

INTERREG CENTRAL EUROPE PROGRAMME 2021-2027

Priority 1: Cooperating for a smarter central Europe
SO 1.1: Strengthening innovation capacities in central Europe

09.2021

Disclaimer

This document has been approved by the programming Task Force “Working Group CENTRAL EUROPE 2021+” as an advanced draft of the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme 2021-2027. The document was drafted in compliance with Article 17 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059, according to the template annexed to the aforementioned regulation.

Further information on the programming process for the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme 2021-2027 can be found at www.interreg-central.eu/CE21-27.

Please note that contents of this document may change also substantially following negotiations with the concerned parties, namely the nine Member States participating in the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme and the European Commission.

Priority 1: Cooperating for a smarter central Europe

Specific objective: Strengthening innovation capacities in central Europe

Reference: Article 17(3)(e)

PO1 -(i) Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies

Related types of action and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, where appropriate

Reference: Article 17(3)(e)(i), Article 17(9)(c)(ii)

Text field [7000]

SO 1.1: Strengthening innovation capacities in central Europe

Territorial needs for central Europe

Innovation capacities bear high relevance for the future economic development of central Europe and its economic resilience. Economic transition challenges the strong position of central European regions in the secondary, manufacturing sector, which includes e.g. the automotive, textile and food industries. Better innovation capacities will be central to adapt regions to the growing importance of the tertiary, services-oriented sector, which includes e.g. the cultural and creative industries, health and tourism. In line with the EU Green Deal and Territorial Agenda 2030, it is important to balance economic, social and ecological aspects in all support activities.

Currently, regions in central Europe do not equally benefit from research and innovation (R&I). Knowledge and technology transfer thus remains a critical need especially for SMEs along transnational value chains. These SMEs are often local suppliers that do not operate on global markets like larger companies.

Tackling innovation-related challenges will help to reduce territorial disparities between regions that might otherwise lead to unequal opportunities and a social disintegration.

Transnational cooperation actions

In this SO, Interreg CE will support transnational cooperation to improve SME competitiveness. The aim is to improve policy learning, strengthen the capacities of innovation stakeholders and to increase collaboration in and between regional innovation systems. Where applicable, actions

supported should be coherent with the relevant smart specialisation strategies of the participating regions. Possible cooperation actions include the development and implementation of strategies, action plans, tools, training, pilot actions and related solutions. All actions should strive for better economic resilience of CE regions and respect greening and sustainability aspects.

Actions should push the uptake of novel technologies and solutions. They should foster cross-sector linkages by improving cooperation among innovation stakeholders with similar challenges. Actions should establish and strengthen regional and transnational central European structures (e.g. clusters, innovation networks) and value chains, which will reduce dependency on foreign suppliers. Cooperation of companies in interregional partnerships is in particular encouraged if these are part of value chains related to smart specialisation strategies of the participating regions.

More concretely, Interreg CE will fund actions in the following fields (non-exhaustive list):

- Green economy, bio-economy
- Industry 4.0, robotisation, mechatronics, digital technologies, key enabling technologies
- Cultural and creative industries and tourism
- Health (care) innovation
- Silver economy
- Social innovation
- Technology and innovation transfer
- Interregional partnerships along value chains
- Innovative schemes for financing innovation

Examples of actions supported (non-exhaustive list):

- Improving capacities of and cooperation among innovation stakeholders at different governance levels (e.g. public, private, national, regional) to help SMEs to better integrate digitalisation in their sustainable transition to industry 4.0
- Exchanging good practices on green economy trends and standards and implementing pilot actions to support SMEs in taking these up
- Fostering technology and innovation transfer from research to business and new cooperation along value chains in order to support the roll out of innovative solutions
- Enhancing support services for SMEs and entrepreneurs to improve their access to research and technological innovations
- Strengthening transnational innovation networks and clusters and enhancing cooperation among innovation hubs in different territories
- Enabling cross-sectoral cooperation to help businesses (e.g. from traditional economic sectors, cultural and creative industries, tourism, health care or silver economy) to sustainably integrate digital technologies (e.g. artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, Internet of Things) into product and service development
- Improving collaboration along value chains of sustainable innovative products and services in coherence with smart specialisation strategies

- Enhancing transfer and upscaling of proven green solutions to open up business opportunities
- Developing and implementing transnational value chain concepts based on regional potentials and resources. Concepts should strengthen sustainability and reduce external dependency of value generation (e.g. by strengthening regional competences for lost/new value creation or introducing short food supply chains). They should also help increase regional resilience to external impacts such as ruptures of supply chains
- Fostering innovation strategies to reduce the environmental footprint of production processes, e.g. by facilitating decentralised and demand-responsive production systems
- Reducing innovation gaps in non-urban areas by e.g. making villages smarter and improving access to innovation support services for rural businesses focused on smart specialisation and technology priority areas
- Strengthening linkages between the public and private sector and finance institutions to encourage the design and setup of structures and services that facilitate access to innovation financing
- Promoting innovative actions that make the economy more just and help the economic and social integration of disadvantaged population groups (e.g. persons with disabilities, migrants, elderly, youth)
- Supporting the establishment of Living Labs, test-beds and ecosystems that bring together the demand and supply sides to promote the development and actual use of innovative solutions for public sector needs, including pre-commercial procurement (PCP) and public procurement of innovative solutions (PPIs)

Actions that might involve genetic modifications have to be compliant with the *acquis communautaire* for genetic engineering, including provisions of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030.

