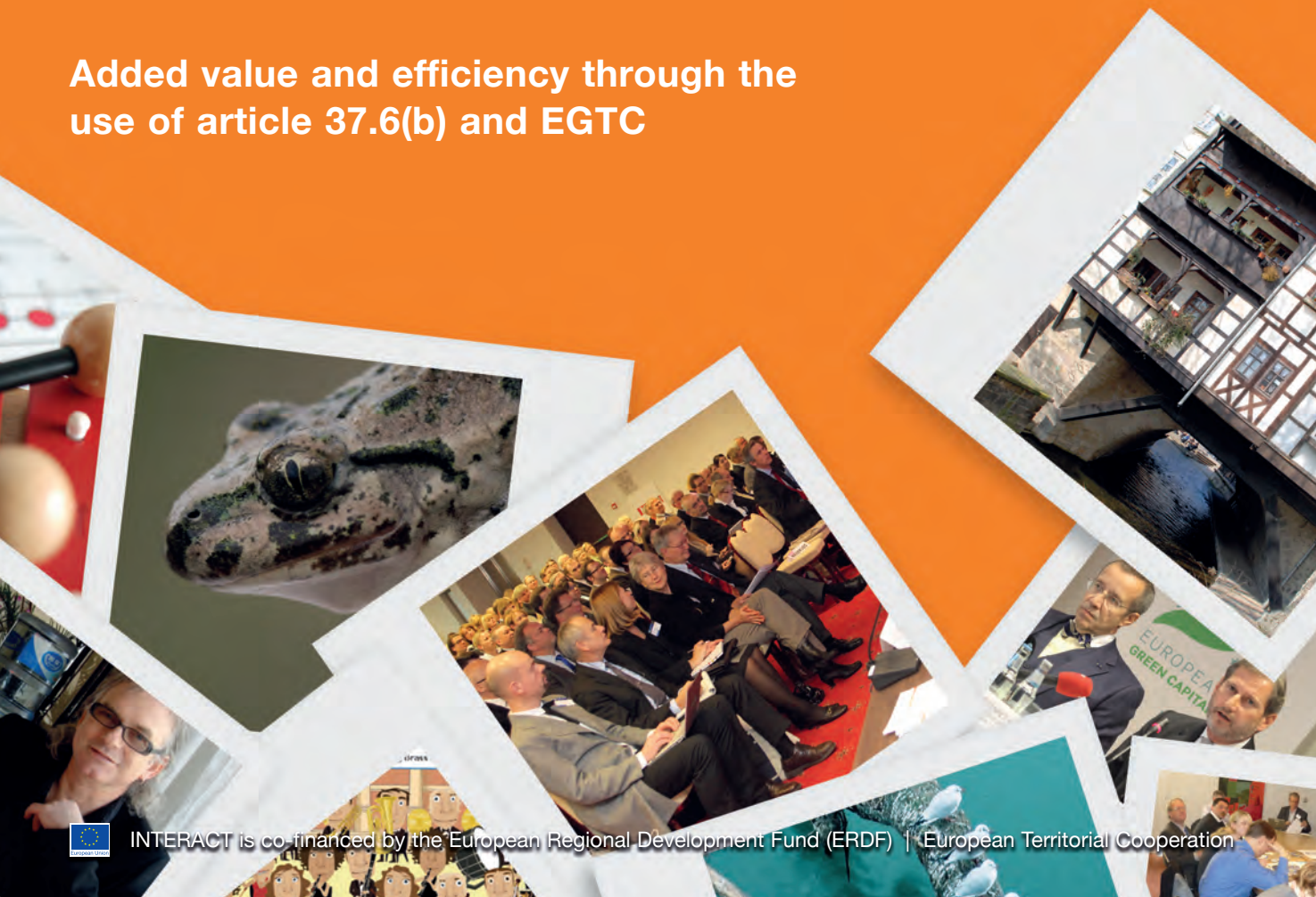


INTERACT pilot activity on cooperation in Objectives 1 and 2

Added value and efficiency through the
use of article 37.6(b) and EGTC



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introduction

The pilot project “Cooperation in Objectives 1 and 2” was born, like many interesting activities, in a very informal way.

In October 2010, a workshop during the Open Days was dedicated to the challenges on the application of article 37.6(b) of Regulation 1083/2006: a few lines that give the possibility to operate cooperation activities outside of the framework of Objective 3, which is within the European Territorial Cooperation.

INTERACT had already become interested in this subject in 2009 when it organised a large seminar in Naples, Italy, attempting to join together as many European stakeholders as possible and also clarifying the methodology and activities that could be implemented through this tool. As a matter of fact, the outcomes of the Naples event were clear: the interest in the subject was high, but wording in the Regulation led to difficulties when implementing the cooperation. On the other hand, this new tool seemed to allow for a degree of flexibility that could not be underestimated.

The seminar collected a few, but still firm points:

Interregional cooperation as in art. 37.6(b) is not supposed to be a new type of cooperation, but rather an instrument for it. Cross-border, transnational and interregional are strands or types of cooperation, while the article is an innovative tool to strengthen its scope and explore new ways of working together.

Even though not is much explained by the regulation, the general principles of the Regulation are to be respected: complementarity, consistency, coordination, conformity with EU law, partnership, proportionality, additionally.

Art 37.6.b of Regulation 1083 states that:

At the initiative of the Member State, the operational programmes financed by the ERDF may also contain for the Convergence and Regional Competitiveness and employment objectives [...] actions for interregional cooperation with at least one regional or local authority of another Member State.

Let us now discuss the workshop held during the 2010 Open Days. That meeting was like a flashback, bringing up the same questions, doubts and eagerness to explore and know more. Part of the problem with the application of this tool is actually the lack of information about it.

Therefore, It was quite understandable and natural for a small group of stakeholders, back then representing INTERACT, Region Limousin and Region Thuringia, to have an informal meeting after the workshop was closed. We talked about the need to find an answer to the many doubts that arose regarding the possibilities offered by the Article. The two regions were already using this tool to cooperate with different partners within and outside the European Union and they were both eager to show their way to others. They strongly believed in cooperation as a winning approach and this did not cease at the three strands offered by European Territorial Cooperation.

It was then when INTERACT proposed to organise and support an information and training activity, a working group possibly, or maybe a project, which was difficult to name because it was not clear how far we could go with this type of exercise. For sure we could not pave the way to a unique approach

to cooperation, as every participant in the group uses a different technique and organisation to implement their cooperation projects. Neither could we propose a single interpretation of the article and moreover, not all of the cooperation activities implemented were actually carried out according to article 37.6(b).

To sum up, we could not be policy makers, nor project partners, nor rules setters, just pioneers, or even pilots. We could not simply stick to article 37.6(b) because we wanted to explore all the possible innovative ways to implement cooperation.

That is how we set up the Pilot Group on Cooperation in Objectives 1 and 2.

That early evening in Brussels, we simply imagined the bases of the project, the philosophy behind it and the objectives. The first technical agreement and the creation of the road map were agreed a few months later, in December, during a meeting organised by Thuringia. At that time the group's partners had already grown in numbers.

The organisation of the pilot project is described further on in this publication, so there is no need to go over the technical details. It was just a pleasure to see how a bottom-up initiative, organised out of enthusiasm and real care, turned, little by little, into a project that raised awareness, interest and produced trickle-down effects within and outside EU borders.

The pilot project, as a circle, finishes its activity after one year, during a closing event at the Open Days of 2011, the same place where it had all begun, but with many more people involved.

*We few,
We happy few,
We band of brothers.
(Henry V, W. Shakespeare)*



the pilot project and group

When the Pilot Group met in Erfurt, Germany, in December 2010, it discussed the objectives to be attained and the methodology to be implemented. The group assigned itself a schedule and a road map to ensure effective production of out-puts and respect to dead-lines.

INTRODUCTION

The link between the three objectives of Cohesion Policy is one of the most challenging targets of the Structural Funds and Article 37.6 (b) is a concrete tool which allows cooperation activities between Objective 1 and 2 of European regions.

The Commission, on 6 October 2011, highlighted the importance of the Article in an official communication:

“Communication from the Commission to The European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic and Social Committee and The Committee of the Regions:

Regional Policy contributing to smart growth in Europe 2020”

Action 3: pursuing the possibility (under Article 37 (6)(b) of Regulation EC No 1083/2006) to finance interregional cooperation to promote research and innovation under the Convergence and Regional Competitiveness Objectives and better access to international research and innovation networks under FP7 and CIP;

In the framework of INTERACT activities following-up the study and seminar carried out on the use of Article 37.6 (b) of Regulation 1083/2006, considering the encouragement stated by the Commission in using the instrument of this Article and of the European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation, given the interest showed by a number of European regions wanting to implement a closer cooperation and exchange between the opportunities offered by the objectives of Cohesion Policy; we wished to pursue the following:

MAIN OBJECTIVE

- To help regions wishing to implement Article 37.6(b) and cooperation outside of Objective 3 to acquire information, examples and support from our growing network.

SECONDARY OBJECTIVES

- To disseminate knowledge and information regarding the Article and other forms of cooperation and support the Commission in its purpose.
- To create an informal network of European regions sharing know-how and experience in the implementation of such projects.
- To provide visibility of good examples of regions that were successful in implementing a link between the three objectives of Cohesion Policy and other programmes.
- To support and highlight the strategic need and concrete possibility in linking ETC with objectives 1 and 2 as well as other sectorial programmes.

PARTNERS

- INTERACT (IP Valencia leading)
- European Commission
- Committee of the Regions
- Region Limousin (F)
- Region Thuringia (D)
- Swedish Development Agency (SE)
- Region Hordaland (NW)
- Region Campania, Veneto, Friuli-Venezia-Giulia, Sardinia, Apulia and Basilicata (I)
- Italian Ministry of Economic Development
- Latvian Ministry of Finance

TIMELINE

Activities would begin in early 2011, following a brainstorming meeting organized, held and paid for by the region Thuringia, Germany, in December 2010. The pilot would last the entire year of 2011 and will be marked by three milestone events and a final publication compiling the results.

OUTPUTS

Meetings and Events

- **1 kick-off event** held on 16 March 2011, in Paris, France, at the Maison du Limousin. This event was a one-day technical workshop where participants were basically limited to regions having implemented the Article and regions wishing to learn about it. We presented examples collected up until that point and also highlighted the differences between how every region developed its approach to underline the flexibility of the Article. The Commission took part in the event as well which helped the evolution of the works, for example providing the classification of projects into four types, according to the degree of cooperation. The basis of the major outputs (Frequently Asked Questions and Recommendations) was laid out. This first meeting helped us to refocus our attention not only on Article 37.6(b), but on the whole concept of cooperation outside of Objective 3, it was understood that Article 37.6(b) would apply a sort of “label” to cooperation projects respecting a certain type of features, but such a label is not the “conditio sine qua non” to run an effective and regular project.
- **1 thematic event** held on 14 June 2011 in Bergen, Norway. The main theme to be addressed during this event was INNOVATION. Regions with examples participated to illustrate the difficulties they encountered and how they found solutions for them. Other INTERACT Points were invited to participate and bring their knowledge on related themes such as:
 - EGTC
 - Synergies with the macro-regional strategies
 - Innovation in ETC and synergies with private enterprises



A representative from the Committee of the Regions also participated in the event. He gave an extensive presentation of the EGTC and showed how such a tool may be suitable for managing cooperation projects involving stakeholders at various levels (region, municipalities, etc.) sharing a common budget.

Participants did not only include the same programmes who took part in the kick-off meeting, but also other stakeholders such as the INTERREG IVC programme, which participated in order to see the possible links between the ETC approach to interregional cooperation and other forms of cooperation.

