analysed in this report lead to the empowerment of key players through increased capacity for action, knowledge and skills. Additionally, programme stakeholders observed the creation and preparation of follow-up projects and activities as widespread long-term effect.
- In the field of **innovation**, besides the empowerment of key players the Interreg B projects analysed in this report lead to the application of knowledge and skills in particular through more frequent application of social and technical innovations and more efficient and effective design of work processes. Selected projects lead to the activation of decision makers, too.
- The most visible long-term effects observed by programme stakeholders are the creation of cooperation networks and the strengthening of local economic development.
- In the field of **environment and management of natural resources**, besides the empowerment of key players the Interreg B projects analysed in this report lead to the application of knowledge and skills through more frequent application of technical innovations, more efficient and effective design of work processes and the improvement of the ecological, social and economic (living) environment. Many projects lead to the activation of decision makers, too.
- The most visible long-term effects observed by programme stakeholders are the creation of cooperation networks and the influence on policy approaches and policy implementation.
- In the field of **accessibility and transport**, besides the empowerment of key players the Interreg B projects analysed in this report lead to the activation of decision makers and to the application of knowledge and skills in particular through more frequent application of technical innovations.

- The most visible long-term effects observed by programme stakeholders are the influence on policy approaches and policy implementation and the preparation of follow-up activities aimed at the implementation of new investments and services.
- In the field of **attractiveness and competitiveness of cities and regions**, besides the empowerment of key players the Interreg B projects analysed in this report lead to the activation of decision makers and to the application of knowledge and skills in particular through more frequent application of social innovations, more efficient and effective design of work processes and the improvement of the ecological, social and economic (living) environment.
- Exemplary long-term effects observed by programme stakeholders are the strengthening of local economic development and the shaping of strategies for sustainable development of vulnerable resources.

The most relevant EU-assisted programmes and funding instruments in the thematic fields tackled by Interreg B projects in the 2007-2013 funding period are the Horizon 2020 programme, the LIFE programme, the Connecting Europe Facility and the URBACT programme. Compared to projects and activities supported by these programmes, projects realised within Interreg B in the 2007-2013 funding period addressed the broadest range of stakeholders, topics and activities.

The Horizon 2020 programme, the LIFE programme and the Connecting Europe Facility provide much better conditions for investments than projects realised within Interreg B. Thus, the possible contribution of Interreg B to the achievement of sectoral objectives is strictly limited. However, with regard to cross-sectoral effects and impacts, projects realised within Interreg B have the capability to activate decision makers.

Finally, Interreg B programmes are managed and implemented by Member States, providing them with the unique possibility to contribute with their knowledge and expertise to transnational cooperation programmes and to support the implementation of place-based approaches.

In the result, the following elements can be characterised as the most relevant 'building blocks' of the unique selling point (USP) of Interreg B:

- Broad variety of stakeholders, topics and activities, enabling integrated and cross-sectoral approaches
- Potential for place-based approaches and support of bottom-up initiatives due to programme management on the level of Member States
- Particular potential for the activation of decision makers

1 Introduction and structure of the report

This report contributes to Work package 3 'Recommendations on the future of Interreg' of the project 'Future of European cooperation on spatial development', which is realised within the research programme 'Demonstration Projects of Spatial Planning (MORO)'. The structure of this research project is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Work packages of the MORO project on the 'Future of European cooperation on spatial development'



Work package 3 consists of four components:

- LB 3.1: Development of transnational cooperation (Interreg B) since 1996
- LB 3.2: Evaluation of the revised orientation of transnational cooperation in the current programming period 2014-2020
- LB 3.3: Identification of the unique selling point (USP) of Interreg B compared to other EU-assisted programmes
- LB 3.4: Monitoring and analysis of current framework conditions on EU level, which might affect the design of future European cooperation

This report aims at the identification of the unique selling point (USP) of Interreg B compared to other EU-assisted programmes (LB 3.3). Within the work package, focus is on content-related and strategic issues, and therefore operational issues of Interreg B implementation are not given dedicated attention. Based on existing analyses and studies, complementary research and existing evaluations of the programmes, an assessment of the changing framework conditions for Interreg B was undertaken and recommendations were prepared to support and to facilitate the discussion on the future of transnational cooperation within Interreg.

Results and conclusions of work were discussed with representatives of German federal states during work group meetings, preparing a dedicated workshop on the unique selling point (USP) of Interreg B. With regard to the work package, the following research questions have been formulated:

- Do the existing delimitations of Interreg B cooperation areas comply with functional areas? Are they appropriate to address spatial challenges? What are the possibilities to adapt territorial cooperation to large cross-border functional areas?
- What are the possibilities to highlight the specific nature and added-value of transnational cooperation within Interreg (planning, implementation, monitoring) more adequately?
- What are the possibilities to strengthen the delimitation and synergies between Interreg B and other funding programmes and to promote the application of innovative financing instruments, in order to better contribute to the objectives of spatial development?

To identify the USP of Interreg B, in the first step the effects and impacts of projects realised within Interreg B are described. This is done by the analysis of projects featured in relevant publications and reports on transnational cooperation (chapter 2). Additionally, the results of a sample survey among programme stakeholders on long-term effects of projects realised within Interreg B in the 2007-2013 funding period are summarised (chapter 3).

In the second step the most relevant EU-assisted programmes in the thematic fields tackled by projects realised within Interreg B in the 2007-2013 funding period are being analysed with regard to topics and stakeholders addressed, activities supported and results and effects achieved and aimed at (chapter 4). Finally, results and findings from both steps of analysis are compared (chapter 5).

To describe the effects and impacts of projects realised within Interreg B, the methodical approach developed in the project 'Impacts of transnational cooperation in Interreg B' has been applied. The project has been realised within the research programme 'Demonstration Projects of Spatial Planning (MORO)' and has been finalised in 2017 (Bundesministerium für Verkehr und digitale Infrastruktur 2017a).

