

2014-2020 20th Interreg Europe Monitoring Committee meeting

14 June 2023

Chaired by: Sweden (SE)
Participants: See participants' List (Annex 01).
Decision notes: Interreg Europe JS

01 Welcome, opening and approval of the agenda

The **Chair** welcomed the participants and introduced the agenda (Annex 02).

Decision: The agenda was approved unanimously.

02 Update on programme developments

New MC participants from **ES, SK, DK, BE, SI** and from the **Certifying Authority** introduced themselves.

JS gave an update on the JS' HR situation (Annex 03).

03 Project experience from a Swedish partner

Ms. Henrik Roos from the County Administrative Board of Västra Götaland (SE), partner of **BIOGOV** project, presented the main achievements (Annex 04).

Discussion:

FI asked about the possible impact of the project on the civil society and whether the public sees these activities in a positive light. Mr Roos explained that the project contributed to spreading knowledge on the importance of biodiversity and increased awareness on the current restrictions on nature-based tourism. Part of the public still sees it as a threat to resources while others have a better understanding on the usage of local resources. **LU** asked about the level of political support in the project. Mr Roos explained that the project activities benefited from a certain support from officials. However, it can be challenging as it is a timely process, and the results are not always obvious. **PL** asked about the importance of cooperation with other countries. Mr Roos confirmed the importance of international cooperation but also of adapting the learning to each context.

04 Update on Policy Learning Platform

JS presented the updates on the Policy Learning Platform (Annex 05).

Discussion:

PL asked about the launch of the new Platform contract and whether the peer reviews would also cover costs for translation and catering if needed. **JS** confirmed full continuation of the Platform services with no changes. **JS** added that local transport costs might also be included for study visits and that a discussion was underway to check whether part of staff costs could be reimbursed.

CY reported from their recent peer review experience, highlighting that it was a unique event with high engagement. **CY** appreciated the experts/peers' participation and their concrete and practical recommendations.

LU asked how other PS managed to spread the word about the Platform services and what bottlenecks existed in communication. **JS** said that some targeted communication campaigns were put in place and some regions not involved in the programme took part in the Platform services. **JS** explained that the communication on PLP was a real challenge since it required a change of mindset: people see Interreg programme as a funding opportunity and not as a service provider who can directly help in solving issues. **JS** acknowledged that smarter communication was needed to make the communication more powerful. **JS** will pick it up and add a discussion about it at the next point of contact meeting.

05 Update on projects' achievements and projects' closure

JS presented a summary of the projects' achievements, administrative changes, lump sum reporting, and shared a presentation the JS officers use during the final events of Interreg Europe projects (Annex 06).

Discussion:

PL asked how many new projects were approved thanks to the type 1 change (implementation of new projects). **JS** will analyse if it is possible to provide such statistics. **LU** suggested showing the % of more and less developed regions as regards the overall % of NUTS2 regions involved in the programme. **JS** confirmed that this could be done but that the difference would not be very big since 90% of NUTS2 regions participate in projects.

06 Update on finances and audit

06.1. TA actual expenditures 2022

JS presented the TA 2022 actual expenditure (Annex 07).

Discussion:

DE proposed to put the TA surplus from 2014-2020 and from Interreg IVC on the agenda of MC meeting in December 2023 to discuss if it is possible to reimburse or suspend national contribution payments for the new period. **JS** clarified that there are no TA surpluses from the past, any national contribution

surplus has been re-imbursed. In the current period the JS expects to fully use the TA budget, but if there would be a surplus the MC would need to decide on it.

Decision:

The MC approved the TA 2022 actual expenditure.

06.2. Financing of national points of contact

JS reminded those PS that still have expenditure to report, to send their last report to the JS by the end of June 2023.

06.3. Audit campaign 2023

The **JS** sent to the MC members the sample of projects that will be audited this summer (Annex 08.1 and 8.2).

06.4. Financing of UA national contribution to TA from IVC surplus (provided positive decision on the programme area extension at MC03)

JS presented the note on financing of the Ukrainian (UA) national contribution to TA budget 2021-2027 from the IVC surplus (Annex 09). **JS** also informed that two days ago it received a letter from Moldova (MD) asking to explore ways to waive the MD TA contribution considering that the country is still under state of emergency due to the war in UA. **JS** proposed to have a decision on UA and have a discussion on MD contribution.

Discussion:

AT, FI, FR, IT, LU, RO were in favour in supporting both UA and MD.

CY, IT expressed concern if MD will be able to fully participate in the programme. **JS** had received MD confirmation that there should be no issues with involvement in the projects, **RO** shared their experience with MD from cross-border programmes, facing no capacity issues.

AT, ES wondered if it is not discriminatory towards the 5 IPA countries joining the programme. **MA** and **JS** explained that IPA countries do not face the same challenges and have not asked to waive their contribution.

ES, LU, PT suggested to postpone the MD decision to allow sufficient time for consultation with relevant PS authorities and take the decision in a written procedure.

EC confirmed that Moldova has welcomed thousands of UA refugees without significant external financial support. In addition, the country has been cut off from energy supplies, faces high inflation, and attempts to disrupt its government. EC encouraged the PS to accept this proposal in solidarity with the challenges that MD is currently facing.

RO expressed interest to discuss the future use of Interreg IVC surplus during MC meeting in December 2023.

**Decision:**

The MC decided to finance the UA national TA contribution from the Interreg IVC surplus. The decision on covering the MD national TA contribution will be taken in a written procedure. The future use of the Interreg IVC surplus will be discussed more in details during the MC meeting in December 2023.

The Chair thanked the participants and closed the meeting.

NOTE: To ensure transparency of the Programming Committee meetings, the decision notes are published on the Interreg Europe's website. Annexes as mentioned in the notes can be requested by email: info@interregeurope.eu