- **1 closing event**, coinciding with the Open Days on 11 October 2011, as a follow-up of the one held in 2010, where we will present the outcomes of the pilot:
- good examples that already exist
- examples of the new regions that have tried to develop projects
- the network that was formed
- the list of regions which included references to the Article or to cooperation in their OPs
- recommendations to the Commission for the future implementation of the Article in the next period

Publications and written material

- 1 list of regions stating interregional cooperation outside of the ETC or Article 37.6 (b) in their Operational programme.
- 1 collection of practices in capitalisation linking the objectives of Cohesion Policy.
- 1 list of possible guidelines or FAQs for interested regions.
- 1 list of recommendations for policy-makers on how to improve the use, explication and dissemination of this Article.

Such deliverables have all been collected in this publication.

Main findings

The four degrees of cooperation for the label of Article 37.6(b)

The objective we had while running the pilot group was to match the existing legal framework and its possible interpretation to the practical experiences that successful regions had been implementing.

Such a methodology led to interesting exchanges and possible conclusions, like the interpretation from the Commission with respect to the four levels of cooperation within the set up of a project outside the ETC framework.

First of all, a higher level of cooperation does not imply a better quality project and second of all, these features refer only to those required by the label of Article 37.6(b)

1. **MIRROR COOPERATION** : Only Articles 4 and 5 of ERDF Regulation apply, NOT Article 6 because it refers to Objective 3; partner regions are identified in the two (or more) participating regions OPs; the amount of the budget or percentage dedicated to cooperation are identified in the OPs of the participating regions; the specific content, referring to the theme and subject-matter of cooperation, can be different and identified in each OP independently (especially in cases of cooperation between Objective 1 and 2) or the content identified in both OPs may have more or less the text but still separate selection criteria/procedures
2. **COMMON COOPERATION** includes all of the above, but is marked by common project selection criteria/procedures (but formally separate selection procedures)
3. **JOINT INFORMAL COOPERATION** includes all of the above, but features joint informal committee for project selection (to be validated by individual programmes)
4. **JOINT FORMAL COOPERATION** includes all of the above, but also asks for the budgets to be pooled together on a joint account (possibly as a global grant); common project selection criteria and a joint legal body (likely an EGTC) to implement joint allocation

Horizontal conditions and control issues

Cooperation projects under Article 37(6)(b) have to respect the following conditions:

Article 22 of Regulation 1083/2006 prevents a given Member State from transferring its appropriations between the objectives of the funds and their components, but this does not exclude that a Member State decides to spend some of its appropriations in a different Member State for the purpose of a cooperation project benefiting to the co-funding programme.

The responsibility of control lies with the authorities of each of the relevant programmes.

The main control rule is included in Art 60 of Regulation 1083/2006: every Managing Authority is responsible for its own spending and will organise the first level control accordingly. A Managing authority will only authorize expenditure outside its programme area when it can be sure that its own first level control system and the respect of its other applicable rules are guaranteed. In order to ensure that sound financial management is guaranteed, the legality and regularity of expenditure incurred outside the territory where the programme authorities can act have to be controlled under the specific responsibilities and according to the arrangements and rules of the funding programme.

collection of practices

Region Thuringia

The Region of Thuringia, in Germany, created an Operational Programme that fully reflects the interest in cooperation as a winning methodology for innovation and efficiency. We find below an extract dedicated to their cooperation choice.

Introduction

In the EU funding period 2007 to 2013 Thuringia is classified as a “Convergence Region” and receives support from the Structural Funds ESF and ERDF. The Thuringian Ministry of Economy, Technology and Labour (TMWTA) is the Managing Authority for both funds.

The basic conditions for transnational and interregional cooperation have been redesigned as regards the structure, content and finances from 2007 on.

The “Operational Programme for Thuringia for the European Regional Development Fund in the Period 2007 to 2013” (ERDF-OP) contains in its priority 1 “education, research and development, innovation” the activity field “interregional cooperation”.

A volume of EUR 9 million is destined for the priority 1 which is equivalent to 0.5 % of the total funds.

The “Operational Programme for Thuringia for the European Social Fund in the Period 2007 to 2013” (ESF-OP) has got a priority axis for “Transnational and Interregional Partnerships”. In the priority axes A to C, Thuringia has intended transnational aspects, too. The priority axis E includes a volume of EUR 19 million which will be split for single contents (3% of the total funds).

Setting of tasks

The present development concept defines topics, selection criteria, cooperation regions and administrative structures for the transnational and interregional cooperation of the region within the Structural Funds according to a strategic concept, to prepare a concrete implementation for the funding period 2007 to 2013.

In this process the orientation of the priority 1 in the ERDF-OP and the priority axis E in the ESF-OP shall be considered and worked on in one single concept: to increase the efficiency of the available finances and to promote synergies in the complex field of transnational and interregional cooperation.



Selection of the cooperation regions

On basis of selection criteria, the following 14 regions have been selected as potential partners for Thuringia.

The criteria for the identification of these regions derive from the cooperation potentials expressed in their ROPs.

Castilla y León (ES); Franche-Comté (FR), Friuli-Venezia Giulia (IT); Carinthia (AT); Länsi-Suomi (FI); Lithuania (LT); Malopolskie (PL); Moravskoslezsko (CZ); Picardie (FR), Styria (AT); Hungary (HU); Vestlandet (NO); West-Ukraina (UA); West Wales (GB)

In the sense of a savings clause for transnational and interregional cooperation, further regions have the possibility to cooperate with Thuringia in the period 2007 to 2013.



Topics and Objectives

Main topics in ESF:

- education, employment and mobility
- development of human capital in research and innovation
- increase of adaptability and competitiveness of employees / companies

Main topics in ERDF:

- innovation, research and development
- competitiveness of enterprises
- environment

Transnational cooperations should support the exchange of information, experiences, results and approved methods and lead to coordinated activities between the priorities in order to strengthen innovation and possible courses of actions.

Potential Final Beneficiaries

The possible target groups are assigned and limited by the ESF-OP and the ERDF-OP or by the directives of the ESF in the region. Generally, the following final beneficiaries should be eligible:

ERDF measures

- SME,
- trade associations and chambers of commerce,
- environment associations,
- Communities, districts and their associations,
- business-friendly research institutions, non profit oriented research institutions,
- Institutions and responsables of the technology transfer or coordinator of networks/ technology cluster,
- application and technology centres and business incubators, universities, non-university research institutions.

ESF measures

- individuals and incorporates or private companies realizing projects for employment promotion,
- public as well as private educational institutions,
- associations of the economy, chambers, labour unions, associations of welfare care dealing with education, vocational training, qualification and consultancy,
- established institutions dealing with mediation of work force, staff exchange and stay abroad on European level.

At any rate, private companies especially SMEs should be included as a priority target group for ERDF and ESF measures. They shall be integrated at noticeable range. This can be conducted in form of associations, co-financing or assignment with service packages from this method.

Recommendations for implementing structures

The development concept is needed to prepare the implementation of transnational and interregional cooperation in the region. This means to set up sustainable structures, to facilitate access to partnerships for its institutions and to reduce obstacles at the same time.

Furthermore, it is necessary to coordinate the different possibilities for transnational and interregional cooperation within and beyond the OPs or to achieve synergies through the support of the corresponding governmental departments.

The set up of an administration office at regional level for coordinating the implementation has proved useful. It should be taken into account that these structures are not only a factor for a successful implementation in Thuringia but should exist simultaneously in the cooperation regions.

Due to the mutual influence of the cooperation in the field of regional development and labour market policy, it is necessary to coordinate the “investments” in transnational and interregional cooperation between governmental departments in Thüringen and other central actors. In that sense, a “steering committee” is recommended.



region thuringia. project example I

Glyco-Protein Sensor

Project Description

Development of an optical sensor array based on molecular imprinted nanogels and a multiplexed fluorescence detection for specific determination of glucose conjugates in proteins and their structure recognition

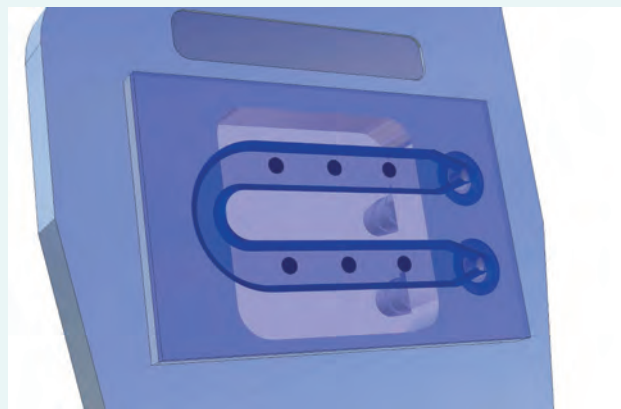
Thuringian Project Partners

Fachhochschule Jena, Jena

International Cooperation Partners

Université de Technologie de Compiègne, Compiègne, Picardie, France

Université de Picardie Jules Verne, Amiens, Picardie, France



infobox

Facts and Figures

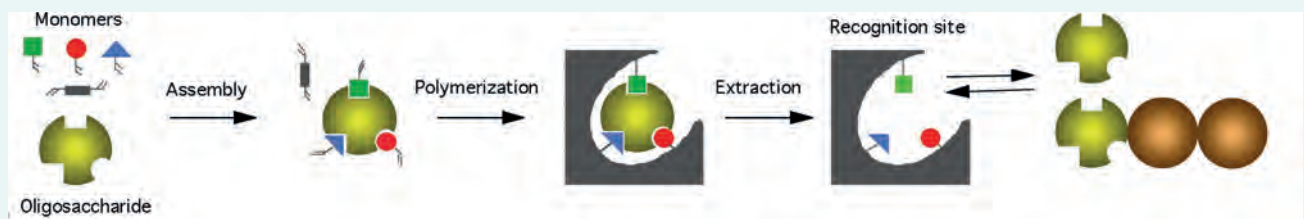
Complete title: Glyco-Protein Sensor

Category: Micro- and Nanotechnologies

Total Budget of
Thuringian Project Partners: 278.000 €

Total Funding of
Thuringian Project Partners: 208.500 €

Total Costs of
International Cooperation Partners: 601.290 €



region thuringia. project example II

Songs2See

Project Description

The project Songs2See aims at developing basic technologies and interactive software applications to motivate and assist children and adolescents with music education. Therefore, informative and dynamic representations, such as interactive score sheets, instrument-specific animations and rhythmic visualizations will be implemented. These visualization modules feature highly innovative algorithms for automatic transcription of music. Thus, virtually any music piece can be imported into the software and be visualized for educational as well as edutainment purposes. The project outcomes can be monetized in various ways, given the fact that any music recordings, and not just specifically edited music can be integrated later on.

Thuringian Project Partners

Fraunhofer Institut für Digitale Medientechnologie, Ilmenau

KIDS Interactive GmbH, Erfurt

Sweets for Brains GmbH i.G., Erfurt

International Cooperation Partners

Stord / Haugesund University College, Stord, Vestlandet, Norway

Grieg Music Education AS, Bergen, Vestlandet, Norway

TU Tampere, Tampere, Länsi-Suomi, Finland

infobox

Facts and Figures

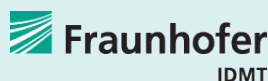
Complete title: Development of basic technologies and interactive software applications to motivate and assist children and adolescents with music education

*Category: *IT Technologies, Media

Total Budget of
Thuringian Project Partners 594.919 €

Total Funding of
Thuringian Project Partners 446.189 €

Total Costs of
International Cooperation Partners 190.750 €



region limousin (france)

Why the implementation of Article 37.6 (b) in Limousin?

The Limousin Region has considered that the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) Objective was not sufficiently responding to its specific needs for cooperation.

First of all, its geographical situation does not allow the Limousin Region to benefit from cross-border cooperation, which corresponds to 70% of the ETC total budget.

Then, since 2007, Limousin is only part of a single transnational cooperation programme which is the SUDOE programme, in the South-West of Europe .

From an operational point of view, very few entities in Limousin are involved in ETC projects, due to the high selectivity of the INTERREG IVB and INTERREG IVC programmes.