Following this approach, the effects and impacts of projects realised within Interreg B can be described according to two dimensions:

- sectoral effects and impacts, oriented towards sectoral elements, e.g. the increase of research and innovation activities, the reduction of CO₂ emissions or the strengthening of the competitiveness of SMEs
- cross-sectoral effects and impacts, oriented towards intersectoral, procedural, organisational and cooperative objectives

An overview on categories of impacts and impacts achieved by Interreg B projects is provided in the subsequent table (Table 1). For more information and a detailed description of selected impacts please refer to the study on impacts of transnational cooperation mentioned above.

Table 1: Categories of impacts and impacts achieved by Interreg B projects

Empowerment of key players	Activation of decision makers	Application of knowledge and skills
Increased capacity of key players to act through increased knowledge and skills	Better representation of interests at regional, national and European level	More frequent application of social and technical innovations
	Strengthened joint action in political decision-making processes	More efficient and effective design of work processes
	Improved ecological, social and economic (living) environment	

Source: Bundesministerium für Verkehr und digitale Infrastruktur 2017a: 19 ff.

2 Analysis of projects featured in publications and reports

For the purpose of this analysis the following publications and reports on transnational cooperation have been analysed, considering in particular projects and 'project stories' from cooperation areas involving German federal states:

- Bundesministerium für Verkehr und digitale Infrastruktur 2017a (ed.): Wirkungen der Transnationalen Zusammenarbeit in Interreg B. Untersuchung ausgewählter Interreg IVB-Projekte nach erzielten Wirkungen und zentralen Gelingensfaktoren. Berlin
- Bundesministerium für Verkehr und digitale Infrastruktur 2017b (ed.): Europäische Modelllösungen nutzen! Ansätze für die Kapitalisierung der Ergebnisse transnationaler Interreg-Projekte in Kommunen und Regionen. MORO Informationen Nr. 17/1 2017. Bonn
- Interact 2017: Ideas for Interreg post-2020 – Transnational Programmes. Input paper, March 2017

The information included in the publications and reports mentioned above has been amended by data and information compiled and published in the project database of the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (Bundesinstitut für Bau-, Stadt- und Raumforschung, BBSR) for the programming period 2007-2013 (BBSR 2018, <https://www.bbr-server.de/interreg>). Additionally, data and information provided through the KEEP database (Interact 2018, <https://www.keep.eu>) has been considered.

The assessment of impacts has been done by the author of the report and is based on information gathered for each project.

2.1 Innovation

In the field of innovation the projects **AlpHouse**, **HealthClusterEurope**, **PROINCOR** and **SCIENCE LINK** have been featured in the publications and reports analysed. Besides the empowerment of key players, the projects lead to the application of knowledge and skills in particular through more frequent application of social and technical innovations and more efficient and effective design of work processes. As a cluster project, the HealthClusterEurope focused on the analysis and compilation of results, experiences and best-practices of participating projects, delivering inspiration and knowledge to interested stakeholders.

The projects represent a broad range of actors and themes, reaching from qualification and education in the construction branch (AlpHouse) to the support of innovation processes in SMEs through innovation audits and access to large-scale research

infrastructure (PROINCOR, SCIENCE LINK) and the promotion of innovative approaches towards health care through combination of transnational and cross-border experience (HealthClusterEurope).

PROJECT PROFILES

Innovation	AlpHouse Alpine building culture and ecology. Competence development of local craft companies in the area of energy-efficient renovation of traditional alpine old buildings and settlements	
	Interreg IVB – Alpine Space, 2,46 m EUR, 2009-2012, 9 partners from Germany, Austria, Italy and France	Chambers of crafts, commerce and architects, education and research institutions and regional authorities
	Development of qualification modules to enhance the competitiveness of regional SMEs by providing them with the knowledge, skills and tools for top-quality renovations of Alpine old buildings, meeting the highest standards of energy efficiency and at the same time preserving the regional characteristics and the endogenous wisdom of Alpine architecture Impacts: Empowerment of key players and application of knowledge and skills	
Innovation	HealthClusterEurope Health cluster for capitalising integrated, innovative and transferable health care models and solutions for healthy ageing and independent living	
	Interreg IVB – NWE, 0,56 m EUR, 2013-2015, 14 partners from Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Ireland, France and Belgium	Universities, education and research institutions, development agencies, regional authorities, private enterprises and foundations
	Analysis and compilation of results of participating projects from several Interreg A and Interreg B programmes and provision of knowledge through a web-based information portal Impacts: Empowerment of key players	
Innovation	PROINCOR Proactive innovation support for SMEs in the corridor from the Baltic to the Mediterranean Sea	
	Interreg IVB – CENTRAL EUROPE, 3,06 m EUR, 2010-2013, 10 partners from Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Austria, Slovenia and Italy	Business support centres, regional development agencies, chambers of commerce and foundations
	Support of enterprises with innovation needs through innovation audits, leading to the diffusion and application of knowledge in new products, processes and services Impacts: Empowerment of key players and application of knowledge and skills	
Innovation	SCIENCE LINK Network between world-leading cluster of large-scale research infrastructure of photon and neutron sources and users fostering innovation and entrepreneurship	
	Interreg IVB – Baltic Sea Region, 3,62 m EUR, 2011-2014, 17 partners from Germany, Poland, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia	Universities and research institutions, regional development agencies, local authorities and foundations
	Creation of a network of research institutions and contact points to improve the access of SMEs to large research infrastructures and to facilitate the transfer of knowledge between science and industry Impacts: Empowerment of key players and application of knowledge and skills	

2.2 Environment and management of natural resources

In the field of environment and management of natural resources the projects **Ballast Water Opportunity**, **BaltSeaPlan**, **Future Cities**, **noPILLS**, **PRESOURCE** and **SUBMARINER** have been featured in the publications and reports analysed. Besides the empowerment of key players, the projects lead to the application of knowledge and skills through more frequent application of technical innovations, more efficient and effective design of work processes and the improvement of the ecological, social and economic (living) environment.

Additionally, the projects Ballast Water Opportunity, BaltSeaPlan and SUBMARINER lead to the activation of decision makers through facilitation of the ratification of international conventions, the preparation of grounds for transnational planning processes and the creation of long-lasting cooperation networks.

As in case of the field of innovation, the projects highlighted in the field of environment and management of natural resources represent a broad range of actors and themes. However, there is a clear thematic focus on water management and management of marine and maritime resources.