Actions might benefit from coordination with other European funding instruments including Horizon Europe, the Interregional Innovation Investment (I3) initiative, ERDF mainstreaming programmes or national innovation funds. Actions should seek synergies to achieve higher and wider territorial impacts in central Europe, e.g. through the uptake of research results and their rolling-out in the regions, as well as take into account action plans of macro-regional strategies. Actions could link up with InvestEU and the new Strategic Investment Facility, which aim at building stronger European value chains and economic resilience. This could support the mobilisation of future investments in next generation technologies (e.g. through preparation of follow up projects or regional knowledge exchanges on good practices in the use of these instruments).

Expected results

Transnational cooperation actions will result in strengthened innovation capacities. They will improve policy learning and implementation, encourage policy changes towards a green and digitalised economy in lagging regions and help these with catching up with front-runner regions. Actions will lead to improved framework conditions for innovation and foster the sustainable uptake of advanced technologies. Improved cross-sector cooperation, technology transfer and coordination will contribute to reducing innovation barriers, in particular for SMEs.

For INTERACT and ESPON programmes:

Reference Article 17(9)(c)(i)

Definition of a single beneficiary or a limited list of beneficiaries and the granting procedure

Text field [7000]

N/A

Indicators

Reference: Article 17(3)(e)(ii), Article 17(9)(c)(iii)

Table 2: Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID [5]	Indicator	Measurement unit [255]	Milestone (2024) [200]	Final (2029) target [200]
1	SO 1.1	RCO 83	Strategies and action plans jointly developed	Strategy/action plan	5	30
1	SO 1.1	RCO 84	Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects	Pilot action	12	80
1	SO 1.1	RCO 87	Organisations cooperating across borders	Organisation	210	300
1	SO 1.1	RCO 116	Jointly developed solutions	Solution	12	80

Table 3: Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Reference year	Final target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
1	SO 1.1	RCR 79	Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations	Joint strategy/ action plan	0	2021	23	Programme monitoring system	
1	SO 1.1	RCR 84	Organisations cooperating across borders after project completion	Organisation	0	2021	150	Programme monitoring system	

1	SO 1.1	RCR 104	Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations	Solution	0	2021	60	Programme monitoring system	
---	--------	---------	--	----------	---	------	----	-----------------------------	--

Main target groups

Reference: Article 17(3)(e)(iii), Article 17(9)(c)(iv)

Text field [7000]

Target groups of funded actions include all public and private stakeholders and population groups that will be involved or positively affected by the actions. They should be stimulated to take up solutions that lead to an improved innovation eco-system. More concretely, target groups include both public and private actors of the quadruple innovation helix system such as enterprises including creative industries and cultural heritage institutions and their employees (especially SMEs), cluster organisations, public authorities, regional development agencies, chambers of commerce and industry technology transfer institutions, NGOs, innovation agencies, technology and industrial parks, sectoral and business networks, business incubators, financing institutions, education and training organisations, private and public research institutions, social networks.

Identification of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article 17(3)(e)(iv)

Text field [7000]

Actions can be implemented throughout the programme area and address all types of territories. Actions should address territories with deficiencies in their innovation systems, who will benefit from exchanges with advanced regions and learn from them. In turn, cooperation should also improve connections among advanced territories (e.g. innovation champions - highly successful regions in a certain sector) and support their spill-over to surrounding territories in order to become more competitive on the global market. Even though innovation system stakeholders are mostly located in urban areas, needs of rural areas should also be addressed.

All possible actions need to consider the specific territorial characteristics of targeted areas and, where applicable, be coherent with the relevant smart specialisation strategies.

Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: Article 17(3)(e)(v)

Text field [7000]

N/A

Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: Article 17(3)(e)(vi), Article 17(9)(c)(v)

Table 4: Dimension 1 - intervention field

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
1	ERDF	SO 1.1	10	1.559.888
1	ERDF	SO 1.1	12	1.559.888
1	ERDF	SO 1.1	13	3.119.775
1	ERDF	SO 1.1	19	1.559.887
1	ERDF	SO 1.1	21	3.119.775
1	ERDF	SO 1.1	24	3.119.775
1	ERDF	SO 1.1	25	1.559.887
1	ERDF	SO 1.1	26	3.119.775
1	ERDF	SO 1.1	27	3.119.775
1	ERDF	SO 1.1	28	3.119.775
1	ERDF	SO 1.1	29	3.119.775
1	ERDF	SO 1.1	30	3.119.775

Table 5: Dimension 2 - form of financing

Priority no	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
1	ERDF	SO 1.1	01	31.197.750

Table 6: Dimension 3 - territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority No	Fund	Specific objective	Code	Amount (EUR)
1	ERDF	SO 1.1	33	31.197.750