Moreover, the thematic priorities of the ETC programmes, INTERREG IVC and INTERREG IVB SUDOE, mainly focus on innovation and environmental issues, excluding some topics that are included in the Limousin ERDF ROP, like the valorisation of the cultural and touristic potential of the territories and thereby constitute a target of the regional development strategy.

The organization for the implementation of Article 37.6 (b) in Limousin

A specific axis (Axis 5) of the ERDF ROP is dedicated to cooperation. It constitutes an additional tool for the realization of the objectives of the other axis and it must be coherent to them.

The Axis 5 is managed by the Limousin Regional Council in the framework of the global grants.

EUR 4 million ERDF are available for the period 2007-2013.

The practical details for the implementation of the Axis 5 are included in a specific document.

The Axis 5 finances:

- **Pilot projects**, resulting from transfers of good practices of another European area to the Limousin territory
- The creation and the participation of local organizations from Limousin in European networks
- **A Regional Framework Operation**, the RURACT network (www.ruract.eu) which aims to promote the transfer of European good practices in the field of rural development.

For pilot projects and networks, beneficiaries can be local authorities, public organizations, universities, research institutes, clusters, associations of regional interest, private companies.

The minimum number of partners required from other EU Member States depends on the type of operation, one for pilot projects and two for network projects.

The maximum ERDF rate is 50%
The list of eligible expenses is precisely defined for each type of operation.

Proposals can be submitted at any moment (no calls for proposals).



region limousin. project example I

A Regional Framework Operation : the RURACT network (European regions for rural innovation)

RUR@CT is a cooperation network gathering European regions politically involved in promoting rural innovation at operational and regional level, but also within a strategic perspective at European level. RUR@CT is :

- a resource centre providing methodological tools for capitalization and transfer of good practices between European regions
- a **field of experimentation** for European regions allowing them to exchange and find solutions to face the to global challenges of rural territories (demographic evolutions, climate change, energy crisis, social and economic development) and better valorize their innovation potential with the prospect of the Europe 2020 strategy.
- an **operational tool**, aiming at demonstrating the capacity of cooperation to feed regional policies and reinforce their efficiency regarding the European strategy « Regions for economic change ».

Objectives

- To facilitate capitalization and transfer of good practices
- To promote rural innovation and territorial cohesion

Partnership

- 62 Regions, partners of the network
- 17 Member States represented

Tools implemented

- 1 website (www.ruract.eu)
- 1 database covering 7 thematic fields
- 125 good practices analyzed with evaluations of transferability

infobox

Facts and Figures

Total cost :
EUR 2 millions during 6 years
(2008 - 2013)

Cofunding : 50% ERDF and
50% regional budget
(axis 5 measure 1)



- 1 methodological guide for the transfer
- 3 conferences organized on strategic issues focusing on territorial cohesion

Results obtained

At strategic level

- 2 political declarations: contribution to the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion, Europe 2020 and the 5th cohesion report
- An institutional cooperation mainly based on collaboration with DG REGIO but involving also DG AGRI, the European Parliament, and the Committee of the Regions

At operational level

- 20 importing regions actively involved
- 56 good practices in process of exportation
- 108 opportunities for importation
- 80 site visits organized
- 40 action plans to be implemented

Perspectives

- New methodological orientations for a greater efficiency and focused on needs
- Legal structuration with possible EGTC status

region limousin. project example II

Conservation programme for French amphibians populations

Lead Partner
Regional Natural Park of Périgord-Limousin

Other partners : Laboratoire d'Ecologie Alpine (France), Ecole Nationale Vétérinaire de Lyon (France), Amphibia-Nature (Canada), Zoological Society of London (UK) and Parco delta del Po (Italy)

Abstract :

Amphibians are facing an unprecedented crisis. Today, one-third of more than the 6500 species described in the world are threatened by extinction. One of the principal factors of this decline is an emergent infectious disease, chytridiomycosis, caused by the fungus *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* (Bd). By now, it has been detected on 387 species in 45 countries, with mass mortalities in at least 7 of them. In France, *B. dendrobatidis* was identified on one species reservoir of the fungus in its natural range: the American Bullfrog (*Lithobates catesbeianus*).

The aim of this programme is to develop a European network specialized on amphibians diseases.

The main objectives of this European project are to:

- Identify natural and anthropogenic drivers of Chytridiomycosis
- Analyse species susceptibility in laboratory,
- Study Bd-distribution in France and in Italy (in the natural reserve of Parco delta del Po) ,
- Elaborate European standardized hygiene and analysis protocols,
- Develop a French amphibians epidemiology network associated with other Europeans survey projects.

infobox

Facts and Figures

Total budget : EUR 172 000 €

Funding :
ERDF (ROP Limousin Axis 5 “Networks”) : 50%
French State (Ministry of research) : 29,65%
Limousin Region : 24,35%



region limousin. project example III

The VORTEX project

Lead partner of the project: University of Limoges,
Research laboratory XLIM

Other partners : Institute of Photonic Technology -
IPHT (Jena)

Abstract :

The core of this project is to synthesize original optical glasses for the development of a new generation of optical fibers composed of several amorphous materials - the core of the optical fiber is made up of the synthesized glass when the cladding is in pure silica for instance.

The preparation of an optical glass is complex, all the components therefore required to be in suitable proportions to obtain a homogeneous glass, amorphous and with acceptable optical losses. The challenge of this project is to build on the recognized expertise of the laboratory IPHT Jena (Germany) to transfer know-how within the laboratory XLIM, and work together on the synthesis of non-conventional glasses. The applications of these glasses in optical fibers, will cover the areas of sensors and light source.

This new building block in the chain of manufacture of optical fibers will be great asset to the laboratory XLIM and for the Limousin Region to enhance its attractiveness in research on optical fibers.

infobox	
Facts and Figures	
Total budget :	EUR 63 500
Fundings :	
ERDF (ROP Limousin Axis 5) :	50%
Limousin Region :	16%
Own sources :	34%

region limousin. project example IV

ELIARE - Support to European research in Limousin

The general objective of ELIARE is to improve the integration of regional research and development actors in the European research area, by increasing their participation in European programmes, in particular FP7 and CIP.

The specific objectives are:

- To improve the cultural integration of stakeholders from the Limousin region in the areas of European research and innovation, and better seize opportunities offered by European funding;
- To increase the number of participations to European programmes FP7 and CIP;
- To motivate regional stakeholders to be project leaders, by supporting the costs inherent to setting-up European projects.

Subsidies can be granted to stakeholders for two different purposes :

- Financial support for the development of European partnerships
- Financial support for assistance in participation to European programmes

List of eligible organisations: Public or private research laboratories, technology transfer centres, Associations, development agencies, clusters.

For each project, an application form is addressed by the stakeholder to the Regional Council of Limousin.

infobox

Facts and Figures

Maximum subsidy : EUR 30.000 per project

Funding:
ERDF (ROP Limousin Axis 5) : from 40 to 50%
Limousin Region : from 40 to 50%
own sources : from 0 to 20%



european transregional cooperation

The approach to European Cooperation in Hordaland (Norway)

by Lars Tveit

Industrial platform

Hordaland is situated on the Western coast of Norway and is the home for about half a million inhabitants. Bergen is its commercial and financial centre. Hordaland is in many ways powered by the sea as it is the leading region in Norway in terms of fisheries, aquaculture, shipping, maritime technology, tourism / cruise, production and export of oil and gas.

These diverse and internationally orientated industries, with a strong focus on technological innovation, are to a large extent the backbone of business in this area. The wide range of enterprises and industrial clusters is also an advantage when business cycles are shifting, and makes the county more robust.

Regional Development Programme for Hordaland

Hordaland's ambition is to be amongst the most innovative regions in Europe, especially in sectors where its industries have particular advantages concerning profitability, international competitiveness and the ability to restructure.

The Regional Development Programme is a joint action plan for regional development in Hordaland. The programme ensures that all Public Policy instruments are focusing on common goals and strategies. The programme controls the use of the County Council's economic policy instruments for industrial development and, likewise, provides guidelines for other public development instruments in the county.



The Regional Development Programme clearly states the necessity for Norwegian actors to seek international partnerships and to be part of relevant projects worldwide, with a specific focus on the EU area. This statement is in line with the conclusions of "The impact of INTERREG on Norwegian Regional Development Policy (International Research Institute of Stavanger, 2011)." The overall conclusion of this study on how INTERREG A, B, and C projects are followed up in Norwegian county councils is that the projects have had lasting impact on regional policy-making. With these statements in mind, our Public Sector is looking for new measures to stimulate local industry, to upgrade their international competence and take their business abroad. The approach in Hordaland is therefore in accordance with the recommendations made by EU for regions to seek the potential and synergies lying in transregional and transnational cooperation (Article 37(6)b, etc.).

Norwegian access to EU cooperation

As part of EEA EFTA, Norway is taking part in selected EU programmes listed in the EEA Agreement, for example INTERREG is of specific interest to Norwegian regions. For partners from Hordaland the B and C programmes, with their transnational and interregional profile, represent great opportunities regarding exchange of information, experience, good practise and useful results. More important, however, is the opportunity to join international and relevant networks which last for much longer than the lifespan of a project, and which often lead to lasting cooperation on a regular basis on a wider horizon. The underlying philosophy regarding public, financial support to project participation is to help organisations to make the first step into an international business world as well as to give them the confidence to move on. Running a professional INTERREG project is financially demanding and time-consuming, nevertheless, Hordaland maintains that it is very important to stimulate R&D institutions, companies, public organisations and others, whenever relevant, to join such partnerships on an international arena.



Applying for financial support from INTERREG requires a substantial amount of hard work, unfortunately too often with a negative feedback. And as long as this is reality, there is always a need to be looking for alternative routes to international cooperation in order to reach our targets in the Regional Development Programme.

“Communiqué” - An agreement about cooperation between Freistat Thüringen and Hordaland

Hordaland has been in close cooperation with Freistat Thüringen, Germany for almost 20 years. It began with Thüringen and Hordaland joining the COMETT II programme (1992 -95). This was followed by SAFEGAS (1997-2000) and, finally, the mini programme ENABLE (2003-2006) under INTERREG IIIC. The two regions have also been cooperating on education and apprenticeship for exchanging students.



The Communiqué is in many ways an experiment, where the regions involved are given the opportunity to spend regional development funds (ERDF - ESF / RUP / ...) on interregional / international cooperation, strictly following the rules and regulations on spending this kind of money.

The agreement between Freistat Thüringen and Hordaland states that the cooperation will focus on education, employment and mobility (ESF), in addition to innovation and R&D (ERDF).

The most important pieces in this jigsaw of cooperation are, no doubt, the structures being made to simplify, clarify, and provide guidance to all administrative procedures concerning development of project ideas from the very start to the end. This includes preparation and implementation of procedures for establishing partnerships, filling in of proposals, set-up of budgets, evaluation, reporting, etc. A critical and invariable condition for this specific agreement is that Norwegian project partners are supported by Norwegian funding only. This rather complex mixture of various public funding sources in addition to private funding requires a good deal of flexibility, close cooperation, mutual understanding and respect from all parties involved.



Freistat Thüringen and Hordaland, together with a number of partners from other EU regions and countries (Freistat Thüringen network), have made this structure and new approach to cooperation work in a very beneficial way for partners and actors at all levels. It is hoped that in 2014 - 2020 the authorities involved and future programmes will be able to maintain these flexible and efficient options for cooperation.

the potential use of Article 36.7 (b) in the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

Alignment of funding in mainstream programmes - a reality?

The concept of alignment of funding has become essential during the implementation of the macro-regional strategies. The use of the Article 37.6.b of the Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 has therefore been discussed in several forums and meetings, especially among the stakeholders in the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR). However, at this point the use of this article remains yet at the level of discussions.