PROJECT PROFILES

Environment	Ballast Water Opportunity Ballast Water Opportunity	
	Interreg IVB – North Sea Region, 11,82 m EUR, 2009-2014, 16 partners from Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Denmark and Belgium	Universities and research institutions, national authorities, consultants and enterprises
	Development of common certification standards for ballast water treatment in the North Sea Region, facilitating the ratification of the Ballast Water Management Convention (BWMC) Impacts: Empowerment of key players, activation of decision makers and application of knowledge and skills	
Environment	BaltSeaPlan Introducing maritime spatial planning in the Baltic Sea	
	Interreg IVB – Baltic Sea Region, 3,71 m EUR, 2008-2012, 14 partners from Germany, Poland, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia	National and regional authorities, universities and research institutions, NGOs
	Support of the introduction of Integrated Maritime Spatial Planning (IMSP) in the Baltic Sea Region, creation of a joint understanding of the instruments and processes of IMSP Impacts: Empowerment of key players, activation of decision makers and application of knowledge and skills	
Environment	Future Cities Urban networks to face climate change	
	Interreg IVB – NWE, 12,65 m EUR, 2007-2014, 8 partners from Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, France and Belgium	Regional river management boards and local authorities
	Proactive transformation of urban infrastructures to prepare for climate change, development of a planning and evaluation tool for comprehensive adaptation strategies ('Future Cities Compass') Impacts: Empowerment of key players and application of knowledge and skills	

noPILLS no PILLS in waters!		
Environment	Interreg IVB – NWE, 9,01 m EUR, 2012-2015, 5 partners from Germany, the United Kingdom, Luxemburg and France	Regional river management boards, universities and research institutes
	Implementation of awareness-raising and communicative measures to reduce pharmaceutical input in the water cycle, measurement and evaluation of effects. Development of technical recommendations for the reduction of the level of micropollutants in the water cycle	
	Impacts: Empowerment of key players and application of knowledge and skills	

PRESOURCE Promotion of resource efficiency in SMEs in Central Europe		
Environment	Interreg IVB – CENTRAL EUROPE, 1,83 m EUR, 2012-2014, 8 partners from Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Austria and Italy	Universities and research institutions, consulting agencies and national authorities
	Improvement of resource efficiency in SMEs through integrated potential analyses and recommendation of measures aimed at ecological innovation. Development of a tool to identify and to exploit potentials for increasing resource efficiency and gathering of knowledge on the financing of eco-innovations	
	Impacts: Empowerment of key players and application of knowledge and skills	

SUBMARINER Sustainable uses of Baltic marine resources		
Environment	Interreg IVB – Baltic Sea Region, 3,58 m EUR, 2010-2013, 19 partners from Germany, Poland, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia	Universities and research institutions, development agencies, national and local authorities
	Development of a comprehensive overview on the current state and future perspectives for applying sustainable and innovative uses from Baltic marine resources. Creation of a broad and active network of key players (www.submariner-network.eu)	
	Impacts: Empowerment of key players, activation of decision makers and application of knowledge and skills	

2.3 Accessibility and transport

In the field of accessibility and transport the projects **ChemLog**, **Code24**, **MORECO** and **TROLLEY** have been featured in the publications and reports analysed. Besides the empowerment of key players, the projects lead to the activation of decision makers and to the application of knowledge and skills in particular through more frequent application of technical innovations.

Compared to other thematic fields, the activation of decision makers seems to be of particular relevance for the projects analysed here. Accordingly, local and regional authorities have been represented in each project.

PROJECT PROFILES

Accessibility	ChemLog Chemical logistics cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe	
	Interreg IVB – CENTRAL EUROPE, 2,12 m EUR, 2008-2012, 10 partners from Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Austria and Italy	Regional authorities, research institutions, business associations and regional development agencies
	<p>Identification of major problems and bottlenecks and development of recommendations for improvement of chemical logistics in Central and Eastern Europe. Realisation of feasibility studies and development of a joint strategy and action plan, leading to the establishment of a cooperation platform</p> <p>Impacts: Empowerment of key players and activation of decision makers</p>	
Accessibility	Code24 Corridor 24 Development Rotterdam-Genoa	
	Interreg IVB – NWE, 7,97 m EUR, 2008-2014, 17 partners from Germany, the Netherlands, France, Italy and Switzerland	Regional and local authorities, universities and research institutions, regional associations, ports and consultants
	<p>Development of integrated development concepts for the transport corridor between Rotterdam and Genoa, taking into account economic, spatial, ecological and transport aspects. Support of the elimination of bottlenecks and facilitation of transnational cooperation and networking</p> <p>Impacts: Empowerment of key players and activation of decision makers</p>	
Accessibility	MORECO Mobility and residential costs	
	Interreg IVB – Alpine Space, 2,49 m EUR, 2011-2014, 10 partners from Germany, Austria, Slovenia, France and Italy	Universities and research institutions and national, regional and local authorities
	<p>Elaboration of tools and strategies supporting a sustainable, resource-friendly settlement development which follows supply facilities and public transport axes.</p> <p>Impacts: Empowerment of key players and application of knowledge and skills</p>	
Accessibility	TROLLEY Promote clean public transport	
	Interreg IVB – CENTRAL EUROPE, 4,19 m EUR, 2010-2013, 9 partners from Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Austria and Italy	Public transport companies, universities, local authorities and interest groups
	<p>Promotion of the use of trolleybuses as part of sustainable urban mobility – elaboration of handbooks and guidelines, realisation of feasibility studies and realisation of information campaigns</p> <p>Impacts: Empowerment of key players, activation of decision makers and application of knowledge and skills</p>	

2.4 Attractiveness and competitiveness of cities and regions

In the field of attractiveness and competitiveness of cities and regions the projects **Baltic Sea Labour Network** and **SECOND CHANCE** have been featured in the publications and reports analysed. Besides the empowerment of key players, the projects lead to the activation of decision makers and to the application of knowledge and skills in particular through more frequent application of social innovations, more efficient and effective design of work processes and the improvement of the ecological, social and economic (living) environment.