Article 37.6.b a pathway to cooperation

At this point of the implementation phase of the EUSBSR, most of the so-called mainstream programme funds available under the Objective 1 - Convergence and 2 - Regional Competitiveness and Employment, are still mostly used within the national and regional borders. This means that they have not yet used Article 37.6.b in order to support trans-national Flagship projects.

Some of the projects labelled by the European Territorial Cooperation (Objective 3) programmes as Flagships have received the funding they need, but this is covering only a part of the overall need to ensure a good implementation of the EUSBSR. Due to limited resources available in Objective 3 programmes, stakeholders must try to find other funding possibilities for projects covering areas in several regions and Member States.

In this sense, mainstream programmes could find inspiration and encouragement from the cross-border cooperation programmes and thus be able to develop their own regions in an international and trans-national framework.



Toomas Hendrik Ilves and Johannes Hahn during the First Annual Forum for the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

First official report for EUSBSR shows the direction

It is evident that there is the need to discover pathways for alignment of funding from different funds, not solely from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). In the first official report¹ from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, European Economic and Social Committee and Committee of the Regions, which will be discussed during the autumn 2011, it is stated that:

“Alignment of available funding with the Strategy² is the key to the success of the implementation process.”

“The Strategy is a pioneer case, paving the way in the new financial and programming perspective for better streamlining of all funding instruments.”

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/baltic/pdf/reports/1_EN_ACT_part1_v2.pdf

² EUSBSR

“Alternative methods of working together such as European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) could also be useful for either the overall Strategy level or for specific Priority Areas, Actions or Flagship Projects.”

“Maximise efforts to align Cohesion Policy and other funding sources in the Region with the objectives of the Strategy.”

Member States are in a key position

In order to map the current situation and the visions for the future, we asked four Member States to answer to four questions regarding the use of the article.

1. Is there a possibility that this article will be used in your country? If yes, please give an example of how it is implemented.

Sweden (SE)³: The article is mentioned in the eight Swedish Ops but there is no formal agreement with other OPs or dedicated budget lines, so no “true” 37.6b. That said, the Swedish OPs fully support transnational cooperation within the programs and encourage the projects to search for possibilities to cooperate outside Sweden.



There has been an initiative for a Swedish-Estonian project on rural entrepreneurship. The partners have not yet submitted a formal application, but preliminary contact has been made with the Managing Authorities.

Currently, there is interest from projects in South Sweden to cooperate with partners in the South Baltic Region. The Swedish Managing Authority actively supports the projects in this.

Estonia (EE)⁴: We do not know of examples of territorial cooperation projects supported under Objective 1 Operational Programmes however, a number of projects supported under different measures of Objective 1 OPs do include a component of international cooperation.

Finland (FI)⁵: Yes, there is still a small possibility for the article to be used, but I am afraid we are running out of time and/or money concerning this programming period. There have been discussions, especially in the South Finland OP, where about 27% of the funding is directed towards programme-level, multiregional theme projects. Unfortunately, a great majority of the funding available in that measure is already assigned.

³ Swedish comments collected by Mr. Björne Hegfeldt, Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth

⁴ Estonian response collected by Ms. Mari Lahtmets, Ministry of Finance

⁵ Finnish answers delivered by Mr. Harri Ahlgren, Ministry of Employment and the Economy

On the other hand, for example, North Finland OP responded that, in reference to transnational cooperation, they still prefer using other instruments, such as INTERREG IV A North and Botnia Atlantica, Kolarctic and Karelia ENPI CBC and so on.

Lithuania (LT)⁶: In this programming period, the Article 37.6.b is not used in Lithuania. However, there is a possibility to cooperate with other Baltic Sea Region countries in the areas of common interests. The use of the Article 37.6.b is a topic of consideration for the next programming period.

We would like to add that in the context of transnational/interregional cooperation, the beneficiaries still prefer Territorial Cooperation programmes (Objective 3) (for example, Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013 rather than Objective 1).

2. Are you planning to promote the use of the article with the aim of supporting transnational cooperation also within ERDF/Objective 1 and 2?

SE: Sweden already does this. The possibility to work trans nationally is promoted regularly in contacts with project owners and has been presented several times at stakeholder conferences and project fairs.

EE: We are not aware of particular plans to promote the use of Article 37.6.b. In our understanding, Article 37.6 (b) is not the only possible way to improve a specific sector and we may as well look for other possibilities. We will consider the possibility of Article 37.6 (b) for the upcoming programming period, but only once the new regulations are being negotiated.

FI: We have not (yet) planned to promote the use of this article - actually the basic idea and possibilities offered by that article still seem to be little unclear to us - promoting transnational co-operation of projects has always been possible, but this article also gives possibilities to fund some types of joint projects in other member states as well.

LT: It is not discussed yet. We feel there is a need for more information and guidelines about the practical use of the Article 37.6.b. More information regarding financing of projects implemented using this article is needed as well.

3. What would be needed in order to make the use of the article even easier for the benefit of your relevant stakeholders?

SE: Depending on the degree of cooperation ⁷, the project demands a different level of syncing between Managing Authorities, which could be cumbersome in the initial phase. "Mirror" projects would be relatively easy to implement for all parties involved, but the main limiting factor seems to be the mind-set of the stakeholders.

FI: We would appreciate some already existing examples of the use of this article to make the concept more solid to us in the MA and as well for the stakeholders.

⁶ Lithuanians views highlighted via Lina Marcinkute, Ministry of Finance

⁷ See REGIOVISTA Note from 01/12/2010, Ref. Ares(2010)886835

LT: More awareness regarding the article is needed: knowledge and understanding of the practical use of the article and its added value. Good practices/ examples of projects implemented in using the Article 37.6.b are of great importance as well, as they could demonstrate the practical aspects of the use of the article.

4. What else would you like to point out when it comes to the use of the article?

SE: The article has a great potential, and we are starting to see an interest in it from the project stakeholders. There are some practicalities which need to be sorted out before “joint” projects are put into place, but the main difficulty is encouraging projects to think transnationally and not only regionally. Stakeholders and Managing Authorities are not used to working with Objective 2 OPs in this manner yet.

EE: It has been proposed not to implement cooperation projects supporting territorial cooperation (in other words, the classical “INTERREG” type of cooperation) according to Objective 1 and 2 rules and principles. Instead we have preferred to provide the possibility for involving experts from the other Member States, in certain “soft” projects implemented, under the measures of Objective 1 and 2 OPs.

FI: The idea and the benefits (also from the regional point of view) should be promoted well before the next programming period so that the possibility may be considered once the new OPs are planned and prepared.

LT: There is a need to increase awareness of the article, about its added value and the possibilities it provides. The discussion concerning the use of the article should start before planning the next programming period at the national level so that Member States would have enough time to consider the use of the Article 37.6 b and integrate it into their OPs.

Conclusion

It is evident that the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea region has had an impact on discussions. However, the article was not planned for usage in any of these countries when the on-going period started in 2007. That makes it difficult to take it on board at this stage when most programmes are already running out of funds and planning their last application rounds. The interest has, nevertheless, started to grow and there is definitely a momentum now during Member States discussions regarding the first official Annual report on the implementation of the EUSBSR. At the same time, many are beginning to agree on the programmes and regulations for the next programming period 2014-2020.

an example of added value of cooperation

Interview to Gisle Johnsen

Founder of Grieg Music Education

Grieg Music Education (GME) is a Norwegian company producing online music education resources. Their main product is **MUSIC DELTA (MD)** - a web portal presenting learning resources:

- A portal for presenting integrated MD LEAPs and apps
- “Everything” a music student needs to know: Contents, articles, videos, tools, applications and music.
- Based on music curricula.
- High degree of interactivity. You learn by exploring and producing yourself.
- Interactive, innovative streaming technology developed by GME, which can be used from any computer connected to the Internet.
- A range of different online applications.
- Enables the users to produce and save their own projects on the web.
- WEB 2.0 community allows all users to share their music and collaborate with everyone interested in music, in the computing cloud.

Grieg Music Education (GME) is based on the philosophy that everyone likes music and that everyone is able to create music, given they have the right tool.

The vision of GME is to develop new web based tools that enable everyone to create music.



Yrjan Tangenes (left) and Gisle Johnsen

In their Music Delta products GME use several applications to present a piece of music and the students can then choose the way they prefer to explore and work with the music. A virtual stage with animated musicians is one way to create your own music production.

If students prefer to work with music notation, they may choose an application which uses an interactive music score and through this, navigate a piece of music or a music video clip to explore the music.

The History of Grieg Music education

As a musician Gisle Johnsen started to compose using technology in the early 80's. Since then, he has been hooked on technology, and how to use technology, both while composing and also while performing. Later he started to use music technology also while teaching.

Through the years Gisle Johnsen has written several books on music teaching, but in 1997, when his friend and colleague Mr Yrjan Tangenes turned one of his books into a CD-ROM, he really got a kick. He then realized that a simple animation actually explains more and illustrates better than several pages of text.

After this, Yrjan Tangenes and Gisle Johnsen started to develop digital learning modules for music education, but they soon realized that the perfect learning tool would have to be solely Internet based, with neither software, hardware or cables- only a computer connected to the Internet! In fact they had already dreamed about cloud computing in as early as 2000!

Grieg Music Education and EU-projects

They soon realised that they would need some technical partners outside Norway to assist in building their planned learning tool. After establishing GME in 2005, they became aware of the different EU-programs and they soon made contact with the EU-office at Hordaland County Council in Norway. Mr Thore Thommassen and Mr Lars Tveit at Hordaland County Council helped them and in 2005/2006 GME became involved in their first Interreg project: MetaStore: Metadata Storage and Retrieval, a joint project of Fraunhofer Institute for Digital Media Technology (Germany), Artspages International and Grieg Music Education. Through this project, GME was introduced to a European network and thus has really opened some important doors for the company.



Following this project, GME was invited to participate in another EU-project; DISMARC (Discovering Music Archives). This time, GME got the chance to develop an interactive map connected to seven European music archives. In this way, European students could use the web based map application to access music from different countries, streamed directly from several European music archives.

Both these projects helped GME accessing new markets and the company was invited to present their products and applications all over Europe.

Cooperation with the German Fraunhofer Institute has continued over the years, but GME was really happy when they were invited to participate in the Songs2See project in 2009. This project has attracted considerable attention inside as well as outside Europe and through this project GME was introduced to new United States partners. This has been a good help as they now are launching their Music Delta products in the US market.

Mr. Gisle Johnsen says it's difficult to see if all this would have been possible without participating in the EU projects, but even if they would get the same amount of funding through national Norwegian projects, they still would not have been able to achieve the same international visibility and access to other markets.

Another important aspect in participating in an EU project, according to Mr. Gisle Johnsen, is the experience of cooperating with people from other countries.

“Even if we're all Europeans, people from different European countries still have different ways of thinking and working. If you want to enter an international market it is extremely important to understand this and know how to act when cooperating with people from other countries. Through participating in the EU-projects GME has experienced and learned how to understand and how to enter a new market!”

Through participation in EU-projects GME has also experienced cultural differences regarding how to administrate projects. As Norwegians, they find it much more easy to administrate a pure Norwegian project, but as they say, if you want to enter new markets you need to know about the way people from different countries think also about administration. It is always important to be willing to learn from other people when it comes to administration!

“If you want your company to be in front of the technological development, it is important to realize that you cannot do everything by yourself. We all need partners to make ourselves better. GME is very happy to have got the chance to cooperate with partners from other countries and different cultures. The development of our Music Delta products is a kind of 'Never ending' - story. We will always be looking for new solutions to be able to produce a better product! Hopefully we will meet new partners through new EU-projects in the future!”



frequently asked questions

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT COOPERATION IN OBJECTIVES 1 AND 2 AND APPLICATION OF ARTICLE 37.6 (b)

This is a collection of questions raised by European regions regarding the implementation of practical terms from Article 37.6(b) of Council Regulation 1083/2006, or other activities relating to cooperation projects in Objectives 1 and 2. The answers are given on the basis of the experience of partner regions which have successfully implemented cooperation activities at inter-regional levels outside of the ETC framework and on the basis of interpretation of the Regulation. Questions are grouped according to subject and at the end of the document you may find a few national legal frameworks of action regarding the participating regions.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Q1 :

Article 4 and Article 5 of Council Regulation 1080/2006 list the fields of activities in which regions can invest structural funds under either Convergence or under the Competitiveness and Employment objective accordingly. Article 6, of the same Regulation, lists the priorities connected to the objective of European Territorial Cooperation. Which Article should the programme refer to while planning the content of a cooperation project outside of the ETC framework - to be funded by the ERDF Operational Programme? Secondly, both the EU Regulation and the Regional Operational Programmes refer to specific priorities and fields of activities. Which document should be the main priority for the implementing programme when it comes to choosing the main theme/content of a project?

Since we are dealing with activities which refer to Objectives 1 or 2 (depending on if the implementing region belongs to the Convergence or to the Competitiveness and Employment level) we should focus on article 4 and 5 accordingly, because they do not refer to the activity of Objective 3, which instead lists its priority activities under Article 6.

Only projects developed under the framework of European Territorial Cooperation can refer to Article 6. Therefore the executive and managing body of a programme wanting to implement cooperation activities outside of this given framework must refer to the other two.

Secondly, although both the Regulation and the ROP are legal sources justifying the choice of themes and contents of the activities, priority is given to the Regional Operational Programme. This document is basically a “selection” of priorities taken from the regulatory framework and chosen by the region, which then adopts it only after it is validated by the Commission. This ensures the coherence of the ROP with the content of the EU Regulation. Moreover, the ROP appears as a document which guides the development of the region for the seven years of the programming period. Therefore, it must contain elements of interest for the territorial stakeholders.

This means that a programme running a project on a specific topic listed in its ROP, must be coherent to its regional priorities and also to the indications of the European Union.

Q2:

Is there a specific methodology to measure the achievements or impact of this type of cooperation?

What kind of monitoring is provided?

What kind of indicators are needed?

We have to start by saying that monitoring and evaluation, when referring to the overall evaluation of the Cohesion policy by the Union, is not an easy task, neither at programme level nor at strategic level.

Having this in mind, the general interpretation of the Regulation can only make a general statement that every MA has the obligation to define a monitoring system as well as a set of indicators, but it is rather free to choose how this is done. DONE

In this situation, dealing with cooperation activities outside of Objective 3 framework, ETC can be a source of inspiration although it has a different logic regarding indicators and monitoring from that of regional programmes (ETC primarily deals with cooperation (although not exclusively) while regional programmes look at socio-economic impact).

Such a challenge is understood and explained on a concrete base by region Limousin where they use, for example, the number of coordinators from Limousin, number of foreign partners implicated, number of projects, number of institutional members, number of FP7 projects as an impact, etc. The challenge is to find indicators coherent enough with the mainstream (Objectives 1&2).

In the case of Thuringia, they depend on the ERDF MA when it comes to indicators, because again, they are dealing with mainstream and cooperation is only a part of it. Monitoring of project activities is of course secured as well as on-the-spot checks. So, in order to encourage promising projects and to somehow make sure that the added value they are looking for is present, when they receive a project proposal, the degree of innovation is measured on a scale between 1 and 3.

Q3:

In a scenario when a region has created a budget line, a list of possible partners, but no project advanced yet because of technical problems, what is the best possible solution for them? Should they start another type of cooperation (unilateral with a certain cooperation scope) or simply modify the ROP?

To change the ROP is a possible solution in the case of technical or administrative problems preventing the calls from taking place and thus delaying the implementation of the programme, which will, as a result, cause a risk of de-commitment.

Another possibility is “unilateral” cooperation, especially if there are available partners which have experience, can support the process or can incorporate a cooperation dimension in existing axis. This change would not require a long evaluation process, but simply an analysis of the situation, a justification for the required change and concluding communication to the Commission to inform them of the modification.

Q4:

How can we use regional funding to participate in an ETC project?

This is the case in which a stakeholder wants to join in an ETC project without using the grant given by the programme, but instead using another regional fund.

The first condition is the eligibility of the beneficiary must be within the cooperation programme and compliance with all the rules. The participation of a partner having a different source of public financing may then be considered for joint financing as per Article 19 (joint financing).¹

Limousin also offers another possibility, which they have not experienced as of yet: to allow a private company from their region in an ETC project, as associated partner with funds from the ERDF ROP.

Q5:

How can we raise awareness about this type of cooperation, especially among partners involved in the management of structural funds?

It all begins when partners and policy-makers are convinced of the value of cooperation even outside of its most well-known framework (Objective 3). Being aware of the possibility to cooperate, believing in its added value and preparing its implementation is an absolute precondition.

Training events may be organised within DG Regio regarding this subject so that whenever regions contact their desk officers to obtain information, they are prepared to answer or give advice.

FINANCIAL QUESTIONS

Q6:

The audit trail of a cooperation project

Every partner is responsible for playing its own part and referring to its MA, especially concerning First Level Control, Second Level Control and securing for the correct audit trail. Every control or audit structure already existing for normal procedure under Objective 1 or 2 should be used in the same way.

Q7:

There is a problem regarding the (non) reciprocity of the fundings for the partners of a same inter-regional project. **Must the two regions use ERDF funds or can they access different sources of financing?**

A cooperation project (outside of the ETC framework) can be carried out by a partner receiving a grant from the ERDF funds, from its region, with another partner who is receiving either the same type of grant or money from a different source, either structural funds or other public, or private funding.

In case the partner receives a grant from its MA, it is its responsibility to respect the rules from their own region.

¹ see INTERREG IVC Programme Manual, page 21

Q8:

The rules for the eligibility of expenditure; the problem of compatibility between national rules for the implementation of interregional cooperation projects.

With respect to the regulation and application of relevant community, national and regional rules state that each region must meet its own expenditure rules and every region must also be responsible for its own control.

Each Region follows the rules established in its own ROP.

If incompatibilities should arise, in general or with respect to shared costs, then the seriousness of the problem will be assessed based on the level of integration of the cooperation (in case of integrated cooperation, partners may need to hold a meeting in order to establish common rules/criteria).

MANAGEMENT

Q9:

The managing procedures - how to deal with the possible exceptional case when the stakeholder (beneficiary) is also the Managing Authority

As in the implementation of funds through projects in normal activities under the ROP, there is no incompatibility and the MA can also be a beneficiary as long as there is a separation between decision, control and implementation.

In case of difficulties, the MA can indicate a specific Directorate General, or a section of its region, but generally these are internal solutions which every MA can solve.

In the case of Limousin for example, whenever the MA is the beneficiary, a specific procedure is organized within the audit trail which indicates a separate service and department.

PARTNERSHIP

Q10:

The eligibility of private companies in cooperation projects outside the ETC framework

Since we are dealing with activities under Objectives 1 and 2, it is therefore normal that private stakeholders, including businesses and enterprises, are among the beneficiaries.

Given the content of the activities, linked to innovation, technology and competition, these types of beneficiaries are actually suitable to perform what the MAs request. Private companies, as project partners, may therefore benefit from funds either in activities, referred to Article 37.6(b) as well as in other cooperation activities outside of ETC. Such types of participation must, in all cases, achieve the requirements stated by EU and internal rules, which every partner must respect, concerning, for example, the eligibility of costs, activities, public procurement and State Aid rules. According to the same logic, a region may state in its ROP, or in a call document, that only certain beneficiaries are eligible and therefore can choose to include or exclude private partners.

If we look at the examples we have collected at European level, we see that according to region Limousin, the possibility of private enterprises participating is considered of added importance in this article. The participation of such beneficiaries is regulated by Limousin through a detailed contract established between the MA and the partner, which

refers to all clauses and rules that must be taken into account.

In the case of the region of Campania, in Italy, for example, the documents were organized in such a way that the participation of beneficiaries in the field of article 37.6(b) ideally targets only public authorities, thus affecting the applicability of the cooperation scope.

Q11:

According to your experience, would it be possible to accept a partner in a project outside of the European Territorial Cooperation framework, if they have no financial participation, therefore instead of providing a proof of financial support, they limit themselves to a document like a letter of intent?

According to the experience of partners which have implemented projects outside of the Objective 3 framework, there is not a yes/no answer to this question. Again, we are not based within the structure of European Territorial Cooperation, where every programme can specify these features either in the calls for proposals or in the Operational Programme. Therefore, we can only try to answer this question in accordance with logic of interpretation and the experience of two regions in Europe.

- One case is the French region of Limousin.

When Limousin begins a project outside the ETC framework, its local beneficiary needs to receive, from its external partner, a letter of intent in order to participate in the cooperation. Information must be given from the external partner regarding the activities they will implement and it must also include the amount of their financial participation and the origin of this contribution (ROP, own resources, etc.).

However, the financial contribution of the external partner can be very limited. Limousin made an example of a transfer process within a pilot action. In this case, the external partner invited the Limousin partner to visit its premises in order to study good practices. Expenses can be very limited for the external partner so all transfer costs must be financed by the visiting region (in this case Limousin). Then, of course, all the “in-kind participation” should be taken into account even if there cannot be a precise cost placed on activities such as mentoring, time commitment, sharing of information, etc.

Another example is made in the context of their RUR@CT network, which is made up of regions that either export or import practices in order to exchange good practices. Within this network, the “exporting region” does not have a budget line previewed for this type of contribution, while it is an obligation for the “importing region” to pay for the good practice they acquire. This does not mean that the practice is actually bought, rather, that the so-called importing region will organise the necessary scenario which allows them to adopt the practice: study, preparation of case-study, testing phase, follow-up and so on.

- Another case is presented by the German region of Thuringia.

The German region wants proof of the specific financial commitment of all partners in all cases in order to make sure that everyone contributes to the implementation of the project. When a call is launched, it is made very clear, in the documents of the call, that every partner must co-finance the activities for the project.

Given these two different cases, the general understanding is that, according to its own internal decision, every region chooses its preference and states it in the documents (OP or call will say if they want a letter of commitment or more proof of involvement such as a financial statement of contribution).

Q12:

Under which circumstances can a non-EU Member State participate in a cooperation project outside of the ETC framework?

There are many regions that would like to cooperate with partners located in the Balkans or Northern Africa.

Please consider the option in which an external partner could co-finance with its own resources.

This type of cooperation is possible especially if the country/region from outside the European Union could co-finance using its own financial resources. However such a type of cooperation activity would not be “labelled” as an example of 37.6(b) for the mere fact that this article defines cooperation only within the borders of the European Union.

In the case of the cooperation between Thuringia and the Norwegian County of Hordaland, the relations are regulated through a bilateral document called Communiqué. The two partners signed an agreement form stating cooperation outside of the ETC framework. Because of this, Thuringia uses its ERDF funds of Objective 2 and Norway uses its own funds. This type of cooperation is not labelled as an example of 37.6(b), but it does show that an EU member and a non-EU member can form an agreement to cooperate if they establish a proper background for it. Such a background is allowed by the Communiqué itself and by the set of internal rules that every partner must respect, concerning, for example, the eligibility of costs, activities, public procurement and State Aid.

One solution would be that, since it is possible to establish a bilateral cooperation in this way, there would be no way to try to comply to the requirements of Article 37.6(b). Actually, since article 37.6(b) appears in the Council Regulation and organises a sort of framework of its own (although very limited compared to the structures of ETC), it represents a type of security for regions which do not feel comfortable in organising their own tailor-made approach to cooperation. This is the reason why many regions still prefer to refer to this article and try to respect its requirements by making a reference to an official document they feel more confident about at legal level.

Q13:

With respect to the legal framework of the interregional cooperation projects (i.e. partnership agreements), is it an obligation for all the partners to submit partnership letters? Is there a template? Are there rules to be respected in this case?

There is no specific established rule, but submission depends on the way in which a region/programme organises its ROP. It has to decide how it will make the process more convenient. It is then up to the MA to assess the need for a partnership agreement.