Compared to the other thematic fields only a small number of projects has been featured in the publications and reports analysed. The reasons for this situation are not known, however it could be the case that projects realised the field of attractiveness and competitiveness of cities and regions achieved less visible (or appealing) effects, thus attracting less attention than other projects. Another reason could be that the thematic field of attractiveness and competitiveness of cities and regions has not been continued in the 2014-2020 funding period, thus reducing the general interest in the analysis and presentation of related issues and projects.

PROJECT PROFILES

Cities and regions	Baltic Sea Labour Network A European model for improvement of interregional labour policy	
	Interreg IVB – Baltic Sea Region, 2,57 m EUR, 2008-2012, 21 partners from Germany, Poland, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia	Trade unions and national associations of trade unions, supra-national associations, local authorities and education institutions
	Tackling of common challenges of the labour market in the Baltic Sea region on the basis of joint transnational strategies, with particular reference to demographic change, migration processes and the improvement of skills and qualifications. Realisation of pilot activities and establishment of the “Baltic Sea Labour Forum” Impacts: Empowerment of key players, activation of decision makers and application of knowledge and skills	
Cities and regions	SECOND CHANCE From industrial use to creative impulse	
	Interreg IVB – CENTRAL EUROPE, 2,89 m EUR, 2010-2013, 10 partners from Germany, Poland, Slovenia and Italy	Local authorities and development agencies, cultural institutions
	Regeneration of urban brownfield sites through the integration and promotion of cultural activities. Elaboration of long-term utilisation and financial concepts for pilot areas, including the development of possible Public Private Partnerships (PPP) Impacts: Empowerment of key players and application of knowledge and skills	

3 Sample survey on project effects among programme stakeholders

To add the perspective of programme stakeholders to the analysis of effects and impacts of transnational cooperation, additionally a sample survey among selected stakeholders from Lower Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein and Berlin-Brandenburg has been realised.

To prepare the survey, the respondents were provided with comprehensive lists of all transnational Interreg projects with partners from Lower Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein, Berlin and Brandenburg, which have been realised in the 2007-2013 funding period. Additionally, the stakeholders have been requested to answer the following questions:

- a) Do you know if one or more of these projects have had long-term strategic effects that extend beyond the 2007-2013 funding period and have influenced policy approaches at state and/or federal level? If so, which are these projects and what effects are you observing or are you aware of?
- b) Do you know if one or more of these projects have created long-term cooperation networks or significant economic effects that continue to exist after the end of project funding? If so, which are these projects?
- c) If you are uncertain about the effects of these projects: For which projects or project partners would it be useful to carry out appropriate research?

The subsequent tables summarise the results of the sample survey. To assess the project effects and impacts, data and information provided by respondents has been analysed. Additionally, data and information compiled and published in the BBSR project database (BBSR 2018) and in the KEEP database (Interact 2018) has been considered.

Table 2: Number of transnational Interreg projects realised in the 2007-2013 funding period with partners from Lower Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein, Berlin and Brandenburg according to thematic fields and priorities

	Innovation	Environment and management of natural resources	Accessibility and transport	Attractiveness and competitiveness of cities and regions	Total
North Sea Region	13	19	8	6	46
Baltic Sea Region	18	12	6	16	52
CENTRAL EUROPE	5	9	6	8	28
NWE	3	2	-	1	6
Alpine Space	2	-	3	-	5
Total	41	42	23	31	137

Source: Bundesinstitut für Bau-, Stadt- und Raumforschung 2018

3.1 Innovation

In the thematic field of innovation 15 projects have been indicated by programme stakeholders, including 6 projects from the North Sea Region, 7 projects from the Baltic Sea Region and two projects from the CENTRAL EUROPE programme area. The SCIENCE LINK project has been featured in the previous section of this report, too.

Table 3: Transnational cooperation projects in the thematic field of innovation indicated in the result of the sample survey

		I	II	III	
Innovation	ClimaFruit Future proofing the North Sea berry fruit industry in times of climate change	NSR	X		X
	Creative City Challenge Creative City Challenge	NSR	X	X	X
	DANS Digital Agenda for the North Sea, DANS ON Digital Agenda for the North Sea: Orientation towards new innovation	NSR	X	X	
	ERIP European regions for innovative productivity	NSR	X		X
	NMU Northern Maritime University	NSR	X		
	POWER Cluster Developing the North Sea Offshore Wind Power Cluster	NSR	X	X	
	BaltFood The BSR food cluster: Innovation and competitiveness in action	BSR	X		X
	Best Agers Using the knowledge and experience of professionals in their primes to foster business and skills development	BSR	X		X
	BSR InnoReg Strengthening innovation governance in Baltic non-metropolitan regions through transnational cooperation	BSR	X	X	X
	ICT for Health Strengthening social capacities for the utilisation of eHealth technologies in the framework of ageing population	BSR	X		X
	JOSEFIN Joint SME finance for innovation	BSR	X		X
	MIN-NOVATION Mining and mineral processing waste management innovation network	BSR	X		X
	SCIENCE LINK Network between world-leading cluster of large-scale research infrastructure of photon and neutron sources and users fostering innovation and entrepreneurship	BSR	X		X
	CEBBIS Central Europe Branch Based Innovation Support	CE	X		
	I3SME Introducing innovation inside SMEs	CE	X		

Source: Information provided by the respondents of the sample survey. The assessment of impacts has been done by the author of the report and is based on information gathered for each project

Categories of project impacts: I = Empowerment of key players, II = Activation of decision makers, III = Application of knowledge and skills

Besides the empowerment of key players, most of the projects lead to the application of knowledge and skills through more frequent application of social and technical innovations and more efficient and effective design of work processes. Several projects (Creative City Challenge, DANS ON, POWER Cluster and BSR InnoReg) aimed at the activation of decision makers, too.

The most visible long-term effect reported by programme stakeholders with regard to projects in the field of innovation is the creation of long-term cooperation networks (BaltFood and SCIENCE LINK). Additionally, the programme stakeholders highlighted effects leading to strengthening of local economic development (e.g. Creative City Challenge, ERIP and ClimaFruit) and to the creation of follow-up projects and activities (e.g. ICT for Health and Best Agers).