For example, Thuringia has developed a partnership statement in English and German that is to be filled out by the beneficiaries from the cooperating region. It is essential for them that all partners contribute financially and that there exists a request for stating the origin and the amount of the co-financing sum in the partnership statement.

Thuringia also recommends the partners consult banks to obtain practical advice and help regarding how to provide co-funding and its evidence.

Apart from the Operational Programmes, the different participating regions need to refer to their national legal framework, especially for what concerns specific national requests and obligations. We have summarized the key ones according to Member States and the participating regions

infobox

EU LEGAL FRAMEWORK - COMMON FOR ALL MEMBER STATES

- EC Regulation No. 800/2008
- EC Regulation No. 1083/2006
- EC Regulation No. 1080/2006
- EC Regulation No. 1828/2006
- EC Regulation No. 1260/1999
- EC Treaty (Arts. 87,88 and 31)

FRANCE

- Decree 21 January 2011 n. 2011-92 modifying the previous decree n. 2007-1303 and fixing the rules for national eligibility of costs in programmes being cofunded by Structural Funds 2007-2013
- Prime Minister's Guidelines of 13 April 2007 on monitoring, management and control of cofunded programmes for the period 2007-2013
- Guidelines of 12 February 2007 on communicating the projects financed by the European Union in the framework of economic and social cohesion

GERMANY (and specifically Thuringia)

- Regional budgetary law of Thüringen (ThürLHO)
- Thüringen handbook on the transnational and interregional cooperation activities (TNA) for 2007-2013, related to competition rules in the framework of the ERDF
- Thüringen Administrative Procedures law (ThürVwVfG)
- Thüringen Personal data protection law
- General additional conditions for allocations and project grants (ANBest-P.)

ITALY

- Decree of the President of the Republic 3 October 2008, n. 196

glossary

- **Importing region** in the case of Limousin, it is the region that activates cooperation in order to learn/acquire a good practice from another partner
- **Exporting region** in the case of Limousin, it is the region that activates cooperation in order to provide/teach a good practice to another partner
- **ROP Regional operational programme**, the document that every region must draft to explain how, when and where it is going to use its structural funds
- **MA Managing Authority**, the executive body of a programme/region
- **ETC European Territorial Cooperation (Objective 3)**

the EGTC, a suitable tool for interregional cooperation

The EGTC, a suitable tool to organise interregional cooperation

_EGTC stands for “European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation”. The EGTC is a legal instrument which can be used throughout the European Union to create joint cooperation structures with legal **personality**¹. *The EGTC is available, among others, for any type of EU-cofinanced cooperation activity addressing social and economic cohesion. It is specifically targeted at cooperation between public organisations (and private organisations governed by public law).*

As we know, Article 37(6)(b) of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 makes it possible for Objective 1 and 2 programmes to finance interregional cooperation actions with at least one local or regional authority of another Member State. These actions can be run by the regions’ administrations directly. Alternatively the participating regions may decide to set up a joint, specific and separate legal structure to run these actions on their behalf, such as an EGTC. *The EGTC is not the only instrument available but it is particularly well-suited for this purpose.*

In this section you will find a set of answers to the main questions arising on how to use the EGTC in the context of Article 37(c)(b). For further information on the EGTC you can contact Elise Blais at INTERACT Point Vienna (elise.blais@interact-eu.net).

Is the EGTC suited to interregional cooperation?

This compatibility check shows that the EGTC fits to the governing principles of Article 37(6)(b) interregional cooperation actions:

- The EGTC is limited to cooperation in the field of economic and social cohesion
- The EGTC must be set up on the territory of the European Union
- The EGTC is open to cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation,
- The EGTC is open to regional and local authorities
- The EGTC can be set up, primarily, to run EU-cofunded **projects/actions**, programmes and/or global grants;
- EGTC requires participation of at least two members from two EU Member States.

What can an EGTC do?

An EGTC mission should be related to strengthening social and economic cohesion. Concretely, an EGTC can run, on behalf of its members, a variety of activities:

- Implementing cooperation (not strictly ETC) activities of different nature (cross-border, transnational, interregional)
- Common or joint management of funds, territorial institutions and services, territorial resources (nature, culture, business)

¹ Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on a European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC)

How does it work?

Having legal personality, the EGTC can hire staff, purchase services, equipment, buildings, run public funds (including collecting fees or distributing grants), etc. The EGTC budget is used to run the EGTC (running costs like staff, office rent, meetings, travel, accounting, etc) and an operational budget can be added to cover the project-related costs of the EGTC (works and services conducted by the EGTC for the interregional actions, publications, events, communication, etc).

The EGTC has a director and an assembly as decision-making organ. The assembly decides on the annual budget, convention and statutes of the EGTC. The director is in charge of the daily running of the EGTC.

The EGTC budget, adopted each year by the assembly, is subject to control and audit rules applicable to the management of public funds of the Member State where it has its seat. Each year the EGTC must publish audited account and an annual report.

An EGTC can be set up for a limited or unlimited period of time.

² According to Directive EC 2004/18/EC, Article 1(9), a “body governed by public law” means any body:

(a) “established for the specific purpose of meeting needs in the general interest, not having an industrial or commercial character,

(b) having legal personality and

Who can become member of an EGTC?

The matter is clarified in Article 3 of the EGTC Regulation. An EGTC may be composed of:

- Member States (national/central authorities);
- Regional and/or local authorities;
- Associations of public authorities, like Euro-regions, associations of municipalities, working communities (as long as they have legal personality)
- Bodies governed by public law, according to the definition of Article 1(9) of Directive 2004/18/EC: this concerns for example associations, foundations, universities, hospitals, national **agencies**²

In any case you need at least 2 members from 2 EU Member States to create an EGTC. It is currently not possible to create an EGTC between just one EU region/institution and one non-EU region/institution.

(c) financed, for the most part, by the State, regional or local authorities, or other bodies governed by public law; or subject to management supervision by those bodies; or having an administrative, managerial or supervisory board, more than half of whose members are appointed by the State, regional or local authorities, or by other bodies governed by public law.

Non-exhaustive lists of bodies and categories of bodies governed by public law which fulfil the criteria referred to in (a), (b) and (c) of the second subparagraph are set out in Annex III. Member States shall periodically notify the Commission of any changes to their lists of bodies and categories of bodies”.

Where should the seat of the EGTC?

The EGTC instrument is available throughout the whole European Union, so an EGTC can be set up anywhere in the EU. The seat of the EGTC must be located on the territory of one of the EU countries participating in the EGTC. The EGTC must be officially registered in the country of the seat.

Which rules apply?

The EGTC is a community instrument so the rules of the EGTC Regulation applies in the first place. Where authorised by the Regulation, the rules contained in the convention and statutes shall apply. For other matters the rules of the Member State where the EGTC has its seat shall apply. This concerns in particular the rules applying to the status of the EGTC (public or private, liability), control and audit. If the EGTC has several offices in the different participating Member States, the rules applying to the staffing of the EGTC staff may be the rules of the Member State of the seat or the rules of the Member State where the staff is working (where the office is located). Such matter can be set in the EGTC statutes.

If the EGTC organises a tendering procedure for supply, works or services, the tendering procedure shall be governed by the public procurement rules of the Member State where the EGT has its seat.

What can the EGTC be used for in the context of Article 37(6)(b)?

Two types of usage can be envisaged:

- a) to manage interregional actions of the participating regions (in this case the EGTC acts as “final beneficiary”), or
- b) to manage, through a global grant (according to Art. 42-43 of 1083/2006), the cooperation axis of each parts of each participating programmes (in this case the EGTC acts as “intermediate body” of the programme)

Which are the advantages of the EGTC for inter-regional cooperation?

- **Pooling human, technical and financial resources together**
 - a) For an interregional action:
- Putting together the budgets of each regional project into a single pot of money. The budget is managed by the EGTC, according to the management and control rules of the Member State of the EGTC (and of course applicable community rules). The assembly of the EGTC acts as project steering committee and is composed of representatives of the participating partner regions.

Phases of Setting-Up an EGTC



- Using that common budget for hiring staff, organising joint public procurement, apply as EGTC for EU projects (interregional or transnational). The EGTC can manage the entire budget of the interregional actions (ERDF contributions of each partner plus national co-financing shares).
- b) For an interregional global grant:
- Putting together the budgets of each regional priority into a joint global grant. The global grant is distributed to interregional actions of the participating regions, based on centralised calls for proposals, a single set of selection criteria, a joint selection committee, a unique type of subsidy contract signed between the EGTC director and the beneficiaries in each participating region. The budget of the global grant shall be used for financing of the actions. The functioning of the EGTC can be financed from the technical assistance (TA) budget of the participating programmes. This TA budget can be used for hiring staff to manage the calls, organise information sessions for applicants and/or training for project beneficiaries.
 - Sustainability and visibility for partnerships: A stable framework, e.g. for lobbying and for establishing relationships with third parties

A growing interest

Thus far Article 37(6)(b) has not been used in many regions of the European Union, but where used, there is a growing interest for ensuring sustainability of the partnerships created. Some regions involved in interregional cooperation under Article 37(c)(b) are currently assessing the options offered by the EGTC instrument.



The revision of the EGTC Regulation

The EGTC Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 foresees in its Article 17 the assessment of the instrument and its use after 4 years. This assessment was presented in a document published by the European Commission on 29 July 2011 (COM(2011)462 final). The EGTC Regulation will be revised as a result of this report. The revised EGTC Regulation is not expected to enter into force until end of 2012 or later.

Know more about the EGTC

For more information on the EGTC you can consult the INTERACT Handbook on the EGTC, available on the INTERACT website: http://www.interact-eu.net/downloads/702/INTERACT_Handbook_Practical_Handbook_on_the_EGTC_November_2008.pdf.

recommendations

Contribution from the Thuringian Coordination Office for Transnational and Interregional Activities (TNA), Free State of Thuringia.

The Free State of Thuringia is situated in the heart of Germany, just as the states of Saxony-Anhalt and Hesse as it has no national borders. Consequently, its access to programs such as INTERREG A and other cross-border funding instruments is very limited.

Therefore, Thuringian stakeholders such as companies, research/ educational institutions and municipalities face increased challenges in finding transnational partners for common projects. However, nowadays, transnational cooperation and exchange of best-practices and experiences has become increasingly important. In order to connect Thuringia to other European regions, the Thuringian Coordination Office for Transnational and Interregional Activities (TNA) was established by the Thuringian Ministry of Economy, Labour and Technology in 2008.

Even though article 37 is not explicitly mentioned in its respective Operational Programs for ERDF and ESF, the Free State of Thuringia made use of its possible potentials.

In order to give interested Thuringian players guidance regarding European regions, particularly promising for transnational cooperation, the Thuringian Coordination Office TNA identified 14 so-called “cooperation regions” highlighting the similarities between Thuringia and these possible partners when it comes to size, population, economic structure, and technological focus. Thuringia’s political partner regions Picardy, France and Malopolska, Poland, belong to this list of “cooperation regions.”

Regular meetings of the Steering Committee Thuringia - Picardy and the Steering Committee Thuringia - Malopolska, assure close coordination between Thuringia and these regions.

Another cooperation region is the county of Hordaland, situated in western Norway. In 2009, Thuringia and Hordaland agreed on a Communiqué expressing the two regions’ interest in cooperating with each other in specific fields related to ERDF and ESF. The close cooperation between Thuringia and Hordaland becomes especially apparent in the preparation and implementation procedure of the annual calls ERDF-TNA. Apart from mutual visits and common information of applicants from both regions, the Thuringian Coordination Office TNA and the Hordaland County Council also discuss the submitted applications and inform each other about funding decisions.

Hence, the Communiqué between Thuringia and Hordaland turned out to be an effective and efficient way of coordinating the two regions’ cooperation activities.

The Structural Funds ERDF and ESF finance all activities of the Thuringian Coordination Office TNA. It functions as starting point for Thuringian players interested in cooperation with transnational partners and offers advice and support. Additionally, it is involved in funding transnational projects.

a) Within ESF the Thuringian Coordination Office TNA examines and evaluates so-called transnational initiatives before applicants submit it to the Thuringian ESF intermediate body for approval. First and foremost, it assures the bids’ conformity

with Priority Axis E of the Thuringian ESF Operational Program, which summarises all transnational activities defined eligible. The initiative lasts for six months. It's goal, as a first step, is to find and attract transnational partners to a certain topic. In the second step, a related two to three year transnational project proposal can be submitted to the Thuringian ESF intermediate body.

Initiatives and resulting project proposals are expected to focus on innovative measures or procedures to be newly created or adapted according to Thuringian conditions.

This way, the Free State of Thuringia intends e.g. to increase the mobility of employees and supports efforts of employees and companies regarding the free movement of workers.

Within ESF the Thuringian Coordination Office, TNA is predominately involved in giving advice and support to applicants preparing initiatives.

b) Within ERDF however, the Thuringian Coordination Office TNA functions as an intermediate body for transnational activities. Each year it prepares and conducts a so-called Call ERDF-TNA focussing on transnational project proposals dealing with R&D and innovation. By launching these calls, new options for action can be developed and innovation in Thuringian industry, science and administration is stimulated.

Through transnational ERDF and ESF activities, the skills of participating Thuringian beneficiaries are further developed, e.g. enlargement of personal experiences and improvement of personal competences (ability to communicate, foreign language skills, intercultural competence).

Likewise, synergetic effects between the objectives of both funds can be achieved, especially in regard to qualification and the availability of skilled workers.

Within the calls ERDF-TNA 2008 to 2010 the Thuringian Coordination Office TNA received 80 applications. 189 Thuringian stakeholders and 165 transnational and interregional partners were involved in these applications. In total, 29 project proposals received approx. EUR 8 Million funding from the Thuringian Ministry of Economy, Labour and Technology.

Within ESF, the ESF intermediate body launched three transnational thematic calls during 2009 and 2010.

Recommendations for EU policy makers:

Transnational cooperation is not only beneficial for regions simply because they exchange know how and best practices. It also has positive impacts on the respective regional companies, universities, and other institutions engaged in transnational cooperation. It broadens the minds of every individual involved. In this way, transnational cooperation makes Europe tangible thus contributing to the objectives of cohesion policy.

By applying Article 37 in Thuringia, the region promotes transnational cooperation, especially with respect to R&D and innovation. By participating in innovative European cooperation networks, Thuringian players are able to import practical knowledge as well as to exchange best practices in various technology fields. This propels the joint creation of innovative products or processes. This way, Thuringia contributes to the intentions of "Europe 2020" to establish an "Innovation Union." 1

In order to benefit from the positive effects of Article 37 beyond 2013, Thuringia advocates its inclusion into the regulations of the next programming period 2014 - 2020. Article 37 allows Thuringia to coordinate transnational research activities with regional funding programs. This brings an obvious added value to research consortia, which would have been exclusively Thuringian without the existence and application of the article.

A specification of the article is not recommended. The more definitions and guidelines that are presented by the Commission, the more flexibility will be lost. In its current form, the article offers extraordinary flexibility allowing European regions of all kinds to apply it according to their specific regional structures and needs. :

1 cf. COM(2010) COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION, EUROPE 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Contributions of Region Limousin to EU policy makers

With a budget of EUR 4 million of ERDF for the period 2007-2013, the Limousin Region has largely used the opportunities provided by Article 37.6 (b) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1083/2006.

In light of Limousin's experience, the following lessons can be concluded regarding the added value of Article 37.6 (b) in the field of cooperation. The Article is:

- a better recognition of territorial cooperation, with respect to the regional development strategy, through an integrated approach;

- greater flexibility which defines the thematic and geographical scope of cooperation, well adapted to the activities of networking and benchmarking;
- an effective tool to ensure greater complements between Objective 2 and Objective 3, and sectoral/thematic programmes, in particular those dedicated to research and innovation (FP, CIP);
- a direct and appropriate answer to the objectives of the Lisbon strategy, then EU 2020, through the financial support of many projects dedicated to technological and territorial innovation;
- easier to implement cooperation projects using the resources of the mainstream, including material investment;
- more flexible in administrative and financial management compared to the programs of the Objective 3;
- in greater proximity to the stakeholders and beneficiaries;
- a real opportunity to develop cooperation for the Regions which, because of their geographical location, are not involved in cross-border cooperation.

The Limousin Region wishes to perpetuate the possibility of financing cooperation within the next generation of mainstream programs. The flexibility which characterizes Article 37.6(b) should be preserved in order to adequately meet the specific needs and functions of European Regions. Resources allocated to cooperation within the mainstream should be a success factor of the EU 2020 strategy and in particular the flagship initiative, Europe for Innovation.

conclusions

What did we learn from this pilot project?

Apart from the technical considerations regarding the usefulness of cooperation managed by regions for their specific objectives and working to build up their managing skills and responsibility, this group work showed how a bottom-up action can lead to empowerment and actual achievements.

In the following page, a schematic summary of the general findings explored during 2011 is presented and divided into themes.

THEMATIC SCOPE AND ELIGIBILITY OF ACTIONS

Cooperation outside of ETC, either according to the label of Article 37 or not, allows the region to perform activities which are most important for its needs and situation. Such concepts involve very practical applications such as the development of new products for high-tech fields like optics or innovative applications to rural areas and agriculture. It also represents a visible opportunity and link to regional strategies. Outputs, in this case, are more tangible and very often develop as a result of joint participation between private and public partners because enterprises can consist of stakeholders from objectives 1 and 2. Innovation is also the main theme addressed by regions cooperating outside of ETC. Many projects funded by ERDF and implemented through the methodology of cooperation have presented concrete feedback to their own beneficiaries and the Managing Authorities because the project was not only about the exchange of a practice or of know-how, it was actually a way to acquire new technology and skills and therefore become more competitive. Such competitiveness was thus seen by the regions as a strategic European approach, a win-win situation against the threats of globalisation, to concretely address the objectives of Europe 2020.

APPLICABILITY AND SUCCESS RATE

Cooperation in objectives 1 and 2 is also open to all regions in Europe, meaning they can choose to adopt it or to not, according to their priorities and to the methodology they prefer. A region, any region, is given a certain source of money to implement its priorities be it a large and productive area or a small, underdeveloped rural zone. If a region wants to develop its projects in a shared way, through the methodology of partnership and cooperation, it can do so according to its own needs and choices. The partner regions, the priorities, the themes, the fields of activities can all be better focused and managed in such a way which promotes interregional cooperation. In this way, a region can either launch calls for proposals in line with other regions' calls in the same field of activity, or accept proposals from regional beneficiaries who want to develop activities with foreign partners. The success rate is higher, compared to the assessment of proposals in an ETC programme, because the scale of the activity is reduced to every single region in Europe.

On the other hand, every region must conduct research on possible partners and make an effort to implement the activities in the best possible way and while maintaining a lack of a fixed framework which may appear as an ocean of opportunities or a source of doubts.

Cooperation in objective 1 and 2 applies a level of meritocracy for strong and capable beneficiaries as well as for regions believing in the added value of cooperation and having the skills to manage themselves. They can be successful in implementing this tool without being tied to external frameworks, guidelines or rules.

SUSTAINABILITY

Cooperation under article 37.6.b is an innovative tool in the Regulation which gives room for exploring other ways for regional development. Considering the examples that are known so far, we may conclude that the results of such interregional cooperation projects have a good potential for sustainability. Not only because they necessarily refer to the objectives of the regional programmes, but also because of the flexibility in the generation process; calls for proposals are not always used and the few relevant Managing Authorities are selecting the most suitable operations for their territories.

ADDED VALUE

ETC is naturally based on cooperation and uses this not only as a methodology but also as an objective. On the contrary, mainstream projects benefit from cooperation as they imply it as a methodology and instead of working on their own; they do it with another European regional partner. In this way, objectives 1 and 2 benefit from the ETC-INTERREGg “acquis” and can still enjoy a more tailor-made cooperation when it comes to, for example, themes and geographical scope.

MYTHS AND FALSE FRIENDS

Article 37.6 b is applied by too few regions.

YES BUT

It is very unknown because it does not have a fixed framework of rules, calls and bodies like an ETC programme.

Nobody knows how to use it.

NO

There are actually few regions using it, but more and more are interested and we are working in a direction to raise awareness about it.

It overlaps with IVC

NO

Actually it does not because the limits of ETC are not the same as those of the other mainstream programmes in which article 37.6 b can be applied. This is because the rules applicable to the two tools are so different in theme, partnership type, results and budget.

It is complicated to use and nobody really knows how

NO

Although there are few examples, they are all very promising, positive and likely to be replicated. Each region implementing the article has chosen its own way and is developing cooperation according to its own schemes so every region tries to make it as easy as possible while still respecting the EU regulations and its internal rules.

annexe: list of regions

France	Presence in the OP	Link to OP	Description
Limousin	yes	http://www.haute-vienne.pref.gouv.fr/sections/politiques_et_action/les_fonds_europeens/copy_of_les_programmes_commu_1/downloadFile/FichierExterne/LIMOUSIN_PO_FEDER.pdf	Extensive use of Article especially within the Ruract network. Area 5 - Promoting interregional partnerships and international cooperation. Guideline 26: Cooperation Article 37. 6 b of Regulation (EC) 1083/2006.
Bretagne	yes	http://www.bretagne.fr/internet/upload/docs/application/pdf/2009-01/po_feder_07-12-2007.pdf	"Related to Article 37-6 (b) the Managing Authority may decide on the financial support of interregional activities under the ERDF programme
Italy	Presence in the OP	Link to OP	Description
Lombardia	yes	http://www.dps.tesoro.it/documentazione/QSN/docs/PO/POR_Lombardia_FESR_SFC2007.pdf	Under the provisions of art. 37.6b of EC Regulation 1083/2006, the interregional cooperation actions will be made in reference to the priorities of the ERDF ROP and on the basis of specific strategies of cooperation programmes. The actions for interregional cooperation under Article. 37.6.b of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006, and trans-regional cooperation actions will be co-financed within the limit of 0.5% of the budget of individual axis and can be activated from the region both directly and in partnership with local authorities and / or other regions.

Veneto	yes	http://www.dps.tesoro.it/documentazione/QSN/docs/PO/POR_Veneto%20_FESR_SFC2007.pdf	With reference to art. 37.6.b of Regulation (EC) 1083/06, interregional cooperation actions can be made according to the priorities of the ERDF OP. These lines of action will focus on the creation of a collaboration between Italian and European regions, including Carinthia, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Slovenia and the Croatian counties of Istria and Primorje Gorski Kotar, on topics related to the axis of the ROP in order to identify and subsequently build cooperation instruments such as the Euroregion, Groupings of territorial cooperation (EGTC) and other appropriate instruments of cooperation.
Abruzzo	yes	http://www.dps.tesoro.it/documentazione/QSN/docs/PO/POR_FESR_Abruzzo_SFC2007.pdf	Under the provisions of art. 37.6.b of Reg.1083/2006, interregional cooperation actions will be made in reference to the priorities of the ERDF ROP and on the basis of strategies provided by cooperation programmes. Actions will focus then on the following topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research and innovation; - Energy; - Enhancement of cultural heritage and environmental / sustainable tourism; - Urban development. The interregional cooperation actions under Art. 37.6.b of Regulation (EC) 1083/2006 and trans-regional cooperation actions will be co-financed within the limit of 0.5% of the budget of individual axis and can be initiated by the Region both individually and in partnership with local authorities, companies and any other relevant regional actors.