3.2 Environment and management of natural resources

In the field of environment and management of natural resources 11 projects have been indicated by programme stakeholders, including 7 projects from the North Sea Region, three projects from the Baltic Sea Region and one project from the CENTRAL EUROPE programme area. The SUBMARINER project has been featured in the previous section of this report, too.

Besides the empowerment of key players, nearly all projects lead to the application of knowledge and skills through more frequent application of technical innovations, more efficient and effective design of work processes and the improvement of the ecological, social and economic (living) environment. Additionally, the majority of projects addressed the activation of decision makers, too.

The most visible long-term effects reported by programme stakeholders with regard to projects in the field of environment of management of natural resources are the creation of long-term cooperation networks (SUBMARINER) and the influence on policy approaches and policy implementation on state and/or federal state level (e.g. Aquarius and LABEL). Additionally, the programme stakeholders highlighted effects leading to strengthening of environmental policies on local and regional level (e.g. North Sea SEP) and to the creation of follow-up projects and activities (e.g. enerCOAST and Baltic Compact).

Table 4: Transnational cooperation projects in the thematic field of environment and management of natural resources indicated in the result of the sample survey

			I	II	III
Environment	Aquarius The farmer as water manager under changing climatic conditions	NSR	X	X	X
	C2CI Cradle to Cradle Islands	NSR	X		X
	CLIWAT Adaptive and sustainable water management and protection of society and nature in an extreme climate	NSR	X		X
	DiPol Impact of climate change on the quality of urban and coastal waters	NSR	X		X
	enerCOAST BlueGreen Coastal Energy Community	NSR	X	X	X
	North Sea SEP North Sea sustainable energy planning	NSR	X	X	X
	SAWA Strategic alliance for integrated water management actions	NSR	X		X
	Baltic COMPASS Comprehensive policy actions and investments in sustainable solutions in agriculture in the Baltic Sea Region	BSR	X	X	
	Baltic Compact Collaborative management planning and action for agriculture and environment in the Baltic Sea Region	BSR	X	X	X
	SUBMARINER Sustainable uses of Baltic marine resources	BSR	X	X	X
LABEL Adaptation to flood risk in the Labe-Elbe river basin	CE	X	X	X	

Source: Information provided by the respondents of the sample survey. The assessment of impacts has been done by the author of the report and is based on information gathered for each project

Categories of project impacts: I = Empowerment of key players, II = Activation of decision makers, III = Application of knowledge and skills

3.3 Accessibility and transport

In the field of accessibility and transport 6 projects have been indicated by programme stakeholders, including one project from the North Sea Region, two projects from the Baltic Sea Region, two projects from the Alpine Space programme area and one project from the CENTRAL EUROPE programme area. The majority of projects tackled issues related to the development of transnational transport corridors.

Besides the empowerment of key players, all projects lead to the activation of decision makers. The most visible long-term effect reported by programme stakeholders is the influence on policy approaches and policy implementation on state and/or federal state level (Scandria and CNSS). Additionally, several projects prepared follow-up activities aimed at the implementation of new investments and services (e.g. Scandria, CNSS and TRANSITECTS).

Table 5: Transnational cooperation projects in the thematic field of accessibility and transport indicated in the result of the sample survey

			I	II	III
Accessibility	CLEAN NORTH SEA SHIPPING (CNSS) Marine transport services and reduction of emission – a North Sea Model	NSR	X	X	
	BSR Transport Cluster for sustainable, multimodal & green transport corridors	BSR	X	X	
	Scandria Scandinavian-Adriatic Corridor for Growth and Innovation	BSR	X	X	
	SoNorA South-North Axis	CE	X	X	
	TRANSITECTS Transalpine Transport Architects; SusFreight Sustainable freight transport – Now and tomorrow	Alpine Space	X	X	

Source: Information provided by the respondents of the sample survey. The assessment of impacts has been done by the author of the report and is based on information gathered for each project

Categories of project impacts: I = Empowerment of key players, II = Activation of decision makers, III = Application of knowledge and skills

3.4 Attractiveness and competitiveness of cities and regions

In the field of attractiveness and competitiveness of cities and regions four projects have been indicated by programme stakeholders, including two projects from the North Sea Region and two projects from the Baltic Sea Region. Two of the projects (Best Agers Lighthouses and PrimCareIT) have been follow-up projects of previous projects realised in the thematic field of innovation (Best Agers and ICT for Health).

Table 6: Transnational cooperation projects in the thematic field of attractiveness and competitiveness of cities and regions indicated in the result of the sample survey

			I	II	III
Cities and regions	PROWAD Protect and prosper - Sustainable tourism in the Wadden Sea	NSR	X	X	
	VITAL Vital rural area	NSR	X		X
	Best Agers Lighthouses Strategic age management for SME in the Baltic Sea Region	BSR	X		X
	PrimCareIT Counteracting brain drain and professional isolation of health professionals in remote primary health care through tele-consultation and tele-mentoring to strengthen social conditions in remote BSR	BSR	X		X

Source: Information provided by the respondents of the sample survey. The assessment of impacts has been done by the author of the report and is based on information gathered for each project

Categories of project impacts: I = Empowerment of key players, II = Activation of decision makers, III = Application of knowledge and skills

Besides the empowerment of key players, three of four projects lead to the application of knowledge and skills through more frequent application of social innovations and the improvement of the social and economic (living) environment. One project addressed the activation of decision makers.

The long-term effects indicated by programme stakeholders referred to the strengthening of local economic development (VITAL) and the shaping of strategies for sustainable development of vulnerable resources (PROWAD). Additionally, the projects Best Agers Lighthouses and PrimCareIT are examples for the realisation of follow-up activities of cooperation networks established in the result of previous projects.

4 Relevant EU-assisted programmes and funding instruments

In this section of the report the most relevant EU-assisted programmes and funding instruments in the thematic fields tackled by Interreg B projects in the 2007-2013 funding period are being analysed. The analysis includes the following programmes:

- Innovation: Horizon 2020, COSME
- Environment and management of natural resources: LIFE, Intelligent Energy – Europe (2007-2013)
- Accessibility and transport: Connecting Europe Facility, Marco Polo (2007-2013), CIVITAS
- Attractiveness and competitiveness of cities and regions: URBACT, Urban Innovative Actions

Special support instruments such as JASPERS (Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions) and ELENA (European Local ENergy Assistance), which mainly aim at the preparation of large investment projects, have not been subject to the analysis.

4.1 Innovation¹

The most relevant EU-assisted programme in the field of research and innovation is the **Horizon 2020** programme. Within this programme, nearly 80 billion EUR of funding will be made available in the funding period 2014-2020. The programme consists of a broad range of thematic sections, including amongst others:

- Excellent science, including support of frontier research, training and career development, future and emerging technologies and construction of world-class research infrastructures
- Industrial leadership, including leadership in enabling and industrial technologies, access to risk finance and support of innovation in small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)
- Societal challenges, including health, demographic change and wellbeing, food security, sustainable agriculture and forestry, marine, maritime and inland water research and the bioeconomy, secure, clean and efficient energy, smart, green and integrated transport, climate action, environment, resource efficiency and raw materials, inclusive, innovative and reflective societies and secure societies

¹ If not indicated separately, information on the Horizon 2020 programme and the COSME programme has been retrieved on 14 December 2018 from the websites <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020>, <https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/cosme> and https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/cosme_en

- Support of Member States and associated countries with low participation rates in research and innovation projects and support of cooperation between science and society
- European Innovation Council (EIC) Pilot and European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)
- Euratom nuclear research and training

Standard research projects require a consortium of at least three partners which are established in a Member State or in an associated country. The EU funding covers up to 100 % of costs directly linked to the implementation of research and innovation actions, and indirect costs (e.g. administration, communication and infrastructure costs, office supplies) are reimbursed with a 25 % flat rate of direct eligible costs. For innovation actions, funding generally covers 70 % of eligible costs, but may increase to 100 % for non-profit organisations. However, the success rate of applications is rather low, reaching the level of 12,6 % during the first three years of implementation of Horizon 2020 (European Commission 2018a: 18).

Looking at the types of organisations submitting proposals to Horizon 2020, the largest share of applications in the period 2014-2016 came from secondary and higher education establishments (38,4 %), followed by private for-profit companies (36,1 %), research organisations (18,2 %) and public bodies (3,8 %, *ibid.*: 11).

During this period, secondary and higher education establishments received 39,3 % of grants signed (9,7 billion EUR), followed by private for-profit companies (27,1 %, 6,7 billion EUR), research organisations (26,3 %, 6,5 billion EUR) and public bodies (3,8 %, 0,9 billion EUR, *ibid.*: 24).

The average size of grants varies considerably due to the great variety of activities supported (*ibid.*: 22, data for the 2014-2016 period, author's own calculations):

- Excellent science: 1,19 million EUR
- Industrial leadership: 2,25 million EUR
- Societal challenges: 2,64 million EUR
- Other: 3,72 million EUR

Proposals for projects and actions have to be submitted during calls, which are organised by different institutions and agencies. Topics to be funded are specified in detailed work programmes, which are set-up and published by the European Commission.

Another relevant EU-assisted programme in the field of innovation is the **COSME** (Competitiveness of enterprises and SMEs) programme, aiming at the promotion of entrepreneurship and the improvement of the business environment for SMEs. With a budget of 2,3 billion EUR available in the period 2014-2020, COSME provides support in the following thematic areas:

- **Access to finance**, with the European Investment Fund (EIF) and banks providing access to financial instruments
- **Access to markets**, amongst others through funding of the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), web portals and helpdesks
- **Improving framework conditions for enterprises**, amongst others through policy assessments, support of cluster development and support of tourism initiatives
- **Encouraging entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial culture**, amongst others through support of mobility of young entrepreneurs

The COSME programme is managed by the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME) on behalf of the European Commission. Applications are submitted during calls, except for the access to finance.

4.2 Environment and management of natural resources²

The most relevant EU-assisted programme in the field of environment and management of natural resources is the **LIFE** programme, which contributes to the implementation, updating and development of environmental and climate policy and laws by co-financing projects with European added value. Within this programme, around 3,4 billion EUR of funding will be made available in the funding period 2014-2020.

The LIFE programme is divided into two sub-programmes, one for environment (75 %) and one for climate action (25 %). Within the environment sub-programme, the following fields of intervention can be addressed:

- Nature and biodiversity, including the development, implementation and management of the Natura 2000 network
- Environment and resource efficiency, including the development and demonstration of innovative technologies and implementation, monitoring and evaluation of EU environmental policy and law

Within the climate sub-programme, the following fields of intervention can be addressed:

- Climate change mitigation, including knowledge sharing and integrated approaches on climate change mitigation strategies and action plans at local, regional or national level

² If not indicated separately, information on the LIFE programme and the Intelligent Energy – Europe (IEE) programme has been retrieved on 14 December 2018 from the websites <https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/life> and <https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/section/energy/intelligent-energy-europe>

- Climate change adaptation, including development and implementation of EU policy on climate change adaptation and best practices and solutions, including ecosystem-based approaches and knowledge sharing

In both sub-programmes the issue of governance and information can be addressed through projects in the areas of awareness raising, training and capacity building, law compliance and enforcement, knowledge development and public and stakeholder participation. Additionally, NGOs can apply for operating grants.

Outstanding LIFE projects are awarded each year during the EU Green Week in Brussels. The 2016 and 2017 winners provide an overview about issues tackled and projects realised within the LIFE programme (Table 7).