Basilicata	yes	http://www.dps.tesoro.it/documentazione/QSN/docs/PO/In%20adozione/POR_Basilicata_FESR_SFC2007.pdf	<p>The Region gave priority to activate cooperation projects related to the following thematic priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environment and sustainable development - Governance - Human resources, territorial attractiveness and competitiveness - Network infrastructure, accessibility, information society and knowledge society. <p>According to Article 37.6 (b) of Regulation 1083/2006, Region Basilicata wants to cooperate with Hungary and France in order to define actions focused on the following priorities: research and technological development, innovation and ICT networks, sustainable development and spatial planning, integrated systems for mobility and logistics services, the enhancement of environmental resources and cultural patterns of local development, the construction of integrated public services for the community. The budget is limited to 0.5% of the total budget for individual axes.</p>
Calabria	yes	http://www.dps.tesoro.it/documentazione/QSN/docs/PO/In%20adozione/POR_Calabria_FESR_SFC2007.pdf	<p>The OP foresees assigning 0.5% of the priorities axes financial resources to interregional cooperation activities. The priority themes which will focus on the interregional cooperation actions will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthening the capacity for innovation, research and technology transfer; - The stimulus to energy efficiency and renewable energy development. - The study and implementation of plans and measures geared towards preventing and coping with natural hazards (fires, floods, desertification, earthquakes, etc..) and technological risks; - The promotion of cultural heritage, landscape and environmental improvement of land management; - The promotion of sustainable tourism; - Policies for urban areas. <p>The regions with which it is thought to trigger actions for interregional cooperation under art. 37.6.b of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 include those of the following Member States: Spain, France, Great Britain, Ireland, Germany, Greece, Portugal, Malta. Funding for the objectives of 37.6.b amounts to 15,740,760 euros.</p>

Campania	yes	http://www.dps.tesoro.it/documentazione/QSN/docs/PO/POR_Campania_FESR_SFC2007.pdf	The OP foresees to assigning 0.5% of the concerned priorities axes financial resources. The proposed inter-territorial cooperation in the ERDF under Article ROP. 37.6.b of the EC regulation 1083/2006, is a specific form of intervention designed in a complementary way, to strengthen the initiatives envisaged by Article 6 of EC Regulation 1080/2006, for the development of partnership relationships, production and social infrastructure in the territories of Campania, which may represent the space in which the strategies of regional development project. The complementary instrument of interregional cooperation will aim to bring out the potential represented by additional extra-territorial dimension of European partnerships.
Friuli Venezia Giulia	yes	http://www.dps.tesoro.it/documentazione/QSN/docs/PO/In%20adozione/POR_Friuli_FESR_SFC2007.pdf	The OP foresees assigning 0.5% of the concerned priorities axes financial resources. Themes included are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research and innovation; - Energy; - Sustainable tourism and valorisation of culture; - Urban development.
Lazio	yes	http://www.dps.tesoro.it/documentazione/QSN/docs/PO/In%20adozione/PORLazio2007-13_28ago07DEF.pdf	The OP foresees assigning the 0.5% of the concerned priorities axes financial resources. Actions will be developed primarily with Spain (Valencia) and Slovakia (Bratislava).
Piemonte	yes	http://www.dps.tesoro.it/documentazione/QSN/docs/PO/POR_Piemonte_FESR_SFC2007.pdf	The budget dedicated to this Article will be 0,5% of the single axis of reference and the main themes of interest will be: research, energy, cultural and tourism development and finally urban development.
Sicilia	yes	to be confirmed	Two specific points have been developed in axis 5 and aim to reinforce the links among the different objectives, thus having a real capitalisation and combination of ETC and mainstream.

Toscana	yes	http://www.dps.tesoro.it/documentazione/QSN/docs/PO/POR_Toscana%20_FESR_SFC2007.pdf	Region Tuscany intends to proceed with the definition of protocols and agreements with other European regions, including bilateral ones, geared towards achieving exchange of best practices, define joint actions of knowledge and evaluation of policies and co-finance joint projects implemented by beneficiaries located in the regions concerned. Areas covered will include: (a) innovation and technology transfer system for SMEs, (b) mobility systems and logistics, (c) regional development policies with a focus on urban issues. Co-financing of operations is assured by the resources allocated in the individual activities of the ROP, in percentage not exceeding 0.50% of the resources planned for each axis, with the exception of Axis Technical Support.
Austria	Presence in the OP	Link to OP	Description
Styria	no, but mention of cooperation outside of ETC	http://www.oerok.gv.at/fileadmin/Bilder/3.Reiter-Regionalpolitik/2.EU-SF_in_OE_07-13/2.4_Ziel_RWB_EFRE/Steiermark/OP-STMK_REGWEG_Endfassung.pdf	Pg. 64 Horizontal approach to cooperation, especially with nearby Countries (Hungary, Slovenia, Italy)
Tyrol	no, but mention of cooperation outside of ETC	http://www.oerok.gv.at/fileadmin/Bilder/3.Reiter-Regionalpolitik/2.EU-SF_in_OE_07-13/2.4_Ziel_RWB_EFRE/Tirol/OP_Reg_Wettbewerbsf_Tirol.pdf	Pg. 96 (6.4) Horizontal approach to interregional activities
Carinthia	no, but mention of cooperation outside of ETC	" http://www.kwf.at/downloads/deutsch/EU/KWF_Operationelles_Programm_Ziel_2_Kaernten.pdf Available only in German	Pg 47: Interregional Cooperation Cross-cutting. Pg 61: Special conditions.

Germany	Presence in the OP	Link to OP	Description
Baden-Württemberg	yes	http://www.rwb-efre.baden-wuerttemberg.de/doks/OP%20RWB%20EFRE%20BW%20Stand%2024-10-2007%20genehmigt%2008-11-2007.pdf	This OP opens the possibility for interregional cooperation according to Art. 37.6.b. Administrations have to make sure that such projects are co-financed under an ETC OP or under a regional OP. Initiatives under the interregional cooperation can be financed under the Art. 37.6.b. The OP offers the possibility for interregional cooperation particularly with F, IT and SP: there is an established cooperation of the "4 motors for Europe", Baden-Württemberg, Lombardy, Catalunya, Rhone-Alpes in the field of clusterbuilding and science.
Bayern	yes	http://www.stmi.bayern.de/imperia/md/content/stmi/bauen/staedtebaufoerderung/programm/rwb_operat_programm.pdf	Page 117 of ROP. Although a general application of the Article is not conceivable, in case of need for further interregional cooperation/activities, some project may be funded according to the referring axis.
Hessen	yes	http://www.region-nordhessen.de/file-admin/redaktion/regionnordhessen/PDF/Operationelles_RWB-EFRE-Programm_Hessen_2007-2013.pdf	Page 137 of ROP. Reference to interst in cooperation especially with regions Emilia-Romagna in Italy, Aquitaine in France and Wielkopolska in Poland.
Schleswig-Holstein	yes	http://www.schleswig-holstein.de/MWV/DE/Wirtschaft/Wirtschaftsfoerderung/EUForderungSH/downloads/OpProgrEFRE,templ ateld=raw,property=publicationFile.pdf	Page 183 of ROP highlights Article 37.6 b, yet there is a whole section (4.7) dedicated to cooperation and indicates the thematic fields within Germany and with other areas of interest in Europe, especially Denmark and Pays de la Loire in France.

Thüringen	no specific reference in the OP to the Article but extensive to need for cooperation	http://www.ziel2.nrw.de/1_Ziel2-Programm/3_1_Programmtexte/Operationelles_Programm_13_08_20071.pdf	Priority Area 1 - Promoting education, research, development and innovation: it will apply Article 37, paragraph 6, letter b of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006, in line with what has been done in the programming period 2000-2006 and in the context of Interreg III C, which was promoted inter-regional cooperation. This inter-regional cooperation will continue also in the programming period 2007-2013.
Sweden	Presence in the OP	Link to OP	Description
West Sweden	yes	http://publikationer.tillvaxtverket.se/ProductView.aspx?ID=1251	In accordance with Article 37 (6) b, the overall programme includes the actions for interregional cooperation with at least one local authority in another Member State.
Stockholm		http://publikationer.tillvaxtverket.se/ProductView.aspx?ID=1250	
North Sweden	yes	http://publikationer.tillvaxtverket.se/ProductView.aspx?ID=1246	The goal of the programme is to exploit new opportunities offered during the 2007-2013 period as an effective collaboration with development programmes in other countries is aimed at stimulating experience for regional development. In accordance with Article 37 (6) b, this includes the actions for interregional cooperation with at least one local authority in another Member State.
Mid-North Sweden	yes	http://publikationer.tillvaxtverket.se/ProductView.aspx?ID=1247	"The programme aims to support interregional cooperation focusing on innovation and knowledge economy and environment and risk prevention. The inter-regional cooperation offers the opportunity to work geographically across Europe and is a valuable tool to approach the strategic partnership within regions which are not geographically linked to transnational and cross-border programs.

Nort-Mid Sweden	yes	http://publikationer.tillvaxtverket.se/ProductView.aspx?ID=1248	"The ambition of the programme is to exploit the new opportunities offered during the period 2007-2013, the effective collaboration with development programmes in other countries aimed at stimulating experience for regional development. In accordance with Article 37 (6) b, this includes the actions for interregional cooperation with at least one local authority in another Member State.
East Sweden	yes	http://publikationer.tillvaxtverket.se/ProductView.aspx?ID=1249	"The goal of the programme is to exploit the new opportunities offered during the 2007-2013 period, as the effective collaboration with development programmes in other countries aimed at stimulating experience for regional development. In accordance with Article 37 (6) b, this includes the actions for interregional cooperation with at least one local authority in another Member State.
"Småland and the Islands'	yes	http://publikationer.tillvaxtverket.se/ProductView.aspx?ID=1252	
'Skåne-Blekinge'	yes	http://publikationer.tillvaxtverket.se/ProductView.aspx?ID=1253	Interaction with regional plans for the Capital Region of Denmark and the Region of Zealand and program groups in the southern Baltic Sea can be made in accordance with Article 37 (6) b, which includes measures for interregional cooperation with at least one regional or local authorities in another Member State.
United Kingdom	Presence in the OP	Link to OP	Description
East of England	yes	http://www.eeda.org.uk/files/East_of_England_Competitiveness_OP_Nov_2007_-_V20_Clean.pdf	The OP includes the option to use art 37.6.b as part of the future programme modification.
Yorkshire and The Humber	no, but mention of cooperation outside of ETC	http://www.yorkshire-forward.com/sites/default/files/documents/ERDF%20Operational%20Programme%202007-2013.pdf	The OP refers to the possibility to implement international and interregional cooperation with another Member State for the implementation of an activity under any priority line

Cornwall	yes	http://www.convergencecornwall.com/downloads/publications/16.pdf	In order to better consolidate the outward dimension of the programme and to offer more scope for networking in line with the programme strategy, it is intended to allow for the possibility (in particular through Priority 1) of using the opportunities offered by Article 37(6)b of Regulation 1083/2006, i.e. financing of actions for interregional cooperation with, at least, one regional or local authority of another Member State. This offers the possibility to use programme resources in order to exchange experience, ideas and best practice with other regions on topics which are common for their respective programmes (small-scale interregional cooperation).
Lowlands and Uplands of Scotland	no, but mention of cooperation in the OP as a continuation of cooperation in ETC	http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/917/0049577.pdf	
West Midlands	no, but mention of cooperation outside of ETC	http://www.advantagewm.co.uk/Images/WM%20OP-FINAL%20v1.4_tcm9-13276.pdf	The desire to integrate the rural, urban and regional European networking experiences of the 2000-2006 EU Programmes (Leader, Urban and Equal into the mainstream Structural Fund Programme) led the partners to develop a small interregional priority within this Programme, which will help the West Midlands learn and apply the lessons from other fast-growing regions within the EU. Funds available in the OP for interregional cooperation is 6.000.000 euros.
North East of England	reference to cooperation	http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/regeneration/pdf/1928682.pdf	

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