Table 7: Projects awarded in the 2016 and 2017 LIFE awards competition

Environment, nature and climate action	ECOREMED Implementation of eco-compatible protocols for agricultural soil remediation in Litorale Domizio-Agro Aversano NIPS	5,77 m EUR, 2012-2017, 4 partners from Italy University, research institution, regional authority and environmental protection agency
	ECO-DHYBAT Demonstration of hygienic eco-design of food processing equipment as Best Available Technique	0,87 m EUR, 2013-2016, 4 partners from Spain Research institution, business association and enterprises
	EH-REK Ecohydrologic rehabilitation of recreational reservoirs 'Arturówek' in Łódź as a model approach to rehabilitation of urban reservoirs	1,24 m EUR, 2010-2015, 3 partners from Poland University, local authority and infrastructure operator
	Kleine Nete Large scale habitat restoration in the valley of the Kleine Nete	4,37 m EUR, 2011-2016, 3 partners from Belgium NGO, regional authority and environmental protection agency
	ARCTOS/KASTORIA Improving conditions of bear-human coexistence in Kastoria Prefecture, Greece	1,13 m EUR, 2010-2015, 3 partners from Greece Regional authority, regional development agency and NGO
	APUS & NYCTALUS Protection of Common Swift (Apus apus) and bats in buildings in Slovakia	1,48 m EUR, 2012-2015, 2 partners from Slovakia NGOs
	AIRUSE Testing and Development of air quality mitigation measures in Southern Europe	2,37 m EUR, 2012-2016, 6 partners from Spain, Greece, Italy and the United Kingdom Research institutions and universities
	AGRICARBON Sustainable agriculture in Carbon arithmetics	2,67 m EUR, 2010-2014, 4 partners from Spain and Belgium Business association, research institution, university and interest group
	Crops for better soil Profitable organic farming techniques based on traditional crops: contrasting soil degradation in the Mediterranean	3,56 m EUR, 2011-2016, 5 partners from Spain and the Netherlands Large enterprise, consultant, university, research institution and business association
	EKO-LIFE Experimenting and communicating sustainable lifestyles to promote Energy Autonomy	0,78 m EUR, 2013-2016, 4 partners from Austria NGO, social enterprise and education and research institutions

Sources: European Commission 2018b, European Commission 2018c

It is possible to apply in annual calls for 'traditional' and integrated projects. Integrated projects combine LIFE funding with other sources of support to maximise their impact over a large area (regional, multi-regional, national or transnational). These large-scale projects implement plans or strategies required by specific EU laws. Since their introduction in 2014, 25 integrated projects with a joint budget of more than 460 million EUR have been approved (European Commission 2018d).

'Traditional' projects receive a co-funding of up to 55 %, whereas integrated projects and projects in the field of nature and biodiversity receive a co-funding of up to 60 %. The co-funding for projects in the field of nature and biodiversity can be increased up to 75 % if at least half of the project costs are used for actions to improve the conservation status of priority habitats or species listed in the EU's birds and habitats directives.

Anyone registered in the EU can submit proposals under the sub-programmes for environment and climate action, including public bodies, private for-profit organisations (e.g. enterprises) and private non-profit organisations (e.g. NGOs). Projects can be run as individual projects, or jointly with partners from one or several countries.

Another relevant EU-assisted programme in the field of environment and natural resources was the **Intelligent Energy – Europe** (IEE) programme, which was running until 2013. A large part of the programme budget was made available through annual calls for proposals to support projects putting the concept of 'intelligent energy' in practice. Carried out by public, private or non-governmental organisations, three main objectives were supported – more energy efficiency, more renewables, and better transport and mobility.

The topics and issues addressed by the IEE programme are now part of the Horizon 2020 programme.

4.3 Accessibility and transport³

The most relevant EU-assisted programme in the field of accessibility and transport is the **Connecting Europe Facility** (CEF), aiming at the construction and upgrading of transport, energy and digital infrastructure. Within this programme, around 30,4 billion EUR of funding will be made available in the funding period 2014-2020.

The **Connecting Europe Facility for Transport** (CEF Transport) is the funding instrument for European transport infrastructure policy. It supports investments in new transport infrastructure or rehabilitation and upgrading of existing transport infrastructure.

³ If not indicated separately, information on the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), the Marco Polo programme and the CIVITAS initiative has been retrieved on 14 December 2018 from the websites <https://ec.europa.eu/inea/en/connecting-europe-facility>, <https://ec.europa.eu/inea/en/marco-polo>, <http://ec.europa.eu/transport/marcopolo> and <https://civitas.eu>

The TEN-T policy objectives foresee

- completion of the TEN-T Core Network by 2030, structured around 9 multimodal Core Network Corridors,
- completion of the TEN-T Comprehensive Network by 2050, in order to facilitate accessibility to all European regions.

CEF Transport focuses on cross-border projects and the removal of bottlenecks or bridging missing links in the TEN-T Core and Comprehensive Network, as well as implementation of horizontal priorities such as traffic management systems. It also supports innovation in the transport system in order to improve the use of infrastructure, reduce the environmental impact, enhance energy efficiency and increase safety.

The budget for CEF Transport amounts to 24,05 billion EUR for the period 2014-2020.

The **Connecting Europe Facility for Energy** (CEF Energy) supports the upgrading of existing, and development of new energy transmission infrastructures of European importance that under current market and regulatory conditions are not commercially viable. Therefore the European Commission has adopted a list of key infrastructure projects, especially cross-border projects, that link the energy systems of EU countries (Projects of Common Interest, PCI). The projects involve electricity transmission lines, gas pipelines, electricity storage projects, underground gas storage projects, LNG terminals and smart grid projects.

The budget for CEF Energy amounts to 5,35 billion EUR for the period 2014-2020.

The **Connecting Europe Facility in Telecom** (CEF Telecom) aims at the facilitation of cross-border interaction between public administrations, businesses and citizens by deploying digital service infrastructures and broadband networks. Supported projects shall contribute to the creation of a European ecosystem of interoperable and interconnected digital services that sustain the Digital Single Market.

The budget for CEF Telecom amounts to 1,04 billion EUR for the period 2014-2020.

Another relevant EU-assisted programme in the field of accessibility and transport was the **Marco Polo** programme, which aimed to ease road congestion and pollution of freight transport through support of modal shift from roads to greener modes. The programme addressed operators of freight transport and was running until 2013.

Additionally, through the **CIVITAS** (City Vitality and Sustainability) initiative since 2002 a network of cities dedicated to the promotion of cleaner and better urban transport has been created. The network serves as platform for the realisation of research and cooperation projects, which in the current funding period are supported from the Horizon 2020 programme.

4.4 Attractiveness and competitiveness of cities and regions⁴

The most relevant EU-assisted programme enhancing cooperation in the field of urban development – at least in terms of the number of partners involved – is the **URBACT** programme, which is being realised as part of European territorial cooperation in the funding period 2014-2020. Within this programme, around 74 million EUR of funding will be made available to promote exchange and learning between cities.

The URBACT programme is aimed at capacity building in the field of integrated urban development in various thematic fields and has four specific objectives:

1. **Capacity for policy delivery:** to improve the capacity of cities to manage sustainable urban policies and practices in an integrated and participative way
2. **Policy design:** to improve the design of sustainable urban policies and practices in cities
3. **Policy implementation:** to improve the implementation of integrated and sustainable urban strategies and actions in cities
4. **Building and sharing knowledge:** to ensure that practitioners and decision-makers at all levels have access to knowledge and share know-how on all aspects of sustainable urban development in order to improve urban development policies

To reach these aims around 70 networks focusing on specific themes and challenges shall be launched during implementation of the programme. Each network with 6-12 cities involved is expected to run for 30 months (average budget of networks launched during the period 2014-2018: 657 thousand EUR; URBACT 2018, author's own calculations).

More than half of the programme funding shall be dedicated to exchange and learning activities undertaken by cities. Remaining funds shall be dedicated to programme activities such as capacity building for urban stakeholders, expertise at project and programme level and national URBACT points.

Main beneficiaries of the URBACT programme are cities, city districts and metropolitan authorities. Additionally, local agencies, regional and national authorities and universities and research institutions may participate. The co-financing rate is 85 % for partners located in less developed and transition regions and 70 % for partners located in more developed regions.

URBACT complements the work undertaken by the Urban Development Network and supports the implementation of the integrated approach to sustainable urban development, as it has been laid down in Article 7 of the ERDF regulation.

⁴ If not indicated separately, information on the URBACT programme and the Urban Innovative Actions (UIA) initiative has been retrieved on 14 December 2018 from the websites <http://urbact.eu> (in particular Fact Sheet 1 – URBACT III Programme Manual) and <https://www.uia-initiative.eu/en>

Additionally, with Article 8 of the ERDF regulation the European Commission has launched the **Urban Innovative Actions** (UIA) initiative to test new and innovative solutions addressing urban challenges. Around 372 million EUR of funding are available for this activity in the funding period 2014-2020.

Projects, which are realised by single cities, are selected through calls for proposals with an ERDF contribution of maximum 5 million EUR per project, a co-financing rate of maximum 80 %, and maximum three-year duration. The topics of the calls are defined annually by the European Commission. Until the end of 2018, 55 projects have been approved for implementation.

5 Results and findings

Based on the approach followed in this report, the differences between Interreg B and the most relevant EU-assisted programmes and funding instruments in thematic fields tackled by projects realised within Interreg B in the 2007-2013 funding period might be summarised as follows (Table 8):

- Due to the broad range of topics addressed and activities supported, Interreg B addresses the **broadest range of stakeholders** – from public bodies to education and research institutions, enterprises, infrastructure operators and NGOs.
- Even if within the thematic fields investigated this difference obviously will be less evident, the mere possibility to address by a single programme a broad variety of stakeholders and **to facilitate sectoral and cross-sectoral cooperation** among them is unique.
- The Horizon 2020 programme addresses a broad range of stakeholders, too. However, due to the low success rate of applications, participation in the programme requires a high degree of excellence. This condition strictly limits the possibilities for participation, thus channelling the effects and impacts of the programme towards high-end research and innovation.
- The Horizon 2020 programme, the LIFE programme and of course the Connecting Europe Facility provide much better conditions for investments than projects realised within Interreg B. **Thus, the possible contribution of Interreg B to the achievement of sectoral objectives is strictly limited.**
- With regard to cross-sectoral effects and impacts investigated in this report, nearly all programmes contribute to the empowerment of key players and the application of knowledge and skills. Additionally, Interreg B (and the URBACT programme, with its strict focus on policy development and policy learning) have the capability **to activate decision makers.**
- Interreg B programmes are managed and implemented by Member States, providing them with the unique possibility to contribute with their knowledge and expertise to transnational cooperation programmes and to support the implementation of **place-based approaches.**
- All remaining programmes are managed and implemented by the European Commission and delegated agencies, partly applying top-down approaches to achieve the desired effects (e.g. Horizon 2020)

Accordingly, the following elements can be characterised as the most relevant 'building blocks' of the unique selling point (USP) of Interreg B:

- Broad variety of stakeholders, topics and activities, enabling integrated and cross-sectoral approaches
- Potential for place-based approaches and support of bottom-up initiatives due to programme management on the level of Member States
- High potential for the activation of decision makers

Table 8: Synopsis of Interreg B and main EU-assisted programmes and funding instruments investigated in this report

Aspect		Interreg B	Horizon 2020	LIFE	CEF Transport	URBACT
Topics		Innovation Environment and natural resources Low carbon and climate change Sustainable transport Governance and capacity building	Innovation in various thematic fields	Environment, nature and climate	Transport	Urban development in various thematic fields
Spatial scale of cooperation		Transnational	Interregional	Local, cross-border and interregional	Local, cross-border and transnational	Interregional
Co-financing rates		60-85 %	100 %	55-75 %	10-50 % / 85 %	70-85 %
Key activities		Capacity building, research, studies and (small-scale) investments	Research and (pilot) investments	Research, investments and works	Studies, investments and works	Capacity building
Effects and impacts	Empowerment of key players	X	X	X		X
	Activation of decision makers	X				X
	Application of knowledge and skills	X	X	X	X	X
Key target groups		Public bodies, education and research institutions, enterprises, infrastructure operators and NGOs	Education and research institutions, enterprises and public bodies (including infrastructure operators)	Public bodies, research institutions, enterprises and NGOs	Infrastructure operators	Public bodies
Programming		Member States	European Commission	European Commission	European Commission	European Commission

Source: Results of author's analysis. To ensure comparability of information, thematic fields addressed by Interreg B and co-financing rates valid for Interreg B in the 2014-2020 funding period have been considered

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